dear Grade 10s

please read this poem ‘gentling a wildcat’ and use your dictionary to establish the meaning of the words in bold. I will post the analysis of the poem and the questions later on.

I hope you are working on the english work that I have sent so far. I will send the answers to last week’s work shortly.

Please ‘like’ or comment on the work on facebook so that I can see if you are working on it.

YOu should also be reading other books for pleasure. try not to spend too much time on social media or watching tv. Remember to be positive and healthy.

I wish you luck and I really miss teaching you.

your beloved teacher: M.Green

**GENTLING A WILDCAT BY DOUGLAS LIVINGSTONE**

Not much wild life, roared Mine **leonine** Host 1  
from the fringe of a forest of crackles  
round an old dome-headed steam radio,  
between hotel and river – a mile of bush –  
except for the wildcats and jackals. 5

And he, of these parts for years, was right.  
That evening I **ventured** with no **trepidations**  
and a torch, **towed** by the **faculty**I cannot understand, that has got me  
into too many situations. 10

Under a tree, in filtered moonlight,  
a ragged heap of dusty leaves stopped moving.  
A cat lay there, open from chin to loins;  
lower **viscera** missing; **truncated** tubes  
and bitten-off things protruding. 15

Little blood there was, but a mess of  
damaged lungs; **straining** to hold its breath  
for quiet; claws fixed curved and jutting,  
jammed open in a stench of jackal meat;  
it tried to raise its head hating the mystery, death. 20

The big spade-skull with its **lynx-fat** cheeks  
**aggressive** still, raging eyes hooked in me, game;  
nostrils pulling at a tight mask of anger  
and fear; then I remembered hearing  
they are quite impossible to tame. 25

Closely, in a bowl of unmoving roots,  
an untouched carcass, unlicked, **swaddled** and wrapped  
in trappings of birth, the first of a litter stretched.  
Rooted out in **mid-confinement**: a time  
when jackals have courage enough for a wildcat. 30

In some things too, I am a coward,  
and could not here punch down with braced thumb,  
lift the **nullifying** stone or stiff-edged hand  
to axe with mercy the nape of her spine.  
Besides, I convinced myself, she was numb. 35

And **oppressively**, something felt wrong:  
not her approaching melting with earth,  
but in lifetimes of claws, **kaleidoscopes**:  
moon-claws, sun-claws, teeth after death,  
certainly both at mating and birth. 40

So I sat and gentled her with my hand,  
not moving much but saying things, using my voice;  
and she became gentle, affording herself  
the **influent** luxury of breathing –  
**untrammelled**, bubbly, safe in its noise. 45

Later, calmed, despite her tides of pain,  
she let me ease her claws, the ends of the battle,  
pulling off the trapped and **rancid** flesh.  
Her **miniature** limbs of iron relaxed.  
She died with hardly a rattle. 50

I placed her peaceful **ungrinning** corpse  
and that of her firstborn in the **topgallants**  
of a young tree, out of ground reach, to grow: restart  
a cycle of maybe something more **pastoral**,  
**commencing** with beetles, then maggots, then ants. 55

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