

Name:

Class:

Sylvia Earle: Deep Ocean Explorer

By Bobbi Katz 2007

Bobbi Katz (born 1933) is an accomplished poet who specializes in children's literature. In this poem, a speaker describes a famous ocean explorer, Sylvia Earle. As you read, take notes on what Sylvia Earle likes to explore.

[1] Her eyes might gaze toward

distant

stars,

- [5] but not for her the lure¹ of Mars.
 She's challenged by a different place, just as unknown as outer space.
 Not for her the stratosphere²
 but a life-filled, liquid atmosphere—
- [10] where she can be... a pioneer!³ Down, down, down in [15] the depths of the sea where no human had gone before. Down, [20] down down to the deepest deepexploring [25] the ocean floor.



"Dr. Sylvia Earle displays samples to aquanaut inside TEKTITE. Appears in National Geographic August 1971" by OAR/National Undersea Research Program (NURP) is in the public domain.

"Sylvia Earle: Deep Ocean Explorer" by Bobbi Katz (<u>www.bobbikatz.com</u>), copyright © 2007 from Trailblazers: Poems of Exploration by Bobbi Katz, published by Greenwillow Books/Harper Collins. Copyright © 2007 by Bobbi Katz, used with permission of the poet who controls all rights.

- 2. a region of the upper atmosphere
- 3. Pioneer (noun): a person who is among the first to explore a new area

^{1.} Lure (noun): something that tempts or is used to tempt a person or animal to do something



Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

- 1. PART A: Which statement best expresses the theme of the poem?
 - A. Exploration can be exciting, but it is also frightening.
 - B. It is better to avoid exploring the unknown, because it can be dangerous.
 - C. Unfamiliar places like space or the ocean will remain mysterious, no matter how much we explore them.
 - D. Following your interests can lead you on a path to great discoveries.
- 2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "Her eyes might gaze / toward / distant / stars" (Lines 1-4)
 - B. "Just as unknown as outer space. / Not for her the stratosphere" (Lines 7-8)
 - C. "but a life-filled, liquid atmosphere— / where she can be... a pioneer!" (Lines 9-10)
 - D. "down / to / the deepest deep—" (Lines 21-23)
- 3. Why does the poet compare outer space to the ocean floor?
 - A. to show why the ocean floor is uninteresting to Sylvia Earle compared to space
 - B. to show that the ocean is just as unexplored as space, but is more interesting to Sylvia Earle
 - C. to show that exploring space seems more dangerous to Sylvia Earle than exploring the ocean floor
 - D. to show that Sylvia Earle is just as excited by the idea of exploring space as she is about exploring the ocean
- 4. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "Her eyes might gaze / toward / distant / stars" (Lines 1-4)
 - B. "She's challenged by a different place, / just as unknown as outer space" (Lines 6-7)
 - C. "where / no human / had gone before." (Lines 16-18)
 - D. "the deepest deep— / exploring" (Lines 23-24)
- 5. How does the poem's physical form help develop its theme?



Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. What does this poem teach us about the life of an explorer? What do explorers contribute to how we understand and view nature? Would you ever want to be a space or ocean explorer? Why or why not?

2. What does it mean to be a pioneer? Why can it be exciting to be the first person to do something? What do you think is the impact of Earle being both a woman and one of the first people to explore the deep ocean? What are some ways you can be a "pioneer" in your own life?

3. Why is exploration important? Is it valuable for other people to explore places we may never see ourselves? How do explorers help us understand the world around us?