

Name: _____ Class: _____

This Is Not a Small Voice

By Sonia Sanchez
1995

Sonia Sanchez is an award-winning poet who has authored over a dozen books of poetry, as well as short stories, essays, plays, and children books. In this poem, a speaker asserts the strength and love of a collective set of people. As you read, take notes on the imagery that the author uses to describe voice and love.

- [1] This is not a small voice
you hear this is a large
voice coming out of these cities.
This is the voice of LaTanya.
- [5] Kadesha. Shaniqua. This
is the voice of Antoine.
Darryl. Shaquille.
Running over waters
navigating the hallways
- [10] of our schools spilling out
on the corners of our cities and
no epitaphs¹ spill out of their river mouths.



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- This is not a small love
you hear this is a large
- [15] love, a passion for kissing learning
on its face.
This is a love that crowns the feet with hands
that nourishes, conceives, feels the water sails
mends the children,
- [20] folds them inside our history where they
toast more than the flesh
where they suck the bones of the alphabet
and spit out closed vowels.
This is a love colored with iron and lace.
- [25] This is a love initialed Black Genius.

This is not a small voice
you hear.

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1. a phrase or statement written in memory a person who has died

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following identifies a theme within the poem? [RL.2]
 - A. Change can only be created by those who are heard.
 - B. It is important to consider others' opinions and beliefs.
 - C. A tough education is the key to success and happiness.
 - D. Unity is the key to well-being, strength, and resilience.

2. PART B: Which section from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. This is the voice of Latanya. / Kadesha. Shaniqua. This / is the voice of Antoine." (Lines 4-6)
 - B. "Running over waters / navigating the hallways / of our schools spilling out" (Lines 8-10)
 - C. "on the corners of our cities and / no epitaphs spill out of their river mouths." (Lines 11-12)
 - D. "folds them inside our history where they / toast more than the flesh" (Lines 20-21)

3. How does the speaker's personification of learning in lines 14-16 contribute to the poem? [RL.4]
 - A. It shows that love is closely linked with knowledge.
 - B. It shows how all people long to learn and grow.
 - C. It proves that there is a love for education inside every person.
 - D. It stresses that the strongest love is the love for knowledge.

4. How does the author's word choice help develop the poem? [RL.4]
