

The Rainforest Layers

The rainforest is like the layers of a sandwich
(The biggest sandwich around).
If you go to the very top of the trees
The emergent layer can be found.
Sunlight is plentiful up at the top,
The emergents dash for the light.
They're head and shoulders above the rest
Having won the competitive fight.

The section beneath – the canopy,
Is a green, umbrella-like skin.
Two-thirds of the forest life lives here,
It's a noisy, lively din.
Birds, monkeys, frogs and sloths
In a maze of branches found there.
I'll warn you now – it's getting darker
As we travel downwards – beware.

The understory has smaller trees
In gaps where old ones have died.
The trees just grown as quickly as they can.
They have no time to decide.
Perhaps only fifteen metres in height
But all around the trees (and entwined)
Are the twisting, turning, green lianas
(or what you might call a vine).

The final layer is very dark
But I'll try to spread some light.
Dark through the day, perhaps light for minutes
And obviously dark through the night.
Because of the thick green layer above
The sunlight has little say.
Down in this layer – the forest floor
Things quickly, abruptly decay.

Remains are quickly recycled
From the ground and into the roots.
Rainforest life continues
In the form of new green shoots.

Questions:

1. What is the highest layer of the rainforest called? _____

2. Why do the trees grow so high? _____

3. Why does the poet use the words "umbrella-like"? _____

4. What does the word "din" mean? _____

5. Why do you think the branches are described as a maze? _____

6. Why is the final layer so dark? _____

7. What do you think of the last of the last four lines? Do you think they are a good end to the poem? Why/why not?
