Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Romanticism*

Directions: Read the poem, annotate it for connections to Romanticism and answer the questions at the end.

From Walt Whitman’s *The Song Of Myself*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MYSELF  I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself, |  |
| And what I assume you shall assume, |  |
| For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you. |  |
| I loaf and invite my soul, |  |
| I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass. | *5* |
|  |  |
| My tongue, every atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this air, |  |
| Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same, |  |
| I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin, |  |
| Hoping to cease not till death. |  |
|  |  |
| Creeds and schools in abeyance, | *10* |
| Retiring back awhile sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten, |  |
| I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard, |  |
| Nature without check with original energy. |  |
|  |  |
| LEAVES OF GRASS  A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands; |  |
| How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he. | *15* |
| I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven. |  |
|  |  |
| Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord, |  |
| A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped, |  |
| Bearing the owner’s name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?* |  |
|  |  |
| Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation. | *20* |
|  |  |
| Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic, |  |
| And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones, |  |
| Growing among black folks as among white, |  |
| Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same. |  |
|  |  |
| And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves. | *25* |
|  |  |
| Tenderly will I use you curling grass, |  |
| It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men, |  |
| It may be if I had known them I would have loved them, |  |
| It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their mothers’ laps, |  |
| And here you are the mothers’ laps. | *30* |
|  |  |
| This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers, |  |
| Darker than the colorless beards of old men, |  |
| Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths. |  |
|  |  |
| O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues, |  |
| And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing. | *35* |
|  |  |
| I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women, |  |
| And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps. |  |
|  |  |
| What do you think has become of the young and old men? |  |
| And what do you think has become of the women and children? |  |
|  |  |
| They are alive and well somewhere, | *40* |
| The smallest sprout shows there is really no death, |  |
| And if ever there was it led forward life and does not wait at the end to arrest it, |  |
| And ceased the moment life appeared. |  |
|  |  |
| All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses, |  |
| And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier. | *45* |
|  |  |
| I know I am deathless, |  |
| I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter’s compass, |  |
| I know I shall not pass like a child’s curlicue cut with a burnt stick at night. |  |
|  |  |
| One world is away and by far the largest to me, and that is myself, |  |
| And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years, | *50* |
| I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait. |  |
|  |  |
| My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite, |  |
| I laugh at what you call dissolution, |  |
| And I know the amplitude of time. |  |

**Questions to answer in your notebooks:**

1. Why is this poem characterized as an example of Romanticism?
2. What are the THEMES of the poem? Provide evidence to support your claims.