

# Fhazel johnnesse – a young man's thoughts



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Faze Johannes A Young Man's Thoughts Before June the 16th tomorrow I travel on a road that winds to the top of the hill I take with me only the sweet memories of my youth my heart aches for my mother for Friday nights with friends around a table with a broad belch of beer I ask only for a sad song sung by a woman with downturn eyes and strummed by an old man with a broken brow sing my sad song sing for me for my sunset is drenched with red

Glossary: page 231  
 1 Strummed - played noisily or badly upon a stringed instrument.

Enjambment - the unbroken continuation of a sentence from the end of one line to the beginning of another. Alliteration - the use of words in sequence that all begin with the same letter. Melancholy - to be gloomy or depressed. Nostalgia - yearning for what is past or inaccessible; sentimental feelings for past happiness. Summary: The poem communicates the thoughts and feelings of one of the students in 1976 who would lose his life during the protests of June 16th This was the protest of Bantu education by thousands of black schoolchildren, many of whom were shot and killed by the police.

The poem concentrates on the human aspects rather than political convictions. The student has no feelings of bitterness toward anyone and expresses an acceptance of his impending fate. Tone: . Nostalgia . Melancholy . Longing . Acceptance Enjambment: Reflects natural speech patterns and adds to the conversational mood of the poem. Structure: Lack of punctuation and free verse: . Reflects flow of thoughts. Breaks from normal format - protest for change (see synopsis).. Suggests inferior education. . A lack of control over the situation.

Interpretation: Key: Green - important connotation Yellow - alliteration Line 1

The student looks to tomorrow; the day of the protest. ' I ' suggests the student's insignificance in the perspective of improving education for all non-white school goers and his acceptance of the sacrifice he will make to achieve this. That the student will travel on a road' suggests the well-known metaphor of life being a journey. Line 2 The student's Journey in life is full of difficulty, as suggested by Winds' and ' hill'.

It also suggests the student's determination as persistence is needed to navigate a winding, uphill road. The student's life is aimed at achieving a specific goal or assumptive achievement, in this case the improvement of non-white education. Line 3-4 The student takes only his memories on the winding road for comfort. The memories are clearly important to the speaker which emphasizes the importance of the human aspects of the protest rather than the political (see synopsis).

Line 5 The student realizes the heartache and grief his death will bring to his mother. Line 6 The student longs for a time when his life was simpler, and for the social presence of his friends. This shows the student to possess strong interpersonal bonds. Line 7 The student recollects a simple instance with friends. This further emphasizes that the student is merely a normal young man. Line 8 In remembrance the student asks only that he be mourned with a song. This may suggest that he wishes his friends and family not to grieve for long over his passing.

Line 9 The woman who is to sing for him (assumed his mother) has downturn eyes. This could either be seen as a way to hide her grief or as a sign of

submission to the oppressor (the apartheid government). Line 10 The student would also have an old man (assumed his father) to grieve by means of the song. Line 11 The man has a ' broken brow. This may suggest physical scarring but may also suggest that it is furrowed from emotion. This may be from the grief of the student's death or from the years of oppression suffered under apartheid. Line 12

The student asks others to sing for him which may suggest that he is already dead, as he cannot sing for himself. Line 13 The student describes the end of his life (sunset) as red. Red has connotations of anger, passion, blood and violence, all of which detail the occurrences during the protest. ' Drenched' suggests his complete hopelessness of escape from the violence and bloodshed. It also adds to the image of blood and suggests a large number of death. Alliteration: ' B' (line 7)- Links with belching onomatopoeia. ' S' (line 8-9, 12)- Creates mood- hushed, mellow, sorrowful.