

The rainforest is like the layers of a sandwich
(The biggest sandwich around).
If you go to the very top of the trees
The emergent layer can be found.
Sunlight is plentiful up at the top,
The emergents dash for the light.
They're head and shoulders above the rest
Having won the competitive fight.
There's a warning for those who don't like heights;
Here is a definite NO.
The emergents can be sixty meters in height.
Perhaps we should head down below?

The section beneath – the canopy,
Is a green, umbrella-like skin.
Two-thirds of the forest life lives here,
It's a noisy, lively din.
Birds, monkeys, frogs and sloths
In a maze of branches found there.
I'll warn you now – it's getting darker
As we travel downwards – beware.

The understory has smaller trees
In gaps where old ones have died.
The trees just grown as quickly as they can.
They have no time to decide.

Perhaps only fifteen metres in height
But all around the trees (and entwined)
Are the twisting, turning, green lianas
(or what you might call a vine).

The final layer is very dark
But I'll try to spread some light.
Dark through the day, perhaps light for minutes
And obviously dark through the night.

Because of the thick green layer above
The sunlight has little say.
Down in this layer – the forest floor
Things quickly, abruptly decay.

Remains are quickly recycled
From the ground and into the roots.
Rainforest life continues
In the form of new green shoots.

1. **What is this poem all about? Highlight/Shade in parts of the poem to show what different things it mentions. Categories could include: plants, animals, light levels, height. You may add categories of your own to this list.**
2. **Why do you think the author compared the rainforest to the layers of a sandwich?**
3. **Imagine you are climbing one of the emergent trees. What would you be able to see?**
4. **The author says the emergent layer has 'won the competitive fight'. Who/what was the fight against?**