



Poem- a-Day:

Using National Poetry Month and Online Resources for Poetry Immersion

Using a carefully selected daily poem to foster deep reading and prompt focused writing, students can review major poetic techniques and forms in preparation for the AP Literature and Composition exam. Materials include a calendar of readings, specific writing prompts, generic journal topics and links for independent further study.

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Quotations about Poetry

POEM. N. AN ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS WRITTEN OR SPOKEN, TRADITIONALLY A RHYTHMICAL COMPOSITION, SOMETIMES RHYMED, EXPRESSING EXPERIENCES, IDEAS, OR EMOTIONS IN A STYLE MORE CONCENTRATED, IMAGINATIVE, AND POWERFUL THAN THAT OF ORDINARY SPEECH OR PROSE: SOME POEMS ARE IN METER, SOME IN FREE VERSE.

A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom. – ROBERT FROST

PROSE...words in their best order.

POETRY...the best words in the best order. – SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth. – SAMUEL JOHNSON

Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits. – CARL SANDBURG

POETRY IS AT BOTTOM A CRITICISM OF LIFE. – MATTHEW ARNOLD

Poetry is the art of substantiating shadows, and of lending existence to nothing. – EDMUND BURKE

Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash. -- LEONARD COHEN

**Poetry is boned with ideas,
nerved and blooded with emotions,
all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words.**

-- PAUL ENGLE

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...recollected in tranquility.
– WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Poetry involves the mysteries of the irrational perceived through rational words.
– VLADIMIR NABOKOV

All poetry is putting the infinite within the finite. – ROBERT BROWNING

Always be a poet, even in prose. -- CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

I would define poetry as the rhythmical creation of beauty. -- EDGAR ALLAN POE

Poetry is what gets lost in translation. – ROBERT FROST

If...it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that it is poetry. – EMILY DICKINSON

The poet is liar who always speaks the truth. – JEAN COCTEAU

A poem should not mean, but be. – ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

You will not find poetry anywhere unless you bring some of it with you. – JOSEPH JOUBERT

***Poetry is a series of explanations of life,
fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.***

-- CARL SANDBURG

POETRY IS A WAY OF TAKING LIFE BY THE THROAT. -- ROBERT FROST

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds.

-- PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Poetry is the presentiment in musical form to the imagination,
of noble grounds for the noble emotions. -- JOHN RUSKIN

Poetry is a sequence of dots and dashes, spelling depths, crypts, cross-lights, and moon wisps.

-- CARL SANDBURG

Poetry is fact given over to imagery. -- ROD MCKUEN

TALK WITH A LITTLE LUCK IN IT, THAT'S WHAT POETRY IS. -- WILLIAM STAFFORD

POETRY IS A MARRIAGE OF CRAFT AND IMAGINATION. -- CHRISTINE E. HEMP

Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away. -- CARL SANDBURG

Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric;
out of the quarrel with ourselves we make poetry. --W.B. YEATS

Poetry is man's rebellion against being what he is. -- JAMES BRANCH CABELL

A poem begins with a lump in the throat. -- ROBERT FROST

*Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess
about what is seen during a moment.* -- CARL SANDBURG

Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary. --KAHLIL GIBRAN

Imaginary gardens with real toads in them. --MARIANNE MOORE

A poem is never finished, only abandoned. --PAUL VALÉRY

The poem is the point at which our strength gave out. --RICHARD ROSEN

Poetry is to philosophy what the Sabbath is to the rest of the week. --AUGUSTUS AND JULIUS HARE

It is the job of poetry to clean up our word-clogged reality by creating silences around things.

--STEPHEN MALLARME

The only problem
with Haiku is that you just
get started and then

-- ROGER MCGOUGH












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National Poetry Month: Poem-a-Day

National Poetry Month is April and we can thank Poets.org for wonderful materials to help us celebrate. Visit their extraordinary website as a place to begin. Listen to a favorite poet, download lesson plans, find out whether there are any special events scheduled locally, and examine the [National Poetry Map](#).

Day	Focus	Poem	Poet
1	Definition of Poetry	"Introduction to Poetry"	Billy Collins
2	Metapoetry	"I Am Offering This Poem"	Jimmy Santiago Baca
3	AP Prompts	"Blackberry Picking"	Seamus Heaney
4	Ekphrastic Poetry	"Musée des Beaux Arts"	W. H. Auden
5	Regular Verse	"Sympathy"	Paul Laurence Dunbar
6	Specificity	"Where I'm From"	George Ella Lyons
7	Modern Verse	"We Real Cool"	Gwendolyn Brooks
8	Theme	"We grow accustomed to the night--" "Acquainted with the Night"	Emily Dickinson Robert Frost
9	Extended Metaphor	"Cliché"	Billy Collins
10	Concrete Poetry (Calligrams)	"Easter Wings" and Others	George Herbert and Others
11	Dramatic Monologue	"My Last Duchess"	Robert Browning
12	Imagery	"Those Winter Sundays"	Robert Hayden
13	Sonnet	"Sonnet"	Billy Collins
14	Allusion	"Barbie Doll"	Marge Piercy
15	Metonymy and Synecdoche	"Part and Whole"	Rachel Hadas
16	Shakespearean (or English) Sonnet	"Love Is Not All"	Edna St. Vincent Millay
17	Petrarchan (or Italian) Sonnet	"The Illiterate"	William Meredith
18	Villanelle	"One Art"	Elizabeth Bishop
19	Flash Poetry	"Miss Charlotte Brown, Librarian, Goes Mad"	Felix Jung
20	In Memoriam	"Facing It"	Yusef Komunyakaa
21	Undressing a Poet	"Undressing Emily Dickinson"	Billy Collins
22	Heritage	"You Bring Out the Mexican in Me"	Sandra Cisneros
23	Personification	"Talking Myself to Sleep at One More Hilton"	John Ciardi
24	Connotation	"Traveling Through the Dark"	William Stafford
25	Symbolism	"Persimmons"	Li-Young Lee
26	Juxtaposition	"Advice to My Son"	Peter Meinke
27	Music	"Strange Fruit"	Abel Meeropol
28	Irony	"Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper"	Martin Espada
29	Local Color	"Driving in Oklahoma"	Carter Revard
30	Oddities	"The Disappearing Alphabet"	Richard Wilbur

