Identifying Figurative Language #1

Directions: Read the lines of poetry. Slashes represent line breaks. Figure out which technique is being used: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or personification. In the boxes, explain how you figured out your answer. It is possible that more than one technique is being used. If you can, explain each.

1. Like burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed
   Which technique is being used? Simile

   How do you figure? Comparing something to burnt-out torches using "like"
   (write a sentence explaining your answer)

2. There's a faucet in the basement / that had dripped one drop all year
   since he fixed it, we can't find it / without wearing scuba gear.
   Which technique is being used? Hyperbole

   How do you figure? Exaggerating the amount that the sink leaked.
   (write a sentence explaining your answer)

3. When the stars threw down their spears, / And water'd heaven with their tears,
   Which technique is being used? Personification

   How do you figure? Giving the stars the human traits of throwing and crying.
   (write a sentence explaining your answer)
4. The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,

Which technique is being used? Metaphor

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? Comparing the moon to a ghost ship without using "like" or "as." Comparing the road to a ribbon of moonlight without using "like" or "as."

(write a sentence explaining your answer)

5. The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play.
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,

Which technique is being used? Hyperbole or Personification

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? It is hyperbole because Cooney and Barrows did not literally die, they were just tagged out. It is personification, because the score can't actually stand; that is a human trait.

(write a sentence explaining your answer)

6. The sun was shining on the sea, / Shining with all his might:

Which technique is being used? Personification

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? This is personification because the sun is given the human trait of doing something with all of "his might."

(write a sentence explaining your answer)

7. The leaves are little yellow fish / swimming in the river.

Which technique is being used? Metaphor

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? The leaves are compared to fish without using "like" or "as."

(write a sentence explaining your answer)

8. The old clock down in the parlor / Like a sleepless mourner grieves,

Which technique is being used? Simile

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

The clock is compared to a sleepless mourner. The poet uses "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

9. By the lakes that thus outspread / Their lone waters, lone and dead / Their sad waters, sad and chilly

Which technique is being used? Personification
Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? The waters cannot be sad. This is a human trait.
(write a sentence explaining your answer)

10. Fame is a bee. / It has a song -- / It has a sting --
Which technique is being used? Metaphor

Simile, Metaphor, Personification, or Hyperbole

How do you figure? Fame is being compared to a bee without using "like" or "as."
(write a sentence explaining your answer)