

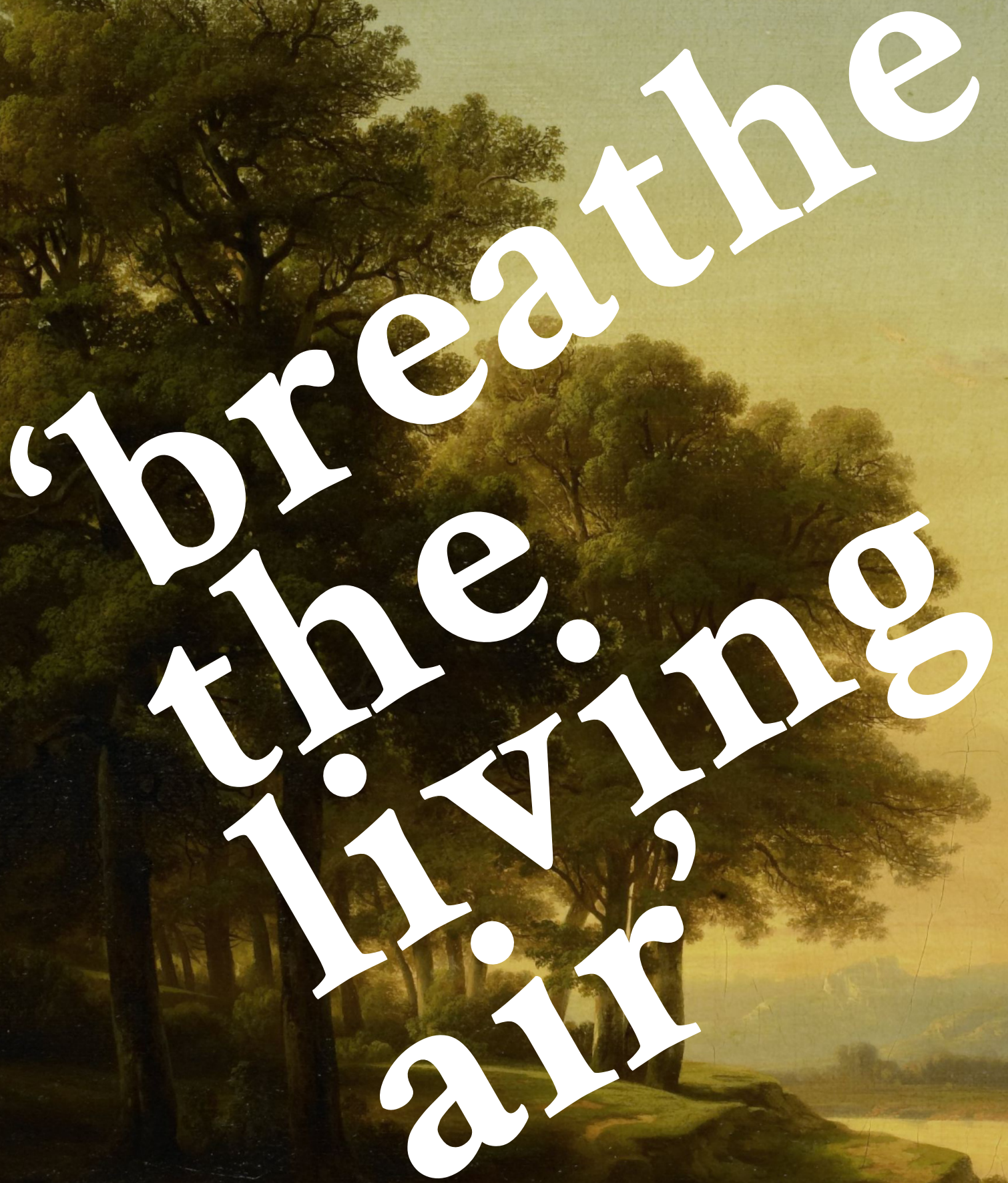
Revision Guide

Passion

Kathleen Raine



Scrbbley.

A classical landscape painting featuring a dense forest of tall, leafy trees in the foreground and middle ground. A river flows through the lower right portion of the scene, with rolling hills and distant mountains visible under a soft, hazy sky. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, browns, and muted yellows, creating a serene and atmospheric setting.

