

ENGLISH TEST PART 3

T^oL - 'ANGLAIS APPROFONDI'

NAME: Sascha Van Der Veen

Don't Give Up - Peter Gabriel (1986)

COMMENTARY

1. The man says his "dreams have all deserted" him (§ 2). What does he mean by that?

When he says his dreams have all deserted him, the man means that before being laid off from his job and unemployed he used to have lots of dreams, of success, prosperity and of course happiness. He probably believed in the American dream which is supposed to give every citizen the opportunity to work their way up and be successful, even strike it rich. Now, unfortunately, he feels totally disillusioned and disenchanted. He no longer has dreams of any kind concerning his future.

2. "the lakeside" / "the earth" / "the trees" / "the ground" (§ 5) + "the bridge" / "the river" (§ 9). These are obvious symbols and metaphors. Explain and illustrate.

The lakeside can be viewed as a symbol of source of life, from which everything flows. This image is the starting point of metaphor that runs through the song: first, the lake, then the bridge and finally the river flowing (to the sea). These aquatic elements symbolise the passage of time and life from birth till death as well as the fact that life goes on whatever happens to those who do not cross the bridge. As for the earth and the trees, they obviously symbolise the man's roots and represent the peaceful place of his childhood but, as the trees have burned down, it seems clear that the man is rootless. There is no place he can call his home any more.

3. Comment freely on § 9 and interpret its implicit meaning (as opposed to its surface meaning). In other words, read between the lines here.

In paragraph 9, the man is tempted by suicide. We can guess he is standing on the bridge brooding over his failure to find a job, which may be synonymous with a 'slow death' for a man accustomed to being active. So he probably considers taking his own life, killing himself by jumping down into the river, committing suicide so as to put an end to his miserable life in search of a job.

However, when he sees the river flowing endlessly, he realizes life is going on, so he has to keep struggling.

4. What message does Peter Gabriel aim to convey in this song?

Peter Gabriel certainly wants to convey a message of hope in this song. He makes it clear that being jobless means feeling depressed, even hopeless but even in such a fix suicide is not a solution. An unemployed person who can count on his family and friends must not give up hope. Life is worth living, all the more so when love and friendship help you go through the hard times and cope with the ups and downs of life.

5. As he was standing on the bridge looking down, the man started thinking about his past, present and future.

Write his **interior monologue**, expressing his hope(s)/hopelessness/dream(s)/wish(es)/regret(s)...

Start like this (see § 4, fourth line):

It is so strange the way things turn. Ain't it funny how I used to be in a hurry all the time!

"It is so strange the way things turn. Ain't it funny how I used to be in hurry all the time. I was always so busy that I never had time to think about all those who are unlucky enough to be jobless. And now I am one of them! I was a young executive with a bright future and a high living standard whereas look at me, now: I might well be homeless sooner or later if things don't get any better As for my future, it's never been so bleak before! God, what am I going to do ? When I had job, I was stressed, for sure, but at least I was so optimistic, so hopeful Now, I have a lot of time on my hands but I feel down in the dumps, always so low If only I could land a job, any kind of job would do the trick I wish they would tell me, "Sir, you're cut out for this work, we're hiring you." I often dream about it, only to wake up in the sweat and still unemployed. What on the earth does the future hold in store for me ? I must not give up hope, though..."

6. (BONUS) Write a short personal interpretation and appraisal of the official video of the song.

The singer is telling us his doubts about the future and his 'conscience' is in this music video Kate Bush is hugging him to reassure him, and make him feel better .I think it is well thought out and profound .