1. (a) ‘petals’ (line 7); ‘Spring’ (line 7); ‘flower’ (line 11); ‘snow’ (line 12); ‘roses’ (line 19) and ‘rain’ (line 20)
   (b) ‘carefully’ (line 12)
2. This is an example of a simile.
3. (a) Although this seems like a paradox, something extremely delicate and seemingly vulnerable that excites such a strong reaction from the observer can have ‘power’ (line 14). This power could be to lead the observer to intervene, protect or any other emotive response in direct response to the quality of ‘fragility’.
   (b) The subject’s fragility provokes a strong response in the speaker: He is inspired to appreciate her all the more as her tiniest gesture draws him in and causes him to declare his undying love for her, perhaps until death separates them. She has the power to move him, to cause him to experience a wide range of emotions he is unfamiliar with, and which he cannot explain or justify.
4. (a) The poem is full of mystery as the speaker attempts to articulate the inexplicable, intangible allure; there is a sense of magical enchantment at play.
   (b) The imagery of travelling into previously unknown territory contributes to the sense of the speaker trying to explain the inexplicable. The images of advance and retreat, opening and closing, and the wonder of the minute elements of nature all combine to create the sense of mystery, charm and magical appeal.
5. The speaker compares his metaphorical journey in this relationship to travelling in foreign, previously unknown lands. This is unchartered territory for him as he has clearly never experienced a connection to another in this way before. He appears willing to embark on this adventure as he ‘gladly’ (line 1) succumbs to her bidding to venture ‘beyond’ (line 1) the known. Her power to move him seems akin to opening up vistas of a new world with ‘the colour of its countries’ (line 15) compelling him to declare his devotion to her.
6. The unusual use of punctuation gives fresh significance to words, images and phrases, prompting the reader to take an active role to decode the possible meanings. For example, the use of parenthesis
almost seems to have the opposite effect of its conventional use as we examine the ‘touching skilfully, mysteriously’ (line 8) and the confession-like whisper of the final stanza. The lack of capital letters renders the first-person ‘i’ insignificant, at the mercy of the subject’s charms, while the capital for ‘Spring’ (line 7) awards the season with power and stature. The unusual sentence structure compels the reader to take time to unravel possible layers. For instance, ‘you open always petal by petal myself’ (line 7) gives ‘always’ prominence, and suggests the careful painstaking opening she applies to reach the speaker and his inability to resist.
'First Day after the War' (page 34)

1. The 'young blades of grass' (line 3), the 'open space' (line 9), the 'mountains and the pathways' (line 10) and the 'waterfalls' (line 15) all suggest that the poem's events take place in the countryside.

2. Their joy and excitement needed vocal and physical expression so they ran to a place where they could vent their emotions.
3. Literally, 'footprints' (line 4) would be the physical imprint on the ground made by feet; figuratively, it may refer to the lasting impact of another's actions, words or behaviour. Literally, the 'young blades' (line 3) could refer to freshly grown grass, while figuratively this may allude to young men, eager to experience excitement.

4. (a) When someone is 'shook up' (line 12) this usually refers to their being disturbed, unsettled or perhaps startled by some shock or fright.

(b) This may refer to the speakers' action of physically shaking an old man as they try to convey the joy of the news.

(c) The 'old man' (line 12) could be symbolic of the older generation who have endured many disappointments and who are wary of believing the good news. It may allude to the cynics who are reluctant to embrace the joy of the moment, or even old folk who are hard of hearing, asleep or in some way uncomprehending of the situation.

5. The capital letter used for 'Ancestors' (line 18) gives the word status, and this is amplified by the forebears 'travelling tall' (line 18) as they take pride and satisfaction in the recent development. The effectiveness of the final line is achieved through the image created, that of the spiritual world paying tribute and also enjoying what has come to pass, as the silhouettes are visible 'on the horizon' (line 18). The alliteration in 'travelling tall' (line 18) adds to the impact of the line. Thus, both the content itself and the way in which it is conveyed, make this an effective final line for the poem.
dying. It is wasteful, pointless, and only serves to advance the political aspirations of greedy, reckless leaders.

