Poetry Analysis Practice

Directions: Using the literary elements that we discussed in class yesterday, analyze the following poems.

**Nothing Gold Can Stay**

by: Robert Frost

Nature’s first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf’s a flower;
But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay.

Vocabulary

1. **Hue**—color
2. **Subsides**—diminish; descend; sink to a lower level.
3. **Eden**—paradise; the garden of Adam and Eve
4. **Grief**—sadness or despair

Answer the following questions and complete the activities about this poem:

1. Why do you think this title is appropriate for this poem? Explain.
2. Paraphrase each SENTENCE in this poem.
3. What is the overall subject of this poem?
4. What is the author’s tone(attitude) toward the subject? Use an example from the poem to prove your point.
5. How does this poem relate to you? In other words, what lesson did you learn from reading this poem that you could apply to your own life? Fill in the blank below:
   This poem teaches me about life because____________________________________________.
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
by: Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.

But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Answer the following questions and complete the activities about this poem:

1. Why do you think this title is appropriate for this poem? Explain.
2. Paraphrase each SENTENCE in this poem.
3. What is the overall subject of this poem?
4. What is the author’s tone(attitude) toward the subject? Use an example from the poem to prove your point.
5. How does this poem relate to you? In other words, what lesson did you learn from reading this poem that you could apply to your own life? Fill in the blank below:
   This poem teaches me about life because____________________________________________.
The Rider
by: Naomi Shihab Nye

A boy told me
If he rollerskated fast enough
his loneliness couldn’t catch up to him.
the best reason I ever heard
for trying to be a champion.
What I wonder tonight
pedaling hard down King William Street
is if it translates to bicycles.

A victory! To leave your loneliness
Panting behind you on some street corner
while you float free into a cloud of sudden azaleas.
luminous pink petals that have
never felt loneliness,
no matter how slowly they fell.

Answer the following questions and complete the activities about this poem:

1. Why do you think this title is appropriate for this poem? Explain.
2. Paraphrase each SENTENCE in this poem.
3. What is the overall subject of this poem?
4. What is the author’s tone(attitude) toward the subject? Use an example from the poem to prove your point.
5. How does this poem relate to you? In other words, what lesson did you learn from reading this poem that you could apply to your own life? Fill in the blank below:
This poem teaches me about life because______________________________________.
Mother to Son
by: Langston Hughes

Well, son, I’ll tell you:
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
It’s had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I’ve been a-climbin’ on,
And reachin’ landin’s,
And turnin’ corners,
And sometimes goin’ in the dark
Where there ain’t been no light.
So boy, don’t you turn back.
Don’t you set down on the steps
‘Cause you find it’s kinder hard.
Don’t you fall now—
For I’m still goin’ honey.
I’m still climbin’,
And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.

Vocabulary

*crystal*—made of brilliant glass.

Literary Element Identification

Find and label examples of the following items in this poem:

*Imagery, symbolism, dialect, metaphor*

Who is the speaker in this poem? Prove it with evidence from the poem.

What details in the poem support the conclusion that life has not been easy for the mother?

List four symbols of hardship in the poem.

Answer the following questions and complete the activities about this poem:

1. Why do you think this title is appropriate for this poem? Explain.
2. Paraphrase each SENTENCE in this poem.
3. What is the overall subject of this poem?
4. What is the author’s tone(attitude) toward the subject? Use an example from the poem to prove your point.
5. This poem teaches me about life because ________________________________.