1. Explain any two of the excerpts of poems given below with reference to their context:

(i) Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
A visitant that while it fans my cheek
Doth seem half conscious of the joy it brings
From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.

(ii) We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
Washed by time’s waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.

(iii) All humane things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, Monarchs must obey:

(iv) And thereupon That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
There’s many a one shall find out all heartache
On finding that her voice is sweet a
Replied, 'To be born woman is to kno,,rr-
Although they do not talk of it at school-
That we must labour to be beautiful.'

(v) Tyger! Tyger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry

(vi) I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov’d? were we not wean’d till
then?But suck’d we i’ the seaven sleepers den?

Ans: (b). The fourth stanza of William Butler Yeats' "Adam's Curse" is one of my favorite of all poetry. The poem is about love and work and the moon, of course. Here it is:

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,

- The mention of "love" seems to have shut them up. We wonder why. Perhaps each of them has their own heartache to consider.
- As they sit and think, the sun finally goes down. Yeats uses a simile here to compare the sunset to the "last embers" of a fire burning out.
- Notice the change in tone at this point? Yeats uses words like "last" and "die" to turn the poem from its milder, peaceful tone to one that gets a little more serious, a little heavier.

And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell

- The speaker describes the sky as "trembling blue-green." It sounds pretty, but how can a sky tremble?
- Perhaps a bit of personification is to blame, as the speaker gives a color combination the ability to feel nervous.
- Remember how the mention of love made all three of the characters in the poem go silent? They seem to be feeling a little shaky as they consider the state of their love lives.
- Ever notice how, when you are sad and heartbroken, even neutral things like the moon seem to be sad, too?
- That’s what’s at work here. The speaker’s sadness carries over into the way he sees the moon.
- Here’s another simile: the moon is compared to a shell, worn by the waves of the sea. That would make it nice and smooth, right?

Washed by time’s waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.

- The speaker continues this moon imagery in these next lines, instead of the sea washing over the shells to make them smooth, though, it’s time that has washed over the moon to smooth it out.
- The mention of love made our speaker consider time, and how it passes. The moon imagery is a way to make us consider the physical marks of time.
- Notice the sound play ("washed" and "waters") going on here? Check out the "Sound Check" for more on Yeats’ sonic tricks.

(b). All human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey:

- Dryden begins with a lofty commentary on mortality, God, and kings, his introduction to what we can only assume will be a grandiose epic of Homeric proportions.
- As we will soon discover, the entirety of the poem is written in rhymed heroic couplets, typical of the epic style. (Check out "Form and Meter" for more on how this poem is put together.)