

In 'Shoulders', how does the poet present ideas about the importance of protecting and taking care of each other?

Shoulders

A man crosses the street in rain,
stepping gently, looking two times north and south,
because his son is asleep on his shoulder.

No car must splash him.
No car drive too near to his shadow.

This man carries the world's most sensitive cargo
but he's not marked.
Nowhere does his jacket say FRAGILE,
HANDLE WITH CARE.

His ear fills up with breathing.
He hears the hum of a boy's dream
deep inside him.

We're not going to be able
to live in this world
if we're not willing to do what he's doing
with one another.

The road will only be wide.
The rain will never stop falling.

In the poem *Shoulders*, the poet presents the importance of protection and care through the father's protection of his son which then becomes a universal message.

The title 'Shoulders' immediately suggests that someone is metaphorically _____ which highlights the need to support and protect one another.

The poet uses **imagery** to emphasise the responsibility of looking after others. The phrase "*his son is asleep on his shoulder*" symbolises vulnerability as he is "asleep" which suggests that he is small and is off the ground, essentially away from danger. The description of the child as "*the world's most sensitive cargo*" reinforces the idea that _____ through the use of the superlative "most". The adjective "sensitive" further emphasises _____. The absence of labels such as "*FRAGILE, HANDLE WITH CARE*" suggests that it may not be specifically stated how fragile the son is, but it should go without saying to handle with "care"

Furthermore, the poet's **tone** is gentle and reflective, reinforcing the theme of care. The phrase "*his ear fills up with breathing*" literally describes _____. This could also connote _____. This personal moment is expanded into a broader message in the final lines, where the poet states, "*We're not going to be able to live in this world if we're not willing to do what he's doing with one another.*" This direct statement highlights _____

Finally, the poem's **structure** supports its message. The poem uses enjambment but there are two end stopped couplets. The first uses the anaphoric repetition..... to....., "*The road will only be wide. The rain will never stop falling,*" creates a sense of..... This suggests that challenges will always exist, but collective care is essential to navigating them. The wide road and continuous rain symbolise.....