

Cozy Apologia

Rita Dove



Learning Outcomes

1. You will be able to explain what the poem is about
2. You will understand the themes and ideas in the poem
3. You will understand the context of the poem.
4. You will be able to comment on the structure of the poem.
5. You will be able to analyse the language used in the poem.

What do you think this poem will be about?

Which of our themes will this poem link with and why?

The word 'apologia' means 'a defence'. A paraphrase of the poem's title might be, 'A Defence of Cosiness'.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlmG5D_nY6o

This clip is your clue

Cozy Apologia

What is the poem about?

Fill in the missing words

Waiting for a _____ to hit, the speaker hunkers down, snug and safe in her study. Though _____ disrupts the business of daily life, it also allows time for daydreams. So, with time on her hands, the speaker finds herself daydreaming about her _____.

Everything the speaker sees, from the _____ outside to the ink on the page, reminds her of her partner. She pictures him as a _____ in shining armour, protecting her. He's a vivid contrast, she thinks, to the '_____ ' boys she used to date. She's embarrassed by how _____ their cosy, ordinary lives have made them. Yet she draws _____ from filling the 'stolen time' resulting from the hurricane's approach with thoughts of _____.

1. Hurricane Floyd

2. Storm

3. partner

4. Rain

5. Knight

6. worthless

7. Content

8. Comfort

9. Fred

Context

What kind of poem is this?

- American poet, Rita Dove is married to fellow-writer Fred Viebahn and *Cozy Apologia* seems to be an affectionate tribute to him. The poem notes details of a couple's domestic life as writers, 'Twin desks, computers, hardwood floors'. It is set against the arrival of Hurricane Floyd, a powerful storm which hit the east coast of the USA in 1999. This factual, real-life context supports the idea this is an autobiographical poem.



Read the poem and complete the
which words activity

Sum up what this poem is about in a paragraph.

Include:

- What happens in the poem
- The narrator's thoughts and feelings

Themes and Ideas

The weather/nature

Love

I could pick anything and think of you—
This lamp, the wind-still rain, the glossy blue
My pen exudes, drying matte, upon the page.
I could choose any hero, any cause or age
And, sure as shooting arrows to the heart,
Astride a dappled mare, legs braced as far apart
As standing in silver stirrups will allow—
There you'll be, with furrowed brow
And chain mail glinting, to set me free:
One eye smiling, the other firm upon the enemy.

How does
the narrator
talk about
her partner?

Themes and ideas

This post-postmodern age is all business: compact disks
And faxes, a do-it-now-and-take-no-risks Event. Today a
hurricane is nudging up the coast,
Oddly male: Big Bad Floyd, who brings a host
Of daydreams: awkward reminiscences
Of teenage crushes on worthless boys
Whose only talent was to kiss you senseless.
They all had sissy names—Marcel, Percy, Dewey;
Were thin as licorice and as chewy,
Sweet with a dark and hollow center. Floyd's

How does the narrator feel about the storm?

Themes and ideas

...Floyd's...

Cussing up a storm. You're bunkered in your
Aerie, I'm perched in mine (Twin desks, computers,
hardwood floors):

We're content, but fall short of the Divine.

Still, it's embarrassing, this happiness—

Who's satisfied simply with what's good for us,

When has the ordinary ever been news?

And yet, because nothing else will do

To keep me from melancholy (call it blues),

I fill this stolen time with you.

- What makes the narrator happy?

Themes

Which statements best describe the ideas in the poem?

How does the writer present her relationship and love?

1. The writer presents her partner Fred as a hero that will rescue her from any danger.
2. The writer presents her relationship as ordinary and without excitement but as one that makes her content.
3. The writer suggests that it is her partner who makes her happy when she might otherwise feel sad.

How does the writer present nature?

1. The writer presents nature as a tough strong man, much stronger than boyfriends she previously had at school.
2. The writer presents nature as an opportunity to spend time with her partner when usually they are too busy.
3. The writer presents nature as strong and destructive but also as something that brings her together with her partner.

Form and structure

- How many stanzas?
- Is there a rhyme pattern?
- Is it the same in each stanza?

Form and structure

Look at the bits in red. What is suggested about the purpose of the structure of this poem?

Structure

The poem is composed of three 10-line stanzas. Stanza one is made up of five rhyming couplets, to make a rhyme scheme aabbccdde. This rhyme scheme starts to break down in stanza two, **as if reflecting the disruption of the oncoming storm**. By stanza three, a new rhyme scheme has begun to emerge: **ababccddddd**. **Perhaps the poet intends the reader to see this suggestion of order and its progressive disruption as a way of representing the oncoming storm on the page.**

Language - imagery

Where does the writer use these techniques and what is the effect of each one?

Technique	Evidence	Effect
Metaphor		
Simile		
Personification		

Cozy Apologia

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3wRxnSeAXA&index=9&list=PL0yL_sOFmpdCgwpJzX4zDbxpWpWKpPjRF
- This is a representation of the poem for a school project.
- If you could transform this poem what would you make it into and why?