**Analysing Poetic Devices – Possible Answers**

**Please note: this is not an exhaustive list. If you can offer an interpretation and link it to the poem, your idea is valid.**

Fill in the table below by finding and commenting on the devices or quotes I have listed.

The effect column must be filled out in detail, and you need to give a range of interpretations.

Consider what the word or image makes you (the reader) think of, feel, understand, experience or realise.

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| Device | Quote | Effect – you must fill this in in detail. |
| Simile | ‘The skin cracks like a pod’ | By comparing the people’s skin to a seed pod, it suggests it is dry and brittle. She may also be implying that just as seeds need water to grow and thrive, so too do these people. The image of skin being cracked makes it sound painful so the reader sympathises with the people. |
| onomatopoeia | ‘drip’ ‘splash’ | Reflects sound of water. To help us understand how it might feel to be imagining the sound of water when we have none. |
| An imperative verb (telling the reader to do something) | ‘Imagine…’ | The poet is asking us to put ourselves in the position of the people in the poem. We do not normally need to imagine the sound of water as we hear it all the time but she wants us to realise that to them it is a joyous sound. |
| A concise, direct, factual statement ending in a full stop. | There is never enough water. | This line is not poetic or complex. Instead it is a simple comment designed to help us understand the facts of the situation at the start of the poem. |
| Metaphor | ‘The voice of a kindly god.’ | This metaphor implies that water is viewed as a gift from a god. It is as if a god’s love is raining down on them in a very practical form. Having water is like a miracle to them.  (Note: no capital letter for god in the poem as India has many gods.) |
| Religious imagery | ‘a congregation’ | The word ‘congregation’ usually refers to a group of worshippers in a church or temple. However, here they are worshipping the around the water that they believe has been sent by a god. |
| Omitting the commas in a list | ‘every man woman child for streets around’ | It reflects that in the scrabble for water, there is no space or separation between man woman or child. |
| Metaphor to reflect value of water. | ‘Silver crashes to the ground’ | The comparison to ‘silver’ implies the water is precious to them and having access to it is a moment of good fortune. It also reflects the colour of the water so the reader can imagine it flooding out of the pipe. |
| Words to show desperation, excitement or panic. | ‘frantic’  ‘butts’ | ‘frantic’ suggests people are desperate to get the water while it lasts. ‘Butts’ suggests everyone is crowded together pushing and shoving each other. There is no time to be polite. |
| Use of a list | with pots,  brass, copper, aluminium  plastic buckets  frantic hands, | Reflects desperation as it suggests people just quickly grabbed whatever they could. It implies that they do not think that access to the water will last. |
| Personification  (a form of metaphor) | ‘The Blessing sings’ | It implies the sound of the water is almost like heavenly singing. Again, it reinforces that this is a miracle and a moment of worship. |
| Emotive language | ‘children’, ‘small bones’ | This reminds the reader that it is children who are suffering a lack of water. They are ‘screaming’ with excitement at this point because it is something they rarely have. |
| Extension: an ironic word | ‘municipal’ | Meant to be referring to the district/area/place – implies that it is to be shared by all. However, it seems some people only get to share it by accident when a pipe bursts! |
| Extension: a link to the North American Gold Rush | ‘sudden rush of fortune’ | By alluding to the gold rush, she is implying that the water is as precious as gold to these people. The gold rush also involved many poor and desperate people chasing a dream, hoping for something better so there are parallels with these people who have yet to find their fortune (or even a decent living). |
| Extension: use of light imagery in the final stanza. | ‘liquid sun’  ‘flashing light’ | May reflect the sun glinting through the stream of water. Reinforces the idea of fortune and water being precious.  Alludes to the idea of it being a spiritual moment – a moment of light in the darkness, a god smiling down and bringing light to the people. |
| Extension: stanza breaks |  | Stanza 1 – she gives you a moment to think about the image and the clear statement she has made.  Stanza 2 - builds up your understanding of how even a little water is a wonderful thing. The break allows us a moment to reflect and ‘imagine’ as she has asked.  Stanza 3 - a longer stanza designed to reflect the frantic, chaotic scramble for the water  Stanza 4 – the enjambment suggests the children are there in the midst of it, but by having the stanza break, it makes the images of them stand out so the reader takes more notice of the effect on the children. This makes it more emotive. |