

**10th Grade
ELA/Reading
Crunch Time**



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Responses to Change

Responses to Change



**"When the wind of change blows, some
build walls while others build windmills."**

—Chinese proverb

The Starry Night

PAINTING

The Starry Night

Vincent van Gogh

POEM

The Starry Night

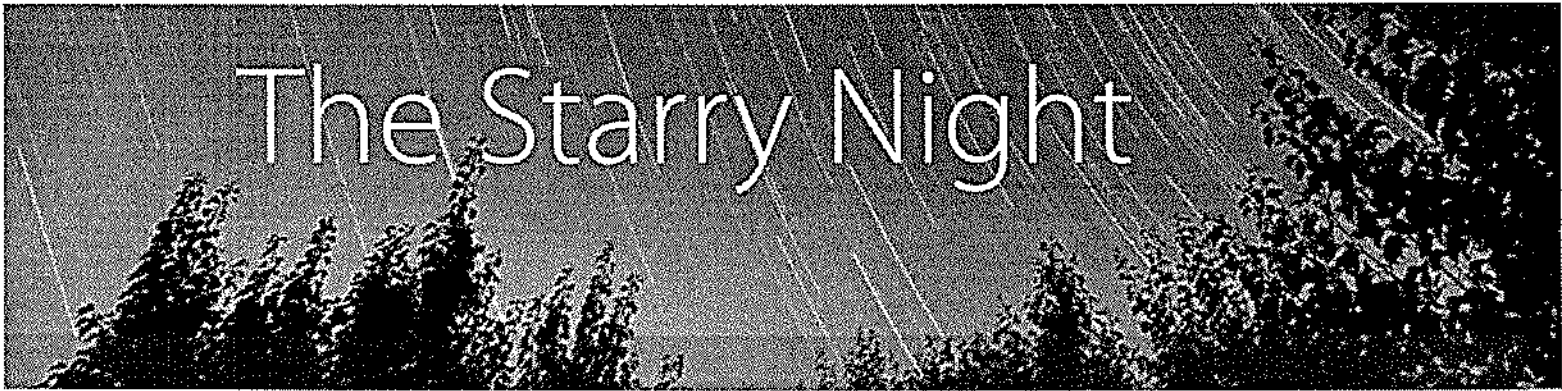
Anne Sexton

SCIENCE WRITING

Life After People

Dolores Vasquez

Background In June 1889, Vincent van Gogh painted *The Starry Night* during a stay at an asylum in Saint-Remy, in southern France. The painting is of the view outside of his window, although the depiction of the village comes partly from van Gogh's imagination. The church spire resembles of the architecture of the Netherlands, van Gogh's home. *The Starry Night* has been part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City since 1941. Almost a century later, Anne Sexton wrote her poem "The Starry Night" (based on van Gogh's painting). The poem opens with a quote from a letter from van Gogh to his brother Theo.



The Starry Night (painting) Vincent van Gogh
The Starry Night (poem) Anne Sexton

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) was a Dutch impressionist artist. His first profession was as an art dealer, but he soon turned to making his own art. Between November 1881 and July 1890, van Gogh painted almost 900 paintings. He sold only one painting in the course of his life, but became one of the most famous and influential artists in history. Van Gogh suffered from mental illness and anxiety throughout his life. At the age of 37, he died from a gunshot wound that most think was self-inflicted, although a gun was never found.



Anne Sexton (1928–1974) was an American poet born in Massachusetts. Married at 20, she worked for a time as a fashion model, gave birth to two children, and then, at age twenty-eight, began writing poetry. Known for her personal, confessional style, Sexton won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967. Like van Gogh, she spent time in several mental hospitals, and her poems often display a storm of emotions. Describing her own work, Sexton said, "Poetry should almost hurt."



1. **READ** ▶ As you view the painting,
 - write notes in the margin about what your eyes are drawn to first in the painting.
 - locate the following images: cypress trees, stars, the moon, the village.

