

Theme. The main idea seems to be best summarized in stanza 6. We should neither trust in the future nor dwell on the past, but live in the present and act under the direction of God.

Oral Reading

This is another poem with a trochaic meter; observe again the serious theme and sober mood. The poem can be sung to the tune of "I Would Love Thee" or "Take My Heart, O Father."

Read the first stanza with a touch of annoyance in the voice. Draw out *mournful numbers*, and emphasize *dead* and *not* (line 4). Change to an earnest, assertive tone in the second stanza.

In stanza 3, line 1, the accents need to be altered so that the second *not* is properly emphasized. Read the first two lines of stanza 4 at a normal volume, and the next two lines a little more slowly and softly.

In stanzas 5 and 6, each exclamatory line should be read as a rousing challenge. The tone used in the last stanza should suggest steady, unflagging labor and perseverance.

Answer Key

1. How can a person's soul be slumbering (a) in the sense that the author meant? (b) in a spiritual sense? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:6.)

 - A person's soul is slumbering if he is preoccupied with sorrow, pleasure, or other things that draw his attention away from the most important things in life.
 - A person's soul is slumbering spiritually if he is not alert to the spiritual dangers around him.
2. What comparisons are used to describe each of the following?

 - a dissatisfying, unfulfilling life
 - our heartbeats
 - life as a temporary sojourn
 - the example of our lives
 - a person discouraged by misfortune
 - an empty dream
 - muffled funeral marches
 - the bivouac of life
 - footprints in the sands of time
 - a forlorn and shipwrecked brother