**‘breathe
the
living
air,’**

Passion

Kathleen Raine

Full of desire I lay, the sky wounding me,
Each cloud a ship without me sailing, each tree
Possessing what my soul lacked, tranquillity.

(Full poem unable to be reproduced due to copyright)

VOCABULARY

Forsook - abandoned or left

Mortal death - having caused or being about to cause death

Immortal - living forever; never dying or decaying





STORY/SUMMARY

Stanza 1: I lay down on the grass, underneath the sky, feeling heartbroken and desiring the person I love, every cloud I see looks like a ship sailing in the sea, so peaceful, but I feel anything but peaceful right now, every tree around me looks tranquil, but I feel that my soul is lacking tranquillity right now.

Stanza 2: I've been waiting to hear your voice on the telephone but it does not ring, each day you don't call, my heart hurts more, I feel like I could die from this heartbreak.

Stanza 3: I can't even find the right words to send you a letter, I feel so hopeless knowing I can't reach you in any way at all, it's as if I'm in Homer's Odyssey, the lost woman waiting for her man to return from battle, except I know you do not want to return.

Stanza 4: I lay here underneath the sky for a long time and it finally began to speak to me, it showed me that love is all around though right now my heart is broken, I realise I have everything I have ever desired inside me, and, Mother Nature is the greatest love of all.

Stanza 5: Nature speaks to me in all of its forms, the clouds, winds, stars, and the sea all welcome me with open arms and love me unconditionally, because I am a part of nature and it is a part of me.

Stanza 6: Now I see very clearly, how everything is connected and how nature will always be my protector, I have the power to choose life over death, healed and alive.

Stanza 7: The heartbreak finally lifted and I saw the world more clearly, when heartbreak is over, the sky is clear of clouds again.

Stanza 8: Everything feels lighter and I am filled with the love that I have found within and around me.



SPEAKER + VOICE

Narrating as a heartbroken woman, the **speaker** uses **singular first-person pronouns 'I', and 'me'** to help the reader connect with her on a personal level. As the woman moves through the different stages of heartbreak, she experiences many emotions including both hopelessness and hopefulness. Towards the end of the poem, how the narrator speaks of her journey and connection with nature depicts the divine power of the universe: she finally realises that beyond heartbreak there is much to be grateful for in the world and that love is ever-present.

LANGUAGE

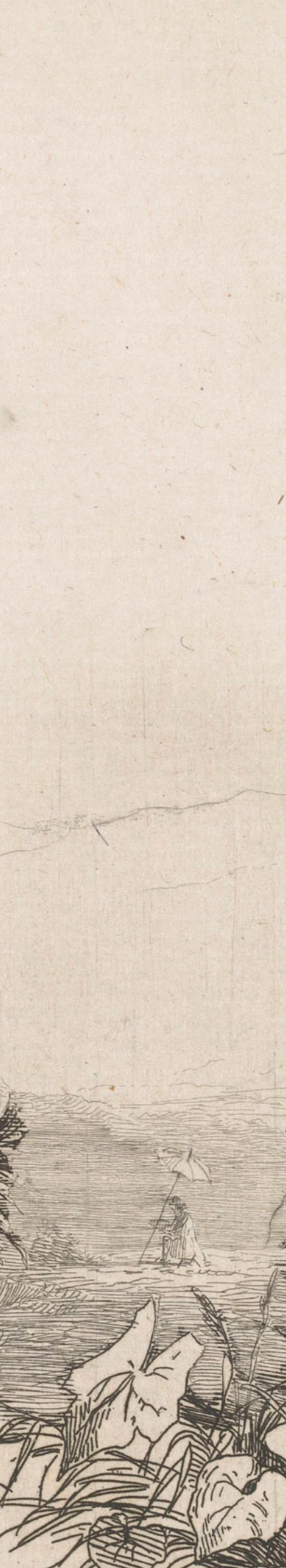
Emotive language - The woman's account of heartbreak, healing, and recovery is made relatable through **emotive language**. In the first stanza, the otherwise innocent sky is **personified** into a harmful entity. The speaker highlights how she lacks inner peace and is wounded by her heartbreak.

