Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“Speaking to You (From Rock Bottom)”

by Michael Ondaatje

1 Speaking to you

2 this hour

3 these days when

4 I have lost the feather of poetry

5 and the rains

6 of separation

7 surround us tock

8 tock like Go tablets

9 Everyone has learned

10 to move carefully

11 'Dancing' 'laughing' 'bad taste'

12 is a memory

13 a tableau behind trees of law

14 In the midst of love for you

15 my wife's suffering

16 anger in every direction

17 and the children wise

18 as tough shrubs

19 but they are not tough

20 --so I fear

21 how anything can grow from this

22 all the wise blood

23 poured from little cuts

24 down into the sink

25 this hour it is not

26 your body I want

27 but your quiet company

**Discussion Ideas**

Think about Patrick’s relationship with Clara and his relationship with Alice. What elements of these relationships do you see portrayed in the poem? If Patrick were to have written this poem, which character do you think he would be talking about?

Discuss the importance of “a memory” (12).

Compare and contrast the beginning of the poem and the line “speaking to you” (line 1) with the end and “quiet company” (line 27).

Enjambment is when one thought/sentence carries over from one line onto the next line of the poem. Pick out a few examples of enjambment from Ondaatje’s poem. Why do you think Ondaatje uses this poetic element? What does it add to or take away from the poem?

What are some words that stick out to you as important? Why? How are they relevant to your reading of *In the Skin of a Lion?*

What are some similarities and differences between this poem and the novel?

Other notes or interesting ideas your group came up with:

At least two comments on other groups’ posters: