GARFORTH ACADEMY
English Literature Revision Guide
EDUQAS Poetry Anthology Notes

January 2019
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<td>Hawk Roosting</td>
<td>The Hawk which behaves like an arrogant God and rules the forest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ozymandias</td>
<td>The pharaoh Rameses II thought his creations would last forever, but they crumble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living Space</td>
<td>The poor in India who have poor quality houses and need to believe in God to make it from day to day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>The poor in London who suffer because the church refuses to help them escape poverty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death of a Naturalist</td>
<td>The narrator wanted to become a naturalist, but lost his childish innocence as he grew up.</td>
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<td>Afternoons</td>
<td>The narrator doesn’t believe in traditional families and think people sacrifice too much of their own happiness for their children</td>
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<td>The Soldier</td>
<td>The patriotic soldier who thinks dying for his country is noble and that he is blessed for being English</td>
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<td>The Manhunt</td>
<td>The soldier’s wife tries to help him cope with PTSD after he returns home from war.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dulce et Decorum Est</td>
<td>The poet’s experience in war taught him that it was not sweet and right to die for your country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mametz Wood</td>
<td>The poet’s journey to the battlefields makes him think about how past sacrifices can resurface.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Wife in London</td>
<td>The wife receives a telegram of her husband’s death, followed shortly after by a letter he wrote which was about him looking forward to coming home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cozy Apologia</td>
<td>A woman who realises that true love doesn’t have to be a fairy-tale and that commitment and contentment is the most important thing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As Imperceptibly as Grief</td>
<td>The poet’s slide into depression as mirrored by the changing of the seasons and the disappearing of light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excerpt from The Prelude</td>
<td>The poet marvels at the beauty of nature, the excitement it brings and how he fits into the wider world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valentine</td>
<td>The poet explores the bitterness and rejection of a love which ends badly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>She Walks in Beauty</td>
<td>The poet admires the grace and poise of a woman whose dark-haired appearance was distinctive and unusual</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Autumn</td>
<td>The writer explores how he admires autumn for providing growth, giving us a harvest and being perfectly in harmony like music.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonnet 43</td>
<td>The poet explores the reasons for loving her partner (after falling out with her parents) and how it will only become stronger and stronger, even after death</td>
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# The Manhunt by Simon Armitage

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The Manhunt is a poem written by Simon Armitage, exploring both the physical and psychological effects of war on those who have experienced it. It is written from his wife, Laura's, point of view, and explores the process of Laura trying to understand the emotional trauma her husband has experienced.

**Key Quotations:**
- “Only then would he let me trace the frozen river which ran through his face” - “Only then” shows that being physical was easier than letting her in emotionally. “Frozen river,” could be a metaphor for a scar; it could link to a river of frozen tears and the emotional pain of war as well. “Frozen” suggests its permanence.
- “Sweating, unexploded mine buried deep in his mind” - shows that the effect of war is still within the man, growing inside of him. The damage war has caused to him has left him a ticking time bomb ready to explode.
- “Then and only then did I come close” - suggests it is a journey through his pain and healing – she needs to learn the new man her husband is.

**Context:**
- Told from the perspective of a soldier’s wife – deals with the idea of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its impact on the soldier and those around him/her. Physically, they can remain close, but there is a gap between them now emotionally as he struggles to let her in.
- The poem was written after Armitage spent time interviewing a couple. The husband had been fighting in the Bosnian War and suffered both physically and mentally.

**Structure:**
- The poem is organised into couplets. Initially these couplets rhyme (“first phase… intimate days”), perhaps showing that when they first reunited, they were close. However, as the poem progresses the rhyme scheme falters, reflecting the struggles they have to overcome on his return.

**Possible Themes and Links:**
- War and its lasting effects – *Mametz Wood*, *A Wife in London* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*
- Relationships and love – *Cozy Apologia* and *A Wife in London*
- Suffering (mental and physical) – *Mametz Wood* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*
The Manhunt

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, 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 finally 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.

Simon Armitage

The title links to the idea that the wife needs to ‘search’ for her old husband as he is closed to her now he has returned from war.

‘Only then’ shows that being physical was easier than letting her in emotionally.

‘Frozen river’ = metaphor for scar; could link to a river of frozen tears and the emotional pain of war? Frozen suggests permanence.

‘Porcelain’ is delicate and fragile – the metaphor links to the fragility of his body in the face of war.

A broken parachute is no use – is this how he feels about himself?

Creates imagery of the woman exploring her husband’s altered body. The image of the ladder in ‘climb the rungs’ suggests the effort she has to go to understand her husband’s state of mind.

The ‘source’ of the scarring is deep within the mind. The ‘unexploded mine buried deep in his mind,’ suggests that the emotional suffering is deep within him and threatens to rear its head at any time. We’re reminded of the damage a bomb can cause and that the wife may be trying to diffuse it, to stop a period of PTSD.

Intimacy of the couple after his return – this comes easily to them and shows their commitment as husband and wife.

‘Explore’ suggests she is searching something unfamiliar to her. Look at the other verbs in the first line of the couplets too. ‘Blown hinge of his lower jaw’ – the physical pain he is suffering but also a metaphor for his inability to speak about what has happened.

‘Fractured rudder’ implies that he can no longer steer himself; she needs to guide him to recovery as he is lost.

‘Mind’ and ‘attend’ link to medical attention – she needs to help him heal.

The ‘grazed heart’ could be literal and the memory of an injury from war, or it could be interpreted as a metaphor for emotional pain he experiences post-war. He can’t share what’s in his ‘grazed heart’ with his wife.

The image of the foetus in him suggests that the physical effects of war have scarred him and are deep within him emotionally. Like growing a baby, a connection is formed between parent and child, and in this case the connection between this man and war will be a bind on him forever.

She can only ‘come close;’ she can never fully understand or solve what her husband is going through. The repetition of ‘only then’ shows just how much she tries to get him to open-up.
**Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s sonnet sequence was written before she married Robert Browning, another famous writer, to express her intense love for him. Sonnet 43 is the most famous of the 44 sonnets. In it, Browning attempts to define her love, comparing it to religion and noting the abstract qualities of love. It is her way of expressing what her husband meant to her, and is one of the most famous love poems of all time.

| Key Quotations: | “I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach” - ‘Depth’, ‘breadth’ and ‘height’ are abstract but encompass all space. It suggests her love is all consuming and allows her to reach impossible extremes. She loves, him not only with her body, but with her soul which transcends time.  
“I love thee with the passion put to use in my old griefs” - she has taken all the bitterness and anger she may have felt before and replaced it with her love for him.  
“If God choose, I shall but love thee better after death” - her love for Browning will go beyond death. Her love is eternal and her dying cannot stop it as it is such a powerful force. |
| Context: | Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s father was very over-protective. She eloped against his wishes with the poet, Robert Browning, showing how important love was to her. She disobeyed her father to be with him.  
Sonnets are traditionally written to show a love for someone or something. This poem is the ultimate way of Browning expressing her love. |
| Structure: | At the beginning of the poem she makes references to her love being limitless and she also reinforces this at the end in the last line ‘I shall but love thee more after death.’  
Sonnet 43 is the length of a traditional sonnet (14 lines) but doesn’t follow the traditional sonnet rhyme scheme. There are rhyming couplets yet the poem avoids a perfect rhyme scheme. Perhaps this reflects their relationship – unconventional but with close unity. |
| Possible Themes and Links: | Relationships and love – Cozy Apologia, Valentine and She Walks in Beauty. |
Sonnet 43

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways!
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday’s
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;

I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith:
I love thee with the love I seemed to lose
With my lost Saints, I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! I love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

She is questioning how she can prove her love
to him.

Beyond a human heart – she loves him
with every part of her being, even the
eternal parts.

‘Being’ and ‘Ideal Grace’ could link to God and the idea that she loves him as she loves God.

The adverb ‘freely’ suggests that she loves him through her own choice. ‘As men strive for Right,’ implies that just as men want to be good, she wants to love him in the way he deserves.

She has taken all the bitterness and anger she may have felt before and replaced it with her love for him.

Sonnet 43

This was Sonnet 43 out of 44 sonnets, written for the traditional purpose of a sonnet: to express love.

She loves him in so many ways – they need counting as there are too many.

‘Depth and breadth and height’ are all abstract, but relate to dimensions – her love fills huge spaces, beyond what she can understand.

Yes she loves him intensely, but also in the day-to-day. It isn’t a short passion.

She loves him constantly throughout the day. He is the ‘sun’ during the day, giving her hope and happiness. He is the ‘candlelight’ in the darkness, guiding her and banishing any negative feelings.

Her love for Browning will go beyond death. Her love is eternal and her dying cannot stop it as it is such a powerful force.

She loves him throughout every emotion she experiences – whether she is happy, sad or simply being.
Who, what, where, when and why:
This poem is a journey through London from Blake’s point of view. He heavily focuses on the poor people he meets and how they are repressed and exploited by the upper classes, leading them to live, and eventually die, in misery. He openly criticises the institutions that are supposed to support the poor: the monarchy, the church and the rich.

| Key Quotations: | “Marks of weakness, marks of woe” – the faces of those he sees clearly show how unhappy and deprived the people are. They are physically and mentally worn down by their harsh lives. |
| | “Mind-forged manacles” - ‘Manacles’ are handcuffs. The fact that they are ‘mind-forg’d’ suggests that they are mentally and emotionally trapped by their class and by poverty. |
| | “Every black’ning church appals” – religion should be the first to help the poor, but the Church didn’t actually help those in need. Many believed the Church was corrupt. |

| Context: | Published as part of ‘Songs of Innocence and Experience.’ This poem is one of the songs of Experience reflecting the more negative aspects of life. |
| | Blake lived and worked in London during the Victorian era, a time of great poverty and industrial change. |
| | He believed in the beauty of the natural world and believed enforcement and power were evil as they only benefitted the rich and those lucky enough to inherit it. |

| Structure: | Initially, Blake just observes the streets as he walks through London. However, as the poem progresses he begins to pick parts that he is clearly unhappy with and focuses on the wider areas he is disgusted with, rather than what he can directly see. |

| Possible Themes and Links: | Welfare and living conditions – Living Space |
| | Power and control – Hawk Roosting, Ozymandias |
London

I wander thro’ each charter’d street,  
Nigel where the charter’d Thames does flow.  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear,  
In every voice: in every ban,  
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry  
Every black’ning Church appals,  
And the hapless Soldier’s sigh  
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro’ midnight streets I hear  
How the youthful Harlots’ curse  
Blasts the new-born Infant’s tear  
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

William Blake

The children who are born into these families are unhappy – they are born into poverty and misery.

The oxymoron ‘marriage-hearse’ here creates a sinister image. A hearse is a funeral carriage, so to put it alongside marriage implies that there is no happy ending for the poor. Being born into the lower class only means pain, death and suffering.

The capital city’s name is used to show that this is the state of the city that represents all of England.

‘Charter’d shows that the city is mapped out and is now owned by people because of this – it is no longer free.

‘Every’ shows the sheer scale of misery and sadness in London.

‘Manacles’ are handcuffs. The fact that they are ‘mind-forg’d’ suggests that they are mentally and emotionally trapped by their class and by poverty.

This focuses on the children of London who were abused. Blake doesn’t agree with their exploitation.

The unhappy soldiers die for their country in pointless wars. Blake blames the monarchy for this who is implies has blood on their hands.

Religion was supposed to help people, but instead Blake condemns religion for allowing poverty to happen. The adjective, ‘black’ning’ could be symbolic of the evil within it.

‘Harlots’ were prostitutes who would work the streets of London. By emphasising that they are, ‘young,’ Blake highlights that many young women were trapped into prostitution as there was no alternative for them. The ‘curse’ could be their low status in this world as they were born into poverty, or in a more literal manner it could refer to the diseases they would have contracted and passed on to customers.

‘Mark’ could hint at the physical scarring of the people of London. The suffering is clear to see.

No-one can escape poverty: men, children, simply everyone is affected by the poor treatment.

Blake writes in the first person (I) to show this is his own account and journey through London.

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The Soldier by Rupert Brooke

Who, what, where, when and why:
This poem, written by Rupert Brooke, explores his intense feelings of love and pride for his country, in this case England. He shares his beliefs that because England is so beautiful, it can only be an honourable thing to die whilst at war for her, showing his true patriotism towards England. He personifies England and this poem is a love poem to her.

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<th>Key Quotations:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England” - this is the first mention of England, the country he is so proud of. Visiting foreign countries allows the beauty of England to spread and when a soldier dies there, his body make their land better as his Englishness feeds their soil.</td>
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<td>“A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware” - England is personified here; she is almost his mother, nurturing the soldier and allowing him to grow.</td>
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<td>“A pulse in the eternal mind” - suggests that the spirit of the soldier will always live on; the “eternal mind,” suggesting their spirits are immortal because they have sacrificed themselves for their country.</td>
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<td>Rupert Brooke was a soldier during WWI but died on the way to the Dardanelles in Greece. He died of septicaemia (blood poisoning) after being bitten by a mosquito.</td>
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<td>He was buried in a “foreign field” in Cyprus.</td>
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<td>He never was involved in active service but this poem shows he felt very patriotic about England.</td>
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<th>Structure:</th>
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<td>The poem takes the reader on a journey of pride. It begins by focusing on how the bodies that have been buried abroad after war are better than the soil they are buried in, infusing it with English pride.</td>
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<td>Towards the middle of the poem, Brooke focuses on the beauty of England, highlighting how honourable it is to die for her.</td>
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<td>The poem ends with the suggestion that dying for your country brings eternal life, memory and pride.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Possible Themes and Links:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Patriotism – Dulce et Decorum Est (contrasts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of war – Dulce et Decorum Est (contrasts) and A Wife in London (contrasts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride – Ozymandias and Dulce et Decorum Est</td>
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</table>
The title doesn't give an individual name, reflecting the number of lives lost. The use of 'The,' suggests the ideal soldier, full of pride and patriotism.

**The Soldier**

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given:
Her sights and sounds, dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friend; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke

The modal verb, 'should,' acknowledges that this is a real possibility, one that the poet believes is honourable.

Acknowledging how far from home they are – it isn't familiar to the soldiers.

First mention of England, the country he is so proud of. Visiting foreign countries allows the beauty of England to spread.

England is personified here; she is almost his mother, nurturing the soldier and allowing him to grow.

A focus on how beautiful the landscape of England is.

This has religious tones to it in, 'blest,' and the idea that she is his protector and guidance in the world.

The 'evil' here could be a reference to the war and the horrors that men at war are capable of.

Heaven here is ultimately 'English,' suggesting that the poet believes heaven, and therefore perfection, must be English as he loves his country so much.

Their memory and soul live on as they are part of England; they are immortal as they died for their country and will never be forgotten.

Here the poet wants the reader to focus on the memories the soldiers have of England: the 'sights,' 'sounds,' 'dreams' and 'laughter.'

The earth is made richer and better by their English bodies being buried there. It could also imply that the bodies ('dust') are richer than the soil that surrounds them, because they're English.

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

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Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given:
Her sights and sounds, dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friend; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke

The soldiers who die at war find peace in death, and are given the ultimate reward of eternal piece for their heroic actions.
**She Walks in Beauty by Lord Byron**

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
‘She Walks in Beauty’ is a poem that celebrates a woman’s beauty which captivates the person who sees her. The narrator is not only enchanted by her physical beauty, but also by her inner ‘goodness’ that he focuses on towards the end of the poem. The poem is a Victorian one written by Lord Byron who was well-known for his appreciation of women.

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<tr>
<th>Key Quotations:</th>
<th>“Of cloudless climes and starry skies” – the references to light suggests an inner radiance and purity of soul.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>“One shade the more, one ray the less” - this focuses on her perfect balance of beauty and perfection.</td>
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<td>“A heart whose love is innocent!” - Byron only uses the word “love” at the end of the poem. There are different interpretations of this. It could be that he doesn’t actually love her, but is infatuated with her because of her beauty. However, it could also mean that the process of writing the poem has made him fall in love with her as he has admired both her inner and outer beauty in detail.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
<th>Byron was a leading figure of the Romantic movement and liked to break conventions. He celebrated beauty in all aspects of life.</th>
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<td>Byron's private life was very public and he was known for his many relationships with different women.</td>
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| Structure: | At the beginning of the poem, Byron expresses his admiration for the woman and as the poem progresses he then speaks about her inner ‘goodness’. He ends the poem with the idea of 'love', an experience that perhaps brings together both the external and internal beauty |

| Possible Themes and Links: | Relationships and love – Sonnet 43, Cozy Apologia and Valentine |
She Walks in Beauty

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!

Lord Byron

Byron only uses the word 'love' at the end of the poem. There are different interpretations of this. It could be that he doesn't actually love her, but is infatuated with her because of her beauty. However, it could also mean that the process of writing the poem has made him fall in love with her as he has admired both her inner and outer beauty in detail.

Her beauty is sophisticated and clear for everyone to see, like an 'eloquent' piece of speech is easy to follow.

Her innocence is something which makes her very appealing.

She is good which means she is innocent and kind, two admirable qualities.