‘The Zulu Girl’ (page 42)

1. The use of the colour ‘red’ (line 1) may suggest a red-tinted dust that coats the land, or the harsh yellow of the sun’s rays making the land seem like it is smouldering like the remaining coals after a fire.

2. ‘Sun’, ‘hot’ and ‘smoulder’ (line 1): burning, flameless fire ‘sweating’ (line 2): perspiring from heat and physical exertion ‘unquenched unsmotherable heat’ (line 14): unrelenting heat that cannot be eased by liquid or by blocking it out

3. The words ‘curbed ferocity’ (line 15) could refer to the restrained or controlled fierceness or strong passion of the oppressed indigenous inhabitants, the ‘beaten tribes’ (line 15), whose anger lies just beneath the surface.

4. The child literally drinks or ‘imbibes’ (line 13) its mother’s breast milk, but on a figurative level also takes in or absorbs the emotions, beliefs and ideas of its mother. The child is ‘fed’ a diet of values from a young age, and so inherits the mother’s attitudes and dreams.

5. The opening stanza adopts a sympathetic tone as the poet exposes the harsh conditions where ‘the sweating gang’ (line 2) labours. Likewise, the girl’s child is ‘tormented’ (line 4) by flies. The second stanza portrays the mother as loving and nurturing as she ‘caresses’ (line 7) her child’s hair while she tends to him. The tone of the third stanza is positive as the scene appears tranquil and serene: The child feeds ‘like a puppy’ (line 10), and the mother’s tired satisfaction is captured by ‘languors’ (line 11) and ‘sighing’ (line 12). The interruption of ‘Yet’ (line 13) alerts us to the shift in tone as the threatening ‘curbed ferocity’ (line 15) of those ‘beaten tribes’ (line 15) intrudes on the peaceful scene. The tone of foreboding and danger finds expression in the ‘cloud so terrible and still’ (line 19) that warns of a looming confrontation once the ferocity is unleashed.

‘Ibadan’ (page 45)
An African Elegy’ (page 48)

1. African people are ‘miracles’ (line 1), ‘precious’ (line 3), ‘able to sing and dream sweet things’ (line 10), they ‘never curse’ (line 11) but rather ‘bless’ (lines 14 and 15), their ‘music is so sweet’ (line 16) and they live life ‘gently’ (line 23) and ‘with hope’ (line 24). Africa, the land, is positive as the air ‘is warm’ (line 11), the fruit ‘tastes so good’ (line 12) and the land has both ‘wonder’ (line 25) and ‘surprise’ (line 26), while the ‘ocean is full of songs’ (line 28).

2. The speaker suggests that in their endurance and optimism, the people are rare and unusual, they have worth and value.

3. The ‘they’ of line 21 may be the ‘dead’ giving the speaker advice, and his careful noting of their words could imply respect for them and their views.

4. The speaker’s message is centred on reconciling negatives in a positive way: the ‘suffering’ (line 4) will turn into ‘wonders’ (line 5); the negative of ‘burn’ (line 6) will become ‘golden’ (line 7); ‘poverty’ (line 9) is drowned out with song and sweet dreams; despite ‘pain’ (line 14), ‘We bless things’ (line 14). Thus, each negative element is transformed into a positive.

5. To live ‘gently/With fire’ (lines 23–24) may mean to live peacefully, not to cause harm to others or one’s surroundings, yet to be able to feel deeply and passionately. It could suggest not allowing strong emotions to spill over and become destructive; perhaps to have strong convictions and principles, but to maintain respect and consideration for the world being inhabited.
6. No, Okri’s message is perfectly believable and plausible in that there are many living in Africa in dire poverty who remain cheerful and convinced that a better life lies ahead. There is much talk of this being the African century, and as the continent continues to develop and prosper, so lives will improve and poverty and pain will be greatly diminished.