The Starry Night by Vincent Van Gogh



The Starry Night
Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890)
Saint Rémy, June 1889. Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 1/4" (73.7 x 92.1 cm).
Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

2. **◀ REREAD** Study the painting again. Then, consider this quote from van Gogh to his brother Theo: "Looking at the stars always makes me dream. Why, I ask myself, shouldn't the shining dots of the sky be as accessible as the black dots on the map of France?" In what ways does van Gogh make the stars accessible? In what ways do the stars contrast with the village?

3. **READ** ▶ As you read the poem, collect and cite text evidence.
- Underline imagery that relates to the stars and moon.
 - Circle language that refers to the town.
 - In the margin, make an inference about the night based on the language Sexton uses.

The Starry Night

by Anne Sexton

*That does not keep me from having a terrible need of—I shall
say the word—religion. Then I go out at night to paint the stars.
—Vincent Van Gogh in a letter to his brother*

The town does not exist
5 except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

10 It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
15 I want to die:

into that rushing beast of the night.
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
20 no cry.

Background Human beings are a fairly recent arrival on Earth. In fact, many archaeologists estimate that *Homo sapiens* have been here for about 200,000 years, a fraction of the lifetime of Earth—approximately 4.6 billion years. In those 200,000 years, human beings have left their mark on the planet. But what would happen if we suddenly disappeared? The article below, accompanied by photographs from HISTORY's television show "Life After People," illustrates what a planet without people might look like.

Life After People

Article by Dolores Vasquez

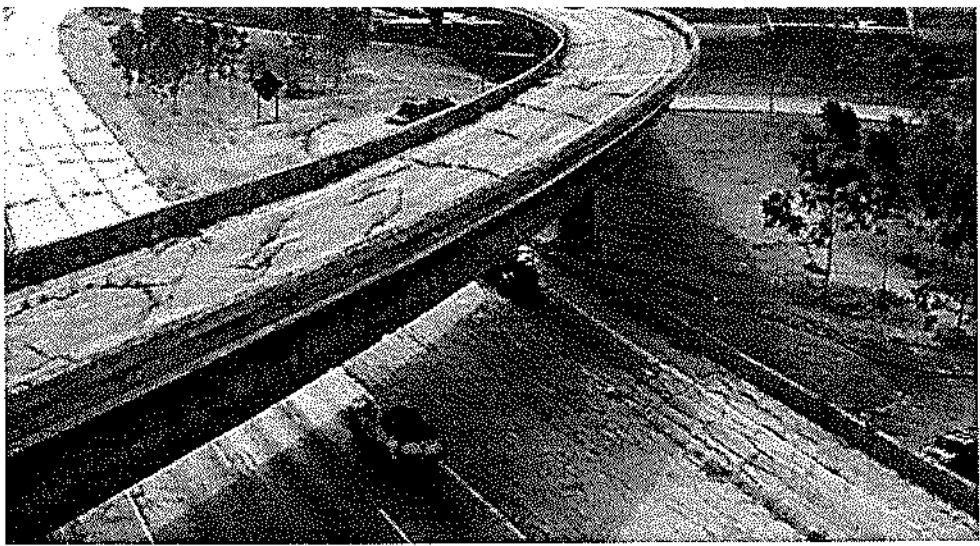
CLOSE READ
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–12, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
 - Circle the question at the beginning of the article.
 - In the margin, paraphrase the central idea in lines 2–4, and underline the details that support it.
 - In the margin, explain the central idea in lines 5–12.

What would the world be like if people suddenly disappeared?

Imagine the immediate consequences: wrecks from driverless cars and planes; saucepans boiling over; startled dogs dragging their leashes down deserted streets. But what happens later?

- 10 Without people to fuel them, power plants stop providing electricity—within hours. We use electricity to make toast and to power TVs and computers, but the absence of electric energy has huge effects on an Earth void of human population. Without electricity, gas tanks are not kept cold; gases such as chlorine and natural gas heat up and escape the tanks into the air. Animals die from the freed chlorine fumes, and the natural gas causes explosions and uncontrolled fires. Within days, treatment facilities are at a standstill and sewage begins to poison rivers and lakes.



