

Poem**by Nazim Hikmet**

There was a waitress
at the Astoria Restaurant in Berlin,
a jewel of a girl.
She'd smile at me over her heavy trays.
She looked like the girls of the country I'd lost.
Sometimes she had dark circles under her eyes—
I don't know why.
I never got to sit
at one of her tables.

He never once sat at one of my tables.
He was an old man.
And he must have been sick—
he was on a special diet.
He could gaze at my face so sadly,
but he couldn't speak German.
Three months he came in for three meals a day,
then he disappeared.
Maybe he went back to his country,
maybe he died before he could.

23 July 1959

Translated from the Turkish by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk

Answer the following questions referring to the poem above.

1. What is the point of view of the poem? Who is the narrator?
2. What is the major difference between the two stanzas?
3. Identify three similarities between the two stanzas?
4. Identify the characters in the poem. How do they feel about each other?
5. Explain the connection between the two characters.
6. What links stanza 1 to stanza 2?
7. What theme is the author of the poem conveying through the use of this unique point of view?

Your turn:

Nazim Hikmet's poem is unique for the use of two narrators who speak to each other through their own thoughts without ever actually speaking to each other. Create your own dialogue poem following the below steps:

- 1) Create two characters who are strangers.
 - 2) Place them in a setting where they recognize each other.
 - 3) What observations does each one make about the other?
 - 4) In what way, do they feel a connection with each other?
 - 5) In what way, do they share similar feelings?
 - 6) Create a transition that links the last line of stanza 1 to the first line of stanza 2.
- Be sure to have **two stanzas** similar in number of lines, line length, and sentence length. (9-10 lines per stanza)
 - Use both **end-stopped** and **enjambment**.
 - Each character is a narrator and should **narrate each stanza** while observing the other character.
 - They must **not directly speak to each other**, but instead connect on a thinking level.

*Write your poem in your journal. Be sure to give your poem a title, and also – very important – explain why you structured your poem the way you did. How does the structure add to the meaning?