**Questions for multiple readings of “Hanging Fire”**

**Answer on a Separate Sheet of Paper. Hand in your answers with your annotations for the poem.**

1. Who do you believe is speaking in the poem? What can you logically assume about their life?
2. How are they speaking to the reader? (what is their tone of voice)
3. What is the speaker worried about and what words or phrases led you to this conclusion?
4. How would you describe the state of mind of the writer? Why?
5. Based on your readings, why do you think the speaker repeats “and momma’s in the bedroom with the door closed?”
6. What do you think you know about the speaker after reading this poem?
7. Explain what specifically in the poem reveals their character/emotions/fears?
8. Do you ever feel like the writer of this poem?
9. While this is a free verse poem, there is a structure to it. What are some features of the structure of this poem?
10. Where does the poet use language in surprising ways? [For example, “my skin has *betrayed* me”]
11. Is the poet complaining? Why or why not?
12. Is there conflict in this poem? Is it internal or external? How do we know?

**After annotating with symbols, it is very helpful (and fun and rewarding) to take your reading a step further. Here are some suggestions for ways to annotate text. You may find one method superior to all the others, or you may find that a mix of methods works best for you. Try them out, and see which one offers you a richer and more complete reading of the poem.**

-Write your thoughts/conclusions/interpretations of lines or stanzas in the margin

-Write a short summary at the end of each stanza

-Write questions as you read: what is confusing? What are you wondering about? Go back and answer them after a second or third read.

-At the end of lines or stanzas (or anywhere really), write what you think is the most important feeling conveyed

-**Draw a picture of what you are thinking or imagining while reading or after reading**

-Comment on a words or phrases that convey a strong image or feeling

**Hanging Fire**

By [Audre Lorde](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/audre-lorde)

I am fourteen

and my skin has betrayed me

the boy I cannot live without

still sucks his thumb

in secret

how come my knees are

always so ashy

what if I die

before morning

and momma's in the bedroom

with the door closed.

I have to learn how to dance

in time for the next party

Nobody even stops to think

about my side of it

I should have been on Math Team

my marks were better than his

why do I have to be

the one

wearing braces

I have nothing to wear tomorrow

will I live long enough

to grow up

and momma's in the bedroom

with the door closed.

my room is too small for me

suppose I die before graduation

they will sing sad melodies

but finally

tell the truth about me

There is nothing I want to do

and too much

that has to be done

and momma's in the bedroom

with the door closed.