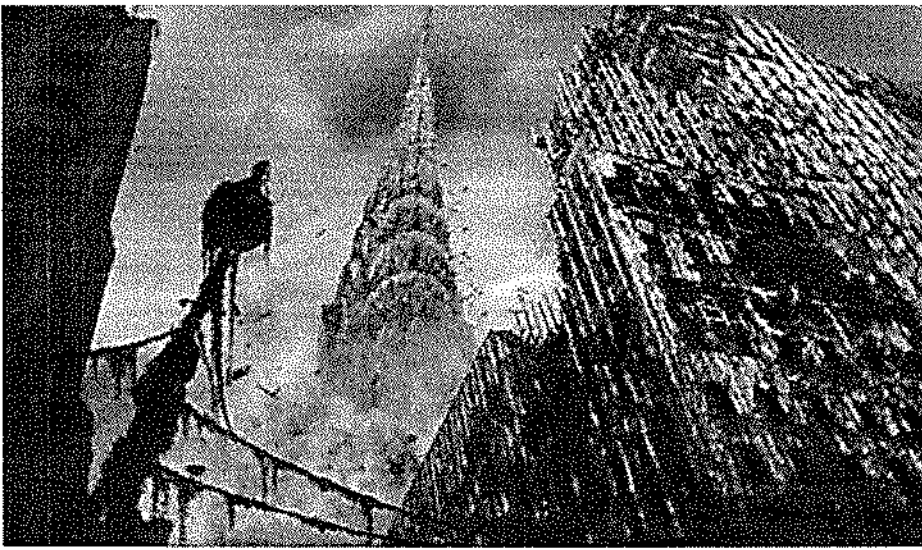
After one year, plants and shrubs begin to overrun the highway system in Los Angeles.

By the end of the first week, pets that have run out of food in their homes must escape and try to survive in the new environment. The larger dogs form packs and prey on smaller animals. Dairy cattle die of thirst in their pens, and their bodies may provide food for scavenging dogs. Cows that were raised as food, however, will eventually establish huge herds on the plains, reinterpreting the lifestyle of the buffalo in the 1800s. Zoo animals that had been restrained by electric fences wander city streets. But within weeks, many animals leave the cities to the mice, rats, and squirrels.

Meanwhile, at nuclear power plants, the cooling ponds for spent fuel rods get hotter and hotter. Soon the water boils away, and the rods cause fires and release radiation into the air, where it is carried by the wind. Plants and animals in affected areas die.

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 1–12. Then, write a summary of the text so far, including essential supporting details.

3. **▶ READ** As you read lines 13–24, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Circle time-order words or phrases that introduce chronological events.
 - In the margin, explain how the author develops her ideas and shows a relationship between events.



After 200 years of neglect, the rusted skeleton of the Chrysler Building in New York finally collapses.

After several months, the radiation in the air is no longer a danger, and those animals that have survived begin to follow their new lives. And by the end of a year, rains have washed the radioactive pollution from the surface of the land.

Over the next fifteen years, the roads get overgrown and cracked. Yards and gardens grow wild, and some animals make their homes in urban areas. Packs of dogs still roam the cities and countryside. Some sports stadiums become giant bat caves. As time passes, the roofs of buildings cave in, and trees and other plants grow in what used to be the indoors. Windows fall, paint is eroded, and concrete cracks. Plants begin to blanket the cities. Pet parrots—whose life span can be 60 years—may form flocks, still speaking the words they had been taught by their human owners.

4. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 13–24. List several cause-and-effect relationships to show a connection between events.

5. **▶ READ** As you read lines 25–48, continue to cite textual evidence.
- Circle each time-order word or phrase that introduces an event in chronological order.
 - In the margin, explain how the author develops her ideas and shows a relationship among events.