Allusion - Raine's allusion to Homer's ghosts connote the idea of something being unattainable. Just like the speaker longs for her past lover, who is now a ghost to her, as Homer's ghosts are in an intangible realm and ever lost (see context for more info).

Auditory imagery - 'Then the sky spoke to me in language clear,' - this **auditory image** indicates that the speaker is connecting to the world around her, communing with nature and understanding or decoding its messages. The landscape around her reflects the woman's humanity, heartbreak, and healing process.

Simile - 'familiar as the heart' is a crucial **simile** that Raine uses to continue the portrayal of the speaker's heartbreak. The **comparison** between her own heart and the sky elaborates on the idea that the speaker, and all humans, are inherently connected to nature.

Personification - 'Raine **personifies** nature throughout the poem with the speaker feeling offended by the clouds' and trees' presence as if their peace is deliberately taunting and hurting her, found in the line 'wounding me'. Due to their lack of suffering and peaceful existence she is envious of them and further leans into her feeling of heartbreak. She personifies nature around her in a continuous manner and eventually resonates with the love surrounding her through Mother Nature. The final stanza uses emotionally provoking **imagery** to convey the speaker's sense of relief to be rid of the pain she once experienced and hopefulness found through her heartbreak journey.



STRUCTURE + FORM

First person - The poem **opens** with the first person singular pronoun, 'I'. This quickly establishes that the speaker is talking of their own experience. The poem continues in this way to connect the reader with the speaker's emotions and healing journey.

Irregular rhyme scheme - In the first stanza of the poem, an **initial rhyme scheme (aaa)** is established, which may have been deliberately lost as the poem progresses. Raine likely decided to do this to reflect the ups and downs one experiences as they move through the different stages of heartbreak to recovery.

Free verse - despite its regular use of tercets (three line stanzas), the poem has no set rhyme or metre, allowing it to flow more fluidly as the speaker connects her thoughts and experiences to the rhythms of the natural world.

Ending - the poem ends with the tripartite structure 'And all is light, love and eternity.', showing that the speaker is in fact fully loved and supported by the wider world, even if she has been shunned by her lover - the suggestion is that 'Passion' in the divine sense - representing love for the natural world around you, and feeling loved and supported by the universe itself in a wider spiritual way - is far more powerful than the 'desire' outlined in the opening of the poem, which is a more personal and private desire to be with another individual human.



CONTEXT

Kathleen Raine was a British Poet who lived between 1908-2003.

Raine was the daughter of a Methodist preacher; she had very strong philosophical leanings and believed that humans were connected to nature on a spiritual level. She admired a lot of William Blake's works and was inspired by his Romantic poems, which demonstrate the way in which God works through the natural world. In her view, everything on earth was connected via the same breath.

Raine's poetry was heavily influenced by the landscape of Northumberland; as a child, during the First World War, she went to live with her Aunt Peggy Black there, and it inspired her to begin writing poetry, as well as forming the basis of her natural poetic depictions.

Classical literature

The speaker refers to 'Homer's ghosts' in stanza 3. Homer was an ancient Greek writer and is considered to be one of the most influential authors of all time. Raine's reference to the ghosts may be drawing upon 'a vapour, gibbering and whining into the earth', which is how Homer refers to ghosts in Odyssey and her inability to properly communicate what she wishes to convey. The idea of unattainability for both the heartbroken speaker and Raine are one.

TASK 1

In Raine's poem 'On the Elements', she states:

'For I myself am clay that breathes and talks

Articulated earth, I move and pray

Alive at once to walk and be the way.'

How do the ideas in these lines reflect the themes and deeper messages of 'Passion'?