OR

Yes, Okri is being hopeful and positive with no valid reason for his claims. People simply have to believe that matters will eventually improve, as to contemplate anything else would be intolerable. Africa will continue to be exploited by resource-hungry foreigners who will do little to improve the lives of Africans. Power-hungry dictators will continue to cling to power and the wealth of African countries will only be enjoyed by an elite minority while the majority continue to scrape out an existence.

‘Vultures’ (page 52)

1. To ‘nestle’ is to make oneself physically comfortable, perhaps with a cushion, or to physically snuggle close to another for warmth or
'Vultures' (page 52)

1. To ‘nestle’ is to make oneself physically comfortable, perhaps with a cushion, or to physically snuggle close to another for warmth or comfort.

2. This line is meant to be understood figuratively. If the head were literally ‘bashed in’ the vulture would be dead. In this instance, the vulture’s appearance is described as so unappealing or ugly that the head looks almost disfigured.

3. There is an interesting set of contrasts implied through the choice of the phrase ‘harbingers/of sunbreak’ (lines 3–4). In one sense, the appearance of the carrion birds are in fact messengers or symbols of death as their presence indicates a corpse in the vicinity. In this instance, however, they are heralding the dawn which is a positive, if inverted, turn of phrase.

4. Yes, it is an appropriate comparison. On one level, both the vultures and the Commandant provoke disgust and repulsion – the vultures for their habits and behaviour, and the Commandant for his occupation overseeing the genocide of his fellow human beings. In both instances, the poet shows the disconcerting evidence of warmth and affection: The vultures appear to enjoy each other’s company and are affectionate towards each other; the Commandant buys a treat for his son, showing his ability to feel love for another. The poet seems to find the ‘goodness’ amidst the savagery and brutality alarming, but undeniable.

OR

No, this comparison seems inappropriate. By drawing a parallel between the Commandant and the vultures, the poet suggests that the vultures are as horrifying and evil as a person who oversaw the genocide of millions of people. This is unfair to the vultures that pick at corpses and ‘oversee’ others’ deaths as a means of salvation.
Although the poet seems to suggest that there can be goodness amidst savagery and brutality, it is inappropriate to suggest that the natural behaviour of vultures is on par with that of the Nazi Commandant.

While the co-existence of ‘kindred love’ (line 49) with the ‘perpetuity of evil’ (lines 50–51) is explored convincingly in the poem, it is difficult to label an animal as ‘evil’ for simply acting on its instincts and in accordance with its design. After all, the vultures provide a vital service in our ecosystem so they surely cannot be termed ‘evil’. On the other hand, man has a conscience and a choice, and even if he has ‘evil’ impulses, he can, and must, repress them. Human nature is complex and nuanced as no individual can be entirely good or entirely wicked, but one can overpower the other if the impulse is permitted to do so.
1. ‘passed on’ OR ‘no more’ (OR any other gentle way of stating ‘dead’)

2. The speaker says, ‘our future that you planned’ (line 6), which implies that the couple planned to spend many more years together.

3. Given that the speaker is dying, the ‘counsel’ possibly refers to the loved one giving advice as to how she could fight the disease or ‘corruption’ (line 11) by taking medication, resting, getting fresh air or other well-meaning suggestions. Alternatively, it could simply refer to the attempt to give comfort in a difficult situation.

4. The ‘beloved’ might be a committed companion who shows his affection through the physical closeness of holding her ‘by the hand’
(line 3), and whose persuasive appeal causes her to abandon the intention to leave, but rather ‘turning stay’ (line 4). The beloved might be an optimist, since he liked to imagine their future that he ‘planned’ (line 6), or he might be an organised individual who likes to anticipate and prepare for future eventualities. He is supportive and loving, as he would ‘counsel’ and ‘pray’ (line 8) as she lay on her deathbed and he grieves at her passing.

5. The poem is divided into two parts, in keeping with its Petrarchan or Italian sonnet form. The octave focuses on remembering aspects of the relationship and has a sad, mournful tone. The sestet is signified by the use of a new sentence beginning with ‘Yet’ (line 9), alerting the reader to a shift in direction. The sestet adopts a more comforting tone as it explores the process of forgetting, and the speaker appears to be encouraging the grieving partner to move on with his life. Thus, the choice of form of the poem contributes to the reader’s appreciation and understanding of its content.