I apologize if the line numbers on many of the selected poems don't quite line up correctly. Please just use them for reference in discussing the poems as I do not have the technical savvy to figure out how to make them align accurately. If you find any other errors -- from misspelled words to broken links, please notify me. Sandra Effinger mseffie@mac.com

	General Poetry Resources	Annotation
	Poetry Foundation	Site includes an online magazine, podcasts, blog, audiovisuals, recordings, reading guides, and pages dedicated to individual poets. Especially useful is Ed Hirsch's "How to Read a Poem."
	Poets.org	The Academy of American Poets sponsors National Poetry Month and offers extensive resources on individual poets, poems, and terms for study. Includes weekly spotlighted poets and poems, audio resources, extensive links, contests, and current events.
	Poetry Out Loud	Site for the national contest offers resources on popular poems and recordings of familiar favorites.
	Poetry 180	Poet laureate Billy Collins website with a poem a day, selected specifically for American high school students. Contemporary, exciting, accessible to all.
	Specific Poets	Annotation
	Borderlands Web Audio Project	Texas Poetry Review's audio project showcases nine contemporary poets introducing, discussing, and reading their poetry.
	Internet Poetry Archive	Focusing on only seven modern poets, this sites collects extensive audio resources, including interviews and recitations.
	Voices and Visions	This PBS website that accompanies the series includes annotated links and a short poetry video for thirteen of America's greatest poets. With a broadband connection, you can even view the programs online for free.
	Specialized Resources	Annotation
	American Life in Poetry	Under the guidance of Ted Kooser, former poet laureate, this site provides newspapers and online publications with a free weekly column featuring contemporary American poems. The poem in each column is brief, enjoyable and accessible. Each column can be downloaded in .pdf format.
	Artists for Literacy	The Sibl Project, sponsored by Artists for Literacy, offers innovative learning tools that foster literary and artistic appreciation, critical thinking, increased confidence, curiosity, and life-long learning. Annual contest honors songs inspired by literature.
	Atlantic Online: Audible Anthology	Not only does the Atlantic Monthly provide free access to all their wonderful contemporary poems, but they also have hundreds of audios -- poets reading their own poems aloud and soundings (multiple interpretations of famous poems).
	BBC Showcase of Visual Poetry	Wonderful resource for flash poetry, poetic interpretations, and other unusual video poetry resources. Also check out the Poetry Out Loud resources of poets reading their own poetry.

	<u>Favorite Poem Project</u>	Started by former US Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, the Favorite Poem Project allows people to submit their favorite poems along with a personal story about why they chose the poem. Includes 50 videos.
	<u>Poems That Go</u>	The ultimate resource for Flash poetry. Also includes extensive links to other sites.
	<u>Poetry Daily</u>	A new poem every day -- online and/or by email.
	<u>Poetry Society of America</u>	Worth a visit, even if only for Poetry in Motion, its selection of Poetry Postcards and Posters. Includes resources for contests, chapbooks and more.
	<u>Poetry Video Projects</u>	Six years of student poetry videos from <u>Communication Arts High School</u> in San Antonio, Texas. Wow.
	<u>Rock and Roll Hall of Fame</u>	Great resource for anyone wanting to study musical lyrics as poetry. Includes more than 50 lessons.
	<u>United States of Poetry</u>	Thematically organized poems with links to some visual resources. Inspired by the PBS series.
	<u>Wired for Books</u>	Poetry Online from Wired includes recitations and interviews with contemporary poets.
	Just for Teachers	Annotation
	<u>Dr. L. Kip Wheeler's Website</u>	The best online resource for literary terms.
	<u>Fooling with Words</u>	Bill Moyers' PBS website based on the 20 poets who performed at the 1999 Dodge festival. Includes handouts, audio and video files.
	<u>Poetry Project</u>	Though not perfect, this fan site focuses on the connection between knowledge of poetry and writing poetry. Tips for students who want to write their own poetry.
	<u>Poetry Teachers.com</u>	Resource devoted mainly to ideas for teaching students to write poetry, but also includes some discussion of terms, major poets, etc.
	<u>Ten for National Poetry Month</u>	Ten National Poetry Month activities from Traci Gardner, founder of tengrrl and currently working with N.C.T.E. to revamp the Read/Write/Think website.

