A Common Misconception
John Hegarty, University of Portland Writers Journal, 2009

People look at me
and all they see
is a basketball player.

A black T-shirt becomes purple,
A slogan becomes a name,
and a brand becomes a number.

But do they wonder?

What goes on in the brain
that a black scally cap
perpetually covers?

Why so rarely does he speak to others?

Where is he from?
Where is he going?

But more frequently I hear,
“Are you still growing?”

Does he like to read?
What does he really need?
Instead it’s just
“For a big guy you have good foot speed.”

Of course I walk around
with headphones blaring,
hidden beneath a hat or hood I’m wearing.

I’m never asked about
my favorite movie,
song,
or television show.

Usually people just tell me that
I’m tall.

Believe me,
I already know.

**Demonstrate Understanding**
1. What does the speaker, or narrator, of this poem look like? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
Demonstrate Understanding

2. If you had to tell a friend what this poem is mostly about, what would you say?

Develop an Interpretation

3. How would you describe the personality of the narrator of the poem? Use examples from the text to support your answer.
Develop an Interpretation
4. A misconception is an incorrect belief. Why do you think this is poem titled “A Common Misconception?” Support your answer with examples from the text.

Analyze Text
5. What is the theme, or life lesson, of this poem? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.
Analyze Text
6. What is the tone or mood of this poem? How does the author show tone or mood? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.