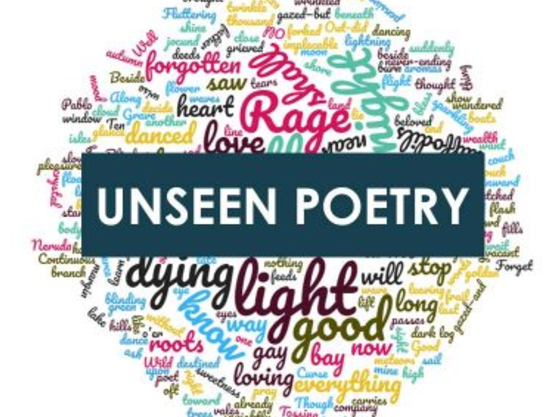
***Yr 11***

***Unseen Poetry***

***Literature***

***Paper 2 Section B***



Name - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contents**

Unseen Strategy – Pg 3

Ninetieth Birthday // My Grandmother **+ Sample Answer** –Pg 5

Piano / Background Material – Pg 9

Don’t Say I Said / Flowers + **Sample Answer** – Pg 10

Visiting Hour // Evans – Pg 14

Your Dad Did What? // The Lesson – Pg 16

They Did Not Expect This // The Pond – Pg 17

Storm In The Black Forest / The Moment + **Sample Answers** –Pg 19

The Aging School Master // When You Are Old + **Sample Answers** – Pg 23

His Visitor // Ghosts – Pg 29

Names // In Oak Terrace – Pg 31

The Road Not Taken // Midnight on the Great Western + **Sample Answers** – Pg 33

Originally // Hard Water – Pg 37

Horse Whisperer // To A Fish – Pg 39

Crossing The Bar // Because I Could not stop for Death – Pg 41

My Father on His Shield // Those Winter Sundays – Pg 43

Time does not bring relief // Farewell, Sweet Dust – Pg 45

Solitude // Ode On Solitude – Pg 46

Nothing’s Changed // Homeland – Pg 48

Hero // The Arms and The Boy – Pg 50

It Rains // The Voice – Pg 52

An Irishman Foresees His Death // Horses Abroad –Pg 54

At Sea // The Sands Of Dee – Pg 55

Bully // My Love For You – Pg 56

Do Not Go Gentle // Remember – Pg 59

Great Grandfather // On The Verge – Pg Pg 60

The Way Through The Woods // Echo – Pg 62

Give //Tramp – Pg 64

I, Too // My People – Pg 65

Alpine Letter // Praise Song For My Mother **+ Sample Answer** – Pg 66

Identification // Nettles – Pg 69

The Palaeontologist’s Blind Date // Blind Date - Pg 72

Divorced Fathers and Pizza Crusts // Father – Pg 74

One Day // Wedding Ring - Pg 77

Woman’s Work // Overheard in County Sligo - Pg 79

I Am Listening Now // Arrogance -Pg 81

Education for Leisure // Hitcher – Pg 83

My Parents Kept Me // Tich Miller – Pg 85

**Tackling The Unseen – Strategy**

**Rules:**

-Spend 45 mins on BOTH questions

Poem 1 + 1 question = 30 mins

Poem 2 + compare question = 15 mins

Question 1 – 30 mins

Poem 1 – approx 3 pages

Question 2 – 15 mins

Both poems – approx 1 page

DO NOT LOSE MOTIVATION

It may be the last question

You may be tired

You may not be as sure what will come up

BUT this is worth

20% of your grade

KEEP GOING!!

**You don’t need to understand every word –pick ones you can talk about!**

**Unseen Steps – What to do?**

1 – What is the key words in BOTH questions?

(this will tell you what both poems are about –

remember they will be similar!)

2 – Read the first poem –

Keep the steer in mind.

Read this a 2nd + possibly 3rd time

3 – How does

Structure + rhyme scheme link?

Steady + controlled?

Unsteady + lacking control?

4 – Highlight approx 5 quotes

Look for devices / strong words

Take from beginning / middle / end

5 – What do we learn from these?

**Bringing in Poem 2**

1 – Remind yourself of key word in this question

2 – Read Poem 2 – How same / different

Agree / disagree

Positive / negative

3 – Similarities / differences in structure – link to meaning

4 – Pick 3 of the 5 quotes from Poem 1 (RE-USE)

Pick out 3 quotes from Poem 2

5 – What do we learn from these – move between!

**Key points**

Poem 1 - 30 mins – 3 page

Poem 1 +2 – 15 mins – 1 page

Use words from the questions

5 quotes from first + re-use these for 2nd!

Keep thinking what we learn!

**Ninetieth Birthday – R. S. Thomas**

You go up the long track  
That will take a car, but is best walked  
On slow foot, noting the lichen  
That writes history on the page  
Of the grey rock. Trees are about you  
At first, but yield to the green bracken,  
The nightjars house: you can hear it spin  
On warm evenings; it is still now  
In the noonday heat, only the lesser  
Voices sound, blue-fly and gnat  
And the stream's whisper. As the road climbs,  
You will pause for breath and the far sea's  
Signal will flash, till you turn again  
To the steep track, buttressed with cloud.  
  
And there at the top that old woman,  
Born almost a century back  
In that stone farm, awaits your coming;  
Waits for the news of the lost village  
She thinks she knows, a place that exists  
In her memory only.  
You bring her greeting  
And praise for having lasted so long  
With time's knife shaving the bone.  
Yet no bridge joins her own  
World with yours, all you can do  
Is lean kindly across the abyss  
To hear words that were once wise.

**How does the poet present old age and people’s attitudes towards it?**

**My Grandmother – Elizabeth Jennings**

She kept an antique shop – or it kept her.  
Among Apostle spoons and Bristol glass,  
The faded silks, the heavy furniture,  
She watched her own reflection in the brass  
Salvers and silver bowls, as if to prove  
Polish was all, there was no need of love.

And I remember how I once refused  
To go out with her, since I was afraid.  
It was perhaps a wish not to be used  
Like antique objects. Though she never said  
That she was hurt, I still could feel the guilt  
Of that refusal, guessing how she felt.

Later, too frail to keep a shop, she put  
All her best things in one narrow room.  
The place smelt old, of things too long kept shut,  
The smell of absences where shadows come  
That can’t be polished. There was nothing then  
To give her own reflection back again.

**In both poems explore relationships between young people and the elderly. Compare the ways these relationships are presented in the two poems.**

**How does the poet present old age and people’s attitudes towards it? – NB**

We see the poet presents a negative attitude towards old age in ‘Ninetieth Birthday’. We see the speaker’s negative attitude as he does not seem close to the person he is visiting and focuses on the distance between them.

The poem’s structure highlights the negative attitude towards the elderly relation. The title is used effectively as we can see the focus on her age immediately followed by ‘birthday’. This normally connotes celebration and happiness but these emotions are not demonstrated here. The structure highlights a sense of detachment between the elderly relative and speaker. The use of second person narrative ‘you’ creates a sense of distance that the speaker feels and the ongoing description of the surroundings makes it feel as if she is quite far away both physically as well as metaphorically. The lack of stanza or rhyme structure could then represent the fact that she has been almost cut off or forgotten from life – she could have lost sense of any structure or routine. The poem uses caesuras repeatedly and a great deal of punctuation which slows the pace of the poem. This could again reflect her old age and add to the distance between her and the speaker.

The writer also uses language to convey his negative attitude. We see this first in the descriptions of getting to the person. The writer uses the adjective ‘long’ on the first line. This is effective as it conveys that he has a journey to get to her physically but this coud also suggest that she is far away from his mind. He does not think about her and she has been forgotten about. He also uses the phrase ‘writes history on the page of the grey rock’. The use of history could suggest that she is not part of current life and has been resigned to the past. The use of colour imagery ‘grey’ could also relate to death and decay to show she is no longer associated with life. Ironically, we see examples of personification in the nature around. The writer uses personification in the nature imagery to describe this area. We are told that ‘voices sound, blue-fly and gnat’. This could be used as a contrast to show the lack of life associated with the old lady by showing the life in nature instead. This again gives us a more negative view of the elderly. We see the speaker ‘pause’ as he gets near which could also suggest his reluctance to continue to visit. The writer has also used the verb ‘climb’ to show his negative view and that he is struggling to go through with this visit.

The writer continues with this negative attitude towards old age when he arrives at the home. The writer describes her as ‘that old woman’. The use of ‘that’ creates a cold, distant feeling and the lack of name could show that she lacks an identity. This could show that he doesn’t see her as very important or show any interest in her. The fact she ‘awaits’ shows that she is more excited to see him than he is to see her. We see this lack of connection continue in ‘no bridge joins her own world with yours’. The ‘bridge’ could be used as a metaphor to show that the speaker feels like he has nothing in common and shows the distance between the two. This imagery of distance is also continued in the hyperbolic ‘abyss’. This heightens the widening gap between the two and heightens the disconnection between them. The writer uses ‘once wise’ to describe her words at the end. This could suggest that her opinion and views are no longer relevant and like where she lives have been forgotten.

Throughout this poem, we see that the speaker feels removed from old age. He shows a discomfort at visiting and clearly has a negative attitude.

**Both poems explore relationships between young people and the elderly. Compare the ways these relationships are presented in the two poems.**

Although both poems show a relationship between young people and the elderly, we see a slight difference between these. In ‘My Grandmother’ we see a sense of detachment between the speaker and her Grandmother although there is more of a sense of a relationship than in ‘NB’.

The title of ‘NB’ focuses more on age rather than the relationship whereas we do see the possessive pronoun ‘My’. This shows distance in ‘NB’ with more of a relationship in ‘MG’. However, as the poem develops we see this is not a very close relationship either. Although there is no strong structure in ‘NB’ to show how cut off the elderly person is there is a stronger rhyme scheme present in ‘MG’ with a rhyming couplet at the end. However, this creates a sense of formality and could reflect the stricter routine and relationship they have. There is a strictness rather than loving feeling here.

We see the writer uses nature imagery in ‘NB’ as a way of showing how far away the woman is from society to suggest she is cut off and detached from this. We see there is a ‘long track’ – the adjective ‘long’ suggests a distant relationship between them. However, the grandmother is more associated with antiques. ‘She kept an antique shop – or it kept her’. The repetition of ‘kept’ creates a stronger link between her and these items which could suggest she is more materialistic and seems to show more love towards these objects than her grand-daughter. This could show they don’t have a close relationship. We see this later in the simile ‘a wish not to be used like antique objects’. The writer shows that she felt that she was being objectified and treated like a possession. We also see a distance as the speaker in ‘NB’ refers to the elderly lady as ‘that old woman’. The use of ‘that’ is cold and distant. The lack of a name could also show that he doesn’t recognise her identity or see her in a close way. Finally, the writer of ‘MG’ uses the darker language of ‘absences’ and ‘shadows’ which again suggests a lack of relationship here. We also see language associated with distance through the metaphors of ‘bridge’ and ‘abyss’ to also show they are not close or have anything in common.

Although we see more of a relationship in ‘MG’ as she provides more personal details about this, both poems show a lack of a bond or connection with the elderly.

**PIANO - D.H. Lawrence**

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;   
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see   
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings   
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song   
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong   
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside   
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour   
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour   
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast   
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

**How does the poet present his feelings about childhood?**

**Background Material – Tony Harrison**

My writing desk. Two photos, mam and dad.

A birthday, him. Their ruby wedding1, her.

Neither one a couple and both bad.

I make out what’s behind them from the blur.

Dad’s in our favourite pub2, now gone for good.

My father and his background are both gone,

but hers has my Welsh cottage and a wood

that still shows those same greens eight summers on,

though only the greenness of it’s stayed the same.

Though one of them’s in colour and one’s not,

the two are joined, apart from their shared frame,

by what, for photographers, would mar3 each shot:

in his, if you look close, the gleam, the light, me in his blind right eye, but minute size–

in hers, as though just cast from where I write, a shadow holding something to its eyes.

1 ruby wedding: fortieth anniversary of their marriage 2 pub: a local inn 3 mar: spoil

**In both poems the speakers describe attitudes regarding the past. What are the main similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those attitudes and feelings?**

**Don’t Say I Said – Sophie Hannah**

Next time you speak to you-know-who  
I’ve got a message for him.  
Tell him that I have lost a stone  
Since the last time I saw him.  
Tell him that I’ve got three new books  
Coming out soon, but play it  
Cool, make it sound spontaneous.  
Don’t say I said to say it.

He might ask if I’ve mentioned him.  
Say I have once, in passing.  
Memorise everything he says  
And, no, it won’t be grassing  
When you repeat his words to me –  
It’s the only way to play it.  
Tell him I’m toned and tanned and fine.  
Don’t say I said to say it.

Say that serenity and grace  
Have taken root inside me.  
My top-note is frivolity  
But beneath, dark passions guide me.  
Tell him I’m radiant and replete  
And add that every day it  
Seems I am harder to resist.  
Don’t say I said to say it.

Tell him that all my ancient faults  
Have been eradicated.  
I do not carp or analyse  
As I might have when we dated.  
Say I’m not bossy any more  
Or, better still, convey it  
Subtly, but get the point across.  
Don’t say I said to say it.

**How does the poet present her views on relationships?**

**Flowers – Wendy Cope**

Some men never think of it.   
                 You did. You’d come along   
                 And say you’d nearly bought me flowers   
                 But something had gone wrong.   
  
                 The shop was closed. Or you had doubts –   
                 The sort that minds like ours   
                 Dream up incessantly. You thought   
                 I might not want your flowers.   
  
                 It made me smile and hug you then.   
                 Now I can only smile.   
                 But, look, the flowers you nearly brought   
                 Have lasted all this while.

**Both poets reveal their feelings about the end of a relationship. Compare the similarities and/or differences in how these are presented.**

**How does the poet present her views on relationships? – DSIS**

The poet presents her negative views on her past relationship in this poem. She doesn’t seem to have let go of the relationship and is fixated on him knowing positive aspects of her life.

The poem’s structure highlights the negative attitude towards the end of the relationship. We can see she is unable to move on as the poem is structured through the dramatic monologue of the speaker telling her friend what to say to her old partner. This is also ironic as we see that she is still trying to maintain a level of control even though the relationship is ended. There is also a contrast between the fact that this poem has a very conversational tone but shows the speaker to trying to dominate this! We can see that the speaker is struggling to move on through the cyclical references to ‘don’t say I said to say it’. This shows that she is unable to move on and still wants to know what is happening. We can also see this negativity and bitterness from the very beginning – ‘you-know-who’. The fact that she refuses to name him could show how hurt she has been by him. We can also see her focus on the end of the relationship at the end of this poem – this has clearly had a big impact on her. The structure fully shows her negative view on this relationship.

The first way the language shows us her views is through the repeated use of imperative ‘Next time… I’ve got a message’. This clearly shows us that she is taking control in the piece and wants to have more dominance. It could suggest that the relationship did not end the way she wanted and so she is now trying to maintain a form of control she lacked in the relationship. We see the writer create a sense of humour through ‘play it cool, make it sound spontaneous’. This is ironic as being ‘spontaneous’ is the exact opposite of what she is doing! This again shows her controlling attitude. She uses the verb ‘memorise everything he says’ which shows how important he must still be to her as she wants to know exactly what was said. The writer tells us that she wants her friend to say she is ‘toned and tanned and fine’. This triplet highlights the fact that she is trying to show off about her physical condition and is focusing on the positive. This shows that she wants him to think of her in this way and regret ending the relationship or feel jealous they are no longer together.

