

free verse = contemporary

"On The Subway" by Sharon Olds (1987)

* notice use of "could"

* hist. allus. slave imagery (violence)

of "tracks" metaphor

enjambment →

Shift/break! could narrator be the aggressor? narrator as philosopher?

Dbl. entendre = ex's

hist. slavery refer. (spine)

denotes change

contrast of?

white woman

1st person

no control

contrast lt./drk.

simile = racial % = symbolic of interwoven lives

lt./drk. metaphor

* imagery

simile = surgical, autopsy (raw)

hunting/skinning reflects

violence parallel est. difference "his + my"

all repetition fear of violence/tone = anxiety connects to theme of racial %

simile dbl. entendre lt./drk. imagery & racial %

judgmental (contrast. lang.)

den. slave (hist. imagery allus.)

The boy and I faced each other. His feet are huge, in black sneakers laced with white in a complex pattern like a set of international scars. We are stuck on opposite sides of the car, a couple of molecules stuck in a rod of light rapidly moving through darkness. He has the alliter. casual cold look of a mugger, — fear/tone alert under hooded lids. He is wearing red, like the inside of the body exposed. I am wearing dark fur, the whole skin of an animal taken and used. I look at his raw face, he looks at my fur coat, and I don't know if I am in his power he could take my coat so easily, my briefcase, my life

or if he is in my power, the way I am living off his life, eating the steak he does not eat, as if I am taking the food from his mouth. And he is black and I am white, and without meaning or trying to I must profit from his darkness,

the way he absorbs the murderous beams of the lt./drk nation's heart, as black cotton simile absorbs the heat of the sun and holds it. There is

no way to know how easy this white skin makes my life, this life he could take so easily and simile break across his knee like a stick the way his own back is being broken, the

rod of his soul that at birth was dark and fluid and rich as the heart of a seedling - simile ready to thrust up into any available light. lt. dark

refer. to discrimination/growth of boy + hatred

- Contrast. status + conflict (troubling fears + insights)
- lt. + drk. imagery
- animal imagery
- implied violence
- similes + metaphors
- shift in middle of poem
- * poem-shape of subway = (long, centered)