

“Where I Come From” Questions

1. The word “smell” is repeated several times in the first stanza. Why do you think the speaker does this? What do you think these city scents of smog, museums, work, and subways smell like?

2. Consider the following lines: “nature tidily plotted in little squares / with a fountain in the centre.” (6-7) What does the speaker mean by this, do you think? What might this reveal about how many people think about nature?

3. How is the speaker’s description of nature different in the second stanza?

4. Does the speaker present a more favourable view of the city or the area where she comes from? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.

5. Descriptions of the buildings in the country such as the “wooden farmhouses, old, in need of paint” (15) and the “battered schoolhouses” (17) suggest that they are in disrepair. Why might this be significant?

6. There are many reasons why people choose to live in the country and also many reasons why people choose to live in the city. Which environment do you prefer? Why?