

Responses to poems

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Responses to Poems Names: Course: Lecturer: Institution: Date: Responses to Poems Ulysses-Lord Tennyson The poem, “ Ulysses” by Lord Tennyson is about a king who is tired of sitting on the throne and giving instructions to people.

The king is used to going for voyages, fighting and traveling and he does not see any fulfillment or satisfaction while he is on the throne. He longs for the day when his son will inherit his throne. This does not mean that he longs for death, rather he longs for the moment when he will be able to return to his work, which is traveling to various places with the other seamen. The king compares his life to the throne with death. He acknowledges the fact that he is old and his days are numbered. As he sees it, he would rather die while he is busy rather than die when doing nothing.

It is ironical that the king regards the people he serves with contempt. He considers his work as a burden, yet he longs to fight in wars and to travel dangerous seas. The king compares the excitement he has had on his travels and the adventures he has had, with the dull, boring and meaningless life of a king seated on a throne next to an aged wife, and ruling the people who do not understand him. He says that sitting on the throne will only make him rust and be of no use in the end. Traveling on the other hand will make him shine. He will be recognized for his achievements because of the fights he will win.

The king considers himself useful in old age. He says that even though he and his friends who used to sail with him are old, they can still be useful. He urges his friends to join him and he insists that he still has goals to

accomplish. This poem contrasts with modern times. Today, people long to retire early from their work so that they can rest. This is not the case with the king who insists that even in old age, he still has unaccomplished goals. This poem should be a lesson to people that they should not judge their abilities according to their age or physical abilities, rather than the will they have to strive to the end.

Batter my Heart-John Donne In the poem “Batter My Heart”, Donne begins by telling God to batter his heart. He refers to a “three person’d” God. According to the Christian doctrine, God is seen as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Although they have separate names, the three persons, or the Holy Trinity, make up one God. The fact that he specifically refers to the Holy Trinity means that he sees each of the three personas as having specific roles to play. He sees them as people with their own individuality. In this poem, Donne sees God as more than the conventional understanding that people have of him. Most Christians, see God as a loving person. They see him as a powerful God and no one thinks of asking God to beat them, or batter them. Most people would rather approach God asking him for forgiveness of sins. Donne seems to be battling with something and he is asking God to help him deal with it.

He tells God to deal with him violently instead of trying to mend or fix him. Donne admits that he loves God and that he has worked to try to come to him but this has not worked. He says that he does not have enough strength to do it on his own.

As one reads the poem, he or she can feel the desperate plea by the man to seek God and to have Him in his life. According to Donne, this is the only way that God can get through to him. He perceives that the only way for him to be mended is if God broke him and destroyed him so that He can then make him like a new creation. He sees it as the only way to freedom from the prison of sin.

People do not have strong religious conviction as they did in earlier times. Some people do not have a place for God in their lives and they would therefore not understand the burden that the speaker was carrying in this poem. For those who claim to know God, many of them would rather ask Him for blessings, healing and forgiveness of sins, rather than asking Him to punish them or to give them endurance to face their struggles. In some cases, some people resort to blaming God for all the troubles and the struggles they experience. They would therefore not understand why someone would ask God to punish him or her harshly and to destroy them so that He can renew them.