

## Lesson 2

### Warmth in Relationships

#### A. Discuss the following questions in pairs.



1. What do you see in this picture? What is the weather like?
2. What do you do on weekend mornings – sleep a little longer or go to work?
3. Do you like to wake up early every morning?
4. Do you like to study on weekends?

#### B. Now read the poem and do the activities that follow.

#### Those Winter Sundays

- Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early  
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,  
then with cracked hands that ached  
from labor in the weekday weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes as well.  
What did I know, what did I know of  
love's austere and lonely offices?

**C. Match the words and their meanings in the context of the poem.**

Words	Meanings
blueblack	ongoing and persistent, like an illness without cure
banked	something protected with a wall around it, made of stones or bricks perhaps
chronic	unadorned and plain, and also without pleasure
indifferently	duties and responsibilities
austere	a kind of deep black colour with a hint of blue
offices	without emotional engagement

**D. Read the poem in a small group and discuss what the following phrases suggest.**

- Line 5: “banked fires blaze”
- Line 6: “the cold splintering, breaking”
- Line 7: “the rooms were warm”
- Line 11: “driven out the cold”

**E. There are good examples of alliteration used in the poem. According to Cambridge English Dictionary alliteration is the use, especially in poetry, of the same sound or sounds, especially consonants, at the beginning of several words that are close together. In this poem alliteration is first used in lines 2 and 3, with the harsh /k/ sounds in "clothes," "cold," and "cracked."**

**Find more examples of alliterations used in the poem following the clues given below.**

- Line 4: “w”, “w”
- Line 5: “b”, “b”
- Line 7: “W”, “w”, “w”
- Line 14: “l”, “l”

**F. Discuss the following questions in pairs.**

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. What is meant by the phrase “Sunday too”?
3. Do you think that the speaker’s father lived a life of toil? Which lines in the poem help you to answer this question?



**G. What is the main theme of the poem? Discuss in pairs. Then complete the paragraphs below that describe the main theme of the poem.**

perspective	regretful	sacrifice	appreciate	childhood
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The speaker of the poem realizes from his adult (a) \_\_\_\_\_ that he took his father for granted. Now in adulthood, he more fully understands what it means to make (b) \_\_\_\_\_ for others. Now, he can look back on his (c) \_\_\_\_\_ and appreciate the way his father was carrying out his duties and responsibilities. Most children can't fully (d) \_\_\_\_\_ their parents because they haven't had to be responsible yet for another human being. "Those Winter Sundays," then, has a kind of sadness to it that is equal parts nostalgic and (e) \_\_\_\_\_. The speaker knows he can't travel back in time and show his gratitude to his father, but that he can at least record it in the poem.

**About the poet:** Robert Hayden was born into a poor family in Detroit in USA in 1913 and had a difficult childhood beset by eyesight problems. He was raised in part by foster parents and missed a father's caring love. But in the sonnet, which is about a childhood memory, he writes about a father – probably his own-- who is harsh and often angry, but does love his son in his own way. Hayden, a black American, wrote about black experiences and history. He died in 1980.

