**Musical Text Analysis**

**Paul Simon**

**“I Am a Rock”**

*(verse 1)*

A winter's day

In a deep and dark December;

I am alone,

Gazing from my window to the streets below

On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.

*(chorus)*

I am a rock.

I am an island.

*(verse 2)*

I've built walls-

A fortress deep and mighty-

That none may penetrate.

I have no need of friendship; friendship causes pain.

It's laughter and it's loving I disdain.

*(chorus)*

I am a rock.

I am an island.

*(verse 3)*

Don't talk of love,

I've heard the words before;

It's sleeping in my memory.

I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died.

If I never loved I never would have cried.

*(chorus)*

I am a rock.

I am an island.

*(verse 3)*

I have my books

And my poetry to protect me;

I am shielded in my armor,

Hiding in my room, safe within my womb.

I touch no one and no one touches me.

*(chorus)*

I am a rock,

I am an island.

*(outro)*

And a rock feels no pain;

And an island never cries.

1. What does the speaker mean when he says, “I am a rock; I am an island.”
2. How is the extended metaphor, “I am a rock,” developed throughout the text?
3. What is the tone of the song?
4. Identify six examples of diction that help create the tone?
5. Highlight the figurative language. Select two examples. Explain what each shows.
6. There is a shift in tone somewhere in this song. Where does it occur? Describe the shift.
7. Identify syntactical features in the song (parallelism, anaphora, epistrophe, etc)?

**Musical Features in “I Am a Rock”:**

1. Describe the instrumentation at the beginning of the song (“A winter's day/In a deep and dark December”):
2. Why does the artist start the song this way?
3. How does starting the song this way help create meaning and tone?
4. When the artist sings “I am alone,” the entire band enters the song.
   1. Why did the artist structure the song like this?
   2. What is the effect?
5. Describe the melody and music during the chorus (I am a rock/I am an island). Specifically, how does the speaker feel about being a “rock” based on the chorus’ melody?
6. How does the song end? Why did the artist end the song this way?

**Analysis Writing**

**Select a prompt:**

Read, annotate, and listen to “I Am a Rock” by Paul Simon. Then, in a well-written essay, discuss the textual and musical features Simon uses to create the song’s tone.

Restate the song’s tone:

Read, annotate, and listen to “I Am a Rock” by Paul Simon. Then, in a well-written essay, discuss the textual and musical features Simon uses to reveal the song’s meaning.

Restate the song’s meaning:

**Thesis:**

**In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the speaker uses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**(title of song)**

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**(State textual features and musical features) (show, create, etc.)**

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**(state the tone or meaning here)**

**Diction**: How does the word help create tone or meaning? What do we associate with the word? What deeper meanings could the word have on the text as a whole?

**Figurative Language:** What does the example show? How does create tone or meaning?

**Music:** Specifically, how does the music help create tone or meaning? Consider the following for your examples: structure, instruments, volume, melody, beat, etc.

**\*Feel free to use other textual features, too.**