You may want to download the following handouts about poetry in general.

- [Quotes about Poetry](#) -- Two pages of quotes about poetry to promote

discussion

- [Poetry Terminology](#) -- Seven pages covering poetry terms and forms
- [TP-CASTT for AP Analysis](#) -- Usual format to guide poem analysis
- [TSP-FASTT and Terms](#) -- Slightly adapted format with shortened term list
- [AP Poetry Prompts](#) -- Literature and Composition Poetry Prompts from 1970 to 2009. Also [AP Poetry Prompts with the Poems](#) (large file).
- [Quoting from a Poem](#) -- Guidelines for quoting from a poem, with exercises
- [Poetry Scanning Worksheet](#) -- Directions and exercises to help teach poetry scansion
- [Poetry Response Journals](#) -- Fourteen literary response journal topics focused on poetry
- [Poetry Baker's Dozen Assignments](#) -- thirteen assignments for thirteen student-selected poems
- [Poetry Is Contagious by Betsey Coleman](#) -- Ideas for Student Poetry, Teacher Tips, and Bibliography
- [Poetry Essay Rubric](#) -- Generic rubric for grading AP Style essays.
- [Poetry Explication](#) -- Explication assignment and sample explication.
- [Poetry Is Dead](#) -- My Turn essay from Newweek on poetry in everyday life.

Back to [Assignments](#) or [Home](#).

Updated 15 June 2009.

As I begin retirement, I look forward to expanding this site.

I welcome any donation you feel is appropriate, payable through PayPal.

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PRJ Your **Poetry Response Journal** should convince me that you have read and thought carefully about the assigned poems. To a limited extent, it is true that a poem means what the reader thinks it means; you must, however, be able to explain your interpretation by specific references to the poem.

If your understanding of the poem is “wrong,” yet your journal clearly proves that you read (or misread) the poem, you may well receive full credit. Your grade is based on what you have to say and how well you say it -- your personal reaction to the poem and your explanation of the logic that led to your interpretation.

Your grade is also based on following directions. I will not grade grammar and usage errors -- but to receive credit, you **MUST** include the following in every **PRJ**:

- √ the poem’s title in quotation marks
- √ the author’s name
- √ a quotation from the poem -- integrated with your own sentence, properly punctuated, and commented upon as necessary to show why you cited that particular line. **No Quote Lumps!**
- √ specific references to the poem
- √ careful thought

After you’ve included the five **MUSTs** above, you may choose any of these **MAYBEs** to guide your response. You may even choose the same one every time. Consider the possibilities of this “baker’s dozen” --

- [1] a general statement of the poem’s content
- [2] an analysis of the poet’s persona, i.e. the poem’s speaker
- [3] a discussion of the title’s significance
- [4] a detailed response to a specific line or lines
- [5] a comparison to another poem, song, story, movie...
- [6] an examination of poetic techniques used, such as rhyme, rhythm, simile, metaphor, personification, allusion...
- [7] a close analysis of the poet’s diction, perhaps noting specific word choices, or connotation and denotation
- [8] a transformation of the poem to another form, such as a cartoon, a news story, a letter, a play, a soap opera, a commercial, perhaps a different form of poetry
- [9] an original poem developing in some way from the assigned poem
- [10] a paraphrase of the poem
- [11] a discussion of the writer's life and its relevance to the poem
- [12] a statement relating the poem to your experience or ideas
- [13] an explanation of problems you had in understanding the poem
- [14] your opinion of the poem, good or bad, supported by specific references from the poem

Length: Approximately 1/2 to 1 page long for each **PRJ**

Format: Blue or black ink, front side of the paper only

Due: Beginning of the hour in the blue wire basket on my desk.

Quoting from a Poem

When you write about a poem or refer to a poem in a literary response journal or an essay, you will frequently need to quote from it. Below are some rules to follow when you quote the words or title of a poem. Examples given in the rules are taken from the poem by William Stafford on the back of this page.

RULE 1: *Whenever you mention the title of a poem, put quotation marks around it.*

In “Fifteen,” William Stafford uses the accidental discovery of an abandoned motorcycle to show the speaker caught between childhood and adulthood.

RULE 2: *Whenever you quote a word or phrase that appears in the poem, put quotation marks around it and INTEGRATE the quoted material within your own sentence.*

The boy describes the motorcycle as if it were alive, calling it his “companion, ready and friendly.”

RULE 3: *Whenever you quote a phrase that begins on one line but ends on the next, indicate where the first line stops by using A SLASH MARK.*

The speaker “indulged/a forward feeling, a tremble” as he is torn between mounting the motorcycle and riding away, or dutifully looking for its owner.

RULE 4: *Whenever you quote four or more lines, indent the passage from both margins, but do not use quotation marks. Cite such a long passage only if it is especially significant. Introduce the quotation, copy the lines EXACTLY as they are in the poem, and then explain the relevance of the citation afterwards.*

The speaker briefly indulges the childish fantasy of stealing the motorcycle and riding away. This moment, however, is truly a “bridge” between childhood and adulthood. Rather than daydream of freedom, he thinks about the situation and crosses over to responsibility. The speaker chooses to look for

the owner, just coming to, where he had flipped
over the rail. He had blood on his hand, was pale --
I helped him walk to his machine. He ran his hand
over it, called me good man, roared away.

