

- ✦ June 16 - History
- ✦ In 1976 the government introduced the compulsory use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction from Grade 7 – then Standard 5.
- ✦ Circuit inspectors and principals received the directive: "It has been decided that for the sake of uniformity English and Afrikaans will be used as media of instruction in our schools on a 50-50
- ✦ Images June 16 1976
- ✦ It was also felt that black school children were becoming too assertive and "forcing them to learn in Afrikaans would be a useful form of discipline". Besides, the government argued, it paid for black education, so it could determine the language of instruction.
- ✦ This was not strictly true. White children had free schooling, but black parents had to pay
- ✦ When high-school students in Soweto started protesting for better education on 16 June 1976, police responded with teargas and live bullets.
- ✦ It is commemorated today by a South African national holiday, Youth day, which honours all the young people who lost their lives in the struggle against Apartheid and Bantu Education.

Title

- Protest poem – june 16 1976

Structure

- Written in free verse
- Has no capital letters
- No punctuation
- Not divided into stanzas
- Symbolises a breaking away from the political oppression

Summary

LINES 1 -2

- a Young man reflects as he prepares for june the 16th
- realises he has chosen a difficult road to travel
- the road will not be straight or flat – it will wind uphill
- ✦
- his journey will not be easy but once he embarks on this journey he cannot turn back.
- Metaphor – “ a road that winds to the top of the hill”

LINES 3 - 4

- chooses to remember only the good memories of his youth “ the sweet memories”
- Joins the struggle to ensure that others will also have good memories.

LINE 5

- Young man's humanity is emphasised by his feelings for his mother.
“ my heart aches for my mother”
- Concerned that his actions will bring her grief
- Strong possibility that they will not see each other again

LINE 6

- Alliteration – “ for friday nights with friends – alliteration places emphasis on close frame just like friends gathered closely around the table.
- Young man portrayed very sociable – will miss friday nights drinking with friends.

LINE 7

- Alliteration – “ ... broad belch of beer” – ‘belch ‘ the sound of gas passing from the stomach through the mouth.

Lines 8 – 9

- Alliteration – “... a sad song sung ...”
- The sibilant “s” slows down the pace and suggests the singing of songs interspersed with tears and sadness.
- Young man requests a sad song to be sung for him – he is certain of what lies ahead of him.
- “downturned eyes” – he hopes there will be people who will be sad about his passing [death]
- If he does die the songs will indeed be sad – singers will have “downturned eyes” as they try to hide their grief.

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Lines 10 – 12

- “strummed” – to play by brushing fingers over strings
- “broken brow” – alliteration – brow – ridge over eye [eyebrow]

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Line 13

- He likens his end to the sunset
- He is sure that the end of his life will be violent – “drenched with red”
- As the sunset ends the day with a red glow, so will his day be – red – drenched in blood – his own – and that of others.
- Euphemism – [line 13] – “ my sunset is drenched with red” – he will die a violent death.
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TONE

- The poem has a conversational tone – ends with resignation and acceptance of his fate.
- Run - on lines contribute to sense of conversation.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

- Metaphor – Line 2 – “road that winds to the top of the hill”
- Alliteration – Lines 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12
“for friday nights with friends”
“the broad belch of beer”
“_sad song sung”
ing my sad song”
- Onomatopoeia – lines 7 and 13 – “belch” , “drenched”

Questions

1. Refer to the title. Explain the significance of the date. (1)
2. What do the words “winds to the top of the hill” suggest about the road (line 2)? (2)
3. Identify the tone in lines 8 – 13. (1)
4. Sunsets are often “red”. Here, the poet suggests something more. Discuss. (2)