**ROBERT FULTON TANNER:**

1. What does Robert Fulton Tanner use as a metaphor for life?
2. What is the tone of this poem?
3. Robert Tanner speaks in the 2nd Person point of view from line 8 on. This means he is speaking to “you”-- the audience. What animal does he use as a metaphor for you?
4. How do the feelings shown through his use of metaphor compare to his own experience with the rat?
5. Robert Tanner does an excellent job of illustrating himself in multiple roles. In the end, into which role do you think he best fits? Why?
6. What does Robert Tanner say is the “bait” that we all crave? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
7. Overall, how would you describe Robert Tanner’s attitude towards life?
8. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**CONSTANCE HATELY:**

1. What is the relationship between Constance Hately and Irene and Mary?
2. Why might the people of Spoon River feel the need to praise Constance?
3. How do the people of Spoon River feel towards Irene and Mary?
4. What did Constance do to deserve Irene and Mary’s contempt, or hatred?
5. How does Constance feel about how she treated Irene and Mary?
6. What is the “poison” she talking about in line 9 of the poem?
7. What does Constance admit in death that she was unable to admit in life?
8. How could have Constance been a better care giver?
9. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**JUDGE SOMERS:**

1. How does Judge Somers feel about himself? How do you know?
2. Why does he list famous political figures in his epitaph?
3. Why does the author feel it is necessary to provide footnotes in this poem? How do they add to the overall meaning, or theme, of the poem?
4. What about Chase Henry’s grave is ironic to Judge Somers? Why is it ironic?
5. How might Judge Somers feelings about himself be read as a flaw to his character?
6. Do you think Judge Somers was a good person or a bad person? What evidence in the poem gives you that idea?
7. How does the speaker of this poem personify Nature?
8. What type of grave do you suspect Judge Somers feels like should be buried beneath?
9. In your opinion, does the appearance of your grave reflect the value of your life once you are dead? Why?
10. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**DOC HILL:**

1. What does Doc Hill reveal about his motives, or reasons, for taking care of the people of the town?
2. How could this revelation be considered a flaw in his character?
3. What might Doc Hill mean by “my son went to the dogs”?
4. Overall, would you consider Doc Hill a good person or a bad person? Why?
5. How did the majority of people of Spoon River feel about Doc Hill?
6. What does the poem suggest about Em Stanton?
7. Seeing as how the poems of The Spoon River Anthology use the epitaphs to explain relationships, predict what the poem of Em Stanton might be about?
8. If you could make a suggestion to Doc Hill about how he could have made his life better, what might you suggest?
9. Why might this have been a sensitive subject in 1915?
10. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**OLLIE MCGEE:**

1. Who is the main subject of this epitaph? What does that tell us about the deceased?
2. What does the poem insinuate about the relationship between Ollie McGee and her husband? Which line specifically makes you feel that way?
3. What attitude best describes the speaker towards her husband? What lines in the text lead you to believe this?
4. What is the overall mood of this poem? Specifically, what words in the poem help to create this mood?
5. How does the deceased feel about herself?
6. In her opinion, what is the benefit of her death?
7. What is ironic about the third and forth lines of this poem?
8. Why might this have been a sensitive subject in 1915?
9. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**HOD PUTT:**

1. Look it up elsewhere: What is bankruptcy?
2. What do you think? Why is it ironic that a person who went bankrupt would end up richer than ever afterwards?
3. What does the text say? How did Hod Putt feel about the wealth of others?
4. What does the text say? How did he deal with his feelings?
5. What does the text say? What were his consequences?
6. What do you think? How were his consequences like bankruptcy?
7. What do you think? What does he mean by “we who took the bankrupt law in our respective ways sleep peacefully side by side”?
8. What do you think? Why did the author choose the word peacefully at the end of this poem rather than a more negative word?
9. What are at least two things he admits to in this poem that he might be more reluctant to admit to in his lifetime?
10. Why might this have been a sensitive subject in 1915?

**TRAINOR, THE DRUGGIST**

1. What are three pairs of things that Trainor compares to chemical reactions?
2. Why do you think that Trainor spends the majority of the poem talking about the Pantier family?
3. How might he find his own life very similar to that of Benjamin Pantier even though he has never been married?
4. List as many pairs of opposites as you can find within this poem. What might this suggest about the underlying meaning of the poem?
5. What metaphors are used within this poem to help us visualize the Pantier family? What image do these metaphors create?
6. How do you think Trainor feels about human relationships in comparison to chemical relationships?
7. Why might his true feelings about these types of relationships have been hard to admit while he was alive?
8. What instance of repetition do you find within the poem?

**Shack Dye**

1. What race is Shack Dye and how can we determine that from the epitaph?
2. What types of jokes do the white men of Spoon River play on Shack?
3. What is Shack Dye’s profession?
4. What would he have been in charge of in the early 1900s?
5. Why would this have been extremely important to the people of the town?
6. How might Shack Dye be comparing himself to the fish and leopards?
7. What does Shack mean in the last line when he says, “And you didn’t know any more than the horse-shoes did/What moved you about Spoon River”?
8. Why do you feel the white men of Spoon River felt it was okay to play these types of jokes on such an important member of their society?
9. What might have happened if Shack had retaliated?