This experience implies that being a grownup is dangerous, and perhaps even joyless. An adult, free to fulfill the speaker’s fantasy, risks real dangers. Stunned and wounded, the owner acknowledges the speaker’s maturity by calling him “good man.” Something magical has been lost, however, in the transformation. The motorcycle itself has changed from a “companion” to a lifeless “machine.”

ACTIVITIES: Use the poem by Sylvia Plath on the back of this page. Answer on a separate page.

1. Write a sentence that explains what this poem is about. Use the title of the poem and the writer’s name in your sentence.
2. In another sentence, point out a striking image or comparison in the poem. Quote a phrase, not a complete sentence. Integrate with your own words. NO QUOTE LUMPS!
3. In another sentence, cite an example of personification and explain what it reveals about the speaker. Quote a phrase that begins on one line and continues on the next.
4. In a sentence that contains at least three lines of the poem, comment on how those lines help reveal the poem’s meaning. Introduce the lines, quote exactly, and explain them afterwards.

Fifteen by William Stafford

South of the bridge on Seventeenth
I found back of the willows one summer
day a motorcycle with engine running
as it lay on its side, ticking over
5 slowly in the high grass. I was fifteen.

I admired all that pulsing gleam, the
shiny flanks, the demure headlights
fringed where it lay; I led it gently
to the road, and stood with that
10 companion, ready and friendly. I was fifteen.

We could find the end of a road, meet
the sky on out Seventeenth. I thought about
hills, and patting the handle got back a
confident opinion. On the bridge we indulged
15 a forward feeling, a tremble. I was fifteen.

Thinking, back further in the grass I found
the owner, just coming to, where he had flipped
over the rail. He had blood on his hand, was pale --
I helped him walk to his machine. He ran his hand
over it, called me good man, roared away.

I stood there, fifteen.

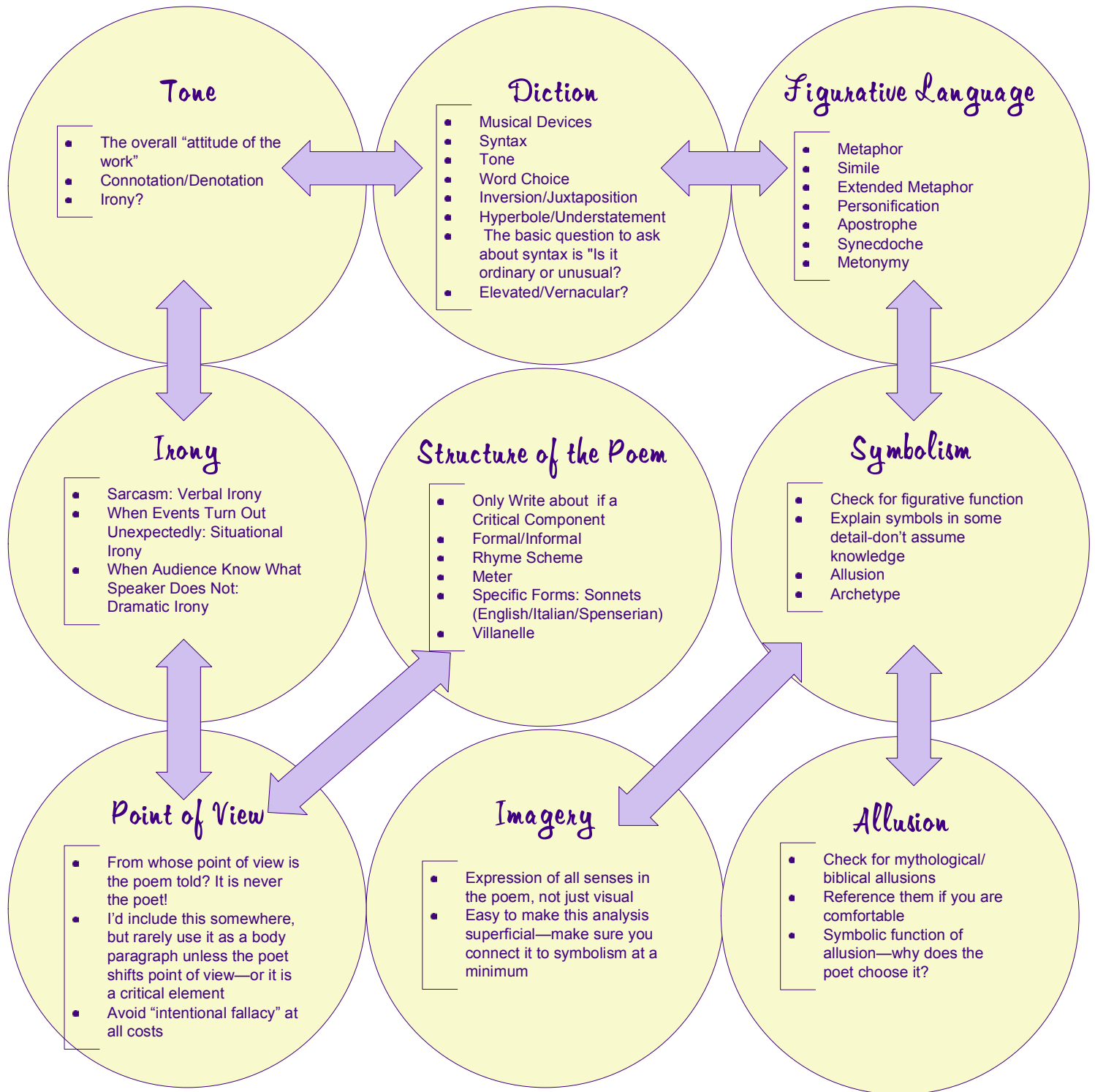
Mirror by Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful --
5 The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
faces and darkness separate us over and over.

