**numeral—**number

**gender—**whether someone is male or female

**barracks—**a group of buildings where people might sleep

**blemishes—**a mark or spot that ruins the appearance of something; a mark on someone’s skin such as a pimple or bruise

**disinfecting—**getting rid of germs

**stench—**bad smell

**cubicles—**small enclose areas in a room

1. Who is the girl in the poem? Where is she and what is happening to her? What clues does the poet provide?
2. The word “deny” can have multiple meanings. Which of the following definitions do you think applies to the poem and why?

**▸ *verb*:**  refuse to let have  
**▸ *verb*:**   restrain yourself, especially from indulging in some pleasure  
**▸ *verb*:**  refuse to grant, as of a petition or request  
**▸ *verb*:**  declare untrue; contradict  
**▸ *verb*:**  refuse to accept or believe  
**▸ *verb*:**  refuse to recognize or acknowledge  
**▸ *verb*:**  deny formally (an allegation of fact by the opposing party) in a legal suit

1. A “line break” refers to where a poet chooses to end a line of poetry and begin a new one. Since poets do not have to adhere to (follow) traditional grammar rules, they often choose to end a line in the middle of a phrase or sentence for some purpose. Notice the line breaks between the first, second and third lines. Why do you think the poet chose to break up the sentence in this way? Do you notice any other interesting line breaks in the poem?
2. Why does the girl need to camouflage her skin?
3. What does the girl urge her sisters to eat? Why does she urge them to eat?
4. Notice that “to eat” is repeated four times throughout the poem. Find all the places this infinitive (You better know what that is by now!) appears in the poem and highlight or underline them. What do you notice about where “to eat” appears? What effect does the placement of “to eat” have on the reader?
5. Find the stanza that begins with “to swallow.” What is supposed to be swallowed? Why?
6. Find the stanza that begins with “to remember.” What is supposed to be remembered?
7. What promise keeps the girl alive? Why does this promise keep the girl alive?
8. What does this poem suggest about human nature?