

"Tonight I Can Write" or "Poem 20"
by Pablo Neruda

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, 'The night is starry
and the stars are blue and shiver in the distance.'

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms.

I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me, sometimes I loved her too.
How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense without her.

And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

What does it matter that my love could not keep her.
The night is starry and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight tries to find her as though to bring her closer.

My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

Another's. She will be another's. As she was before my kisses.

Her voice, her bright body. Her infinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my arms
my soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer
and these the last verses that I write for her.

- _____ 1. What does the speaker hear singing?
a. the trees b. the stars c. the night wind d. the moon
- _____ 2. According to the speaker, forgetting is:
a. so short b. so difficult c. so simple d. so long
- _____ 3. What word is used to describe the night?
a. immense b. mournful c. dark d. infinite
- _____ 4. According to the speaker, love is:
a. so painful b. so fickle c. so short d. so long
- _____ 5. The speaker hears someone doing what in the distance?
a. singing b. laughing c. crying d. whistling
- _____ 6. What does the speaker believe will happen to his former love?
a. She will return. b. She will disappear.
c. She will become another's. d. She will be overcome with sadness.
- _____ 7. The speaker says that on this night he can write what kind of lines?
a. the simplest b. the saddest c. the longest d. the most difficult
- _____ 8. What does the speaker seem to miss most about his love?
a. her voice b. her hair c. her eyes d. her smile
- _____ 9. What are the stars doing on this particular night?
a. twinkling b. falling c. shivering d. dancing
- _____ 10. What color are the stars?
a. silver b. white c. blue d. red

11. Describe the relationship that the speaker had with his love. Cite details from the poem that support your description.

12. Explain why on this particular night the speaker is able to write the saddest lines.

13. Explain the relationship between love and loneliness as portrayed in the poem. Cite details from the poem in your explanation.

14. The speaker writes, "I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her." Explain what he means and whether or not what he says is possible.

15. Find examples of images in the poem that appeal to the following senses: sight, sound, and touch.

16. Find an example of a *simile* in the poem. Explain the comparison that is being made.

17. Explain how the poem is an *elegy* (a mournful, melancholy, or plaintive poem, esp. a funeral song or a lament for the dead).

18. Find an example of *enjambment* (the running on of the thought from one line, couplet, or stanza to the next without a break) in the poem.

19. Find an example of *personification* in the poem.