

PENANG SANGAM HIGH SCHOOL
P.O.BOX 44, RAKIRAKI
LESSON NOTES

School: Penang Sangam High School **Year/Level:** 10 **Subject:** English **Week:** 10

Strand	READING AND VIEWING
Sub Strand	Language Learning Processes and Strategies
Content Learning Outcome	Critically analyze how to use literature as an integrated approach to reading.

Please read the poem and the notes below and answer the activity question.

Poem 1: Island Fire

Poet: Konai Helu Thaman

Embers
Of a once blazing
Fire
Sleep through an
Endless night
Fraught with the din of
billiard balls
Hollywood violence
Rock n' roll music
And the slow turning of
Foreign text book pages
The embers wait
Perhaps never to be
Rekindled by
Dry coconut leaves
...kerosene is easier.

Konai Helu Thaman

FORM: The poem is just one stanza of free verse. It contains 16 lines. Since it is free verse, there is no rhyming scheme. However, it has a thoughtful, measured rhythm to help readers feel the somber mood of the poem.

CONTENT: The poem is lamenting the fact that the traditions and culture of the Pacific Islanders are dying, being eroded by modernization and the influence of the western cultures. These influences have come through sports, entertainment, the mass media and education. There is some hope that these traditions and cultural practices will never be completely lost, but modernization has made life so much easier and more comfortable that these practices are doomed, never to be rekindled or reused by the people of the islands without the influence of modern ideas and practices.

STYLE (POETIC DEVICES USED)

- A. The use of metaphors : The whole poem is a metaphor. Konai Helu uses fire as a metaphor for the traditions and cultures of the islanders. They were “ *once a blazing fire* “, but are now just “ *embers* ”.
- The title, “ *Island Fire* ’ says the poet is referring to the culture and traditions of the islands.
- B. The use of symbolism or symbols : Konai Helu Thaman uses symbols to describe how the “ *Island Fire* “ has been reduced to “ *embers* ” :
- “ *Billiard balls* ” : western games and forms of entertainment.
“ *Hollywood Violence* “ : western mass media
“ *Rock ‘n roll music* ” : western music
“ *Foreign text book pages* “ : western-type education
“ *kerosene* ” : modern technology
- C. The use of enjambment :
There is no punctuation at the end of each line, so each line runs onto the next one until the very last line, where there is to indicate a pause, and an exclamation mark at the end. Enjambment is used to give a sense of urgency to what is being said and to highlight its importance. Also, with enjambment, there is usually an unexpected ending , such as : “ *kerosene is easier !* “ as in the poem.
- D. The use of vivid imagery/descriptive vocabulary : The poet uses descriptive words.
- “ *Endless night* “ : maybe there will never be a normal awakening
 - “ *Fraught with the sound of* “ . ‘ *fraught* ’ means filled or loaded with and likely to result in something bad or undesirable.
 - “ *The slow turning of* ” : pages may be turned slowly because readers find the passages very interesting or very important. It may also mean that the information given is new and needs more time to be read.
 - “ *the embers wait* “ : In many island village and homes, the next day’s fires are lit from the previous day’s embers, which glowed throughout the night and just waited for someone to come along and fan the embers in flames.
 - “ *Dry coconut leaves* “ : They were one way embers could be coaxing into bursting into flames. Sometimes, one would borrow embers from a neighbour , and carry them home quickly in some dried coconut leaves.
- E. The use of alliteration : “ *Billiard balls* ” “ *kerosene is easier* “
- F. The use of personification: “ *Embers.....sleep through* ” “ *The embers wait* “

THEMES

1. Changes are inevitable and unavoidable. It is a fact of life that changes will take place over time and everything and everyone will be affected. Many outside influences help to bring about these changes.
2. Many traditions and customs have adapted to modernization and has begun to die, because it is more easy and convenient.

ACTIVITY: write a paragraph discussing what the poem is about, 3 styles used by the poets with quotations and 2 lessons learnt.