10 Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.

15 I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Useful Strategies for Addressing the Poetry Prompt



Introduction

Introduction: Always should include theme, author and poem, as well as your intended elements

Diction

Diction is, by far, the most flexible element—but can be the most tricky. Focus on important diction, not meaningless detail.

Connections

Consider not making closely related elements each a separate paragraph. You will have a hard time distinguishing between them.

Swell Words

Great poetic verbs: "evokes", "suggests"
Great poetic nouns: "speaker", "reader"
Use them...Myrna will be thrilled!

AP Literature Poetry Essay Prompts (1970–2010)

1970 Poem: “Elegy for Jane” (Theodore Roethke)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you describe the speaker's attitude toward his former student, Jane.

1971 Poem: “The Unknown Citizen” (W.H. Auden)

Prompt: In a brief essay, identify at least two of the implications implicit in the society reflected in the poem. Support your statements by specific references to the poem.

1972 NO POEM 1973 (exam not available)

1974 Poem: “I wonder whether one expects...” (No poet given)

Prompt: Write a unified essay in which you relate the imagery of the last stanza to the speaker's view of himself earlier in the poem and to his view of how others see poets.

1975 NO POEM

1976 Poem: “Poetry of Departures” (Philip Larkin)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you discuss how the poem's diction (choice of words) reveals his attitude toward the two ways of living mentioned in the poem.

1977 Poem: “Piano” [2 poems with the same name] (D. H. Lawrence)

Prompt: Read both poems carefully and then write an essay in which you explain what characteristics of the second poem make it better than the first. Refer specifically to details of both poems.

1978 Poem: “Law Like Love” (W. H. Auden)

Prompt: Read the poem and then write an essay discussing the differences between the conceptions of 'law' in lines 1-34 and those in lines 35-60.

1979 Poems: “Spring And All” (William Carlos Williams) and “For Jane Meyers” (Louise Gluck)

Prompt: Read the two poems carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you show how the attitudes towards the coming of spring implied in these two poems differ from each other. Support your statements with specific references to the texts.

1980 Poem: “One Art” (Elizabeth Bishop)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you describe how the speaker's attitude toward loss in lines 16-19 is related to her attitude toward loss in lines 1-15. Using specific references to the text, show how verse form and language contribute to the reader's understanding of these attitudes.

1981 Poem: “Storm Warnings” (Adrienne Rich)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you explain how the organization of the poem and the use of concrete details reveal both its literal and its metaphorical meanings. In your discussion, show how both of these meanings relate to the title.

1982 Poem: “The Groundhog” (Richard Eberhart)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you analyze how the language of the poem reflects the changing perceptions and emotions of the speaker as he considers the metamorphosis of the dead groundhog. Develop your essay with specific references to the text of the poem.

1983 Poem: “Clocks and Lovers” (W. H. Auden)

Prompt: Write a well-organized essay in which you contrast the attitude of the clocks with that of the lover. Through careful analysis of the language and imagery, show how this contrast is important to the meaning of the poem.

1984 NO POEM

1985 Poems: “There Was A Boy” (William Wordsworth) and “The Most of It” (Robert Frost)

Prompt: These two poems present encounters with nature, but the two poets handle those encounters very differently. In a well-organized essay, distinguish between the attitudes (toward nature, toward the solitary individual, etc.) expressed in the poems and discuss the techniques that the poets use to present these attitudes. Be sure to support your statements with specific references.

1986 Poem: “Ogun” (E. K. Braithwaite)

Prompt: Read the poem. You will note that it has two major sections that are joined by another section lines 21-26. Write an essay in which you discuss how the diction, imagery, and movement of verse in the poem reflect differences in tone and content between the two larger sections.

1987 Poem: “Sow” (Sylvia Plath)

Prompt: Read the poem. Then write an essay in which you analyze the presentation of the sow. Consider particularly how the language of the poem reflects both the neighbor's and the narrator's perceptions of the sow and how the language determines the reader's perceptions. Be certain to discuss how the portrayal of the sow is enhanced by such features as diction, devices of sound, images, and allusions.

1988 Poems: “Bright Star” (John Keats) and “Choose Something Like a Star” (Robert Frost)

Prompt: Read the following two poems very carefully, noting that the second includes an allusion to the first. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss their similarities and differences. In your essay, be sure to consider both theme and style.

