


MAKING MEANINGS

Elegy for Jane

First Thoughts

1. Describe Jane's personality. Has Roethke focused on characteristics that you might focus on in a person you love? Explain. (Review your Quickwrite notes.) 

Shaping Interpretations


2. In the poem, Jane is compared to three birds. Name them, and tell how the comparisons help build an overall impression of the young woman.
3. An **elegy** is a poem of mourning. Some elegies concentrate fully on the person who has died; others extend their subject to reflect on general matters, such as life, death, beauty, even politics. Which type of elegy is Roethke's poem? Explain.
4. The poem's speaker says he has "no rights in this matter" (line 21). In your own words, explain what he means. Do you think he is correct? Why or why not?

Night Journey

First Thoughts

1. What **image** in the poem strikes you as especially powerful or memorable? Explain.

Shaping Interpretations

2. Roethke uses **figurative language** to convey the physical intensity of the journey. Which lines suggest a kind of fusion between the speaker, the speeding train, and the countryside?
3. Read "Night Journey" aloud, emphasizing its **rhythm**. How does the rhythm give you the feeling of being on a train?
4. What are the speaker's attitudes toward the train and toward the land? Are his feelings similar to those you noted in your Quickwrite? 

CHOICES: Building Your Portfolio

Writer's Notebook

1. Collecting Ideas for an Evaluation



A well-written evaluation of a work of literature includes an *orientation* for the audience, a clearly stated *judgment*, identification of the *criteria* used in judging, and *evidence* to back up the judgment. Make an informal outline for an evaluation of "Elegy for Jane" or "Night Journey." What would your readers need to know? What specific aspects of the poem would you evaluate—**figures of speech, theme, form, emotional effect, sounds**, some other element? What criteria would you apply? What evidence (examples, experiences, authorities) would you cite? Save your notes for possible use in the Writer's Workshop on page 1181.

Comparing Poems

2. Two Young Women

Write a brief essay comparing and contrasting "Elegy for Jane" with John Crowe Ransom's "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" (page 578). Consider especially the **figures of speech** and **tone** used in each elegy.

Responding to Art

3. Does It Fit?

In a brief essay tell whether or not you feel that the Edward Hopper painting used with "Night Journey" fits the **mood** of the poem. To support your response, refer to at least one specific detail in the painting.

Art

4. Painting a Poem

Draw or paint the landscape of Roethke's "Night Journey." Before you start, list all the specific **images** you'll want to consider including, starting with the "bridges of iron lace." Select a phrase from the poem as your title.