Day 3 – “Pride” Read Aloud – Discussion KEY

Pride – Dahlia Ravikovitch - Israel

Approaching the Poem
“Pride” is a translation from Hebrew of a poem by Dahlia Ravikovitch, the leading woman poet in Israel. The poem expresses the writer’s idea on a topic; however, the ideas are not formally defined or analyzed. Rather, they are implied through imagery and metaphor. It is up to you, the reader, to discover how the details in this description of a scene from nature convey ideas about pride.

I tell you, even rocks crack,
and not because of age.
For years they lie on their backs
in the heat and the cold,
so many years,
it almost seems peaceful.
They don’t move, so the cracks stay hidden.
A kind of pride.
Years pass over them, waiting there.
Whoever is going to shatter them hasn’t come yet.
And so the moss flourishes, the seaweed whips around,
the sea pushes through and rolls back—
the rocks seem motionless.
Till a little seal comes to rub against them,
comes and goes away.
And suddenly the rock has an open wound.
I told you, when rocks break, it happens by surprise.
And people, too.

Analysis:
- Natural elements that symbolize pride, but have little or no effect – heat, cold, time, moss, seaweed, the sea
- The seal symbolizes the only element that affects pride in the poem.
- The invisibility of the cracks in the rocks foster the illusion of permanence—a false pride of perfection and durability. If the cracks were obvious, the rocks would appear imperfect, weak and at the mercy of the elements. The poem refers to a stubborn pride, impervious and unfeeling.
- The poet chose a seal to catalyze the crack, but any animal could have been chosen. Any natural element would demonstrate the same meaning—that the most natural and innocuous-seeming creatures, feelings, or things can have an effect when opposed to stubborn elements. Perhaps the poet chose a seal to enhance the sensory contrast between the brittle dry rock and a living, soft, slippery seal.
- Literary devices: Sensory image and personification “For year they lie on their backs; the seaweed/whips around, the sea pushes against them; the rock has an open wound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>What words and phrases are used to describe the rock?</th>
<th>What do the lines suggest about the relationship between pride and emotional pain?</th>
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What theme is suggested by the metaphor of the rock?
Answer may vary, but include:
The poet thinks people are rocklike and that people must be adaptable or they, too, will break. You many also interpret that like the rocks, people are sometimes impassive and unfeeling. Rocks in their motionless state seem safe and people sometimes stagnate under a similar illusion of security.