1989 Poem: “The Great Scarf of Birds” (John Updike)

Prompt: Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poem's organization, diction, and figurative language prepare the reader for the speaker's concluding response.

1990 Poem: Soliloquy from *Henry IV, Part II* (William Shakespeare)

Prompt: In the soliloquy, King Henry laments his inability to sleep. In a well-organized essay, briefly summarize the King's thoughts and analyze how the diction, imagery, and syntax help to convey his state of mind.

1991 Poem: “The Last Night that She lived...” (Emily Dickinson)

Prompt: Write an essay in which you describe the speaker's attitude toward the woman's death. Using specific references from the text, show how the use of language reveals the speaker's attitude.

1992 Poem: “The Prelude” (William Wordsworth)

Prompt: In the passage below, which comes from William Wordsworth's autobiographical poem “The Prelude,” the speaker encounters unfamiliar aspects of the natural world. Write an essay in which you trace the speaker's changing responses to his experiences and explain how they are conveyed by the poem's diction, imagery, and tone.

1993 Poem: “The Centaur” (May Swenson)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you discuss how such elements as language, imagery, structure, and point of view convey meaning in the poem.

1994 Poems: “To Helen” (Edgar Allan Poe) and “Helen” (H.D.)

Prompt: The following two poems are about Helen of Troy. Renowned in the ancient world for her beauty, Helen was the wife of Menelaus, a Greek King. She was carried off to Troy by the Trojan prince Paris, and her abduction was the immediate cause of the Trojan War. Read the two poems carefully. Considering such elements as speaker, diction, imagery, form, and tone, write a well-organized essay in which you contrast the speakers’ views of Helen.

1995 Poem: “The Broken Heart” (John Donne)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the speaker uses the varied imagery of the poem to reveal his attitude toward the nature of love.

1996 Poem: “The Author to Her Book” (Anne Bradstreet)

Prompt: Read carefully the following poem by the colonial American poet, Anne Bradstreet. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss how the poem’s controlling metaphor expresses the complex attitude of the speaker.

1997 Poem: “The Death of a Toad” (Richard Wilbur)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how formal elements such as structure, syntax, diction, and imagery reveal the speaker’s response to the death of a toad.

1998 Poem: “It’s a Woman’s World” (Eavan Boland)

Prompt: The following poem was written by a contemporary Irish woman, Eavan Boland. Read the poem carefully and then write an essay in which you analyze how the poem reveals the speaker’s complex conception of a “woman’s world.”

1999 Poem: “Blackberry-Picking” (Seamus Heaney)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully, paying particular attention to the physical intensity of the language. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the poet conveys not just a literal description of picking blackberries but a deeper understanding of the whole experience. You may wish to include analysis of such elements as diction, imagery, metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, and form.

2001 Poems: “Douglass” by Paul Laurence Dunbar and “London, 1802” by William Wordsworth

Prompt: In each of the following poems, the speaker responds to the conditions of a particular place and time – England in 1802 in the first poem, the United States about 100 years later in the second. Read each poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two poems and analyze the relationship between them.

2002 Poem: “The Convergence of the Twain” (Thomas Hardy)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then, taking into consideration the title of the poem, analyze how the poetic devices convey the speaker’s attitude toward the sinking of the ship.

2002B Poem: “If I Could Tell You” (W. H. Auden)

Prompt: The following poem is a villanelle, a form having strict rules of rhyme, meter, and repetition. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the formal elements of the poem contribute to its meaning.

2003 Poems: “EPΩΣ” (Robert Bridges) and “Eros” (Anne Stevenson)

Prompt: The following poems are both concerned with Eros, the god of love in Greek mythology. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two concepts of Eros and analyze the techniques used to create them.

2003B Poem From *Modern Love* (George Meredith)

Prompt: The following poem is taken from *Modern Love*, a poetic sequence by the English writer George Meredith. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poet conveys a view of “modern love.”

2004 Poems: “We Grow Accustomed to the Dark” (Emily Dickinson) and “Acquainted with the Night” (Robert Frost)

Prompt: The poems below are concerned with darkness and night. Read each poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the poems, analyzing the significance of dark or night in each. In your essay, consider elements such as point of view, imagery, and structure.

2004B Poem: “Crossing the Swamp” (Mary Oliver)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the techniques the poet uses to develop the relationship between the speaker and the swamp.

2005 Poem: “The Chimney Sweeper” [1789 and 1794 versions] (William Blake)

Prompt: The poems below, published in 1789 and 1794, were written by William Blake in response to the condition of chimney sweeps. Usually small children were forced inside chimneys to clean their interiors. Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, taking into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each.

2005B Poems: “Five A.M.” (William Stafford) and “Five Flights Up” (Elizabeth Bishop)

Prompt: Carefully read the two poems below. Then in a well-organized essay compare the speakers’ reflections on their early morning surroundings and analyze the techniques the poets use to communicate the speakers’ different states of mind.

2006 Poem: “Evening Hawk” (Robert Penn Warren)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poet uses language to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning.

2006B Poem: “To Paint a Water Lily” (Ted Hughes)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then write an essay discussing how the poet uses literary techniques to reveal the speaker’s attitudes toward nature and the artist’s task.

