

ALASKA

1. What is this poem about? Describe the 'story' of the poem and find evidence to support your ideas.
2. This poem can be described as a dramatic monologue. What is this? Explain the definition and use an appropriate quotation to illustrate your explanation. Who is the poem addressed to? Provide evidence for your ideas.
3. The tone on the poem could be described as: angry; bitter; cynical? Which of these words, if any, do you think best suits the tone of the poem? What other words can you think of to describe the tone? Find a quotation for each of the words you choose.
4. Why do you think the speaker refers to himself as the 'own prince'? You may need to research the definition of the word before providing an answer to the question.
5. What was the woman's life like before she left? Is it depicted as comfortable, easy, or happy? What evidence do you have for your ideas?
6. What sort of life does the speaker envisage his ex-girlfriend is living now? What words or phrases from the poem support your opinion?
7. What words or phrases hint at a cold, desecutive or even violent relationship between the speaker and his ex-girlfriend? Analyse the words and phrases that you choose.
8. When the speaker describes the time he 'came within a mile / of missing you' what is it about his ex-partner that he misses? What might this suggest to us about their relationship?
9. What does the speaker think of the woman's new relationship? What evidence do you have for your ideas? What do phrases like, 'nodding donkeys' and 'further west' imply?
10. What do you notice about the structure and form of the poem? Why do so many of the lines run on to the next and subsequent lines and even into other stanzas? Why has Armitage split the poem into stanzas when so many lines run on? What does the use of stanzas add, if otherwise, to the poem?
11. What do you think of the last line of the poem? Is it threatening or sad or pathetic or something else? Explain your ideas.
12. Why do you think Armitage called the poem 'Alaska'?