The writer also uses the repeated ‘r’ sound in ‘radiant and replete …. Harder to resist’. This alliterative use of the same letter could again convey that she is finding it difficult to move on and highlight her obsessive nature over this past relationship. At the end of the poem, she says about her ‘ancient faults’ have been ‘eradicated’. This shows that she wants him to think that his possible reasons for ending the relationship are no longer justified. By using the adjective ‘ancient’ she is making her faults sound as if they are historical and no longer relevant. The strong word choice ‘eradicated’ shows that they are completely gone – again she is trying to show an improved version of herself since the relationship ended. The writer also says ‘say I’m not bossy’. Like earlier, this is also ironic as this is exactly what she is doing! The imperative shows that this is how she is in fact acting and could again suggest that she is not able to let go of how she was when she was in the relationship – much as she recognises the problems of this!

Throughout this poem we have seen the speaker provide a humorous take on what she wants her ex to know about her. However, this compulsion shows that she is not over the past relationship and still has a negative view of this.

**Both poets reveal their feelings about the end of a relationship. Compare the similarities and/or differences in how these are presented.**

Despite both poems showing the end of a relationship, the speakers view this ending in different ways. Poem A seems unable to move on from the relationship as she constantly wants him to know how she is whereas Poem B seems much more content to think about the end and looks on their time together fondly.

Both poems are structured to show their differing views. Poem A uses cyclical references – ‘don’t say I said to say it’ throughout. This shows that she has not been able to move on and also doesn’t want to speak to her ex. This is contrasted in Poem B as the speaker seems to be directing her poem towards him with the direct address ‘You’ throughout. This shows that she is more positive towards him and can look back on their time with more happiness than Poem A which starts and ends the poem with negative thoughts about the relationship.

Poem A also starts the poem by saying ‘you know who’. This suggests there has been a negative end to the relationship so she doesn’t want to say him name which is also contrasted with Poem B who seems to still think about her ex with fondness. We see this through ‘now I can only smile’. The verb ‘smile’ shows us she is able to recognise the positives from their relationship and appreciate these. We also see one of the aspects Speaker A wants passed on is that her ‘ancient faults’ have been ‘eradicated’. The use of the adjective ‘ancient’ could again show that she is trapped in the past and unable to move on. The use of ‘faults’ shows that she is also focusing on the more negative aspects of how the relationship ended. This is different to Poem B as the speaker ends by saying ‘the flowers you nearly brought have lasted all this while.’ This shows that she is still holding onto her thoughts of him which will outlive the flowers. However, she is focusing on a positive memory from the relationship whereas Speaker A is focusing on the negatives.

Despite both relationships ending, the speakers seem to be dealing with this in different ways. Poem B is more accepting of the end and can reflect on it with more positivity whereas Poem A seems to still want to have an aspect of control and is unable to let go

**Visiting Hour**

The hospital smell

combs my nostrils

as they go bobbing along

green and yellow corridors.

What seems a corpse

is trundled into a lift and vanishes

heavenward.

I will not feel, I will not

feel, until

I have to.

Nurses walk lightly, swiftly,

here and up and down and there,

their slender waists miraculously

carrying their burden

of so much pain, so

many deaths, their eyes

still clear after

so many farewells.

Ward 7. She lies

in a white cave of forgetfulness.

A withered hand

trembles on its stalk. Eyes move

behind eyelids too heavy

to raise. Into an arm wasted

of colour a glass fang is fixed,

not guzzling but giving.

And between her and me

distance shrinks till there is none left

but the distance of pain that neither she nor I

can cross.

She smiles a little at this

black figure in her white cave

who clumsily rises

in the round swimming waves of a bell

and dizzily goes off, growing fainter,

not smaller, leaving behind only

books that will not be read

and fruitless fruits.

**In ‘Visiting Hour how does the poet present the speaker’s feelings about visiting the sick woman?**

**Evans**

Evans? Yes, many a time

I came down his bare flight

Of stairs into the gaunt kitchen

With its wood fire, where crickets sand

Accompaniment to the black kettle’s

Whine, and so into the cold

Dark to smother in the thick tide

Of night that drifted about the walls

Of his stark farm on the hill ridge.

It was not the dark filling my eyes

And mouth appalled me; not even the drip

Of rain like blood from the one tree

Weather-tortured. It was the dark

Silting the veins of that sick man

I left stranded up on the vast

And lonely shore of his bleak bed.

**In both poems the speakers describe the experience of visiting a person who is old and sick. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these experiences?**

**Your Dad Did What? – Sophie Hannah**

Where they have been, if they have been away,

Or what they’ve done at home, if they have not –

You make them write about the holiday.

One writes *My Dad did*. What? Your Dad did what?

That’s not a sentence. Never mind the bell.

We stay behind until the work is done.

You count their words (you who can count and spell);

All the assignments are complete bar one

And though this boy seems bright, that one is his.

He says he’s finished, doesn’t want to add

Anything, hands it in just as it is.

No change. *My Dad did.* What? What did his Dad?

You find the ‘E’ you gave him as you sort

Through reams of what this girl did, what that lad did,

And read the line again, just one ‘e’ short:

*This holiday was horrible. My Dad did.*

**How does the poet present the speaker and their feelings about the boy?**

**The Lesson – Edward Lucie-Smith**

‘Your father’s gone,’ my bald headmaster said.

His shiny dome and brown tobacco jar

Splintered at once in tears. It wasn’t grief.

I cried for knowledge which was bitterer

Than any grief. For there and then I knew

That grief has uses – that a father dead

Could bind the bully’s fist a week or two;

And then I cried for shame, then for relief.

I was a month past ten when I learnt this:

I still remember how the noise was stilled

In school-assembly when my grief came in.

Some goldfish in a bowl quietly sculled

Around their shining prison on its shelf.

They were indifferent. All the other eyes

Were turned towards me. Somewhere in myself

Pride, like a goldfish, flashed a sudden fin.

**Both poems present students’ experiences of school. What are the similarities and differences between the ways the poets present those experiences?**

**They did not expect this**

They did not expect this. Being neither wise nor brave

And wearing only the beauty of youth's season

They took the first turning quite unquestioningly

And walked quickly without looking back even once.

It was of course the wrong turning. First they were nagged

By a small wind that tugged at their clothing like a dog;

Then the rain began and there was no shelter anywhere,

Only the street and the rows of houses stern as soldiers.

Though the blood chilled, the endearing word burnt the tongue.

There were no parks or gardens or public houses:

Midnight settled and the rain paused leaving the city

Enormous and still like a great sleeping seal.

At last they found accommodation in a cold

Furnished room where they quickly learnt to believe in ghosts;

They had their hope stuffed and put on the mantelpiece

But found, after a while, that they did not notice it.

While she spends many hours looking in the bottoms of teacups

He reads much about association football

And waits for the marvellous envelope to fall:

Their eyes are strangers and they rarely speak.

They did not expect this.

**How does the poet present the relationship within this poem?**

**The Pond**

The heart had already gone out of our house

The summer you dug the pond. Day after

Day, driving the old space into clay,

Bare-backed, your white limbs twitching

On the parched lawn, carving a womb.

I fought with dough in the dead kitchen:

Brown bread for you, white for me,

We never ate together. You’d break pieces

From your loaf before it cooled – your usual

Hurry to be somewhere else.

I wished the words the priest had made me say

Unspoken, as I pressed the pill marked Thursday

From the packet. Standing beside the bed

I could not look out at the unfilled pond.

Empty of you, I pace through the rooms

On the upper floors. So many rooms

Without a nursey air.

**In both poems, the poets share a view on a relationship. What similarities and differences are there in the ways these relationships are presented?**

**Storm in The Black Forest**  
  
Now it is almost night, from the bronzey soft sky   
  
jugfull after jugfull of pure white liquid fire, bright white   
  
tipples over and spills down,   
  
and is gone   
  
and gold-bronze flutters beat through the thick upper air.   
  
  
  
And as the electric liquid pours out, sometimes  
  
a still brighter white snake wriggles among it, spilled  
  
and tumbling wriggling down the sky :   
  
and then the heavens cackle with uncouth sounds.   
  
  
  
And the rain won’t come, the rain refuses to come!   
  
  
  
This is the electricity that man is supposed to have mastered  
  
chained, subjugated to his own use!

**In this poem, how does the poet present the speaker’s feelings about the storm?**

**The Moment**

The moment when, after many years  
of hard work and a long voyage  
you stand in the centre of your room,  
house, half-acre, square mile, island, country,  
knowing at last how you got there,  
and say, I own this,  
  
is the same moment when the trees unloose  
their soft arms from around you,  
the birds take back their language,  
the cliffs fissure and collapse,  
the air moves back from you like a wave  
and you can't breathe.  
  
No, they whisper. You own nothing.  
You were a visitor, time after time  
climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming.  
We never belonged to you.  
You never found us.  
It was always the other way round.

**In both ‘Storm in the Black Forest’ and ‘The Moment’ the speakers describe the relationship between man and nature. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present this relationship?**

**Sample Responses**

Grade 8 Response

In ‘Storm in the Black Forest’ D.H. Lawrence uses language, form and structure to present the speaker’s feelings about the storm being quite conflicted. The poem describes both the power of the storm, but the speaker also appears to be attempting to belittle it. The speaker describes the storm as frustrating, as the thunder and lightning are continual but the rain will not begin.

The first two stanzas of the poem feature the speaker describing the storm, and the second two stanzas (of which the third is just one line) express the speaker’s feelings about the storm more explicitly.

The language that Lawrence uses to describe the storm is very interesting, as at some points it seems very powerful and at others it does not. For example, the speaker uses the phrase ‘bronzey soft sky’. This creates a conflicted image as bronze, being a metal, is quite hard and strong but this is contrasted to the next adjective of ‘soft’. The lightning is likened to liquid as it streams through the sky: ‘liquid fire’ and ‘electric liquid pours out’. This creates the impression that the storm is fast-paced and quite free.

The speaker uses the phrase ‘jugfull after jugfull’ to describe the lightning cascading through the skies. The use of repetition and the word ‘after’ implies that the lightning appears to be neverending, and yet the speaker is using a measure of ‘jugfull’ which does not have a very large volume. This seems to show the speaker attempting to lessen the impact of the storm on him.

Similarly, there are other instances where the speaker uses language choices that seem to present the storm as not very threatening. The lightning is described as ‘bright white/ tipples over’, which seems to lessen the impact of the storm. The speaker also uses animal imagery when they describe the lightning as a ‘white snake wriggl[ing] among it’. In many ways, these descriptions are quite surprising as they do not describe the storm as frightening in any way. There is also possibly an inference that the storm is tricking the speaker, like the devil in the Garden of Eden.

However, the speaker does also employ personification when they describe the thunder as ‘the heavens cackling with uncouth sounds’. This sets up the idea that the storm has a personality and is quite wilful; it is seen to be laughing at the speaker. This seems to be a turning point in the poem, as the speaker now seems to be chastising the storm for not sending rain. Lawrence instils a sense of wilfulness into the storm when he uses the standalone exclamation ‘And the rain won’t come, the rain refuses to come!’ The use of alliteration helps to present the speaker as exasperated at the storm. This leads to the final stanza of the poem, in which the speaker employs sarcasm to chastise man for thinking they have control over electricity – as the storm is refusing to surrender the rain.

The first two stanzas use enjambment and repetition to support the idea that the storm is on-going. This stands in sharp contrast to the final three sentences in stanzas 3 and 4, which are all exclamatory. The speaker exclaims ‘electricity that man is supposed to have mastered/chained, subjugated to his use!’ The language here implies that the speaker is frustrated that – for all the technological advancements made by man – they are still unable to harness the power of nature. This is seen by the fact that the words are powerful – and even insinuate that man ought to have enslaved nature (‘chained’).

To conclude, in this poem the speaker describes the storm as frustrating; he is willing the rain to come as a reprieve from the thunder and lightning but it will not. This is presented by the speaker through the use of language and form.

Grade 5 Response

In ‘Storm in the Black Forest’ the speaker is talking about how he is annoyed that the storm is just thunder and lightning, but that it won’t rain.

The language that Lawrence uses in the first few stanzas tries to make the storm seem small and insignificant. It does this by using words like ‘tipples’ and ‘spills’ and ‘flutters’ to imply that it is not very powerful. The speaker also describes it like a snake that ‘wriggles’. This makes it seem much smaller than a storm.

Towards the end of the second stanza you start to feel that the speaker is getting annoyed by the storm now. They say that ‘the heavens cackle with uncouth sounds’. This could be onomatopoeia to describe the sound of the thunder but it is also personification to show that the speaker thinks the storm is laughing at them.

This leads to the second half of the poem, where the speaker seems to be much more annoyed. Here the speaker shouts ‘And the rain won’t come, the rain refuses to come!’ This is personification and implies that nature is being difficult on purpose. All of the final three statements are exclamatory which highlights this.

The speaker mentions that man is ‘supposed to’ have power over electricity, but the storm proves that this is not the case. Here the speaker uses powerful words like ‘mastered’, ‘chained’ and ‘subjugated’ to show that nature should be in the power of man but isn’t. The final repeat of ‘supposed to!’ sounds like sarcasm.

The speaker uses enjambment a lot at the start of the poem, which contrasts with the exclamatory statements at the end of the poem.

To conclude, Lawrence presents the speaker as frustrated by the storm, and at his inability to force it to rain.

Grade 2 Response

In this poem, there is a storm. The speaker describes the lightning a lot, using words like ‘white’ and ‘liquid’ to show how it appears in the sky.

The speaker presents the thunder as laughing at him, which he doesn’t seem to react well to. This can be seen in the lines: ‘the heavens cackle with uncouth sounds. And the rain won’t come, the rain refuses to come!’

The exclamation marks show that the speaker is shouting so they obviously feel quite strongly about this.

The poem is about how the speaker wants to be able to control the weather, but he can’t. He compares it to being able to use electricity.

The poet uses words like ‘bronzey’ and ‘gold-bronze’ which also describe the storm and make it sound special. The speaker uses the phrase ‘jugfull after jugfull’ which seems like the storm just keeps on coming.

**Ageing Schoolmaster**

And now another autumn morning finds me  
With chalk dust on my sleeve and in my breath,  
Preoccupied with vague, habitual speculation  
On the huge inevitability of death.  
  
Not wholly wretched, yet knowing absolutely  
That I shall never reacquaint myself with joy,  
I sniff the smell of ink and chalk and my mortality  
And think of when I rolled, a gormless boy,  
  
And rollicked round the playground of my hours,  
And wonder when precisely tolled the bell  
Which summoned me from summer liberties  
And brought me to this chill autumnal cell  
  
From which I gaze upon the april faces  
That gleam before me, like apples ranged on shelves,  
And yet I feel no pinch or prick of envy  
Nor would I have them know their sentenced selves.  
  
