Investigate! The poetry of Christina Rossetti: *Winter: My Secret*

Investigating *Winter: My secret*

❖ What do you associate with the idea of secrets?

  ➢ How does this poem meet these associations?

❖ What do you associate with the idea of winter?

  ➢ How does the poem meet these associations?

❖ Describe how the poem links the idea of secrets to the idea of winter.

❖ What difficulties could potentially arise from reading the poem in a purely biographical context?

❖ What suggestions can you find which could be seen to identify the speaker as God?

  ➢ What are the difficulties with this interpretation?

Investigating language and tone

❖ Apart from clothing, does anything else convey the gender of the speaker?

❖ Read aloud the line, 'Only, my secret's mine and I won't tell' (line 6) several times

  ➢ Describe the tone in which you think that it is spoken

  ➢ What message does this tone convey?

Investigating structure and versification

❖ Note down all the rhymes that you can find in the poem

  ➢ What is the effect of linking certain words together through rhyme?

  ➢ What effects are created by the use of internal rhyme?

❖ How does the punctuation work to change the tone of the speaker?

  ➢ Give specific examples.

Investigating imagery and symbolism

❖ What associations do you have with the idea of a mask?

  ➢ How may a mask be a comforting piece of clothing for the speaker?

❖ Why do you think that the speaker describes her identity in terms of a house?

  ➢ How effective is this image?

❖ Why does the speaker suggest that winter is the most preferable season?

Investigating themes

❖ What associations do you have with the notion of something being nonsense?

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➢ How appropriate do you think that the title *Nonsense* is for the poem?

❖ What does the speaker suggest the dangers of curiosity are?

❖ What moral lessons do you think that the poem can be seen to convey?

❖ How can these lessons be compared to the lessons given in *Goblin Market*?