BLINK YOUR EYES
by Sekou Sundiata

I was on my way to see my woman
but the Law said I was on my way
thru a red light red light red light
and if you saw my woman
you could understand,
I was just being a man.
It wasn’t about no light
it was about my ride
and if you saw my ride
you could dig that too, you dig?
Sunroof stereo radio black leather
bucket seats sit low you know,
the body's cool, but the tires are worn.
Ride when the hard time come, ride
when they’re gone, in other words
the light was green.

I could wake up in the morning
without a warning
and my world could change:
blink your eyes.
All depends, all depends on the skin,
all depends on the skin you're living in

Up to the window comes the Law
with his hand on his gun
what’s up? what's happening?
I said I guess
that’s when I really broke the law.
He said a routine, step out the car
a routine, assume the position.
Put your hands up in the air
you know the routine, like you just don't care.
License and registration.
Deep was the night and the light
from the North Star on the car door, deja vu
we’ve been through this before,
why did you stop me?
Somebody had to stop you.
I watch the news, you always lose.
You’re unreliable, that's undeniable.
This is serious, you could be dangerous.

I could wake up in the morning
without a warning
and my world could change:
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New York City, they got laws
can’t no bruthas drive outdoors,
in certain neighborhoods, on particular streets
near and around certain types of people.
They got laws.
All depends, all depends on the skin,
all depends on the skin you're living in.
### TPASTT Poem Analysis Method

**Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Attitude, Shift, Title (revisited), Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong> Before you even think about reading the poetry or trying to analyze it, speculate on what you think the poem might be about based on the title alone. Often times, authors conceal meaning and give clues in the title. Jot down what you think this poem is about…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paraphrase:</strong> Before you begin thinking about meaning or trying to analyze the poem, don’t overlook the literal meaning of the poem. One of the biggest problems that students often make in poetry analysis is jumping to conclusions before understanding what is taking place in the poem. When you paraphrase a poem, write in your own words exactly what happens in the poem. Look at the number of sentences in the poem—your paraphrase should have exactly the same number of sentences. (This technique is especially helpful for poems written in the 17th and 19th centuries.) Sometimes your teacher may allow you to summarize what happens in the poem. Make sure that you understand the difference between a paraphrase and a summary.</td>
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<td><strong>Connotation:</strong> Although this term usually refers solely to the emotional overtones of word choice, for this approach the term refers to any and all poetic devices, focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both of a poem. You may consider imagery, figures of speech (simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, etc), diction, point of view, and sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme). It is not necessary that you identify all the poetic devices within the poem. The ones you do identify should be seen as a way of supporting the conclusions you are going to draw about the poem.</td>
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<td><strong>Attitude:</strong> Having examined the poem's devices and clues closely, you are now ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem. Examination of diction, images, and details suggests the speaker's attitude and contributes to understanding. You may refer to a list of words on Tone that will help you. Remember that usually the tone or attitude cannot be named with a single word—Think complexity.</td>
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| **Shift:** Rarely does a poem begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most us, the poet's understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that understanding or insight. Watch for the following keys to shifts:
  * key words, (but, yet, however, although)
  * punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis)
  * stanza divisions
  * changes in line or stanza length or both
  * irony
  * changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning
  * changes in diction
| **Title (revisited):** Now look at the title again, but this time on an interpretive level. What new insight does the title provide in understanding the poem? |
| **Theme:** What is the poem saying about the human experience, motivation, or condition? What subject or subjects does the poem address? What do you learn about those subjects? What idea does the poet want you take away with you concerning these subjects? Remember that the theme of any work of literature is stated in a complete sentence |
You think this poem is about...

Often times, authors conceal meaning based on the title alone. You might be about to read the poetry or trying to analyze it, speculate on what you think the poem is about based on the title. Jot down what clues are in the title and give insight into the title. Before you even think about reading the poetry or trying to analyze it, speculate on what you think the poem is about based on the title alone.
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Attitude

Having examined the poem’s devices and clues closely, you are now ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem. Examination of diction, images, and details suggests the speaker’s attitude and contributes to understanding. You may refer to a list of words on Tone that will help you remember that usually the tone or attitude cannot be named with a single word. Think complexity.

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Changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning:

Changes in Line or Stanza Length or Both

Punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipses)

Key words (but, yet, however, although)

Watch for the following keys to shifts:

Ironic changes in Line or Stanza Length or Both

Stanza divisions

Changes in diction

Changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning

Shift: Rarely does a poem begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most us, the poet’s understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that.
theme: What is the poem saying about the human experience, motivation, or condition? What subject or subjects does the poem address? What do you learn about those subjects? What idea does the poet want you to take away with you concerning these subjects? Remember that the theme of any work of literature is stated in a complete sentence. 