6. The fact that the speaker wants the loved one to ‘forget and smile’ (line 13) suggests that she is ‘thoughtful’ and cares for his future happiness without her. She could be considered ‘self-sacrificing’ in telling him not to feel guilty if he forgets her, but this would imply that she really wants to be remembered but will sacrifice this desire out of concern for him, which is not supported by the poem. If she were egocentric, she would insist on never being forgotten, which is contrary to the poem’s message.
and missed opportunities where children have been denied the chance at life with all its potential.

‘Motho Ke Motho Ka Batho Babang’ (page 59)

1. The mirror allows the prisoner to see and receive communication beyond the restricted vision of the cell’s confines.

2. A prisoner is busy ‘polishing a doorhandle’ (line 4), which is hardly a crucial task.

3. The signal of bunched fingers to the forehead, miming a badge on an ‘imaginary cap’ (line 11), is visual ‘shorthand’ to indicate the presence of a guard.

4. Cronin uses conventional language to communicate with the reader. The poem incorporates a description of the sign language used by prisoners to communicate silently to one another, with the explanations of the visual gestures being interpreted in parenthesis. The guard’s authoritative demand in Afrikaans and the submissive spoken response are indicated by the use of italics. Thus, this unnatural world is conveyed through the use of various communication tools.

5. The informal, colloquial register of the narrative makes the poem seem like the speaker is speaking directly to the reader; the direct speech captures the speech patterns used and so makes the exchange authentic and convincing.

6. The human need for communication with fellow beings is demonstrated in the poem as prisoners would risk the wrath and punishment of breaking the rules just to have some contact with one another. This demonstrates just how cruel, unnatural and difficult it must be to endure the deprivation of the isolated prisoner. This form of punishment is favoured for political prisoners as it would prohibit the ‘subversive’ ideas that such prisoners would want to spread.

7. The poem is an excellent demonstration of the concept of ubuntu as we see how the isolated prisoner only feels fully human through the connection with another. The fellow prisoner is also aware of this and is prepared to risk unpleasant consequences for his defiance in reaching out to a fellow prisoner.

‘At a Funeral’ (page 62)

1. The speaker’s grief and anger can be seen through their lamentation that will not return.
voice was indeed hers and not another woman.

‘Felix Randal’ (page 116)

1. Randal had not only been ‘anointed’ (line 6), which prepared his soul for the afterlife but the speaker’s use of ‘ransom’ (line 7) tells us he believes Randal was saved.
2. From being a strapping ‘hardy-handsome’ (line 2) man ‘powerful amidst peers’ (line 13), Felix Randal became physically weak ‘Pining, pining’ (line 3) as he succumbed to the illness that ‘broke him’ (line 5).

3. The word ‘mould’ means shape or recognisable form. In this instance, it is used to denote a physical ‘type’ or physique: that of a large, strong man. The word also has the connotation of influencing or guiding someone’s character. This is also appropriate in the context of the poem, as the speaker, the priest, converts his parishioner, Felix Randal, and moulds his ‘heavenlier heart’ (line 6).

4. The poem begins with quite a detached, unaffected tone as the death of Randal is commented on and the reaction is merely ‘my duty all ended’ (line 1). The octave relates the progression of Randal’s diminishing health and his religious growth, but the speaker seems resigned and accepting of the inevitability of the death. In contrast, the sestet reveals the loss and pain of the speaker as the distressed tone conveys: ‘Thy tears that touched my heart’ (line 11).

5. Dealing with others’ pain and fears must be emotionally difficult, as the priest needs to provide comfort and assistance while protecting his own emotional state. While the speaker in this poem seems to be able to keep his emotions in check in the octave, the raw grief expressed later in the poem tells us how emotionally involved this priest became. Constant experiences of grief frequently repeated must surely be emotionally destabilising, and might ultimately lead to a personal breakdown. Thus, if the poem reflects Hopkins’ experience, he could be considered effective as a provider of comfort to the dying, but possibly at significant personal cost.
...a gothic horror tale for instance, a house of bones could refer to the gruesome evidence of a serial killer’s labour.

