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| 5  10  15  20  25 | **His t-shirts Tammy Ho**  Medium-sized t-shirts on his dark body.  He’s totally Chinese - more so than me.  But in periods when he’s building bridges,  fixing window panes or drilling roads,  I think he’s from Africa.  Yellow skin is black in the sun.  Who said colours are God-given?  Medium-sized t-shirts he has aplenty.  Elated, in countries foreign, we do not forget  at home he’s suppressing his worried lips.  He wants nothing from us, but  we like the idea of giving. And so he’s  wearing t-shirts from London, Thailand,  Auckland, Japan, Finland, India,  Malaysia, Poland, Korea...  ‘Where are you from, father?’ We are  teasers. Names of places bold  in English on his chest. He doesn’t know.  ‘China,’ he answers. We laugh.  We laugh. Bad daughters.  Medium-sized t-shirts on top of Large  -sized ones in his drawers.  He once stood huge  in front of a snack bar,  buying us coca-colas,  and we cheered. |

**Poetry Remake Competition**

STUDENT’S COPY

**List of Poems and Learning and Teaching Materials for Junior Secondary Division**

“His t-shirts” was published in *hula hooping* by Tammy Ho Lai-ming, p.5. Copyrights © 2015 by Chameleon Press. Reprinted by permission of Chameleon Press.

**Suggested Questions and Answers**

1. What is this poem about?
2. Who is the speaker in this poem?
3. Describe the relationship between the speaker and her father. Support your answer with evidence from the poem.
4. What changes has the speaker observed in his father over time?
5. Does the poem have any important symbol? What meaning does it bring to the poem?
6. What is the theme of the poem?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30 | **Lamma Island Tofu-fa Kate Rogers**  On the broken trail to Mot tat  a field of white ginger lilies  flags us down.  We shrug off our packs.  Huddled among ruins to our left,  a stone house  red clay roof sloping,  doorway gaping  like an old man sleeping.  A wriggly-tin shed  shades wooden tubs of tofu.  We sit at a plank table.  A tiny woman  with a toothless smile,  trembling, blue-veined hands,  carries a tray. Tofu-fa  is heaped like soft snow  in turquoise plastic bowls.  I love the tofu’s smooth surface  but crave the sight of golden sugar  pocking its face,  tofu puddled in ginger syrup –  its sharp scent,  clearing my nostrils  with the first spoonful.  Dusk creeps under our table  grey as the old woman’s dog.  The old woman dozes  on her low stool beside the shed,  bathed in the milk of the moon. |

“Lamma Island Tofu-fa” first appeared in the *American Literary Journal, World Literature Today*, Spring 2019 issue.

**Suggested Questions and Answers**

1. What is the setting of the poem?
2. Who are “us” and “we” in lines 3-4? What do you think they are doing in Mot tat at the beginning of the poem?
3. Identify three comparisons from the poem to complete the following sentences:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is compared to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. In lines 16-25, rich imagery is used in the description of tofu-fa.
2. Identify expressions that appeal to the following senses and complete the table below:

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| --- | --- |
| Sense | Examples |
| sight |  |
| hearing |  |
| smell |  |
| touch |  |
| taste |  |

1. Which sense has not been used in the description of tofu-fa? Enrich the poem with a line that appeals to this missing sense.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_imagery that appeals to the sense of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_has not been used in the description of tofu-fa. The poem could be enriched with the following line:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Comment on the special use of language in lines 21-22. What effects does it create?
2. Describe the mood in lines 26-30. How is the mood created?
3. If you could break this poem into different stanzas, how would you break the lines apart? Mark with // places you would like to start a new stanza and explain why.

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| 5  10  15 | **Thinking of Work James Shea**  A brief storm  blew the earth clean.  There was much  to do: sun to put up,  clouds to put out,  blue to install,  limbs to remove,  grass to implant.  (The grass failed.  We ordered new grass.)  A limb cracked  in half in the short storm,  short with its feeling.  We saw its innards,  all the hollow places.  Something flew out of  the window and then  the window flew out of the window. |

“Thinking of Work” was published in *The Lost Novel* by James Shea, p.2. Copyrights © 2014 by James Shea. Reprinted by permission of Fence Books.

**Suggested Questions and Answers**

1. What is the poem about?
2. In Stanza 1, the storm is described as “brief”. How do the length of the lines and word choice bring out the brevity of the storm?
3. How does the speaker emphasise that there was “much to do” after the storm?
4. What is the follow-up work after the storm likened to? Answer with close reference to the nouns and verbs/action words used in the poem.
5. Comment on the repeated use of certain words in the poem. What effect does it achieve?

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| --- | --- |
| 5  10 | **fence Eddie Tay**  skyscrapers  all eyes looking at the centre  henry aspires to havard business  and throws away his harmonica  jenny is driving a car  into her global spider networked future  jonah unfurls like a creased carpet  on the eighth floor to watch voodoo tv  someone is working on her tablet cv  on winning beans and influencing people  dorcas must pass her abrsm  she bangs on her piano or else her mother  skyscrapers, fence  all eyes looking |

“fence” was published in *Dreaming Cities* by Eddie Tay, p.32. Copyrights © 2016 by Eddie Tay. Reprinted by permission of the poet.

**Suggested Questions and Answers**

1. What do you think “skyscrapers” and “fence” symbolise in the poem?
2. In Stanza 2,
3. identify the alliteration used
4. work out what the “harmonica’’ in line 4 symbolises
5. Identify two comparisons in Stanzas 3 and 4.
6. In Stanza 5,
7. explain why the name of the person is not provided
8. work out what “winning beans” may mean
9. How would Dorcas’ mother react if Dorcas failed to pass her piano exam? Complete the following sentence.

Her mother would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Discuss the use of repetition in the last stanza of the poem. What effect does it achieve?
2. What is special about the use of punctuation marks and capitalisation in the poem?
3. Do you think the “fence” in the poem is surmountable? Does the poem present an optimistic or pessimistic outlook on life?

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| --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20 | **Shanghai Street Jennifer Wong**  It is the missing block four of a development,  the way we avoid going outdoors  one summer evening of ghost festival.  We suspect foreigners may be confused  by shop signs that read  ‘Celestial Pleasures’ or  ‘Eternal Living’ nestled between  tuck-shops and stationers  in the middle of Shanghai Street.  I heard that folks went there  for quality timber and craftsmanship.  When I was a kid I used to think  they were toy shops - all those  paper houses, paper dolls,  paper shirts and even mobile phones.  I didn’t know until the day I saw  Grandmother burned them after purchase.  I didn’t know what to do  with the packet I received:  a coin, a sweet, and tissue paper.  A riddle.  How strange it feels,  things we don’t talk about. |

“Shanghai Street” was published in *Goldfish* by Jennifer Wong, p.9. Copyrights © 2013 by Chameleon Press. Reprinted by permission of Chameleon Press.

**Suggested Questions and Answers**

1. What is the setting of the poem?
2. In Stanza 1, why is the block four missing?
3. What do the “folks” want to buy in lines 10-11?
4. In Stanza 2, why may foreigners be confused?
5. Comment on the tone and voice of the speaker in the poem.
6. What does the speaker mean by “A riddle” in line 21?