

Read pages 8-16 of the “Solarium” chapter in David Mitchell’s *Black Swan Green* from “One moment we were watching the twitch of a squirrel’s heart” to ““So believe me. Comprehensive schools are not so infernal”” and answer the following questions:

1. How does Madame Crommelynck describe her experience of growing older? How does her description develop or refine a central idea?
2. How does Madame Crommelynck’s statement, “eating the roots of beauty is a[n] ... [i]nsatiable, indestructible slug”, develop a central idea?
3. How does Jason describe the music playing in the solarium? How does the music relate to Jason’s poetry?
4. What does Madame Crommelynck want Jason to tell her?
5. What is Madame Crommelynck’s opinion of Jason’s real name?
6. Why does Madame Crommelynck believe Jason uses a pseudonym?
7. Why does Jason say he writes under a pseudonym?

8. When does Madame Crommelynck believe Jason starts “talking like a real poet”? Why?
9. How does Jason and Madame Crommelynck’s discussion of a “double life” develop or refine a central idea?
10. How does Madame Crommelynck describe the relationship between poetry, truth, and beauty?
11. How does the “greater mystery” (p. 155) relate to Jason and Madame Crommelynck’s discussion from their previous meeting?
12. How does Madame Crommelynck’s assessment of the “Hangman” poem develop or refine a central idea?