With careful effort I can separate the faces,  
The dull, the clever, the various shapes and sizes,  
But in the autumn shades I find I only  
Brood upon death, who carries off all the prizes.

**How does the poet present the schoolmaster’s feelings about becoming older?**

**When You Are Old**

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,

And nodding by the fire, take down this book,

And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,

And loved your beauty with love false or true,

But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,

And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,

Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled

And paced upon the mountains overhead

And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

**In both poems the speakers describe their feelings about becoming older. What are the similarities/differences between the ways the poets present these feelings?**

**‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ + ‘When You Are Old’ – Sample Responses**

**High Response**

The use of the first person narrative structure and the present tense allows the reader to gain insight to the schoolmaster’s feelings about becoming older, ‘And now the autumn morning finds me.’ The first words of the poem, ‘And now’ imply the passage of time and also suggest that the speaker often reflects on this aspect of his life. The reference to ‘autumn’ is the first example of the use of the extended metaphor (the comparison between the seasons and life). Autumn typically has connotations of death and decay and this suggests that the speaker is very much aware that he is nearing the end of his life. However, in autumn there is also the promise of spring, which connotes new life and new beginnings. Interestingly, the speaker can only see the spring time in the children he teaches and is only looking towards death in his own life.

The structure of the poem also links to the ideas explored regarding the passage of time. Four out of the five stanzas include an abcb rhyme scheme. The regularity of this scheme reflects the speaker’s awareness of the inevitable passage of time and ultimately, his death, ‘I find I only/Brood upon death.’ Although the speaker is alive and still working as a teacher, it seems ironic that he is so preoccupied with death and that these thoughts are now ‘habitual.’ He is surrounded by pupils who are full of life yet all he can focus on is death.

The schoolmaster uses metaphorical language to describe the pupils he teaches, ‘the april faces.’ As previously discussed, the connotations of spring contrast greatly with autumn and this emphasises how the speaker perceives a vast distance between himself and his pupils. A simile is also used to develop this idea further; their faces are described ‘like apples ranged on shelves.’ As well as being associated with spring time, apples are also a recognisable image that is often associated with school. The fact that they ‘gleam’ suggests their readiness to learn and the idea that many opportunities and experiences lie ahead for them. Again, this is a significant contrast to the speaker’s view of life and his future.

Interestingly, the speaker claims that he does not feel a ‘pinch or prick of envy’ towards his young pupils. Instead, his tone is more nostalgic and reflective; he does not seem to show any bitterness about becoming older. For example, when looking back on his own youth, the speaker wonders ‘when precisely tolled the bell/Which summoned me from summer liberties/And brought me to this chill autumnal cell.’ He wonders where the time has gone and again uses a reference to autumn to convey his perception that he is in a stage of decay and impending death. As with the reference to the pupils’ faces as ‘apples,’ the bell is also a recognisable image associated with school. In the same way that school children are told when their playtime is over, the speaker reflects on how his ‘summer liberties’ ended just as suddenly and without warning.

This poem uses imagery associated with the familiar experience of school as well as the extended metaphor of the seasons, to convey the speed with which time passes. The speaker is seemingly surprised by how quickly he has become old and also leaves the reader to ‘wonder’ about this themselves. Although the speaker is not angry or resentful about getting older, there is a tone of certainty in his language that conveys the way in which his thoughts are fixed on death and can see no future in his life at this stage.

Mid Response

The poem ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ is about a school teacher who thinks about his life and how he is getting older. He thinks about his own life and the poet uses lots of techniques, such as metaphors and imagery, to present his thoughts. It is written in first person so we know exactly what he is thinking.

The speaker uses the seasons to compare his old age with the youth of his students, ‘the april faces/That gleam before me.’ This metaphor suggests that the students are young and have the rest of their lives to look forward to, unlike the schoolmaster. He writes that he is in a ‘chill autumnal cell.’ The word ‘cell’ implies that the speaker is trapped and he cannot escape from getting older. Also, ‘chill’ suggests that this is not a pleasant experience for him and that it makes him uncomfortable.

The speaker is not jealous of his students but he does not want them to know what it is like to get old, ‘Nor would I have them know their sentenced selves.’ The word ‘sentenced’ links to the schoolmaster being in a ‘cell.’ The pupils do not have a choice about getting older and the schoolmaster does not want them to know what it is like. The reference to prison here suggests that the speaker believes getting older is a punishment but it is something that happens to everyone even if you have not done anything wrong. When you are young, you don’t think about getting old, just like the pupils in the poem. The schoolmaster says he was like this once when he ‘rollicked round the playground’ but his life is very different now that he is older.

The schoolmaster appeals to the reader’s senses to present his views about becoming older, ‘I sniff the smell of ink and chalk and my mortality.’ Ink and chalk make the reader think of school and this reflects his long career as a teacher. By appealing to the senses, the speaker creates an image for the reader of an old, traditional schoolmaster. The schoolmaster writes that he can smell his ‘mortality.’ This is a metaphor and suggests that he might die soon.

All of the stanzas have four lines and this makes me think that the schoolmaster’s days are all the same. He says that his thoughts about death are now ‘habitual’ so it is clear he spends a lot of time thinking about how he has become older and cannot escape death. He knows there is nothing he can do about getting older and he is surprised about how quickly time has passed.

In conclusion, it is clear that the schoolmaster does not like getting older and even though he is not jealous of his pupils because they are young, the reader gets the impression that he wishes he could go back to when he was younger. The schoolmaster always thinks about death and Scannell uses different techniques to present his ideas and opinions about this.

Low Response

The poem is about an old teacher. I know this because he is an ‘Ageing Schoolmaster.’ This means he is getting older. He must be quite old because we don’t really have chalk in our schools anymore and in the poem he has chalk on his sleeve.

The teacher thinks about when he was younger. He was happier then because he could go out in the playground. However, now he is old he thinks about dying all the time and this means he is quite unhappy.

There are five stanzas in the poem. In each one the schoolmaster thinks about getting older. In the last stanza he says how he looks at his students. Some of them are ‘clever’ but some of them are ‘dull.’ He uses a simile to describe them. For example, ‘like apples ranged on shelves.’ The students are shiny and new like apples. They are also young.

Overall, I don’t think the schoolmaster is very happy about getting older. He wants to be young like his students. He was happier when he was younger. Now all he thinks about is dying. This is probably why he’s so miserable.

Comparison Sample Responses

High Response

The use of the personal pronoun ‘you’ in ‘When You Are Old’ initially suggests that the speaker is addressing the reader, inviting them to reflect on the ageing process and the passage of time in their life, ‘When you are old and grey and full of sleep.’ This is perhaps a stereotypical image of an elderly person and one that readers will be familiar with. The word ‘when’ conveys the idea that becoming older is inevitable, which is an idea also explored in ‘Ageing Schoolmaster,’ particularly in the way in which he describes the process as similar to being ‘sentenced’ for a crime.

However, it is soon clear that unlike ‘Ageing Schoolmaster,’ Yeats’ poem is addressed to someone the speaker once loved. Both poets use natural imagery when looking back on the past; Yeats refers to how the speaker’s love ‘paced upon the mountains overhead’ while Scannell recalls his ‘summer liberties’ with fondness. The use of this type of imagery in both poems could suggest the inevitability of the ageing process but also the way in which the past seems to be superior to the present for both speakers.

Both poems include repetition but to present very different views about becoming older. For example, ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ makes repeated references to death and its ‘huge inevitability.’ In contrast, ‘When You Are Old’ repeats the verb ‘loved’ to suggest that the love the speaker felt when he was young has not altered over time. Although age has caused the woman to have a ‘changing face,’ the speaker’s love has remained and this creates a poignant tone.

Mid Response

Both poems contain imagery to present the speakers’ views about becoming older ’When you are old and grey and full of sleep.’ This is an image lots of people would associate with an elderly person. It seems that life has made them tired and in need of rest. This presents the person as being quite peaceful and calm. Similarly, Scannell also uses imagery to show the differences between the young and old. He suggests that when you are young, you are full of energy and have lots to look forward to. For example, he describes the pupils ‘like apples ranged on shelves.’ This simile emphasises the contrast between them and the teacher.

Both poems are written in the first person but ‘When You Are Old’ is directed at someone in particular. ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ includes the personal thoughts of the speaker about ‘the huge inevitability of death,’ while Yeats’ poem is addressing someone the speaker used to love and is focused on past happiness. For example, ‘How many loved your moments of glad grace.’ The alliteration of ‘glad grace’ emphasises how the speaker admired the woman and suggests that when she was young, she was very beautiful. There is also a tone of sadness because perhaps the relationship did not end well, ‘a little sadly.’ ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ could also be described as having a sad tone because the speaker feels that getting older is a punishment that he cannot escape; he is trapped in his ‘cell’ until he dies.

Low Response

Both of the poems are about getting older. ‘When You Are Old’ describes an old lady sitting by the fire. She has ‘grey’ hair and the speaker tells her to read a book. This makes me imagine an old person relaxing. The poet talks about how he used to be in love. For example, ‘loved your beauty.’ I don’t think the relationship went well because it says ‘a little sadly.’ The poet doesn’t tell us exactly why he is sad and this keeps the reader interested.

The speaker in ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ is also quite sad because he is getting old. He also uses language to talk about his past. For example, ‘rollicked round the playground.’ He used to be happy when he was playing in the playground but now he knows he will die soon. The speaker thinks about death quite a lot and he thinks about the past, like ‘When You Are Old.’ The speaker in ‘When You Are Old’ doesn’t really mention dying. There are more words to do with love. This poem is addressed to someone, ‘you’ but ‘Ageing Schoolmaster’ is not.

**His Visitor**

I come across from Mellstock while the moon wastes weaker  
To behold where I lived with you for twenty years and more:  
I shall go in the gray, at the passing of the mail-train,  
And need no setting open of the long familiar door  
As before.  
  
  
The change I notice in my once own quarters!  
A brilliant budded border where the daisies used to be,  
The rooms new painted, and the pictures altered,  
And other cups and saucers, and no cosy nook for tea  
As with me.  
  
  
I discern the dim faces of the sleep-wrapt servants;  
They are not those who tended me through feeble hours and strong,  
But strangers quite, who never knew my rule here,  
Who never saw me painting, never heard my softling song  
Float along.

So I don't want to linger in this re-decked dwelling,  
I feel too uneasy at the contrasts I behold,  
And I make again for Mellstock to return here never,  
And rejoin the roomy silence, and the mute and manifold  
Souls of old.

**In ‘His Visitor’, how does the poet present death and the afterlife?**

**Ghosts**

I to a crumpled cabin came  
upon a hillside high,  
And with me was a withered dame  
As weariful as I.  
"It used to be our home," she said;  
"How well I remember well!  
Oh that our happy hearth should be  
Today an empty shell!"  
  
The door was flailing in the storm  
That deafed us with its din;  
The roof that kept us once so warm  
Now let the snow-drift in.  
The floor sagged to the sod below,  
The walls caved crazily;  
We only heard the wind of woe  
Where once was glow and glee.  
  
So there we stood disconsolate  
Beneath the Midnight Dome,  
And ancient miner and his mate,  
Before our wedded home,  
Where we had know such love and cheer . . .  
I sighed, then soft she said:  
"Do not regret - remember, dear,  
We, too, are dead."

**Both poems explore people’s feelings on visiting a former home.**

**What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these feelings?**

**Names**

She was Eliza for a few weeks

when she was a baby –

Eliza Lily. Soon it changed to Lil.

Later she was Miss Steward in the baker’s shop

And then ‘my love’, ‘my darling’, Mother.

Widowed at thirty, she went back to work

As Mrs Hand. Her daughter grew up,

Married and gave birth.

Now she was Nanna. ‘Everybody

Calls me Nanna,’ she would say to visitors.

And so they did – friends, tradesmen, the doctor.

In the geriatric ward

They used the patients’ Christian names.

‘Lil,’ we said, ‘or Nanna,’

But it wasn’t in her file

And for those last bewildered weeks

She was Eliza once again.

**How does the poet show us about different stages of the woman’s life in this poem?**

**In Oak Terrace**

Old and alone, she sits at nights,

Nodding before the television.

The house is quiet now. She knits,

rises to put the kettle on,

watches a cowboy’s killing, reads

the local Births and Deaths, and falls

asleep at ‘Growing stock-piles of war-heads’.

A world that threatens worse ills

fades. She dreams of life spent

in the one house: suffers again

poverty, sickness, abandonment,

a child’s death, a brother’s brain

melting to madness. Seventy years

of common trouble; the kettle sings.

At midnight she says her silly prayers,

And takes her teeth out, and collects her night-things.

**Both poems look at a woman looking back at her life. What similarities and differences do you see in this?**

**The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

**How does the poet explore life choices and how they affect people?**

**Midnight on the Great Western**

n the third-class seat sat

The journeying boy.

And the roof-lamp’s oily flame

Played down on his listless form and face,

Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,

Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy

Had a ticket stuck; and a string

Around his neck bore the key of his box,

That twinkled gleams of the

Lamp’s sad beams

Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy,

Towards a world unknown,

Who calmly, as if incurious quite

On all at stake, can undertake

This plunge alone?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,

Our rude realms far above,

Whence with spacious vision

You mark and mete

This region of sin that you find you in,

But are not of?

**Both poems feature journeys that can be seen to represent life. Compare the way these journeys are presented in the two poems.**

Sample Answer – The Road Not Taken

‘The Road Not Taken’ explores life choices and how they affect people. Frost uses the extended metaphor of a fork in the road to symbolise the choices people face and how they ultimately must make a decision.

The narrator shows the difficulty of making choices when they are stood facing the fork in the road. The narrator’s hesitation is revealed through the repetition of ‘And’ in the first stanza, which suggests they are weighing up the choice between the two paths but although through the ABAAB rhyme scheme which reflects how the narrator considers both choices, switching back and forth between the two. Through this, the poet could be suggesting that decisions take a lot of time and thought.

The narrator’s choice reflects choices the reader may have faced in that, when the narrator looks down the path ‘as far’ as they could, the reader is reminded of times they may have weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of a choice before making it.

Although choices are presented as difficult, the possibilities they provide are also presented as excited. The narrator seems to show excitement at the prospect of taking the path that ‘wanted wear’. This sense of excitement is emphasised through the alliteration of the ‘w’ sound as it gives the reader the impression that the narrator is eager to be the person who wears it down. The use of the exclamation mark in ‘Oh, I kept the first for another day!’ further reflects this excitement as it implies that the narrator already looks forward to the possibility of returning to try the other path.

One interpretation of the poem is that people assign meaning to the choices that make. The image of the paths which ‘equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black’ shows that the paths are practically identical. Despite this, the narrator imagines themselves saying that they ‘took the one less travelled by’ suggesting that perhaps a person’s memory of making a choice can differ from the reality.

The assigning of meaning could be to justify a choice, as people sometimes question or regret the choices they make. This idea is presented in the poem through the use of a first person narrative. This gives lines tinged with regret, such as ‘I doubted if I should ever come back’ even more emotion. Furthermore, a cyclical structure is created through the repetition of the phrase, ‘two roads diverged’. This reflects how the narrator looks back on the decision they made and perhaps suggests that they keep questioning their choice.

