When every pencil meant a sacrifice
his parents boarded him at a school in town,
slaving to free him from the stony fields,
the meagre acreage that bore them down.

They blushed with pride when, at his graduation,
they watched him picking up the slender scroll,
his passport from the years of brutal toil
and lonely patience in a barren hole.

When he went in the Bank their cups ran over.
They marvelled how he wore a milk-white shirt
work days and jeans on Sundays. He was saved
from their thistle-strewn farm and its red dirt.

And he said nothing. Hard and serious
like a young bear inside his teller`s cage,
his axe-hewn hands upon the paper bills
aching with empty strength and throttled rage.

By Alden Nowlan
POETRY ANALYSIS

1. Read the poem and underline and define any words that you are unfamiliar with.

2. Look for and highlight any of the following literary devices:
   - Alliteration
   - Simile
   - Metaphor
   - Personification
   - Hyperbole
   - Paradox
   - Imagery
   - Situational Irony

   
   **Alliteration:** The repetition of the initial consonant sounds of words:
   Ex: “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”

   **Simile:** A direct comparison of dissimilar objects, usually using “like” or “as”
   Ex: “I wandered lonely as a cloud” or “He eats like a pig”

   **Metaphor:** An implied comparison between dissimilar objects. This is different from a simile in that a metaphor does not use “like” or “as”.
   Ex: “Her talents blossomed”, “She’s a real gem”

   **Personification:** A figure of speech in which non-human things are given human characteristics.
   Ex: “Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath”. This is a personification because dirt cannot breathe; breathing is a human characteristic.

   **Hyperbole:** Extreme exaggeration to add meaning. It is used to create emphasis, evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression.
   It is not meant to be taken literally
   Ex: “These books weigh a ton”

   **Paradox:** A statement that apparently contradicts itself and yet might be true.

   **Imagery:** Language that appeals to the five senses.
   Ex: “Nothing beside remains: round the decay
   Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
   The lone and level sands stretch far away.”
   (The language in the above passage serves to allow the reader to see the landscape.)

   **Situational Irony:** Irony involving a situation in which actions have an effect that is opposite from what was intended, so that the outcome is contrary to what was expected.

3. What is the theme / meaning / message of this poem?

4. How do the literary devices, word choice and formatting of words on the page work to convey the theme?