

ELA B10 – “What the Defense Plant Worker Said” and “Richard Cory”

Part 1:

For each poem, read and respond: What is this poem about? What is the speaker/character feeling (with examples)? What poetic devices are used? Who is responsible in these situations?

Part 2:

- a) Using “What the Defense Plant Worker Said”, write a journal entry **as the character** defending your choice.
- b) Compare your own values with those shown in the poem.

Write a
He/She/It
decision poem
- 12+ lines

What the Defence-Plant Worker Said

Bombs have no function but to kill
And making bomb parts is what I do,
but I have a grocery cart to fill
and expenses to meet, just the same as you.
The Chamber of Commerce understands.
War-contracts help the economy:
make jobs for hundreds of factory hands
and add quite a lot to the GNP.

I'd rather make ploughs if I had my way,
but in case of a permanent bombing truce
this plant would shut down and I'd miss my pay.
I can't control what my hands produce.
I wouldn't kill my children at play: not me.
I'd never to murder with my own hands
but I'm only a war plant employee
and the ones getting killed are in foreign lands.

I don't have to see them or hear their cries –
a burnt child's scream or a mother's sob.
Their mangled bodies or blinded eyes
are none of my business. I need a job.
The reason they're killed is to set them free,
but they aren't grateful, so what's the use?
You understand how it is with me –
I can't control what my hands produce.

– Bonnie Day

Good choice

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favoured, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
“Good-morning,” and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich – yes, richer than a king –
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

- Edwin Arlington Robinson