Frost presents the outcome of the narrator’s choice as ambiguous. The narrator ends the poem by imagining that their choice ‘made all the difference’. However, it is not clear whether this ‘difference’ has been positive or negative. This feeling of ambiguity is emphasised through the use of the word ‘sigh’ as although the narrator could be sighing with a sense of nostalgia, it could also be seen in a negative light. In this way, Frost highlights how, although choices have consequences, the nature of these consequences can be ambiguous, perhaps reflecting how people are often unsure whether or not they have made the right choice.

By using the extended metaphor of a fork in the road, Frost explores the intricacies of making a choice and the impact these decisions have on people. The poem is punctuated with moments of decision, indecision, excitement and regret, which gives the poem a mixed tone that reflects how life choices affect people differently. The poet chooses to leave the poem open to interpretation which gives the reader the impression that choices in life and the impact they have are often unclear.

Sample Answer – Compare / Contrast

Both poems present different journeys – a walk in the woods and a train journey. Both journeys can be seen as extended metaphors for life. The poets use symbolism as well as aspects of form and structure to present these journeys and by extension, life.

Both poems present life as being uncertain. The ‘The Road…’, the narrator couldn’t see the end of the path because it ‘bent in the undergrowth’. This emphasises the narrator’s feeling of uncertainty because the outcome of their choice isn’t clear. The use of the adjective ‘bent’ implies a sharp and sudden lack of path making the uncertainty seem even more intimidating to the reader. Life is also presented as being uncertain in ‘Midnight’ when the boy is described as heading towards a ‘world unknown’. The reader can interpret this ‘world’ as adulthood and by using this metaphor the poet emphasises just how much uncertainty there is in the boy’s future because the vastness of a ‘world’ suggests that there is nowhere the boy can escape uncertainty.

The poems suggest that despite this uncertainty, people have varying levels of control in life. In ‘The Road..’ the narrator has an active role in their journey as they walk through the wood. They are able to choose between paths and even change their mind when they ‘took the other’. In contrast, the figures in ‘Midnight..’ are aboard a moving train, literally set on tracks that they cannot deviate from. This lack of control is emphasised as the boy is asleep and ‘journeying’ with a ‘ticket stuck’ in his hat. This presents him as a passive figure with no control over his destination - he simply has to go wherever the journey takes him.

The irregular forms of both poems reflect these ideas. The ABAAB rhyme scheme of ‘The Road …’ reflects ow the narrator is uncertain of their choice. This uncertainty is reinforced by the anaphora of ‘and’ in the first stanza, as it suggests the narrator can’t decide which path to take. In contrast, the ABCDB rhyme scheme in ‘Midnight’ emphasises the passengers’ lack of control. The ABCD lines reflect the forward momentum of the train, how it can’t deviate from its set course and how the passengers have no control over where it goes. However, the return of the B rhyme in the final line of each stanza also reminds the reader of life’s uncertainty.

Although the journeys show narrators with contrasting degrees of control, both poets show how they represent the uncertainty of life.

**Originally**

We came from our own country in a red room  
which fell through the fields, our mother singing  
our father’s name to the turn of the wheels.  
My brothers cried, one of them bawling, *Home,  
Home*, as the miles rushed back to the city,  
the street, the house, the vacant rooms  
where we didn’t live any more. I stared  
at the eyes of a blind toy, holding its paw.

All childhood is an emigration. Some are slow,  
leaving you standing, resigned, up an avenue  
where no one you know stays. Others are sudden.  
Your accent wrong. Corners, which seem familiar,  
leading to unimagined pebble-dashed estates, big boys  
eating worms and shouting words you don’t understand.  
My parents’ anxiety stirred like a loose tooth  
in my head. *I want our own country*, I said.

But then you forget, or don’t recall, or change,  
and, seeing your brother swallow a slug, feel only  
a skelf of shame. I remember my tongue  
shedding its skin like a snake, my voice  
in the classroom sounding just like the rest. Do I only think  
I lost a river, culture, speech, sense of first space  
and the right place? Now, *Where do you come from?*  
strangers ask. *Originally?* And I hesitate.

**How does the poet convey the narrator’s feelings about moving?**

**Hard Water**

I tried the soft stuff on holiday in Wales,  
a mania of teadrinking and hairwashing,  
excitable soap which never rinsed away,

but I loved coming home to this.

Flat. Straight. Like the vowels,  
like the straight talk: *hey up me duck*.  
I’d run the tap with its swimming-pool smell,  
get it cold and anaesthetic. Stand the glass  
and let the little fizz of anxiety settle.

Honest water, bright and not quite clean.  
The frankness of limestone, of gypsum,  
the sour steam of cooling towers,  
the alchemical taste of brewing.

On pitiless nights, I had to go for the bus  
before last orders. I’d turn up my face,  
let rain scald my eyelids and lips.  
It couldn’t lie. Fell thick  
with a payload of acid. No salt —  
this rain had forgotten the sea.

I opened my mouth, speaking nothing  
in spite of my book-learning.  
I let a different cleverness wash my tongue.  
It tasted of work, the true taste  
of early mornings, the blunt taste  
of *don’t get mardy*, of *too bloody deep for me*,  
fierce lovely water that marked me for life  
as belonging, regardless.

**Both ‘Originally’ and ‘Hard Water’ both convey their feelings towards their roots. Compare the way these feelings are presented in the poems.**

**Horse Whisperer**

They shouted for me  
when their horses snorted, when restless  
hooves traced circles in the earth  
and shimmering muscles refused the plough.  
My secret was a spongy tissue, pulled bloody  
from the mouth of a just-born foal,  
scented with rosemary, cinnamon,  
a charm to draw the tender giants  
to my hands.

They shouted for me  
when their horses reared at burning straw  
and eyes revolved in stately heads.  
I would pull a frog’s wishbone,  
tainted by meat, from a pouch,  
a new fear to fight the fear of fire,  
so I could lead the horses,  
like helpless children, to safety.

I swore I would protect  
this legacy of whispers  
but the tractor came over the fields  
like a warning. I was the life-blood  
no longer. From pulpits  
I was scorned as demon and witch.  
Pitchforks drove me from villages and farms.

My gifts were the tools of revenge.  
A foul hex above a stable door  
so a trusted stallion could be ridden  
no more. Then I joined the stampede,  
with others of my kind,  
to countries far from our trade.

Still I miss them. Shire, Clydesdale, Suffolk.  
The searing breath, glistening veins,  
steady tread and the pride,  
most of all the pride.

**How does the poet portray their feelings with other humans?**

**To a Fish**

You strange, astonished-looking, angle-faced,  
Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,  
Gulping salt-water everlastingly,  
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,  
And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;  
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,--  
Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,  
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:--  
  
O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,  
What is't ye do? What life lead? eh, dull goggles?  
How do ye vary your vile days and nights?  
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles  
In ceaseless wash? Still nought but gapes, and bites,  
And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?

**The speakers in ‘Horse Whisperer’ and ‘To A Fish’ present their attitudes towards animals. Compare the way these attitudes are presented.**

**Crossing the Bar**

Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crost the bar.

**What does the poet suggest about the narrator’s emotions when considering death?**

**Because I could not stop for death**

Because I could not stop for Death –

He kindly stopped for me –

The Carriage held but just Ourselves –

And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste

And I had put away

My labor and my leisure too,

For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove

At Recess – in the Ring –

We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –

We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –

The Dews drew quivering and Chill –

For only Gossamer, my Gown –

My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground –

The Roof was scarcely visible –

The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet

Feels shorter than the Day

I first surmised the Horses' Heads

Were toward Eternity –

**Both poems present attitudes towards death. Compare the way in which these attitudes are presented.**

**My Father On His Shield**

Shiny as wax, the cracked veneer Scotch-taped   
and brittle.I can't bring my father back.   
Legs crossed, he sits there brash   
  
with a private's stripe, a world away   
from the war they would ship him to   
within days.Cannons flank his face   
  
and banners above him like the flag   
my mother kept on the mantel, folded tight,   
white stars sharp-pointed on a field of blue.

I remember his fists, the iron he pounded,   
five-pound hammer ringing steel,   
the frame he made for a sled that winter   
  
before the war.I remember the rope in his fist   
around my chest, his other fist   
shoving the snow, and downhill we dived,   
  
his boots by my boots on the tongue,   
pines whishing by, ice in my eyes, blinking

and squealing.I remember the troop train,   
  
steam billowing like a smoke screen.   
I remember wrecking the sled weeks later   
and pounding to beat the iron flat,   
  
but it stayed there bent   
and stacked in the barn by the anvil,   
and I can't bring him back.

**How does the poet present the feelings regarding the loss of his father?**

**Those Winter Sundays**

Sundays too my father got up early

and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,

then with cracked hands that ached

from labor in the weekday weather made

banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I’d wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.

When the rooms were warm, he’d call,

and slowly I would rise and dress,

fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,

who had driven out the cold

and polished my good shoes as well.

What did I know, what did I know

of love’s austere and lonely offices?

**Both poems present attitudes towards their fathers. Compare the way in which these attitudes are presented.**

**Time does not bring relief**

Time does not bring relief; you all have lied

Who told me time would ease me of my pain!

I miss him in the weeping of the rain;

I want him at the shrinking of the tide;

The old snows melt from every mountain-side,

And last year’s leaves are smoke in every lane;

But last year’s bitter loving must remain

Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.

There are a hundred places where I fear

To go,—so with his memory they brim.

And entering with relief some quiet place

Where never fell his foot or shone his face

I say, “There is no memory of him here!”

And so stand stricken, so remembering him.

**How does the poet portray their views regarding what it is like to remember a loved one?**

**Farewell, Sweet Dust**

Now I have lost you, I must scatter  
All of you on the air henceforth;  
Not that to me it can ever matter  
Buy it's only fair to the rest of the earth.

Now especially, when it is winter  
And the sun's not half so bright as he was,  
Who wouldn't be glad to find a splinter  
That once was you in the frozen grass?

Snowflakes, too, will be softer feathered,  
Clouds, perhaps, will be whiter plumed;  
Rain, whose brilliance you caught and gathered,  
Purer silver have reassumed.

Farewell, sweet dust; I never was a miser:  
Once, for a minute, I made you mine:  
Now you are gone, I am none the wiser  
But the leaves of the willow are as bright as wine.

**Both poems have different attitudes regarding the loss of a loved one. Compare the way these attitudes are presented in the poems.**

**Solitude**

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;

Weep, and you weep alone;

For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,

But has trouble enough of its own.

Sing, and the hills will answer;

Sigh, it is lost on the air;

The echoes bound to a joyful sound,

But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;

Grieve, and they turn and go;

They want full measure of all your pleasure,

But they do not need your woe.

Be glad, and your friends are many;

Be sad, and you lose them all,—

There are none to decline your nectared wine,

But alone you must drink life’s gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;

Fast, and the world goes by.

Succeed and give, and it helps you live,

But no man can help you die.

There is room in the halls of pleasure

For a large and lordly train,

But one by one we must all file on

Through the narrow aisles of pain.

**How does the poet portray their attitude towards isolation?**

**Ode on Solitude**

Happy the man, whose wish and care

A few paternal acres bound,

Content to breathe his native air,

In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,

Whose flocks supply him with attire,

Whose trees in summer yield him shade,

In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find

Hours, days, and years slide soft away,

In health of body, peace of mind,

Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,

Together mixed; sweet recreation;

And innocence, which most does please,

With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;

Thus unlamented let me die;

Steal from the world, and not a stone

Tell where I lie.

**Both poets reveal their feelings about being alone. Compare the way in which these feelings are presented.**

**Nothing’s Changed – Tatamkhulu Afrika**

Small round hard stones click   
under my heels,   
seeding grasses thrust   
bearded seeds   
into trouser cuffs, cans,   
trodden on, crunch   
in tall, purple-flowering,   
amiable weeds.   
  
District Six.   
No board says it is:   
but my feet know,   
and my hands,   
and the skin about my bones,   
and the soft labouring of my lungs,   
and the hot, white, inwards turning   
anger of my eyes.   
  
Brash with glass,   
name flaring like a flag,   
it squats   
in the grass and weeds,   
incipient Port Jackson trees:   
new, up-market, haute cuisine,   
guard at the gatepost,   
whites only inn.   
  
No sign says it is:   
but we know where we belong.   
  
I press my nose   
to the clear panes, know,   
before I see them, there will be   
crushed ice white glass,   
linen falls,   
the single rose.   
  
Down the road,   
working man's cafe sells   
bunny chows.   
Take it with you, eat   
it at a plastic table's top,   
wipe your fingers on your jeans,   
spit a little on the floor:   
it's in the bone.   
  
I back from the   
glass,   
boy again,   
leaving small mean O   
of small mean mouth.   
Hands burn   
for a stone, a bomb,   
to shiver down the glass.   
Nothing's changed.

**How does this poet present views on place in this poem?**

**Homeland -by Jon Sait**

them come at midnight i remember that  
i was fooding the cat  
what happened to the cat  
in and across the hall them was  
before the last bod slam the door  
i was scared more for décor  
all bootmark in the twill  
mud set to stone too quick in nape and alley  
and fuss would follow  
anyway  
them wanted to know why it was off  
i often have it off i said which made them laff  
all bellyjig and straining like at shit  
then them poke me one with a stick and ask again  
not ask exact more shout and kick  
i sleep deep and dream i said upstanding  
and has no need of it  
all flattering from dull mouth or some sunny play  
gobbing did it good for me then  
hit me and down i was  
with stompers flying in all crowblack and beaky  
i pass over then and only come to when rain wet me  
it was chillstone and the dark was eyeless  
and all was lone and bleedy  
three days least them probe me  
all think sore and head reely  
then the white light  
the bright light  
the light like light that change it ever

illuminati

them let me go then after fingering  
and promise to never do  
now i venge in the not quite dark  
all flicker flash and wheezy  
i leave the sash open so the whole street can see me  
and them that watch can think me safely home

**In both poems the writers present views on place. What are the main similarities and/or differences in their views?**

**The Hero – Siegfried Sassoon**

'Jack fell as he'd have wished,' the mother said,  
And folded up the letter that she'd read.  
'The Colonel writes so nicely.' Something broke  
In the tired voice that quavered to a choke.  
She half looked up. 'We mothers are so proud  
Of our dead soldiers.' Then her face was bowed.   
  
Quietly the Brother Officer went out.  
He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies  
That she would nourish all her days, no doubt  
For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes  
Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,  
Because he'd been so brave, her glorious boy.   
  
He thought how 'Jack', cold-footed, useless swine,  
Had panicked down the trench that night the mine  
Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried  
To get sent home, and how, at last, he died,  
Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care  
Except that lonely woman with white hair.

**How does the poet present the solider in this poem?**

**Arms and the Boy-** [**Wilfred Owen**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/wilfred-owen)

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade

How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;

Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;

And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-leads,

Which long to nuzzle in the hearts of lads,

Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth

Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple.

There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple;

And God will grow no talons at his heels,

Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls.

**In both poems the speakers present soldiers in the war. What are the main similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these soldiers?**

**It Rains – Edward Thomas**

It rains, and nothing stirs within the fence

Anywhere through the orchard’s untrodden,

Dense

Forest of parsley. The great diamonds

Of rain on the grassblades there is none to break,

Or the fallen petals further down to shake.

