

**Standards Focus: Analyzing Poetry**

**Chapters 4-6**

In Chapter 5, Ponyboy recites a famous poem written by the American poet, Robert Frost. Ironically, he says that he remembered the poem because he never really understood what it was about.

There are many different types of poetry such as a *sonnet*, *ballad*, *lyric*, *epic*, *ode*, *elegy*, *haiku*, and *limerick*. Each type has its own set rhyme scheme, rhythm pattern, and specific number of lines which makes it unique.

Every poem, however, has a message that the poet wants the reader to receive. As we read a poem, the easiest way to understand and appreciate its theme is to analyze it in pieces, or line by line, then think about the lines as a group and decide how they relate to each other. Had Ponyboy analyzed the poem in this way, he may have understood the poem a little better.

**Part One**

**Directions:** For the poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay," read each line and try to make an educated guess as to what the poet is trying to say in the line. Then answer the questions that follow to try to figure out the theme, or deeper meaning, of the poem.

**Nothing Gold Can Stay**

- 1 Nature's first green is gold,  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Her hardest hue to hold.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Her early leaf's a flower;  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 But only so an hour.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 So Eden sank to grief,  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 So dawn goes down to day.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Nothing gold can stay.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Two**

1. In line 2, who is the “Her” to whom the poet is referring?

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2. In line 5, what does the word “subsides” mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think the poet means when he says “Nothing gold can stay”?

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4. What kind of mood is this poem expressing? (i.e. happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, etc)

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\_\_\_\_\_

5. Specifically, which words from the poem do you feel contribute to the creation of this mood? How does each contribute to the mood?

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6. Apply your answers to the five questions above, as well as your interpretations of each individual line, to conclude the general **theme** of this poem by Robert Frost.

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