‘Funeral Blues’ (page 125)

1. ‘Blues’ can refer to a depressed mood, when someone is feeling unhappy. Given that the poem is about grief, this is certainly appropriate. It can also apply to a type of music that is characterised by its soulful, sad mood, which also applies to the content of the poem.

2. The contrast of the colours black and white comes to the fore. The white necks of doves need to be marked with a black ribbon (line 7), while the traffic policemen must exchange their usual white gloves for black (line 8). This shows the depth of the speaker’s bereavement as he wants the public acknowledgement of the death of this individual to be apparent.
3. This was clearly a very close relationship. This stanza expresses the joy of time spent together, whether it was the day-to-day humdrum of the working week or the leisure of a weekend (line 10). The reader can infer from ‘my talk, my song’ (line 11) that this couple shared many conversations and were happy. The depth of loss is amplified by the fact that the loved one was ‘my North, my South, my East and West’ (line 9); clearly, the partner provided the speaker with direction, purpose, guidance and security. The simple comparisons used in this stanza are most evocative as their sincerity rings true and is immediately grasped.

4. While readers may respond differently, most will find the poem moving. The simple diction of the poem, the ordinary scenes used, and the recognisable references make it effortless for most people to relate to. The way the speaker expresses his grief through the domestic scene, the public sphere and ultimately the universe, allows us to glimpse the pain and deep loss being experienced. The simplicity of ‘I was wrong’ (line 12) is searing, and the reader is able to get an inkling of the speaker’s feelings. The sentiment that there is nothing good left in the world, nor will there ever be, rings true.
1. The children are excited and delighted at the imminent storm, while the adults rush about fearfully trying to prepare defences against the storm.

2. ‘Like a plague of locusts’ (line 6) or ‘Like dark sinister wings’ (line 13)

3. (a) No. At the outset, the wind is definitely the more powerful of the elements, as the wind seems to drag the clouds along, as if taking the initiative and being the leader. The ‘Pregnant clouds/Ride stately’ (lines 10–11) on the back of the wind, so again the wind seems to have the edge.

(b) The way the clouds perch on hills ‘Like dark sinister wings’ (line 13) as if waiting their moment is ominous. At this stage the clouds seem more threatening. The wind makes a lot of noise and announces the coming storm, but the real danger comes along with those clouds. The wind ‘whistles by’ (lines 14, 25) but it is allowed to pass, whereas it is the ‘blinding flashes’ (line 30) that pose the real danger.

4. The contrasting content is reflected in the division into three stanzas. The first and second stanzas describe the coming storm and its build up, while the third stanza turns to the effect of the storm on human existence. The form of the line arrangements also contributes to the impact of the content: The irregular line lengths and one-word lines capture the unpredictable nature of the storm as it changes direction erratically, speeds up, stalls and lingers.

5. The poem follows the build-up of the storm and culminates in its explosive release. This is most effective as the tension builds and the scene is set. It seems evident that this was the purpose of
1. The phrases, 'Where I used to play' (line 4) and 'That so many sweet flowers bore' (line 8), prove that the speaker's memories are pleasant ones.

2. In this context, 'midst' (line 3) means 'in the middle'.

3. The new structures could have been presented in a positive light as signs of progress and transforming a wasteland. Similarly, the speaker might have praised the newly established graveyard as the ideal final resting place and admired the development.

4. The alliteration of the phrase 'binding with briars' (line 12) draws our attention. The image of the priests in 'black gowns' (line 11) who seem too intent on repressing all joy and employ restrictive measures as they close off all paths with barriers of thorns is effective.

5. The speaker disapproves of the development that has taken place. Adding to his dismay at the radical change to a favourite childhood meeting place is the hostile nature of the church and its graveyard. This is at odds with what one expects from a church as this one does not welcome visitors and seems repressive, strict and joyless. Perhaps the poet intends this as a general observation of the effect of organised religion and the power it has to clamp down on pleasure.