And I am nearly as happy as possible

To search the wilderness in vain though well,

To think of two walking, kissing there,

Drenched, yet forgetting the kisses of the rain:

Sad, too, to think that never, never again,

Unless alone, so happy shall I walk

In the rain. When I turn away, on its fine stalk

Twilight has fined to naught, the parsley flower

Figures, suspended still and ghostly white,

The past hovering as it revisits the light.

**In ‘It Rains’, how does the poet use the weather and the setting to express the speaker’s feelings?**

**The Voice – Thomas Hardy**

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,

Saying that now you are not as you were

When you had changed from the one who was all to me,

But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,

Standing as when I drew near to the town

Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,

Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness

Travelling across the wet mead to me here,

You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,

Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,

Leaves around me falling,

Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,

And the woman calling.

**In both ‘It Rains’ and ‘The Voice’, the poets describe their feelings about a past relationship. What are the similarities and differences between the ways the poets present these feelings?**

**An Irishman Foresees His Death**

I know that I shall meet my fate

Somewhere among the clouds above;

Those that I fight I do not hate

Those that I guard I do not love;

My country is Kiltartan Cross\*

My countrymen Kiltartan’s poor,

No likely end could bring them loss

Or leave them happier than before.

Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,

Nor public man, nor cheering crowds,

A lonely impulse of deight

Drove to this tumult in the clouds;

I balanced all, brought all to mind,

The years to come seemed waste of breath,

A waste of breath the years behind

In balance with this life, this death.

\*Kiltartan Cross – a village in Ireland

**How does the poet present the speaker’s feelings about war in this poem?**

**Horses Abroad**

Horses in horse cloths stand in a row

ON board the huge shop that as last lets go:

Whither are they sailing? They do not know,

Nor what for, nor how. –

They are horses of war,

And are going to where there is fighting afar;

But they gaze through their eye-holes unwitting they are,

And that in some wilderness, gaunt and ghast,

Their bones will bleach ere a year has passed,

And the item be as ‘war-waste’ classed. –

And when the band booms, and the folk say ‘Good bye!’

And the shore slides astern, they appear wrenched awry

From the scheme Nature planned for them – wondering why.

**In both poems, the speakers discuss the impact of war on ordinary people or animals. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poems present these ideas?**

**At Sea**

With nothing to do now he’s gone,

She dusts the house,

Sweeps the bleached verandah clear of sand.

The broom leaves a trail of grit on the step,

A sprinkling under the book where it hands.

A coast for a pillow,

She sleeps downstairs,

Dreams the loathed ocean is coming for her,

Climbing the cliffs,

Creeping in through the door.

She wakes to the screaming gulls,

His shirts on the line

And the high tide’s breakers’

Chill in her arms.

**How does the poet present a feeling of being alone?**

**The Sands of Dee**

‘O Mary, go and call the cattle home,

And call the cattle home,

And call the cattle home

Across the sands of Dee;’

The western wind was wild and dank with foam,

And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,

And o’er and o’er the sand,

And round and round the san,

As far as eye could see.

The rolling mist came down and hid the land:

And never home came she.

‘Oh! Is it weed, or fish, or floating hair –

A tress of golden hair,

A drowned maiden’s hair

Above the nets at sea?

Was never salmon yet that shone so fair

Among the stakes on Dee’.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,

The cruel, crawling foam,

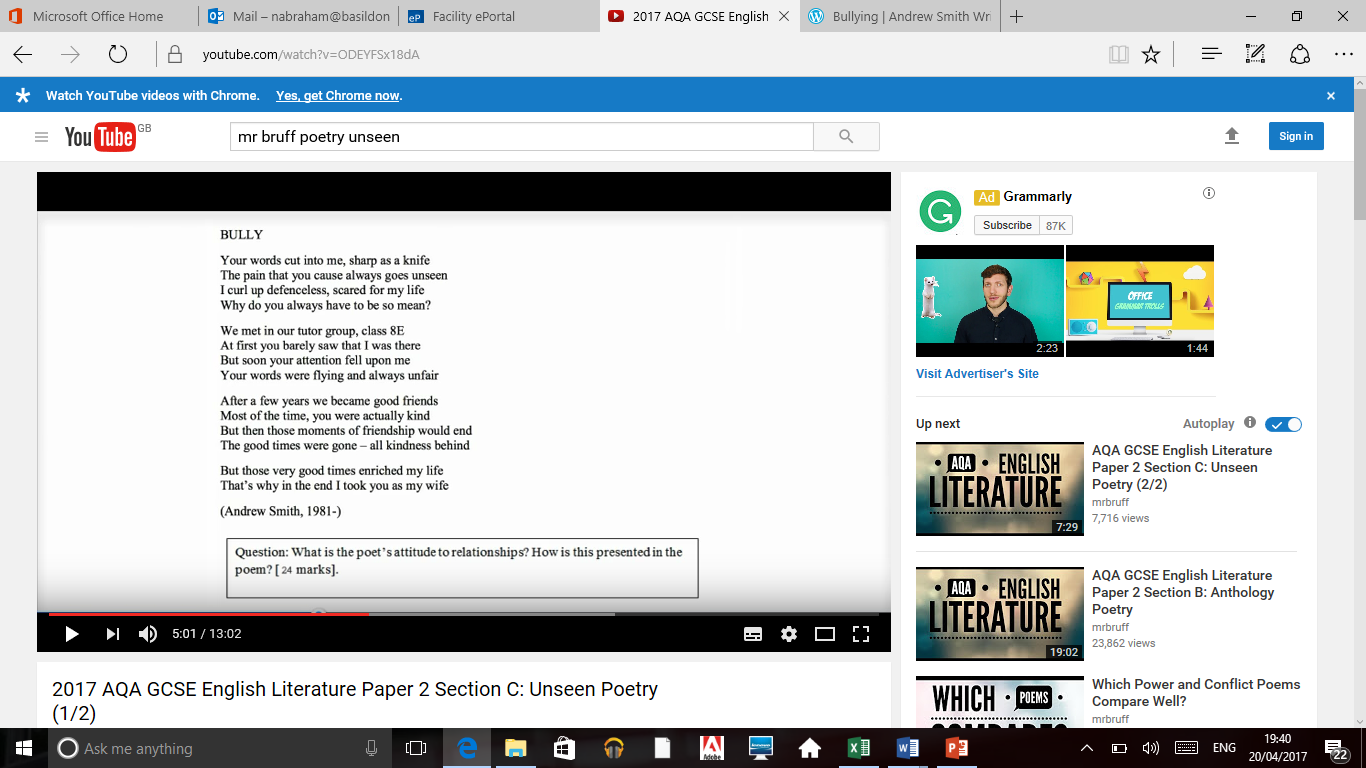
The cruel, hungry foam,

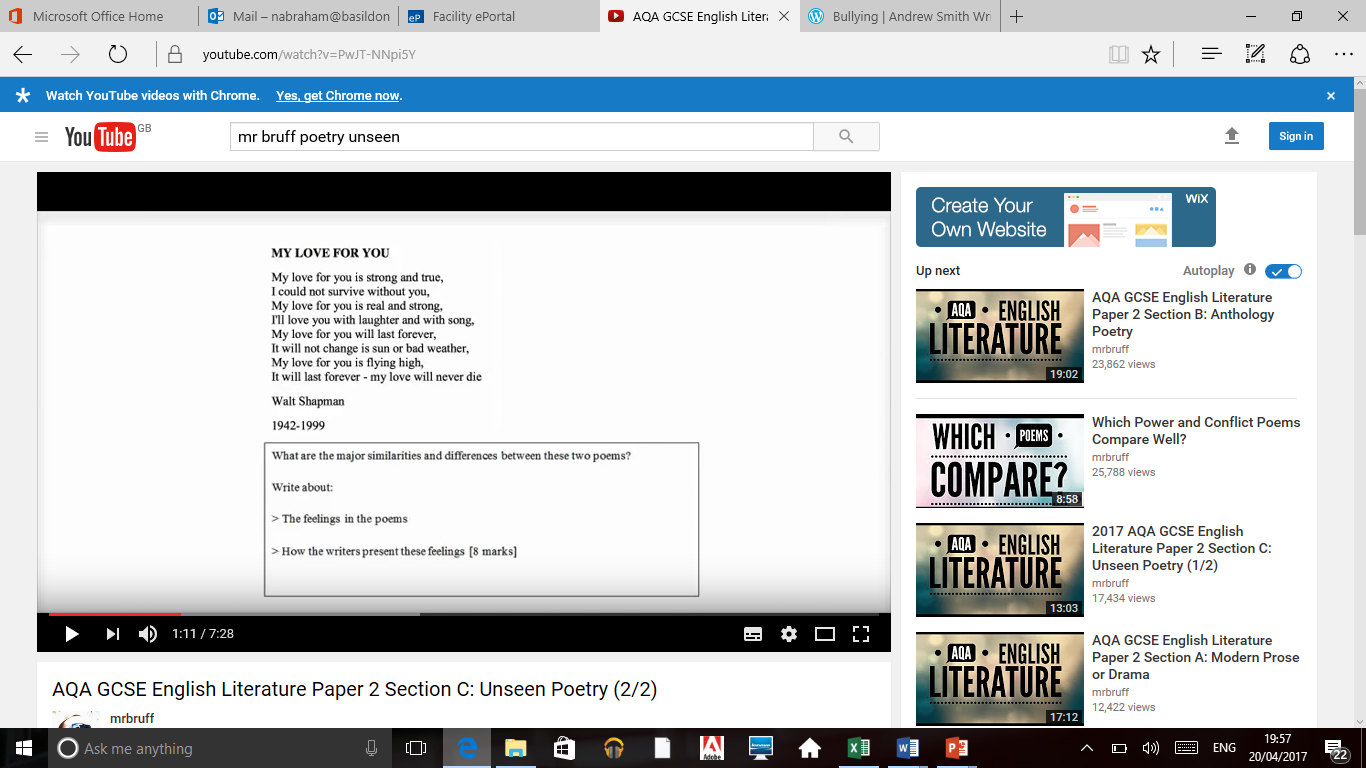
To her grave beside the sea:

But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,

Across the sands of Dee.

**In both poems, the speakers describe the power of the sea. Compare the ways in which the poets present the sea in these poems.**





**Impressions of a New Boy**

This school is huge – I hate it!

Please take me home.

Steep stairs cut in stone,

Peeling ceiling far too high,

The Head said ‘Wait’ so I wait alone,

Alone though Mum stands here, close by.

The voice is loud – I hate it!

Please take me home.

‘Come. Sit. What is your name?’

Trembling lips. The words won’t come.

The head says ‘Speak’, but my cheeks flame,

I hear him give a quiet sigh.

The room is full – I hate it

Please take me home.

A sea of faces stare at me.

My desk is much too small.

Its wooden ridge rubs my knee,

But the Head said ‘Sit’ so though I’m tall

I know that I must try.

The yard is full – I hate it.

Please take me home.

Bodies jostle me away, Pressing me against the wall.

Then one boy says, ‘Want to play?’

The boy says, ‘Catch’ and throws a ball

And playtime seems to fly.

This school is great - I love it.

**How does the poem ‘Impressions of a New Boy’ present the experience of school?**

**Only The Wall**

That first day

only the wall saw

the bully

trip the new boy

behind the shed,

and only the wall heard

the name he called,

a name that would stick

like toffee.

The second day

the wall didn’t see

the fight

because too many

boys stood around

, but the wall heard

their cheers,

and no one cheered

for the new boy.

The third day

the wall felt

three bullies

lean against it,

ready to ambush

the new boy,

then the wall heard

thumps and cries,

and saw blood.

The fourth day

only the wall

missed

the new boy

though five bullies

looked for him,

then picked another boy

instead. Next day

they had him back,

his face hit the wall.

The sixth day

only the wall knew

the bullies

would need that other boy

to savage.

The wall remembered

the new boy’s face

going home,

saw he’d stay away

**Both ‘Impressions of a New Boy’ and ‘Only the Wall’ explore childhood experiences. What are the similarities and differences in the way that the poets portray this theme?**

**Do Not Go Gentle**

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,

Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright

Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,

And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight

Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on that sad height,

Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

**In ‘Do Not Go Gentle’, how does the poet present attitudes towards death?**

**Remember**

Remember me when I am gone away,

Gone far away into the silent land;

When you can no more hold me by the hand,

Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day

You tell me of our future that you plann'd:

Only remember me; you understand

It will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while

And afterwards remember, do not grieve:

For if the darkness and corruption leave

A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,

Better by far you should forget and smile

Than that you should remember and be sad.

**Both poems explore reactions towards death.**

**What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these feelings?**

**Great-grandfather**

Great-grandfather would sit in the back parlour

For hours listening to the gramophone\*.

I have no photograph of him doing this,

So the picture I see of him sitting alone

With his head inclined towards the trumpeting

Green lily is colourful and unfaded.

The handkerchief, with which he blots the tears

Schubert serenades from him, is distinctly red

And the gramophone’s tin horn grows steadily

More greenly lily-like and rare,

Grows into antiquity – and soon will be found

Surviving only behind glass in conditioned air.

Great-grandfather knows nothing of this, but

Such an instrument will be treasured as though

It were a silver trumpet once discovered

Lying in the tomb of some young Egyptian Pharaoh;

And only on certain occasions will it be taken

From its case and played with careful ceremony –

when thinnest sound will summon the ready armies

Of imagination to salute the music lovers of history.

And great-grandfather will be one of those.

Freda Downie

Glossary: gramophone\* – an early (twentieth century) machine for listening to recorded music. It had a turntable, with a needle that went into the grooves of the record placed on it. The sound came out through a ‘horn’ or ‘trumpet’, often shaped like a flower.

**How does the speaker present the Great Grandfather in this poem?**

**On the Verge**

The skin is wrinkled and speaks of age.

I watch it change from year to following year

As hurrying life turns yet another page,

And feel it as it drops another gear.

It’s not that bits have started to fall off,

Though annual checks will monitor decline.

Occasional wheeze is now a chronic cough.

Leg muscles wither though the brain seems fine.

The three score years and ten\* are long-term past.

And dreams of action close as I can get.

The body has mislaid that key word ‘fast’.

And ‘slow’ or ‘creeping’ are a better bet.

It’s no good worrying at this lack of urge

For life’s still sweet here resting on the verge. Michael Ware

**Compare the ways the writers present an old person in ‘Great-grandfather’ and ‘On the Verge.’**

**The Way Through the Woods**

They shut the road through the woods

Seventy years ago.

Weather and rain have undone it again,

And now you would never know

There was once a road through the woods

Before they planted the trees.

It is underneath the coppice and heath,

And the thin anemones.

Only the keeper sees

That, where the ring-dove broods,

And the badgers roll at ease,

There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods

Of a summer evening late,

When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools

Where the otter whistles his mate,

(They fear not men in the woods,

Because they see so few.)

You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,

And the swish of a skirt in the dew,

Steadily cantering through

The misty solitudes,

As though they perfectly knew

The old lost road through the woods.

But there is no road through the woods.