2007 Poems: “A Barred Owl” (Richard Wilbur) and “The History Teacher” (Billy Collins)

Prompt: In the following two poems, adults provide explanations for children. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two poems, analyzing how each poet uses literary devices to make his point.

2007B Poem: “Here” (Philip Larkin)

Prompt: Read the following poem carefully. Then, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the techniques the poet uses to convey his attitude toward the places he describes.

2008 Poems “When I Have Fears” (John Keats) and “Mezzo Cammin” (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Prompt: In the two poems below, Keats and Longfellow reflect on similar concerns. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two poems, analyzing the poetic techniques each writer uses to explore his particular situation.

2008B Poems: “Hawk Roosting” (Ted Hughes) and “Golden Retrievals” (Mark Doty)

Prompt: The following two poems present animal-eye views of the world. Read each poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the techniques used in the poems to characterize the speakers and convey differing views of the world.

2009 Speech from *Henry VIII* (William Shakespeare)

Prompt: In the following speech, Cardinal Wolsey considers his sudden downfall from his position as advisor to the king. Spokesmen for the king have just left Wolsey alone on stage. Read the speech carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Shakespeare uses elements such as allusion, figurative language, and tone to convey Wolsey’s complex response to his dismissal from court.

2009B Poem: “Icarus” (Edward Field)

Prompt: The following poem makes use of the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus. Read the poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Field employs literary devices in adapting the Icarus myth to a contemporary setting.

2010 Poem: “The Century Quilt” (Marilyn Nelson Waniek)

Prompt: Write an essay analyzing how Waniek uses literary techniques to develop the complex meanings that the speaker attributes to “The Century Quilt.” You may wish to consider such elements as structure, imagery, and tone.

2010B Poems: “To Sir John Lade, on His Coming of Age” (Samuel Johnson) and “When I Was One-and-Twenty” (A. E. Housman)

Prompt: Each of the two poems below is concerned with a young man at the age of twenty-one, traditionally the age of adulthood. Read the two poems carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you compare and contrast the poems, analyzing the poetic techniques, such as point of view and tone, that each writer uses to make his point about coming of age.

Poetry Analysis Scoring Guide

- 9-8** These well-organized and well-written essays clearly demonstrate an understanding of how the speaker / author in _____ uses _____ to convey _____. In their references, they are apt and specific. Though not without flaws, these papers will offer a convincing interpretation of the poem, as well as consistent control over the virtues of effective composition, including the language unique to the criticism of poetry. They demonstrate the writer's ability to read perceptively and to write with clarity and sophistication.
- 7-6** These essays also demonstrate an understanding of _____'s poem; but, compared to the best essays, they are less thorough or less precise in their analysis of how the speaker / author uses _____ to convey _____. In addition to minor flaws in interpretation, their analysis is likely to be less well-supported and less incisive. While these essays demonstrate the writer's ability to express ideas clearly, they do so with less mastery and control over the hallmarks of mature composition than do papers in the 9-8 range.
- 5** While these essays deal with the assigned task without important errors, they have little to say beyond what is easiest to grasp. Their analysis of how _____ conveys _____ may be vague. As a critical explanation, they deal with the poem in a cursory way. Though the writing is sufficient to convey the writer's thoughts, these essays are typically pedestrian, not as well conceived, organized, or developed as upper-half papers. They may reveal simplistic thinking or immature writing.
- 4-3** These lower-half essays often reflect an incomplete or over-simplified understanding of the poem. Typically, they fail to respond adequately to part of the question. Their analysis may be weak, meager or irrelevant, inaccurate or unclear. The writing demonstrates uncertain control over the elements of effective composition. These essays usually contain recurrent stylistic flaws and/or misreadings, and they often lack persuasive evidence from the text. Essays scored 3 exhibit more than one of the above infelicities; they are marred by a significant misinterpretation, insufficient development, or serious omissions.
- 2-1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. Writers may seriously misread the poem. Frequently, these essays are unacceptably brief. They are poorly written on several counts and may contain many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. While some attempt may have been made to answer the question, the writer's observations are presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays that are especially inexact, vacuous, and/or mechanically unsound should be scored 1.
- 0** This is a response with no more than a reference to the task or no response at all.

Using TPCASTT for Analysis of Poetry

T	Title	What do the words of the title suggest to you? What denotations are presented in the title? What connotations or associations do the words possess?		
P	Paraphrase	Translate the poem in your own words. What is the poem about?		
C	Connotation	What meaning does the poem have beyond the literal meaning? Fill in the chart below.		
		Form	Diction	Imagery
		Point of View	Details	Allusions
		Symbolism	Figurative Language	Other Devices (antithesis, apostrophe, sound devices, irony, oxymoron, paradox, pun, sarcasm, understatement)
A	Attitude	What is the speaker's attitude? How does the speaker feel about himself, about others, and about the subject? What is the author's attitude? How does the author feel about the speaker, about other characters, about the subject, and the reader?		
S	Shifts	Where do the shifts in tone, setting, voice, etc. occur? Look for time and place, keywords, punctuation, stanza divisions, changes in length or rhyme, and sentence structure. What is the purpose of each shift? How do they contribute to effect and meaning?		
T	Title	Reanalyze the title on an interpretive level. What part does the title play in the overall interpretation of the poem?		
T	Theme	List the subjects and the abstract ideas in the poem. Then determine the overall theme. The theme must be written in a complete sentence.		

Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes by Billy Collins

First, her tippet made of tulle,
easily lifted off her shoulders and laid
on the back of a wooden chair.

5 And her bonnet,
the bow undone with a light forward pull.

Then the long white dress, a more
complicated matter with mother-of-pearl
buttons down the back,
10 so tiny and numerous that it takes forever
before my hands can part the fabric,
like a swimmer's dividing water,
and slip inside.

You will want to know
that she was standing
15 by an open window in an upstairs bedroom,
motionless, a little wide-eyed,
looking out at the orchard below,
the white dress puddled at her feet
on the wide-board, hardwood floor.

20 The complexity of women's undergarments
in nineteenth-century America
is not to be waved off,
and I proceeded like a polar explorer
through clips, clasps, and moorings,
25 catches, straps, and whalebone stays,
sailing toward the iceberg of her nakedness.

Later, I wrote in a notebook
it was like riding a swan into the night,
but, of course, I cannot tell you everything--
30 the way she closed her eyes to the orchard,
how her hair tumbled free of its pins,
how there were sudden dashes
whenever we spoke.

What I can tell you is
35 it was terribly quiet in Amherst
that Sabbath afternoon,
nothing but a carriage passing the house,
a fly buzzing in a windowpane.

40 So I could plainly hear her inhale
when I undid the very top
hook-and-eye fastener of her corset

and I could hear her sigh when finally it was unloosed,
the way some readers sigh when they realize
45 that Hope has feathers,
that reason is a plank,
that life is a loaded gun
that looks right at you with a yellow eye.



Your Turn: It's your turn to get intimate with a poet. Pick someone whose poetry inspires you and "undress" them. Or dress them, or take them for a walk, have tea, go shopping – whatever metaphor works best for getting to know your poet.

from MsEffie's LifeSavers Poem-a-Day National Poetry Month Assignments
<http://homepage.mac.com/mseffie/assignments/poem-a-day/daily.html>

Refrigerator Magnet

I help Dr. Williams out of his fedora
and his soggy gray wool overcoat,
hang them dripping by the front door
on the patinaed brass hook,
fastened with a 16d nail
to a 2x4 stud,
wallpapered in green and gold stripes.

You may wonder
just as i did
at the label inside that hat:
Borselino.
From Alessandria, Italy,
felt from Belgian rabbit fur,
banded with the cocoons
of Chinese mulberry silkworms.

I wonder, too
that he lets me touch
such expensive garments.

You will want to know
that he stood smiling slightly
but wordless
in his Rutherford foyer
when he caught me studying that label.

"Come, Doctor.
May I call you Bill?"
His smile widens at this,
and he nods at me.
I drag him by his wrinkled elbow,
past dozens of baby photos,
patients delivered,
clustered around
a Duchamp print,
nearly covering the ugly wallpaper,
past the bookshelves
filled with Pound, Stevens, and Moore.

"Show me the kitchen," I demand.
"I want to see those plums.
My mouth has watered
for decades."

Richard McAlister
Palo Duro High School
Amarillo, TX

Symbols

Title: Practical, Personal

General Negative

Advice to My Son by Peter Meinke

Apocalyptic Imagery

The trick is, to live your days *for the moment* as if each one may be your last

(for they go fast, and young men lose their lives in strange and unimaginable ways)

5 but at the same time, plan long range *for the future*

(for they go slow: if you survive the *accident* shattered windshield and the *war* bursting shell you will arrive

10 at our approximation here below of heaven or hell).

Turn. Colloquial Imagery
To be specific, between the peony and the rose plant squash and spinach, turnips and tomatoes, beauty is nectar

15 and nectar, in a desert, saves-- but the stomach craves stronger sustenance than the honied vine.

Therefore, marry a pretty girl after seeing her mother; speak truth to one man,

20 work with another; and always serve bread with your wine.

★ ALG Turn
But son, always serve wine.

like logical syllogism

Speaker - witty, wise, more experienced, sense of humor (could be mother or father)

Life is a mixed blessing.

Theme: Multiple Opposing Aspects

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

- ① the practical + the idealistic
- ② the physical + the spiritual
- ③ the temporal + the long-term
- ④ the sensual + the intellectual
- ⑤ the secular + the religious
- ⑥ the aesthetic + the mundane
- ⑦ the serious + the humorous

Rhymes irregularly

3 Aphorisms but AS contradictions

Title: How to Live One's Life

Advice to My Son by Peter Meinke

The trick is, to live your days
as if each one may be your last
(for they go fast, and young men lose their lives
in strange and unimaginable ways)
5 but at the same time, plan long range
(for they go slow: if you survive
the shattered windshield and the bursting shell
you will arrive
at our approximation here below
10 of heaven or hell).

To be specific, between the peony and the rose
plant squash and spinach, turnips and tomatoes;
beauty is nectar
and nectar, in a desert, saves--
15 but the stomach craves stronger sustenance
than the honied vine.
Therefore, marry a pretty girl
after seeing her mother;
speak truth to one man,
20 work with another;
and always serve bread with your wine.

But, son,
always serve wine.