

Imagery and Diction

Novelist Robert Newton Peck once said, “A good author makes a camera out of a pen.” An author creates imagery through his or her **diction**. Imagery is language that appeals to the senses. Writers use it to describe an experience and evoke a feeling.

1. Review Acosta’s poem and identify two **images**. Explain why the images appeal to you.
2. Next, consider the topic, purpose, and occasion of Acosta’s poem. How might they shape her diction or choice of words?
3. The power of a sentence or a line of poetry to produce a reaction in the reader lies mainly in the **connotations** (the suggested meaning) of words. Consider the final image in the poem, “knotted with love the quilts sing on.” What are the denotations of the words *knotted* and *sing*? What are their connotations? Discuss the connotations of the words *knotted* and *sing*.
4. Consider what would happen if the author’s **diction** were different. For example, suppose instead of “knotted,” she had used “entangled,” “mixed up,” or “tied together.” How might a different word or phrase affect the reader’s perception of the final line in the poem?

LITERARY TERMS

Images help create pictures or ideas in the reader’s mind. Most images appeal to the sense of sight.

Connotation is the emotional feeling attached to a word. A connotation may be positive, negative, or neutral.

Denotation is the literal meaning of a word.

Diction is the writer’s choice of words.

WORD CONNECTIONS

In this poem, the patches of the quilt represent pieces of the author’s life. The patch-quilt analogy has also been used to describe the make-up of the U.S. population. Explain the meaning of this analogy.