

**Continuum  
Allen Curnow**

**The moon rolls over the roof and falls behind  
my house, and the moon does neither of these things,  
I am talking about myself.**

**It's not possible to get off to sleep or  
the subject or the planet, nor to think thoughts.  
Better barefoot it out the front.**

**door and lean from the porch across the privets  
and the palms into the washed-out creation,  
a dark place with two particular**

**bright clouds dusted (query) by the moon, one's mine  
the other's an adversary, which may depend  
on the wind, or something.**

**A long moment stretches, the next one is not  
on time. Not unaccountably the chill of  
the planking underfoot rises.**

**in the throat, for it's part the night sky empties  
the whole of it's contents down. Turn on a bare  
heel, close the door behind**

**on the author, cringing demiurge, who picks up  
his litter and his tools and paces me back  
to bed, stealthily in step.**

## Pre-reading

Have you ever had an experience of a sleepless night? How often do you experience it? What do you do at such times?

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Is there any phenomenon in nature that you feel envious of? Like the perpetually living tress in contrast with mortal man?

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## While-reading

First Impression:

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## Post Reading: Second Reading

I. Identify and comment on the :

i. Title:

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**ii. Structure**

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**iii. Diction**

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**II. Reading for Meaning**

**i. Identify the persona /narrator/speaker of the poem?**

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**ii. What is the mood in stanza one and two? How is it created by the use of personification?**

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**iii. What are the literal meanings of the following words?**

1	Query	
2	unaccountable	
3	Planking	
4	Demiurge	
5	litter	
6	underfoot	
7	stealthily	

- iv. Identify the connotation and effects created by sound in the phrase ‘Better barefoot it out...’? Does it suggest that the persona needs a escape from his situation?
- v. Comment on the conflict in the second stanza. How is this transition made?
- vi. Identify the technique in lines 6-7 and 9-10. What is the effect of this technique?
- vii. Enumerate and list down the no. of tasks that the persona performs from Stanza 1 to 3
- viii. Comment on the implications of “washed-out creation” and “a dark place” that the persona observes? What do they suggest about the mood of the stanza?
- ix. The speaker observes the two clouds in the sky and says “one’s mine/the other’s an adversary”. Why is one cloud his and in what way?
- x. How is the word ‘adversary’ defined and why?
- xi. Stanza 6-7: ‘ close the door behind/the author...’ is a suggestion to indicate the writer’s block. How?
- xii. Using PQC, explore the following lines to present the writer’s inability to compose his thoughts:
  - a. “A long moment stretches, the next one is not/on time”
  - b. “Not unaccountably the chill of/the planking underfoot rises/in the throat,”
  - c. “...for its part the night sky empties/the whole of its contents down”
- xiii. What is the role of “night sky’s” in the scheme of things?
- xiv. In the last stanza of this poem, who does the speaker seem to be describing? Can you give an adjective to qualify the way in which he does this?
- xv. Pick out the words the speaker uses to describe the author and comment on their effects. Go back to the beginning of this worksheet and look at the different meanings of the word “demiurge”.
- xvi. Why is he “cringing” line 19?
- xvii. Consider the following phrases and try to define and comment upon them:
  - “his litter and his tools”-what is this?
  - “stealthily in step”-what does this suggest about the poet’s state of mind? (look back at the beginning of the worksheet at the definition of the word “stealthily”)

## Essay Question:

- i. How does the poet presents the process of a creative activity in the poem *Continuum*?
- ii. Compare with: Summer Farm/Where I Come From
- iii. Contrast with: A Different History/ The Woodspurge

## Poems for Comparison:

Theme	Poems
Personal Reflection	A Different History, The Cockroach, Summer Farm, Where I Come From
Observations on the Natural World	Pied Beauty, Horses, Hunting Snake, The Woodspurge, Summer Farm, Where I Come From, Upon Westminster Bridge