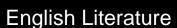
## SN Kansagra School





Grade 11

Starlight – An Anthology of Poetry

## **Telephone Conversation**

- By Wole Soyinka

The price seemed reasonable, location Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived Off premises. Nothing remained But self-confession. "Madame," I warned, "I hate a wasted journey—I am African." Silence. Silenced transmission of Pressurized good breeding. Voice, when it came, Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully. "HOW DARK?"... I had not misheard... "ARE YOU LIGHT OR VERY DARK?" Button B. Button A. Stench Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak. Red booth. Red pillar box. Red double-tiered Omnibus squelching tar. It was real! Shamed By ill-mannered silence, surrender Pushed dumbfoundment to beg simplification. Considerate she was, varying the emphasis — "ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?" Revelation came. "You mean — like plain or milk chocolate?" Her assent was clinical, crushing in its light Impersonality. Rapidly, wave-length adjusted, I chose. "West African Sepia" — and as afterthought, "Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic Flight of fancy, till truthfulness clanged her accent Hard on the mouthpiece. "WHAT'S THAT?" conceding "DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS." "Like brunette." "THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?" "Not altogether. Facially, I am brunette, but madam, you should see The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet Are a peroxide blonde. Friction, caused — Foolishly madam — by sitting down, has turned My bottom raven black — One moment madam!" — sensing Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap About my ears — "Madam," I pleaded, "wouldn't you rather See for yourself?"