ATTITUDES

Heartbreak is a journey -

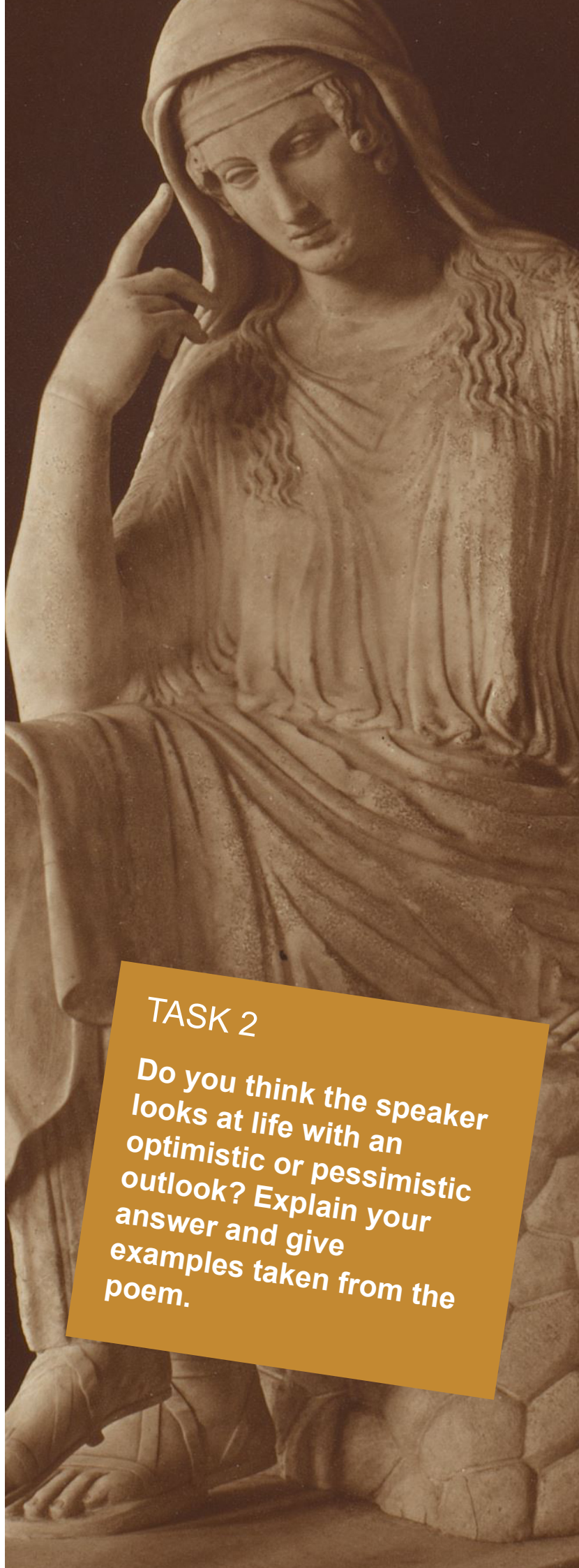
Raine's 'Passion' invites the reader to embark upon the healing journey of the speaker. Though initially she is paralysed and tormented by their heartbreak, she finds the inner strength to heal.

We are all one with the universal spirit -

Through personification of nature, Raine draws upon the human connection to nature. She deliberately does this in order for the reader to reflect on their philosophical beliefs and demonstrates the true power in nature. This also connects with the ideals of Romantic literature, proposed by poets such as Blake and Wordsworth, who see humans as natural beings, and nature as a representation of the divine workings of God on earth.

It is important to embrace the ups and downs in life -

Though initially the speaker seems completely anguished by her heartbreak, the language in the poem becomes more hopeful as an indication of healing. We come to learn that she finds peace within themselves and heals. She chooses an optimistic outlook on life rather than allow heartbreak to continue to consume her.



TASK 2

Do you think the speaker looks at life with an optimistic or pessimistic outlook? Explain your answer and give examples taken from the poem.

THEMES

Heartbreak

Nature

Spirituality

Life

Death

Hope

Philosophy

Mortality - Raine emphasises the speaker's heartbreak with the comparison of it to mortality 'With the well-known and mortal death, heartbreak'. She makes it clear that the feeling of heartbreak runs very deep 'Possessing what my soul lacked, tranquillity.' which connects us to her anguished emotional state until in later stanzas.

TASK 3

How does the poet draw on the theme of spirituality?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Raine's treatment of the theme of nature, focusing on its connection to the divine.
2. 'Passion' is an optimistic poem.', to what extent do you agree with this statement?
3. Examine how Raine explores the theme of love in the poem, with reference to its title 'Passion'.