

The Song of the Whale

A. Answer these questions

1) Why is the whale crying?

Ans) The whale is crying for all its family members that have been killed by humans. We are slaughtering various species for our own benefit. Instead of the whale's live, we are choosing lipsticks and polishes and other products that are made of whales.

2) Which lines in the poem tell you what whales were used for?

Ans) The lines "~~lipstick~~ lipstick for our painted faces, polish for our shoes" tell us that the whales are used for.

3) Bird-high notes, keening / soaring
a) what are these lines describing?

Ans) The lines are describing the pain and helplessness of the whales that are crying about their plight, the exploitation by humans and fear of extinction. The use of

Sound conveys a sense of sadness in a whale, which encourages us to also feel for the whale.

b) Why does the speaker describe it as 'keening'?

Ans) The word 'keening' creates an impression of pain or loss as high-pitched sound are often associated with pain and grief. The ~~whales~~ whales are missing their friends and relatives as we human keep on killing them for our greed. Thus, they sing the keening songs.

4) ~~where~~ what are 'painted faces'? How does the speaker feel about them?

Ans) 'Painted faces' are faces made up with cosmetics. The poet dislikes them as he is aware that we are killing whales to obtain these beauty products, which is a sheer waste of life.

5) How would we make the whales 'dumb'?

Ans) The word 'dumb' suggest something is silent and unable to speak. In this case the whales has died or is dying and so is no longer able to sing. This line means that man would kill all the whales, making them extinct.

6) Why does the speaker say that we are not choosing 'life'?

Ans) ~~why~~ The whales are being killed for our needs and greeds and instead of the lives of the whales, we are choosing make-up, polish and other beauty products they provide, instead of letting the whales live, we are choosing luxury items for ourselves.

B. Think and answer.

1) Why is the poem titled 'The Song of the Whale'?

Ans) The poem is titled so as if voices the misery, the plights of the whales in the forest of the sea.

2) Who is the speaker addressing in the poem? Why does he do that?

Ans) The speaker is addressing a whale in the poem. Speaking to the whale directly, the speaker is telling that he understands its song and its pain. By making the whale a 'person' that we can address and talk to, the speaker makes the whale more real in our eyes. It makes the reader aware that we are responsible for causing a living, breathing, talking, singing creature in pain. The speaker is attempting to make us feel the sorrow of a fellow creature in the world.

3) What feeling does the speaker wish to convey in the poem? Sadness? Anger? Disgust? Support your answer with lines from the poem.

Ans) Sadness - 'Great whale, crying for your life'.

Disgust - Lipstick for our painted faces, polish for our shoes.

4) Does the speaker think there is a hope yet for the whales? How do we know?

Ans) The poet sees very little hope for the whales as he feels they are on the edge of extinction and the humans still do not see the emptiness and cruelty of their actions. The line 'we will never let you be' projects the hopelessness that the speaker feels.