

Unseen - Poetry | Sample Answer

Do you find the poet's reaction to the lamb in the poem surprising? Explain your answer with reference to the poem.

(Question 1, 2019)

At first, I found the poet's reaction to the poem surprising. He states "I have nowhere to hide" upon facing a lamb. I initially thought this meant he was intimidated by the lamb, possibly suggesting unfamiliarity among animals. I was shocked that he would have this fear of a small lamb, seen when he describes "the two black eyes" peering up at him.

However, when I continued reading this poem, I discovered that he was not consumed by fear, but rather by guilt. The poet felt guilt as he was about to slaughter the innocent lamb. As I reread the description of the poet's emotion facing the lamb, the poet's reaction was no longer surprising. He describes the innocence of the lamb "two black eyes peer up at me", showing the lamb's inferiority. The line "I have nowhere to hide" also takes new meaning after the first read, as we now see the poet feels guilt rather than intimidation.