

Name _____

The Cremation of Sam McGee

Reading Guide

Answer the following questions as you read the poem.

STANZA 1	1. What is the setting of the poem?	
STANZA 1	2. "That would make your blood run cold" is an idiom. What does it mean?	
STANZA 1	3. What does line 8 reveal that the speaker will explain in the poem?	
STANZA 1	4. <i>Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge</i> Based on its context, what is a "marge"?	
STANZA 2	5. Describe Sam McGee.	
STANZA 2	6. What does the speaker wonder about Sam McGee?	
STANZA 2	7. Why did Sam McGee stay in the Yukon even though he was "always cold?"	
STANZA 2	8. "...the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell." What type of figurative is this and what does it tell the reader about the Yukon?	
STANZA 2	9. How did Sam feel about the North? Why wouldn't he leave?	
STANZA 3	10. What were Sam McGee and the speaker doing?	

STANZA 3	11. Why is it significant that they were traveling on Christmas Day?	
STANZA 3	12. How does the speaker emphasize how cold it was?	
STANZA 3	13. What does the speaker admit about Sam McGee in this stanza?	
STANZA 4	14. Why did the men sleep beneath the snow?	
STANZA 4	15. "And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe." What is the mood in this quote?	
STANZA 4	16. What does Sam McGee mean when he says he'll "cash in" on this trip?	
STANZA 5	17. How does the speaker treat Sam?	
STANZA 5	18. What was Sam McGee's request?	
STANZA 6	19. How does the speaker respond to Sam's request?	
STANZA 6	20. Name a clue that Sam is going to die.	
STANZA 6	21. What happened to Sam McGee? Why?	
STANZA 7	22. How does the mood change in this stanza?	
STANZA 7	23. Why does the speaker refer to the Yukon as a "land of death?"	
STANZA 7	24. Why could the speaker not get rid of Sam McGee's body?	
STANZA 7	25. How does the speaker feel about the promise he has made?	

STANZA 8	26. What is the "stern code" of the trail?	
STANZA 8	27. Why does the speaker "curse that load" as he is traveling?	
STANZA 8	28. How does the image of the howling dogs add to the mood of this stanza?	
STANZA 9	29. How does the trip become more miserable for the speaker?	
STANZA 9	30. How does the speaker start to act crazy in this stanza?	
STANZA 10	31. What did the speaker find at the shore of Lake Lebarge?	
STANZA 10	32. What did the speaker decide to do with his friend's body?	
STANZA 11	33. How did the speaker cremate his friend's body?	
STANZA 12	34. Why did the speaker leave while his friend was being cremated?	
STANZA 12	35. Why was the speaker sweating even though it was cold outside?	
STANZA 13	36. Why is the speaker all of a sudden freaked out?	
STANZA 13	37. Why do you think the speaker made inappropriate jokes at this point?	
STANZA 14	38. What surprise does Service throw at the reader in this stanza?	
STANZA 14	39. How is Sam feeling? WHY?	
STANZA 15	40. Why does Service repeat the first 8 lines of the poem again?	