‘Like the night,’ suggests that her darkness and mysterious is different to the traditional beauty of other women. Usually, beauty is associated with light and therefore Byron draws attention to how different her beauty is.

This imagery is romantic and draws on her mysterious nature. She is, to him, as beautiful as the stars in the sky and perhaps as inaccessible.

‘She’ is used to suggest the anonymity of the woman – we don’t know her name or who she is. The fact that she ‘walks’ in beauty suggests everything about her is beautiful, even the way she moves.

Darkness and light come together to create this perfect beauty; she is the balance of them both.

Again, this focuses on her perfect balance of beauty and perfection.

Not only is this woman physically beautiful, but she is also beautiful inside, as suggested by her ‘pure’ and ‘sweet’ thoughts.

He begins to pick out parts of her face he finds particularly charming.

She has a beautiful smile that ‘win[s]’ as it captures his heart (or attention at least!).

‘She walks in beauty,’ suggests that everything about her is beautiful, even the way she moves.

This imagery is romantic and draws on her mysterious nature. She is, to him, as beautiful as the stars in the sky and perhaps as inaccessible.

The beauty of ‘day’ is too traditional and garish for Byron. Her beauty is natural and understated. She is effortlessly beautiful.

Her ‘raven’ hair goes against the typical fair haired beauties of the time. Byron finds her darkness mysterious and alluring. Does her perhaps think there is something dangerous about her?

Her beauty is sophisticated and clear for everyone to see, like an ‘eloquent’ piece of speech is easy to follow.

Her innocence is something which makes her very appealing.

She is good which means she is innocent and kind, two admirable qualities.
Living Space by Imtiaz Dharker

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The poem describes the slums of Mumbai, where thousands of people migrate to in the hope of a better life. These slums have housing made from many different materials that can easily be found, and Dharker focuses on the fact that it’s a miracle these places are able to give people a home, and that through it all they can maintain their faith and hope.

| Key Quotations: | • “Nothing is flat or parallel” – everything is slanted and crooked, which is potentially dangerous. The slums do not look like usual houses.  
• “Eggs in a wire basket” - shows ordinary objects make the slums feel like home and also reflect the fragility of life. Even fragile human lives can survive in the slums, as can their fragile hope.  
• “Hung out of the dark edge of a slanted universe” – the “dark edge” sound sinister and dangerous, and the “slanted universe” might represent inequality between classes – everything is skewed in favour of the rich.  
• Final words – “thin walls of faith” suggests the existence of these living spaces is a miracle and implies they still have “faith” even in difficult conditions. Perhaps it is their faith that allows them to keep going? |
|---|---|
| Context: | • Born in Pakistan but raised in Scotland, Imtiaz Dharker has an interest in representing a different culture.  
• The slums, whilst poor living conditions, provide people with a home and what they believe to be a new way of life. |
| Structure: | • The poem begins by describing the slums and they come across as a poor living environment.  
• The small middle stanza might represent the ‘squeezed-in’ living conditions.  
• The poem ends with Dharker praising the slums and really focusing on the fact that they provide a living space for desperate people. |
| Possible Themes and Links: | • Welfare and living conditions – London  
• Fragility of life and resilience of spirit – The Manhunt and Mametz Wood |
Other people view the slums as a space to live rather than a home. Dharker wants to challenge this.

The fact that the slums aren't structurally traditional is a 'problem' for western and upper class people. The real 'problem' is the divide between the rich and the poor.

The adverb 'crookedly' could emphasise the dangerous living conditions that they have to live in.

'Nails clutch' not only emphasises the fragility of the houses, but also the idea that the people living in the slums 'clutch' onto opportunities to try and improve their lives.

The adverb 'dangerously' shows the hazardous conditions in the slums.

Dharker has admiration for the people living in the slums and appreciates their unique way of living.

Close proximity to one another but also finding opportunities to build houses in spaces others would reject.

People have had to take risks to improve their lives here; what they've done could have been dangerous.

The 'slanted universe' could be a metaphor for the inequality between the rich and the poor, and how life goes in the riches' favour.

The brightness could link back to the symbolism of the light giving them hope. However, the fact that the walls are, 'thin,' links to the fragility of their society, living in these dangerous conditions.

Symbolic of hope.

