

Why?



The Cornish poet Charles Causley was inspired by folk songs, ballads and hymns that he heard as a child. Here he uses a series of questions to describe Susanna's feelings one Bonfire Night (5th November). This date marks the failed attempt in 1605 of a man called Guy Fawkes to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The dummy placed on Bonfire Night fires is still known as a 'guy'.

Why do you turn your head, Susanna,
And why do you swim your eye?
It's only the children on Bellman Street
Calling, *A penny for the guy!*

Why do you look away, Susanna,
As the children wheel him by?
It's only a dummy in an old top-hat
And a fancy jacket and tie.

Why do you take my hand, Susanna,
As the pointing flames jump high?
It's only a bundle of sacking and straw.
Nobody's going to die.

Why is your cheek so pale, Susanna,
As the whizzbangs flash and fly?
It's nothing but a rummage of paper and rag
Strapped to a stick you spy.

Why do you say you hear, Susanna,
The sound of a last, long sigh?
And why do you say it won't leave your head
No matter how hard you try?

Best let me take you home, Susanna,
Best on your bed to lie.
It's only a dummy in an old top-hat.
Nobody's going to die.



Charles Causley (1917–2003)

1 Ring two adjectives that might describe how Susanna is feeling.

horrified bored upset surprised excited curious

2 marks

2 How did the poem make you feel? Explain why.

2 marks

3 a) How is the dummy dressed?

1 mark

b) What is it stuffed with?

1 mark

4 Give an example suggesting that Susanna has a strong imagination that makes her think a lot about things she observes.

1 mark

5 What exactly are the 'whizzbangs'?

1 mark

6 Name one thing that Susanna does that shows she is nervous.

1 mark

7 a) Who do you think might be asking the questions?

1 mark

b) What do they say twice to try and reassure Susanna?

1 mark

8 What does the speaker advise Susanna to do when she gets home?

1 mark