

Questions on Africa by Maya Angelou:

1. How is Africa characterized in this poem? How is this characterization of Africa like and unlike that in “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” and “Something Like a Sonnet”?
2. What are the implications of the image of Africa as a woman? How does this image work in concert with the image of violence in this poem?
3. What is the significance and effect of the use of direct, imperative phrasing in the final stanza? What kinds of relationships among speaker, subject and reader might Angelou thereby build into the poem?
4. What are the effects of Angelou’s use of verbs in the poem, particularly in terms of the way the poem differentiates between kinds of action? How does the poem attribute agency and responsibility for certain actions?