

By using similes, metaphors or personification, a poet can make whatever he or she is describing more **vivid**, forceful and more lifelike in your mind. In this way, the poet creates an accurate picture or image of his subject.

- a) Read the following poem. Then answer the questions following.

Milking Before Dawn

In the drifting rain the cows in the yard are as black
And wet and shiny as rocks in an ebbing tide;
But they smell of the soil, as leaves lying under the trees
Smell of the soil, damp and steaming, warm.
The shed is an island of light and warmth, the night
Was water-cold and starless out in the paddock.

Crouched on the stool, hearing only the beat
The monotonous beat and hiss of the smooth machines,
The choking gasp of the cups, the rattle of hooves,
How easy to fall asleep again, to think
Of the man in the city asleep; he does not feel
The night encircle him, the grasp of mud.

But now the hills in the east return, are soft
And grey with mist, the night recedes, and the rain.
The earth as it turns towards the sun is young
Again, renewed, its history wiped away
Like the tears of a child. Can the earth be young again
And not the heart? let the man in the city sleep.

Ruth Dallas

1. a) Explain what the poet means when she compares the cows with rocks in the first two lines of the poem.
b) Is this comparison a simile or a metaphor?
2. Write down an example of **metaphor** from the first stanza and explain what the poet means by her comparison.
3. Explain what the poet means by the simile, "...its history wiped away/like the tears of a child".
4. When the poet says in the last line, "Let the man in the city sleep", she implies that she is not jealous of the city dweller's easier life-style. Judging from the poem as a whole, why do you think she is content?