 Resource 10 - Understanding Wild Grapes

| Poem | Wild Grapes |
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| Context | Part of Slessor’s landscape poems that did not glorify bush living but instead reveal the harshness and the beauty of the land and how they are linked to human interaction and part of the human experience |
| Content | The persona is visiting an old abandoned orchard and shows how the passing of time and nature have transformed and destroyed what was once there |
| Purpose | Slessor is capturing the decay, hopelessness and despair of life. His poetry captures the significance of time and death, two ideas which are significant to the human experience. This is a landscape poem that reveals the harshness and the beauty of the land and how human interaction is linked to the land. Explores mortality |
| Structure | Four stanzas with a set rhyming pattern |
| Stylistic Features | Slessor’s poem is marked by strong rhyme and rhythm  Imagery is precise and sensuous  Modernist techniques – adopting a freer form  Strong poetic expression  Bleak perspective  Personification of the grapes and Isabella  Rhetorical question – intrigue at the end asking ‘what happened’?  Sensory Imagery – sight, taste of eating the grapes  Clear links to romanticism through the power of nature |
| Notes |  |

Questions

1. What is the significance of the title of the poem? What is the connotation of the word ‘wild’?
2. How is the ‘old orchard’ described? What impression do you get of this setting?
3. How does the ‘smoking air’ add to the atmosphere of the ‘old orchid’?
4. Stanza two begins, “Here’s where” what does this suggest to the reader?
5. What is the effect of listing the things that are no longer there?
6. How does the persona describe the ‘Isabella grapes’? What impression does that give?
7. How is the description of the ‘Isabella grapes’ and ‘Isabella the dead girl’ connected?
8. What impression is given through the line ‘swallows never stir’? How does that add to the atmosphere of the ‘old orchard’?
9. What is the impact of the rhetorical question in the last line? What tone is created?