

Read the following poems and answer the questions, using all you know about interpreting poetry through close reading and re-reading.

Stone

Go inside a stone
That would be my way.
Let somebody else become a dove
Or gnash with tiger's tooth.
I am happy to be a stone.

From the outside the stone is a riddle:
No one knows how to answer it.
Yet within, it must be cool and quiet
Even though a cow steps on it full weight,
Even though a child throws it in a river;

The stone sinks slow, unperturbed
To the river bottom
Where the fishes come to knock on it
And listen.

I have seen sparks fly out
When two stones are rubbed,
So perhaps it is not dark inside after all;
Perhaps there is moon shining
From somewhere, as though behind a hill –
Just enough light to make out
The strange writings, the star charts
On the inner walls.

- Charles Simic

In lines 4-5, the speaker says

Let somebody else become a dove
Or gnash with tiger's tooth.

What does the speaker mean in these lines? Be sure to explain the phrases “become a dove” and “gnash with tiger’s tooth” and how they connect to the rest of the poem.

How does stanza 2 help develop a theme in this poem? Be sure to explain how stanza 2 is important to a bigger point in the poem, including specific text references to support your thinking.

Tysheen Stanton

The way I look at things is
You have to shoot for a goal,
Figuratively.
You have to run around,
Or through your opponent,
Literally.
You have to
Stand tall,
Move fast,
Play hard,
While everyone on the sidelines is
Looking at your every move.
You have to grab the ball,
Or the world,
With two hands
And jam that sucker home.
You watch me today at the tryouts.
I'm ready to step up to a whole new level.
Basketball is my life.
It's the only game in town.
It's the only thing I know.

- Mel Glenn (from *Jump Ball: A Basketball Season In Poems*)

The speakers in the poem “Stone” and the poem “Tysheen Stanton” have different perspectives on what’s important in life. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the perspectives in the two poems. Be sure to include:

- What the speaker in “Stone” thinks is important in life
- What the speaker in “Tysheen Stanton” thinks is important in life
- Evidence from both texts to support your points