

Poetry Analysis of "Every Riven Thing" by Christian Wiman

This poem is ideal for a Christian High School classroom because it is modern, spiritual, technical, and uses a form that invites discussion and analysis. Discussion could center around his theme, his word and punctuation choice, and his modification of the villanelle form.

Every Riven Thing

God goes, belonging to every riven thing He's made
Sing his being simply by being
The thing it is:
Stone and tree and sky,
Man who sees and sings and wonders why

God goes. Belonging, to every riven thing He's made,
Means a storm of peace.
Think of the atoms inside the stone.
Think of the man who sits alone
Trying to will himself into the stillness where

God goes belonging. To every riven thing He's made
There is given one shade
Shaped exactly to the thing itself:
Under the tree a darker tree;
Under the man the only man to see

God goes belonging to every riven thing. He's made
The things that bring Him near,
Made the mind that makes Him go.
A part of what man knows,
Apart from what man knows,

God goes belonging to every riven thing He's made.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the meaning of "riven"?
2. How does knowing that affect your understanding of the poem?
3. What form of poetry is Wiman building off of?
4. Why do you think he chose this form?
5. How does his punctuation and word usage influence the poem's meaning?