Pre-Reading - Questions for Discussion

- How do these pictures make you feel?
- What is similar about each one?
- What is different about each one?
- If there is one underlying message these pictures convey, what is it?
- Is this message specific to a time or a place?
Vocabulary

SOME WORDS CONNECTED TO THE PRE-READING:

empathy (noun) the ability to share another person’s feelings and emotions as if they were your own.

indifference (noun) lack of interest, concern, or sympathy

disconnected (adjective) not linked in any way

self-absorbed (adjective) thinks so much about things concerning themselves that they do not notice other people or things around them

oblivious (adjective) unaware

uncomfortable (adjective) causing or feeling unease or awkwardness

disturbing (adjective) causing you to feel worried or upset

In pairs, study the picture below. Try to guess what is happening in the part of the picture I’ve circled. We will discuss together what others’ reactions to the scene is.
About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.
Match the word to its definition:

- **suffering** (countable noun) something that is not a success
- **passionately** (adverb) without hurry
- **especially** (adjective) very fine in texture or structure; of intricate workmanship or quality
- **innocent** (adverb) in a way that shows no feeling, understanding or interest
- **disaster** (phrasal verb) to avert your eyes from something; to ignore
- **failure** (noun) the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship.
- **delicate** (adverb) in a way that shows strong feelings or beliefs
- **dully** (noun) a sudden event, such as an accident or a natural catastrophe, that causes great damage or loss of life.
- **“turns away”** (adverb) used to emphasize a characteristic or quality
- **leisurely** (adjective) having no experience or knowledge of the more complex or unpleasant aspects of life
Fill in the missing words using the synonyms below

suffering  
passionately  
especially  
innocent  
disaster  
failure  
delicate  
dully  
to turn away  
leisurely

1. He walked at an easy pace toward the door. He walked leisurely.
2. It’s hard for people to see others suffering and so they look the other way. People ______________ from the suffering of others.
3. She answered him without any enthusiasm. She answered him ____________________.
4. Her pain and agony were more than she could bear. She could not bear her ________________.
5. He didn’t succeed in his efforts to fly. His effort to fly was a ________________.
6. The plates she used where her finest, most fragile. She set used her most __________ plates.
7. She felt very strongly about the idea. She believed in it ________________.
8. She was naïve about certain things. She was ____________________.
9. The plane crash was a catastrophe. It was the worst air traffic ________________ I can remember.
10. She particularly loves ice cream. Ice cream is something she ________________ enjoys.

LOTS Questions

1. Describe how the children felt about “the miraculous birth” in the first stanza?
   ____________________________________________________________________

2. List three words or phrases from the second stanza that let us know something bad has happened.
   ____________________________________________________________________
3. Complete the chart according to physical images described in the poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who or What</th>
<th>is doing/ did what?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>someone</td>
<td>eating, opening a window, walking dully along</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>waiting, reverently, passionately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td>behaving like regular animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icarus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ploughman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literary Terms:

**Stanza** - A group of lines, which form a unit in a poem.

1. How many stanzas does our poem have?

**Rhyme** - used in poetry most often at the end of lines when the last syllables of the words at the ends of the lines share the same sound, homophony.

2. Find two lines that rhyme in our poem.

**Rhyme Scheme** - The pattern of rhymed words at the end of lines in a stanza or throughout a poem. Sometimes rhymes are close but not exact, like “shone” and “on”.

3. What is the rhyme scheme for the second stanza of our poem?

   *Hint: use letters of the alphabet for rhyming words that are the same.*

**Imagery** - Words used in images in poetry that use our five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touching.

4. What are some images we find in our poem?
The HOTS of Distinguishing Different Perspectives: Adapted from The Phantom Tollbooth, by Norton Juster:

For us, the bucket of water looks like

![Image of a child holding a bucket of water]

a bucket of water,

But how does it look to an ant?

![Image of an ant]

From an elephant’s point of view, how does that bucket of water look?
How does the bucket of water seem to a fish?

It’s the same bucket of water.  
Each one sees it as it relates to themselves.  
Each one has a DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.
Explicit teaching of HOTS continued – Identifying Different Perspectives

- Recall this photograph from a previous lesson.

- Use the chart below to interpret this photograph according to the perspective of each person in the photo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who / What</th>
<th>What They are Doing</th>
<th>In your own words, how do they relate to the homeless man in the photo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lady</td>
<td>walking by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homeless man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other pedestrian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis and Interpretation:

1. What is the difference between the outlook of the children and that of the aged toward “the miraculous birth”?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What is the importance of the fall of Icarus from the perspective of the ploughman?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Describe the attitude of the people on the ship toward the “boy falling from the sky.”

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. How do you think the perspective of the ploughman compares with that of Icarus’ father who built his son the wings?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Propose an alternative response by the people on-board the ship.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What event of the first stanza is most related to the fall of Icarus and how?

________________________________________________________________________
Bridging

Read the following quote:

“We may have found a cure for most evils; but we have found no remedy for the worst of them all, the apathy of human beings.” - Helen Keller

How does the quote connect to the poem?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Post-Reading

Choose from one of the following options:

1. Find a picture, painting, or video clip that you feel represents a modern-day example of Auden’s theme, and, based on this, write a “third stanza” for Auden’s poem.

2. Auden’s poem is based on his interpretation of Breughel’s painting of The Fall of Icarus. Using https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/, create a comic showing some of the people on the ship and articulate their thoughts regarding Icarus in thought/speech bubbles.

3. Write a brief script between two imagined characters that could have been in any scene described in Musee des Beaux Arts and then, with a friend, enact your script. Have someone video your enactment.