**How does the poet present the way that the closed road changed over time?**

**Echo**

“Who called?” I said, and the words

Through the whispering glades,

Hither, thither, baffled the birds—

“Who called? Who called?”

The leafy boughs on high

Hissed in the sun;

The dark air carried my cry

Faintingly on:

Eyes in the green, in the shade,

In the motionless brake,

Voices that said what I said,

For mockery's sake:

“Who cares?” I bawled through my tears;

The wind fell low:

In the silence, “Who cares? who cares?”

Wailed to and fro.

**Both poems have a mysterious atmosphere. Compare the ways in which the poets create this atmosphere.**

**Give – Simon Armitage**

Of all the [public places](https://genius.com/6531300/Simon-armitage-give/Public-places), [dear](https://genius.com/5074880/Simon-armitage-give/Dear)  
[to make a scene](https://genius.com/7637431/Simon-armitage-give/To-make-a-scene), I’ve [chosen](https://genius.com/5012783/Simon-armitage-give/Chosen) here.  
  
[Of all the doorways in the world  
to choose to sleep, I’ve chosen yours.  
I’m on the street, under the stars.](https://genius.com/4563156/Simon-armitage-give/Of-all-the-doorways-in-the-world-to-choose-to-sleep-ive-chosen-yours-im-on-the-street-under-the-stars)  
  
[For coppers I can dance or sing.  
For silver-swallow swords, eat fire.  
For gold-escape from locks and chains.](https://genius.com/5074910/Simon-armitage-give/For-coppers-i-can-dance-or-sing-for-silver-swallow-swords-eat-fire-for-gold-escape-from-locks-and-chains)  
  
It’s not as if I’m [holding](https://genius.com/9218914/Simon-armitage-give/Holding) out  
for [frankincense or myrrh](https://genius.com/5074915/Simon-armitage-give/Frankincense-or-myrrh), [just change](https://genius.com/5012750/Simon-armitage-give/Just-change).  
  
[You give me tea](https://genius.com/7637435/Simon-armitage-give/You-give-me-tea). [That’s big of you.](https://genius.com/5074921/Simon-armitage-give/Thats-big-of-you)  
I’m [on my knees](https://genius.com/6532109/Simon-armitage-give/On-my-knees)[.](https://genius.com/20231262/Simon-armitage-give/) [I beg of you](https://genius.com/6509691/Simon-armitage-give/I-beg-of-you).

**How does the writer present the speaker within this poem?**

**Tramp - Rupert M. Loydell.**

This mad prophet

gibbers\* mid-traffic,

wringing his hands

whilst mouthing at heaven.

No messages for us.

His conversation is simply

a passage through time.

He points and calls.

Our uneven stares dissuade\*

approach. We fear him, his

matted hair, patched coat,

grey look from sleeping out.

We mutter amongst ourselves

and hope he keeps away. No

place for him in our heaven,

there it’s clean and empty.

**In both poems the writers explore the perception of the homeless. Compare the ways this is presented in the two poems.**

**I, Too** - BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I’ll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody’ll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They’ll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

**How does the writer present their point of view on identity within this poem?**

**My People**, also by LANGSTON HUGHES

The night is beautiful,  
So the faces of my people.  
  
The stars are beautiful,  
So the eyes of my people.  
  
Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

**In both ‘*I, Too’* and ‘*My People’* the speakers present ideas about sharing a positive viewpoint of their African American heritage and experience. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poet presents those ideas?**

**Alpine Letter**

Love? If you’d asked me yesterday, I’d say

love is a saw that amputates the heart.

I’d call it my disease, I’d call it plague.

But yesterday, I hadn’t heard from you.

So call it the weight of light that holds one soul

connected to another. Or a tear

that falls in all gratitude, becoming sea.

Call it the only word that comforts me.

The sight of your writing has me on the floor,

the curve of each letter looped about my heart.

And in this ink, the tenor of your voice.

And in this ink the movement of your hand.

The Alps, now, cut their teeth upon the sky,

and pressing on to set these granite jaws

between us, not a mile will do me harm.

Your letter, in my coat, will keep me warm.

**Ros Barber**

**In ‘Alpine Letter,’ how does the poet present ideas about love?**

**Praise Song for My Mother**

You were  
water to me  
deep and bold and fathoming

You were  
moon’s eye to me  
pull and grained and mantling

You were  
sunrise to me  
rise and warm and streaming

You were  
the fishes red gill to me  
the flame tree’s spread to me  
the crab’s leg/the fried plantain smell  
replenishing replenishing

Go to your wide futures, you said

**Grace Nichols**

**In both ‘Alpine Letter’ and ‘Praise Song for my Mother’, different types of love and attitudes towards love are presented. What are the similarities and or differences in the ways that these ideas are presented?**

Both ‘Alpine Letter’ and ‘Praise Song for my Mother’ deal with love in different forms. While ‘Alpine Letter’ deals with romantic love, ‘Praise Song for My Mother’ uses a variety of techniques to describe the love between a mother and her child.

In ‘Alpine Letter’, the poet uses metaphor to describe the power of romantic love: ‘ The curve of each letter looped around my heart’. Here, the metaphor suggests that the speaker has been captured or perhaps trapped by her feelings of love. Similarly, the speaker of ‘Praise Song’ uses metaphor but she is exploring her love for her mother rather than romantic love. For instance: ‘You were/ sunrise to me/ rise and warm and streaming.’ The use of metaphors of natural elements suggest that to her, her love for her mother is reassuringly predictable and also necessary for the speaker to grow and flourish.

The imagery within ‘Alpine Letter’ is also powerful in presenting love. For example, the poet presents the connection between the lovers as a ‘tear…becoming sea’. This image allows the reader to understand that as their separation goes on, their longing for each other grows into a ‘sea’, something vast and wide and eternal. Alternatively, in ‘Praise Song’, imagery is used to convey the poet’s pride and love for her culture which she sees as something her mother has instilled within her as part of her identity. We are told that the speaker is nourished by ‘the fried plantain smell/ replenishing replenishing’. Here, the reference to the poet’s Caribbean identity allows the reader to understand that the food her mother provided her with helped to establish within her not only a love and appreciation for her mother but also a pride and appreciation for her cultural identity.

‘Alpine Letter’ is also structurally interesting in presenting the poet’s attitudes to romantic love. The poem is highly regular in its structure with a neat layout of 4 quatrains. Line lengths are similar and predictable, demonstrating the reassuring nature of love. Perhaps the poet is suggesting that within the predictable patterns of love, there is comfort to be found. Differently, in ‘Praise Song’, whilst there is regularity within the poem, the final stanza is shortened and separate from the main body of the writing, as though it is floating on its own: ‘Go to your wide futures you said’. The separation of this line from the poem suggests that the separation between a mother and child is inevitable, yet perhaps brutal as the separation of this line is an unexpected surprise to the reader.

**Identification - Roger McGough**

So you think its Stephen?

Then I'd best make sure

Be on the safe side as it were.

Ah, theres been a mistake. The hair

you see, its black, now Stephens fair ...

Whats that? The explosion?

Of course, burnt black. Silly of me.

I should have known. Then lets get on.

The face, is that the face mask?

that mask of charred wood

blistered scarred could

that have been a child's face?

The sweater, where intact, looks

in fact all too familiar.

But one must be sure.

The scoutbelt. Yes thats his.

I recognise the studs he hammered in

not a week ago. At the age

when boys get clothes-conscious

now you know. Its almost

certainly Stephen. But one must

be sure. Remove all trace of doubt.

Pull out every splinter of hope.

Pockets. Empty the pockets.

Handkerchief? Could be any schoolboy's.

Dirty enough. Cigarettes?

Oh this can't be Stephen.

I dont allow him to smoke you see.

He wouldn't disobey me. Not his father.

But that's his penknife. Thats his alright.

And thats his key on the keyring

Gran gave him just the other night.

Then this must be him.

I think I know what happened

... ... ... about the cigarettes

No doubt he was minding them

for one of the older boys.

Yes that’s it.

That’s him.

That’s our Stephen.

**In 'The Identification', how does the poet present the father’s feelings about identifying his son?**

**Nettles - Vernon Scannell**

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed.

'Bed' seemed a curious name for those green spears,

That regiment of spite behind the shed:

It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears

The boy came seeking comfort and I saw

White blisters beaded on his tender skin.

We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.

At last he offered us a watery grin,

And then I took my billhook, honed the blade

And went outside and slashed in fury with it

Till not a nettle in that fierce parade

Stood upright any more. And then I lit

A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead,

But in two weeks the busy sun and rain

Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:

My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

**In both ‘The Identification’ and ‘Nettles’, the poets explore the relationship between father and son. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those feelings?**

**The Palaeontologist’s Blind Date By Philip Memmer**

You have such lovely bones, he says,

holding my face in his hands,

and although I can almost feel

the stone and the sand

sifting away, his fingers

like the softest of brushes,

I realize after this touch

he would know me

years from now, even

in the dark, even

without my skin.

Thank you, I smile—

then I close the door

and never call him again.

*Palaeontologist – A specialist in forms of life existing in prehistoric or geologic times, as represented by the fossils of plants, animals, and other organisms.*

**How does the speaker explore ideas about relationships?**

## **Blind date** **By Marc Hurkmans**

Blind date  
  
The rivers run dry,   
as the buildings rise   
  
I turn my face towards   
the indifferent sky   
  
Without wondering why this   
is all happening in the first place  
  
Saturday night, it’s hot   
outside, cold inside  
  
Hello baby, how  
are you doing  
  
Let’s get out of here   
  
Let’s get really gone for a change

**In both ‘The Palaeontologist’s Blind Date’ and ‘Blind Date’ the speakers explore their feelings about relationships. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those feelings?**

# Divorced Fathers and Pizza Crusts By Mark Halliday

The connection between divorced fathers and pizza crusts

is understandable. The divorced father does not cook

confidently. He wants his kid to enjoy dinner.

The entire weekend is supposed to be fun. Kids love

pizza. For some reason involving soft warmth and malleability

kids approve of melted cheese on pizza

years before they will tolerate cheese in other situations.

So the divorced father takes the kid and the kid's friend

out for pizza. The kids eat much faster than the dad.

Before the dad has finished his second slice,

the kids are playing a video game or being Ace Ventura

or blowing spitballs through straws, making this hail

that can't quite be cleaned up. There are four slices left

and the divorced father doesn't want them wasted,

there has been enough waste already; he sits there

in his windbreaker finishing the pizza. It's good

except the crust is actually not so great—

after the second slice the crust is basically a chore—

so you leave it. You move on to the next loaded slice.

Finally there you are amid rims of crust.

All this is understandable. There's no dark conspiracy.

Meanwhile the kids are having a pretty good time

which is the whole point. So the entire evening makes

clear sense. Now the divorced father gathers

the sauce-stained napkins for the trash and dumps them

and dumps the rims of crust which are not

corpses on a battlefield. Understandability

fills the pizza shop so thoroughly there's no room

for anything else. Now he's at the door summoning the kids

and they follow, of course they do, he's a dad.

**How does the speaker explore ideas about fathers?**

# Father By Edgar Albert Guest

My father knows the proper way

The nation should be run;

He tells us children every day

Just what should now be done.

He knows the way to fix the trusts,

He has a simple plan;

But if the furnace needs repairs,

We have to hire a man.

My father, in a day or two

Could land big thieves in jail;

There’s nothing that he cannot do,

He knows no word like “fail.”

“Our confidence” he would restore,

Of that there is no doubt;

But if there is a chair to mend,

We have to send it out.

All public questions that arise,

He settles on the spot;

He waits not till the tumult dies,

But grabs it while it’s hot.

In matters of finance he can

Tell Congress what to do;

But, O, he finds it hard to meet

His bills as they fall due.

It almost makes him sick to read

The things law-makers say;

Why, father’s just the man they need,

He never goes astray.

All wars he’d very quickly end,

As fast as I can write it;

But when a neighbour starts a fuss,

’Tis mother has to fight it.

In conversation father can

Do many wondrous things;

He’s built upon a wiser plan

Than presidents or kings.

He knows the ins and outs of each

And every deep transaction;

We look to him for theories,

But look to ma for action.

**In both ‘Divorced Partners and Pizza Crusts’ and ‘Father’ the speakers explore the role of the father. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those feelings?**

# One Day By Patricia Jabbeh Wesley

*Love Song for the Newly Divorced*

One day, you will awake from your covering

and that heart of yours will be totally mended,

and there will be no more burning within.

The owl, calling in the setting of the sun

and the deer path, all erased.

And there will be no more need for love

or lovers or fears of losing lovers

and there will be no more burning timbers

with which to light a new fire,

and there will be no more husbands or people

related to husbands, and there will be no more

tears or reason to shed your tears.

You will be as mended as the bridge

the working crew has just reopened.

The thick air will be vanquished with the tide

and the river that was corrupted by lies

will be cleansed and totally free.

And the rooster will call in the setting sun

and the sun will beckon homeward,

hiding behind your one tree that was not felled.

**How does the speaker explore ideas about relationships breaking down?**

**Wedding-Ring By Denise Levertov**

My wedding-ring lies in a basket

as if at the bottom of a well.

Nothing will come to fish it back up

and onto my finger again.

It lies

among keys to abandoned houses,

nails waiting to be needed and hammered

into some wall,

telephone numbers with no names attached,

idle paperclips.

It can’t be given away

for fear of bringing ill-luck

It can’t be sold

for the marriage was good in its own

time, though that time is gone.

Could some artificer

beat into it bright stones, transform it

into a dazzling circlet no one could take

for solemn betrothal or to make promises

living will not let them keep? Change it

into a simple gift I could give in friendship?

**In both ‘One Day’ and ‘Wedding-Ring’ the speakers explore their feelings about relationships breaking down. What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present those feelings?**

***Woman’s Work***

I've got the children to tend  
The clothes to mend  
The floor to mop  
The food to shop  
Then the chicken to fry  
The baby to dry  
I got company to feed  
The garden to weed  
I've got shirts to press  
The tots to dress  
The can to be cut  
I gotta clean up this hut  
Then see about the sick  
And the cotton to pick.  
  
Shine on me, sunshine  
Rain on me, rain  
Fall softly, dewdrops  
And cool my brow again.  
  
Storm, blow me from here  
With your fiercest wind  
Let me float across the sky  
'Til I can rest again.  
  
Fall gently, snowflakes  
Cover me with white  
Cold icy kisses and  
Let me rest tonight.  
  
Sun, rain, curving sky  
Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone  
Star shine, moon glow  
You're all that I can call my own.

***How does the poet show us the lifestyle of the woman in this poem?***

***Overheard in County Sligo***I married a man from County Roscommon  
and I live in the back of beyond  
with a field of cows and a yard of hens  
and six white geese on the pond.  
  
At my door’s a square of yellow corn  
caught up by its corners and shaken,  
and the road runs down through the open gate  
and freedom’s there for the taking.  
  
I had thought to work on the Abbey stage  
or have my name in a book,  
to see my thought on the printed page,  
or still the crowd with a look.  
  
But I turn to fold the breakfast cloth  
and to polish the lustre and brass,  
to order and dust the tumbled rooms  
and find my face in the glass.  
  
