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| Siren SongBY [MARGARET ATWOOD](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/margaret-atwood)This is the one song everyonewould like to learn: the songthat is irresistible:the song that forces mento leap overboard in squadronseven though they see the beached skullsthe song nobody knowsbecause anyone who has heard itis dead, and the others can't remember.Shall I tell you the secretand if I do, will you get meout of this bird suit?I don't enjoy it heresquatting on this islandlooking picturesque and mythicalwith these two feathery maniacs,I don't enjoy singingthis trio, fatal and valuable.I will tell the secret to you,to you, only to you.Come closer. This songis a cry for help: Help me!Only you, only you can,you are uniqueat last. Alasit is a boring songbut it works every time.1. What is the subject of this poem and who is the speaker? How can you tell? What allusion is the poem making?
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| Squadron: a group of soldiersBeached: something that has gotten stuck on a beach | This is the one song everyonewould like to learn: the songthat is irresistible:the song that forces mento leap overboard in squadronseven though they see the beached skullsthe song nobody knowsbecause anyone who has heard itis dead, and the others can't remember. | 1. Why do you think the poet broke the line between “squadrons” and “even though”? What other interesting line breaks can you find?
2. Why does is everyone who has heard the song dead? Why can’t other people remember the song?
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| Picturesque: beautiful or attractive enough to be in pictureManiac: crazy personTrio: a piece of music for three musicians to playFatal: deadly | Shall I tell you the secretand if I do, will you get meout of this bird suit?I don't enjoy it heresquatting on this islandlooking picturesque and mythicalwith these two feathery maniacs,I don't enjoy singingthis trio, fatal and valuable. I will tell the secret to you,to you, only to you.Come closer. This songis a cry for help: Help me!Only you, only you can,you are unique | 1. Notice that the speaker has started to use “you.” Who is the speaker talking to? Why is the speaker using “you”?
2. What words and phrases does the speaker use to create a negative tone towards her life? Why does she create such a negative tone towards her life? In other words, why is she trying to make her life sound so bad?
3. What does the speaker want from “you”?
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| Alas: an old word that means you are sad about something and wish it hadn’t happened. | at last. Alasit is a boring song but it works every time | 1. Why does the speaker say “at last”? What has just happened?
2. How has the tone shifted in this last stanza?
3. What is the song the speaker referring to in the last stanza?
4. Why does the song work every time if it is boring?
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1. What do you think the theme of this poem is? What might it be saying about human nature?