I ought to feel I’m a happy woman  
for I lie in the lap of the land,  
but I married the man from County Roscommon  
and I live at the back of beyond.

***Both poems look at a woman giving us an insight into their lifestyles. What similarities and differences do you see in this?***

***I Am Listening Now***

I am listening, now ……

I am listening, now. The past is the past,

I’m here. I’m sitting beside your bed.

Speak to me now. It’s time at last

To make amends. The past is dead.

I am listening, now. I’m here, my dear.

Your spotted hands are soft as fur.

Speak to me now. I’ve ears to hear,

They are not as deaf as they once were.

I am listening, now. I’m done with fuss;

Babble of treachery, love or pain,

Speak of yourself, of them, of us –

Speak of the ghosts that fill the rain.

I am listening, now. I left it late,

Later than we ever thought or knew.

Speak to me. Please. Unbar the gate.

Turn back, my dear. I’m here for you.

*H****ow does the poem ‘I am listening now’ present the speaker’s feelings and emotions?***

***Arrogance***

The lion king posed quietly

Without a single roar,

As if the whole wide world to see,

So they could shout encore!

With arrogance and more to spare,

The lion drew a crowd,

His golden mane a halo there,

No touching was allowed...

Just like the Sphinx, he looked sublime,

A hero through and through,

Yet haughtiness is such a crime,

Yet this was all he knew...

His challengers were forced to run

To save them from their fears,

So many battles had been won,

He left a trail of tears...

No challenge left, he merely posed,

For now he lacked all friends,

His solemn stare as if to boast,

This legend never ends...

But old age came and slowed him down,

His eyes now weak and frail..

And suddenly he lost his crown...

No more the Alpha Male...

***Both poems explore a feeling of desperation and change. What are the similarities and differences in the way that the poets portray this theme?***

***Education for Leisure***

Today I am going to kill something. Anything.  
I have had enough of being ignored and today  
I am going to play God. It is an ordinary day,  
a sort of grey with boredom stirring in the streets.

I squash a fly against the window with my thumb.  
We did that at school. Shakespeare. It was in  
another language and now the fly is in another language.  
I breathe out talent on the glass to write my name.

I am a genius. I could be anything at all, with half  
the chance. But today I am going to change the world.  
Something’s world. The cat avoids me. The cat  
knows I am a genius, and has hidden itself.

I pour the goldfish down the bog. I pull the chain.

I see that it is good. The budgie is panicking.

Once a fortnight, I walk the two miles into town

for signing on. They don’t appreciate my autograph.

There is nothing left to kill. I dial the radio

and tell the man he’s talking to a superstar.

He cuts me off. I get our bread-knife and go out.

The pavements glitter suddenly. I touch your arm.

***How does the poet present the disturbed mindset of the speaker in this poem?***

***Hitcher***

I'd been tired, under

the weather, but the ansaphone kept screaming:

One more sick-note, mister, and you're finished.

Fired. I thumbed a lift to where the car was parked.

A Vauxhall Astra. It was hired.

I picked him up in Leeds.

He was following the sun from west to east

with just a toothbrush and the good earth for a bed. The truth,

he said, was blowin' in the wind,

or round the next bend.

I let him have it

on the top road out of Harrogate - once

with the head, then six times with the krooklok

in the face - and didn't even swerve.

I dropped it into third

and leant across

to let him out, and saw him in the mirror

bouncing off the kerb, then disappearing down the verge.

We were the same age, give or take a week.

He'd said he liked the breeze

to run its fingers

through his hair. It was twelve noon.

The outlook for the day was moderate to fair.

Stitch that, I remember thinking,

***Both poets explore a sense of violence through the speakers. What are the similarities and differences in the way that the poets portray this theme?***

***My Parents Kept Me***

My parents kept me from children who were rough

Who threw words like stones and wore torn clothes

Their thighs showed through rags they ran in the street

And climbed cliffs and stripped by the country streams.

I feared more than tigers their muscles like iron

Their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms

I feared the salt coarse pointing of those boys

Who copied my lisp behind me on the road.

They were lithe they sprang out behind hedges

Like dogs to bark at my world. They threw mud

While I looked the other way, pretending to smile.

I longed to forgive them but they never smiled.

***How does the poet show us the speaker’s feelings about their peers?***

***Tich Miller***

|  |
| --- |
| Tich Miller wore glasses  with elastoplast-pink frames  and had one foot three sizes larger than the other.  When they picked teams for outdoor games  she and I were always the last two  left standing by the wire-mesh fence.  We avoided one another's eyes  stooping, perhaps, to re-tie a shoe-lace  or affecting interest in the flight  of some fortunate bird, and pretended  not to hear the urgent conference:  'Have Tubby!' 'No, no, have Tich!'  Usually they chose me, the lesser dud  and she lolloped, unselected,  to the back of the other team.  At eleven we went to different schools.  In time I learned to get my own back,  sneering at hockey players who couldn't spell.  Tich died when she was twelve. |

***Both poems look at a how children teat each other. What similarities and differences do you see in this?***

She Walks in Beauty

BY LORD BYRON (GEORGE GORDON)

She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that’s best of dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes;

Thus mellowed to that tender light

Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,

Had half impaired the nameless grace

Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o’er her face;

Where thoughts serenely sweet express,

How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,

So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,

The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent!

**Living Space**

There are just not enough  
straight lines. That  
is the problem.  
Nothing is flat  
or parallel. Beams  
balance crookedly on supports  
thrust off the vertical.  
Nails clutch at open seams.  
The whole structure leans dangerously  
towards the miraculous.  
  
Into this rough frame,  
someone has squeezed  
a living space  
  
and even dared to place  
these eggs in a wire basket,  
fragile curves of white  
hung out over the dark edge  
of a slanted universe,  
gathering the light  
into themselves,  
as if they were  
the bright, thin walls of faith.

[As imperceptibly as grief](https://allpoetry.com/As-imperceptibly-as-grief)

As imperceptibly as grief  
  The summer lapsed away, —  
  Too imperceptible, at last,  
  To seem like perfidy.  
  A quietness distilled,  
  As twilight long begun,  
  Or Nature, spending with herself  
  Sequestered afternoon.  
  The dusk drew earlier in,  
  The morning foreign shone, —  
  A courteous, yet harrowing grace,  
  As guest who would be gone.  
  
  And thus, without a wing,  
  Or service of a keel,  
  Our summer made her light escape  
  Into the beautiful.

Cozy Apologia

BY [RITA DOVE](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/rita-dove)

*For Fred*

I could pick anything and think of you—

This lamp, the wind-still rain, the glossy blue

My pen exudes, drying matte, upon the page.

I could choose any hero, any cause or age

And, sure as shooting arrows to the heart,

Astride a dappled mare, legs braced as far apart

As standing in silver stirrups will allow—

There you'll be, with furrowed brow

And chain mail glinting, to set me free:

One eye smiling, the other firm upon the enemy.

This post-postmodern age is all business: compact disks

And faxes, a do-it-now-and-take-no-risks

Event. Today a hurricane is nudging up the coast,

Oddly male: Big Bad Floyd, who brings a host

Of daydreams: awkward reminiscences

Of teenage crushes on worthless boys

Whose only talent was to kiss you senseless.

They all had sissy names—Marcel, Percy, Dewey;

Were thin as licorice and as chewy,

Sweet with a dark and hollow center. Floyd's

Cussing up a storm. You're bunkered in your

Aerie, I'm perched in mine

(Twin desks, computers, hardwood floors):

We're content, but fall short of the Divine.

Still, it's embarrassing, this happiness—

Who's satisfied simply with what's good for us,

When has the ordinary ever been news?

And yet, because nothing else will do

To keep me from melancholy (call it blues),

I fill this stolen time with you.

# Valentine

Carol Ann Duffy

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.  
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.  
It promises light  
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.  
It will blind you with tears  
like a lover.  
It will make your reflection  
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.  
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,  
possessive and faithful  
as we are,  
for as long as we are.

Take it.  
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,  
if you like.  
Lethal.  
Its scent will cling to your fingers,  
cling to your knife.

[A Wife In London](https://allpoetry.com/A-Wife-In-London)

December 1899  
          I  
She sits in the tawny vapour  
That the Thames-side lanes have uprolled,  
Behind whose webby fold-on-fold  
Like a waning taper  
The street-lamp glimmers cold.  
  
A messenger's knock cracks smartly,  
Flashed news in her hand  
Of meaning it dazes to understand  
Though shaped so shortly:  
He—he has fallen—in the far South Land…  
  
          II  
  
'Tis the morrow; the fog hangs thicker,  
The postman nears and goes:  
A letter is brought whose lines disclose  
By the firelight flicker  
His hand, whom the worm now knows:  
  
Fresh—firm—penned in highest feather—  
Page-full of his hoped return,  
And of home-planned jaunts of brake and burn  
In the summer weather,  
And of new love that they would learn.

**Death of a Naturalist**

BY [SEAMUS HEANEY](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/seamus-heaney)

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart

Of the townland; green and heavy headed

Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.

Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.

Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles

Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.

There were dragonflies, spotted butterflies,

But best of all was the warm thick slobber

Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water

In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring

I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied

Specks to range on window sills at home,

On shelves at school, and wait and watch until

The fattening dots burst, into nimble

Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how

The daddy frog was called a bullfrog

And how he croaked and how the mammy frog

Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was

Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too

For they were yellow in the sun and brown

In rain.

    Then one hot day when fields were rank

With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs

Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges

To a coarse croaking that I had not heard

Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.

Right down the dam gross bellied frogs were cocked

On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:

The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat

Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.

I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings

Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew

That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

**To Autumn**

Launch Audio in a New Window

BY [JOHN KEATS](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/john-keats)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

   Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

   With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

   And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

      To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

   With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,

      For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

   Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

   Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

   Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

      Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

   Steady thy laden head across a brook;

   Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,

      Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?

   Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

   And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

   Among the river sallows, borne aloft

      Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

   Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft

   The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;

      And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Afternoons – Philip Larkin

Summer is fading:

The leaves fall in ones and twos

From trees bordering

The new recreation ground.

In the hollows of afternoons

Young mothers assemble

At swing and sandpit

Setting free their children.

Behind them, at intervals,

Stand husbands in skilled trades,

An estateful of washing,

And the albums, lettered

Our Wedding, lying

Near the television:

Before them, the wind

Is ruining their courting-places

Vultures - Chinua Achebe

In the greyness

and drizzle of one despondent

dawn unstirred by harbingers

of sunbreak a vulture

perching high on broken

bones of a dead tree

nestled close to his

mate his smooth

bashed-in head, a pebble

on a stem rooted in

a dump of gross

feathers, inclined affectionately

to hers. Yesterday they picked

the eyes of a swollen

corpse in a water-logged

trench and ate the

things in its bowel. Full

gorged they chose their roost

keeping the hollowed remnant

in easy range of cold

telescopic eyes...

Strange

indeed how love in other

ways so particular

will pick a corner

in that charnel-house

tidy it and coil up there, perhaps

even fall asleep - her face

turned to the wall!

...Thus the Commandant at Belsen

Camp going home for

the day with fumes of

human roast clinging

rebelliously to his hairy

nostrils will stop

at the wayside sweet-shop

and pick up a chocolate

for his tender offspring

waiting at home for Daddy's

return...

Praise bounteous

providence if you will

that grants even an ogre

a tiny glow-worm

tenderness encapsulated

in icy caverns of a cruel

heart or else despair

for in the very germ

of that kindred love is

lodged the perpetuity

of evil.

The Clown Punk – Simon Armitage

Driving home through the shonky side of town,

three times out of ten you’ll see the town clown,

like a basket of washing that got up

and walked, towing a dog on a rope. But

don’t laugh: every pixel of that man’s skin

is shot through with indelible ink;

as he steps out at the traffic lights,

think what he’ll look like in thirty years’ time -

the deflated face and shrunken scalp

still daubed with the sad tattoos of high punk.

You kids in the back seat who wince and scream

when he slathers his daft mush on the windscreen,

remember the clown punk with his dyed brain,

then picture windscreen wipers, and let it rain.

Harmonium – Simon Armitage

The Farrand Chapelette was gathering dust

in the shadowy porch of Marsden Church.

And was due to be bundled off to the skip.

Or was mine, for a song, if I wanted it.

Sunlight, through stained glass, which day to day

could beatify saints and raise the dead,

had aged the harmonium’s softwood case

and yellowed the fingernails of its keys.

And one of its notes had lost its tongue,

and holes were worn in both the treadles

where the organist’s feet, in grey, woollen socks

and leather-soled shoes, had pedalled and pedalled.

But its hummed harmonics still struck a chord:

for a hundred years that organ had stood

by the choristers’ stalls, where father and son,

each in their time, had opened their throats

and gilded finches – like high notes – had streamed out.

Through his own blue cloud of tobacco smog,

with smoker’s fingers and dottled thumbs,

he comes to help me cart it away.

And we carry it flat, laid on its back.

And he, being him, can’t help but say

that the next box I’ll shoulder through this nave

will bear the freight of his own dead weight.

And I, being me, then mouth in reply

some shallow or sorry phrase or word

too starved of breath to make itself heard.

The ManHunt – Simon Armitage

After the first phase,

after passionate nights and intimate days,

only then would he let me trace

the frozen river which ran through his face,

only then would he let me explore

the blown hinge of his lower jaw

and handle and hold

the damaged, porcelain collar bone,

and mind and attend

the fractured rudder of shoulder-blade,

and finger and thumb

the parachute silk of his punctured lung.

Only then could I bind the struts

and climb the rungs of his broken ribs,

and feel the hurt

of his grazed heart.

Skirting along,

only then could I picture the scan,

the foetus of metal beneath his chest

where the bullet had come to rest.

Then I widened the search,

traced the scarring back to its source

to a sweating, unexploded mine

buried deep in his mind, around which

every nerve in his body had tightened and closed.

Then, and only then, did I come close.

A Vision – Simon Armitage

The future was a beautiful place, once.

Remember the full-blown balsa-wood town

on public display in the Civic Hall.

The ring-bound sketches, artists’ impressions,

blueprints of smoked glass and tubular steel,

board-game suburbs, modes of transportation

like fairground rides or executive toys.

Cities like dreams, cantilevered by light.

And people like us at the bottle-bank

next to the cycle-path, or dog-walking

over tended strips of fuzzy-felt grass,

or model drivers, motoring home in

electric cars, or after the late show -

strolling the boulevard. They were the plans,

all underwritten in the neat left-hand

of architects – a true, legible script.

I pulled that future out of the north wind

at the landfill site, stamped with today’s date,

riding the air with other such futures,

all unlived in and now fully extinct.

On A Portrait Of A Deaf Man

Sir John Betjeman

The kind old face, the egg-shaped head,

The tie, discreetly loud,

The loosely fitting shooting clothes,

A closely fitting shroud.

He liked old city dining rooms,

Potatoes in their skin,

But now his mouth is wide to let

The London clay come in.

He took me on long silent walks

In country lanes when young.

He knew the names of ev'ry bird

But not the song it sung.

And when he could not hear me speak

He smiled and looked so wise

That now I do not like to think

Of maggots in his eyes.

He liked the rain-washed Cornish air

And smell of ploughed-up soil,

He liked a landscape big and bare

And painted it in oil.

But least of all he liked that place

Which hangs on Highgate Hill

Of soaked Carrara-covered earth

For Londoners to fill.

He would have liked to say goodbye,

Shake hands with many friends,

In Highgate now his finger-bones

Stick through his finger-ends.

You, God, who treat him thus and thus,

Say "Save his soul and pray."

You ask me to believe You and

I only see decay.

Spellbound (1837)

Emily Brontë

The night is darkening round me,

The wild winds coldly blow;

But a tyrant spell has bound me

And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending

Their bare boughs weighed with snow.

And the storm is fast descending,

And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,

Wastes beyond wastes below;

But nothing drear can move me;

I will not, cannot go.

Belfast Confetti

Suddenly as the riot squad moved in, it was raining exclamation marks,

Nuts, bolts, nails, car-keys. A fount of broken type. And the explosion

Itself—an asterisk on the map. This hyphenated line, a burst of rapid fire…

I was trying to complete a sentence in my head, but it kept stuttering.

All the alleyways and side-streets blocked with stops and colons.

I know this labyrinth so well—Balaclava, Raglan, Inkerman, Odessa Street—

Why can’t I escape? Every move is punctuated. Crimea Street. Dead end again.

A Saracen, Kremlin-2 mesh. Makrolon face-shields. Walkie-talkies. What is

My name? Where am I coming from? Where am I going? A fusillade of question marks.

–Ciaran Carson, from Belfast Confetti (1989)

Cold Knap Lake – Gillian Clarke

We once watched a crowd

pull a drowned child from the lake.

Blue lipped and dressed in water’s long green silk

she lay for dead.

Then kneeling on the earth,

a heroine, her red head bowed,

her wartime cotton frock soaked,

my mother gave a stranger’s child her breath.

The crowd stood silent,

drawn by the dread of it.

The child breathed, bleating

and rosy in my mother’s hands.

My father took her home to a poor house

and watched her thrashed for almost drowning.

Was I there?

Or is that troubled surface something else

shadowy under the dipped fingers of willows

where satiny mud blooms in cloudiness

after the treading, heavy webs of swans

as their wings beat and whistle on the air?

All lost things lie under closing water

in that lake with the poor man’s daughter.

Hour – Carol Ann Duffy

Love’s time’s beggar, but even a single hour,

bright as a dropped coin, makes love rich.

We find an hour together, spend it not on flowers

or wine, but the whole of the summer sky and a grass ditch.

For thousands of seconds we kiss; your hair

like treasure on the ground; the Midas light

turning your limbs to gold. Time slows, for here

we are millionaires, backhanding the night

so nothing dark will end our shining hour,

no jewel hold a candle to the cuckoo spit

hung from the blade of grass at your ear,

no chandelier or spotlight see you better lit

than here. Now. Time hates love, wants love poor,

but love spins gold, gold, gold from straw.

Quickdraw

I wear the two, the mobile and the landline phones,

like guns, slung from the pockets on my hips. I’m all

alone. You ring, quickdraw, your voice a pellet

in my ear, and hear me groan.

You’ve wounded me.

Next time, you speak after the tone. I twirl the phone,

then squeeze the trigger of my tonge, wide of the mark.

You choose your spot, then blast me

through the heart.

And this is love, high noon, calamity, hard liqour

in the old Last Chance saloon. I show the mobile

to the sheriff; in my boot, another one’s

concealed. You text them both at once. I reel.

Down on my knees, I fumble for the phone,

read the silver bullets of your kiss. Take this …

and this … and this … and this … and this …

Carol Ann Duffy

Case History: Alison (Head Injury)

UA Fanthorpe

(She looks at her photograph)

I would like to have known

My husband’s wife, my mother’s only daughter.

A bright girl she was.

Enmeshed in comforting

Fat, I wonder at her delicate angles.

Her autocratic knee

Like a Degas dancer’s

Adjusts to the observer with an airy poise

That now lugs me upstairs

Hardly. Her face, broken

By nothing sharper than smiles, holds in its smiles

What I have forgotten.

She knows my father’s dead

And grieves for it, and smiles. she has digested

Mourning. Her smile shows it.

I, who need reminding

Every morning, shall never get over what

I do not remember.

Consistency matters.

I should like to keep faith with her lack of faith,

But forget her reasons.

Proud of this younger self,

I assert her achievements, her A levels,

Her job with a future.

Poor clever girl! I know,

For all my damaged brain , something she doesn’t:

I am her future.

A bright girl she was.

Two Scavengers in a Truck

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

At the stoplight waiting for the light

nine a.m. downtown San Francisco

a bright yellow garbage truck

with two garbagemen in red plastic blazers

standing on the back stoop

one on each side hanging on

and looking down into

an elegant open Mercedes

with an elegant couple in it

The man

in a hip three-piece linen suit

with shoulder-length blond hair and sunglassed

The young blond woman so casually coifed

with short skirt and coloured stockings

on the way to his architect's office

And the two scavengers up since four a.m.

grungy from their route

on the way home

The older of the two with grey iron hair

and hunched back

looking down like some

gargoyle Quasimodo

And the younger of the two

also with sunglasses and long hair

about the same age as the Mercedes driver

And both scavengers gazing down

as from a great distance

at the cool couple

as if they were watching some odourless TV ad

in which everything is always possible

And the very red light for an instant

holding all four close together

as if anything at all were possible

between them

across that small gulf

in the high sea

of this democracy.

‘Brothers’ by Andrew Forster

Saddled with you for the afternoon, me and Paul

ambled across the threadbare field to the bus stop,

talking over Sheffield Wednesday’s chances in the Cup

while you skipped beside us in your ridiculous tank-top,

spouting six-year-old views on Rotherham United.

Suddenly you froze, said you hadn’t any bus fare.

I sighed, said you should go and ask Mum

and while you windmilled home I looked at Paul.

His smile, like mine, said I was nine and he was ten

and we must stroll the town, doing what grown-ups do.

As a bus crested the hill we chased Olympic Gold.

Looking back I saw you spring towards the gate,

your hand holding out what must have been a coin.

I ran on, unable to close the distance I’d set in motion.

At the Border, 1979\* - CHOMAN HARDI

‘It is your last check-in point in this country!’

We grabbed a drink –

soon everything would taste different.

The land under our feet continued

divided by a thick iron chain.

My sister put her leg across it.

‘Look over here,’ she said to us,

‘my right leg is in this country

and my left leg in the other.’

The border guards told her off.

My mother informed me: We are going home.

She said that the roads are much cleaner

the landscape is more beautiful

and people are much kinder.

Dozens of families waited in the rain.

‘I can inhale home,’ somebody said.

Now our mothers were crying. I was five years old

standing by the check-in point

comparing both sides of the border.

The autumn soil continued on the other side

with the same colour, the same texture.

It rained on both sides of the chain.

We waited while our papers were checked,

our faces thoroughly inspected.

Then the chain was removed to let us through.

A man bent down and kissed his muddy homeland.

The same chain of mountains encompassed all of us.

Born Yesterday

Philip Larkin

For Sally Amis

Tightly-folded bud,

I have wished you something

None of the others would:

Not the usual stuff

About being beautiful,

Or running off a spring

Of innocence and love —

They will all wish you that,

And should it prove possible,

Well, you’re a lucky girl.

But if it shouldn’t, then

May you be ordinary;

Have, like other women,

An average of talents:

Not ugly, not good-looking,

Nothing uncustomary

To pull you off your balance,

That, unworkable itself,

Stops all the rest from working.

In fact, may you be dull —

If that is what a skilled,

Vigilant, flexible,

Unemphasised, enthralled

Catching of happiness is called.

Praise Song for My Mother by Grace Nichols

You were

water to me

deep and bold and fathoming

You were

moon's eye to me

pull and grained and mantling

You were

sunrise to me

rise and warm and streaming

You were

the fishes red gill to me

the flame tree's spread to me

the crab's leg/the fried plantain smell replenishing replenishing

Go to your wide futures, you said

Sister Maude

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Who told my mother of my shame,

Who told my father of my dear?

Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,

Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,

With his clotted curls about his face:

The comeliest corpse in all the world

And worthy of a queen’s embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,

Have spared my soul, your own soul too:

Though I had not been born at all,

He’d never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,

My mother at Heaven-gate:

But sister Maude shall get no sleep

Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden crown,

My mother a crown may win;

If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate

perhaps they’d let us in:

But sister Maude, oh sister Maude,

Bide you with death and sin.

HARD WATER - JEAN SPRACKLAND

I tried the soft stuff on holiday in Wales,

a mania of teadrinking and hairwashing,

excitable soap which never rinsed away,

but I loved coming home to this.

Flat. Straight. Like the vowels,

like the straight talk: hey up me duck.

I’d run the tap with its swimming-pool smell,

get it cold and anaesthetic. Stand the glass

and let the little fizz of anxiety settle.

Honest water, bright and not quite clean.

The frankness of limestone, of gypsum,

the sour steam of cooling towers,

the alchemical taste of brewing.

On pitiless nights, I had to go for the bus

before last orders. I’d turn up my face,

let rain scald my eyelids and lips.

It couldn’t lie. Fell thick

with a payload of acid. No salt —

this rain had forgotten the sea.

I opened my mouth, speaking nothing

in spite of my book-learning.

I let a different cleverness wash my tongue.

It tasted of work, the true taste

of early mornings, the blunt taste

of don’t get mardy, of too bloody deep for me,

fierce lovely water that marked me for life

as belonging, regardless.

Text – Carol Ann Duffy

I tend the mobile now

like an injured bird

We text, text, text

our significant words.

I re-read your first,

your second, your third,

look for your small xx,

feeling absurd.

The codes we send

arrive with a broken chord.

I try to picture your hands,

their image is blurred.

Nothing my thumbs press

will ever be heard.

Salamander

An unexpected guest

Comes to my grandmother’s greenhouse,

A golden salamander,

Searching for slugs,

And company, perhaps.

On lonely days I watch him.

He is a clown tumbling between chrysanthemums

And red geraniums,

Or a shadow puppet

Darting between shady leaves

And the roots of miniature trees.

Or sometimes he lolls

In the luxury of the African marigold,

As though sunning himself in its glow.

I am as still as a waxwork.

He spots my presence

And sits,

His eyes mapping my face

Pressed to the windowpane.

Searching.

Does he see me?

Does he know we both wear the colour of friendship?

Does he think I am a salamander too?

Abra-Cadabra - Grace Nichols

My mother had more magic

in her thumb

than the length and breadth

of any magician

Weaving incredible stories

around the dark-green senna brew

just to make us slake

the ritual Sunday purgative

Knowing how to place a cochineal poultice

on a fevered forehead

Knowing how to measure a bully’s symmetry

kneading the narah pains away

Once my baby sister stuffed

a split-pea up her nostril

my mother got a crochet needle

and gently tried to pry it out

We stood around her

like inquisitive gauldings

Suddenly, in surgeon’s tone she ordered,

‘Pass the black pepper,’

and patted a little

under the dozing nose

My baby sister sneezed.

The rest was history.

Lineage

BY MARGARET WALKER

My grandmothers were strong.

They followed plows and bent to toil.

They moved through fields sowing seed.

They touched earth and grain grew.

They were full of sturdiness and singing.

My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers are full of memories

Smelling of soap and onions and wet clay

With veins rolling roughly over quick hands

They have many clean words to say.

My grandmothers were strong.

Why am I not as they?

The Call

by Charlotte Mew

From our low seat beside the fire

Where we have dozed and dreamed and watched the glow

Or raked the ashes, stopping so

We scarcely saw the sun or rain

Above, or looked much higher

Than this same quiet red or burned-out fire.

To-night we heard a call,

A rattle on the window-pane,

A voice on the sharp air,

And felt a breath stirring our hair,

A flame within us: Something swift and tall

Swept in and out and that was all.

Was it a bright or a dark angel? Who can know?

It left no mark upon the snow,

But suddenly it snapped the chain

Unbarred, flung wide the door

Which will not shut again;

And so we cannot sit here any more.

We must arise and go:

The world is cold without

And dark and hedged about

With mystery and enmity and doubt,

But we must go

Though yet we do not know

Who called, or what marks we shall leave upon the snow.

Canto CCCLXIV – Niall O’Sullivan

Occasionally, my sleeping baby girl

wakes alone within the darkened room,

lets out the saddest little drawn out wail

then falls asleep again. The summer moon

glints icily through our uneven blinds,

a helicopter judders through the gloom,

a dog across the road barks and then grinds

his canines against his new favourite stick.

There’s never a moment when you cannot find

something that’s crying out, but if you pick

a random living room, you’ll find instead

a roaring soul within a nest of brick,

a trembling lip, a hairline bead of sweat,

a knot within the stomach, a slight tick,

a mental rerun of a great regret

that will not be alchemised into talk,

nor find throat in primal, mammalian cries,

the expression rises within, then balks,

returns to its cramped cell behind the eyes.

Sally

Phoebe Hesketh, 1909 – 2005

She was a dog-rose kind of girl:

Elusive, scattery as petals;

Scratchy sometimes, tripping you like briars.

She teased the boys

Turning this way and that, not to be tamed

Or taught any more than the wind.

Even in school the word ‘ought’ had no meaning

For Sally. On dull days

She’d sit quiet as a mole at her desk

Delving in thought.

But when the sun called

She was gone, running the blue day down

Till the warm hedgerows prickled the dusk

And moths flickered out.

Her mother scolded; Dad

Gave her the hazel switch,

Said her head was stuffed with feathers

And a starling tongue.

But they couldn’t take the shine out of her,

Even when it rained

You felt the sun saved under her skin.

She’d a way of escape

Laughing at you from the bright end of a tunnel,

Leaving you in the dark

She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

She dwelt among the untrodden ways

Beside the springs of Dove,

A Maid whom there were none to praise

And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye!

—Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be;

But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me!

Returning, We Hear the Larks

BY ISAAC ROSENBERG

Sombre the night is:

And, though we have our lives, we know

What sinister threat lurks there.

Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know

This poison-blasted track opens on our camp—

On a little safe sleep.

But hark! Joy—joy—strange joy.

Lo! Heights of night ringing with unseen larks:

Music showering on our upturned listening faces.

Death could drop from the dark

As easily as song—

But song only dropped,

Like a blind man's dreams on the sand

By dangerous tides;

Like a girl's dark hair, for she dreams no ruin lies there,

Or her kisses where a serpent hides.

In Hospital

by Edith Nesbit

Edith Nesbit

Under the shadow of a hawthorn brake,

Where bluebells draw the sky down to the wood,

Where, 'mid brown leaves, the primroses awake

And hidden violets smell of solitude;

Beneath green leaves bright-fluttered by the wing

Of fleeting, beautiful, immortal Spring,

I should have said, "I love you," and your eyes

Have said, "I, too . . . " The gods saw otherwise.

For this is winter, and the London streets

Are full of soldiers from that far, fierce fray

Where life knows death, and where poor glory meets

Full-face with shame, and weeps and turns away.

And in the broken, trampled foreign wood

Is horror, and the terrible scent of blood,

And love shines tremulous, like a drowning star,

Under the shadow of the wings of war.