The poem ends positively and with hope. The idea that they have 'faith' shows that they are able to withstand the harsh conditions as they have a belief that they are being looked-after.
As Imperceptibly as Grief by Emily Dickinson

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
‘As imperceptibly as Grief’ is Dickinson’s way of expressing her fears that time is slipping past her; she is scared of death and shows this through the metaphor summer ending. It was written during her 20s and although she was young, she had suffered much heartbreak through losing loved ones. Here she expresses her fear of time passing.

| Key Quotations: | • “The Summer lapsed away” - suggests time passing and life coming to an end. It could be symbolic of happiness coming to an end as she has to deal with the inevitable depression that follows a sad event.  
• “As twilight long begun” – “twilight” is the end of the day when there is still some light but darkness is approaching. Perhaps the speaker of the poem feels trapped between darkness and depression, and hope and light.  
• “Our summer made her light escape into the beautiful” - The “light escape” could be symbolic of her accepting that time passing. “Into the beautiful” suggests that she is accepting her next journey into a happier place, which could be symbolic of her being ready to go to heaven. |
| Context: | • Emily Dickinson lived in Massachusetts, America, 1830-86. She did not live the house often and lived a reclusive lifestyle.  
• She suffered a lot of grief in her life and before writing this poem, she had lost a number of family members and friends. |
| Structure: | • The use of dashes means that there isn’t a constant pace to the poem. These may be used to reflect her own fractured thoughts.  
• Towards the end, she seems more hopeful, and the tone becomes more positive. |
| Possible Themes and Links: | • Time passing – *To Autumn* and *Afternoons*  
• The natural world – *To Autumn, Excerpt from the Prelude* and *Death of a Naturalist* |
As imperceptibly as Grief

The Summer lapsed away—
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, that would be gone—
And thus, without a Wing
Or service of a Keel
Our Summer made her light escape
Into the Beautiful.

Emily Dickinson

‘Imperceptibly’ suggests that her grief has been so gradual that people may not have noticed it happening to her.

‘Grief’ shows the pain she is suffering is unbearable.

Could ‘summer’ be the best part of someone’s life – potentially youth?

The verb ‘lapsed’ shows the passing of time and could suggest that the speaker of the poem is beginning to think about death, the inevitable end of human life.

‘Long begun’ is a depressing tone as the speaker feels the darkness and depression has long taken over their life.

‘Twilight’ is the end of the day when there is still some light but darkness is approaching. Perhaps the speaker of the poem feels trapped between darkness and depression, and hope and light.

The ‘Dusk’ could symbolise the darkness coming in, and as it draws in ‘earlier’ she might feel that her happiness is shorter each day. The depression is inevitable.

‘Grace’ is something that is usually kind but the fact that it is ‘harrowing’ suggests that it is painful and scary to her.

When morning comes, it bring light and hope with it; this is ‘foreign’ to her as she doesn’t recognise it and cannot understand.

‘Twilight’ is the end of the best part of someone’s life – potentially youth?

The speaker may feel as though she is trapped in her life and unstable emotionally. She needs a ‘wing’ or ‘keel’ to help to support her so she can escape, but she’s unable to.

The ‘light escape’ could be symbolic of her accepting the time passing. ‘Into the beautiful’ suggests that she is accepting her next journey into a happier place, which could be symbolic of her being ready to go to heaven.
**Cozy Apologia by Rita Dove**

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The speaker of the poem uses the time she is spending waiting for a hurricane to arrive at her town to reflect on her relationship with her husband. Everything she sees reminds her of him and she reflects on their cozy lifestyle and how content they both are.

| Key Quotations: | “Chain mail glinting, to set me free” – this creates a heroic image of her husband coming to save the damsel in distress from all the ‘boys’ she has had relationships with before. He “sets her free” from the horrors of dating these immature boys. |
| | “Teenage crushes on worthless boys whose only talent was to kiss you senseless” - the “worthless boys” were not worth her time. The boys are, “hollow,” showing they had no substance and were empty. Young, passionate love (“kiss you senseless”) is nothing compared to the enduring love she has with Fred. |
| | “We’re content, but fall short of the Divine” - their love may not be viewed as heavenly as shown by “Divine,” but Dove is happy with their everyday love. Their love is unique. |

| Context: | Hurricane Floyd hit the east coast of the USA in 1999 and was a very powerful storm. The poem takes place whilst she is awaiting its arrival. |
| | Rita Dove is American and married to the writer Fred Viebahn (probably the “Fred” in the poem). |

| Structure: | Dove takes the reader on a journey through her love life: she starts with the idealised version of her husband, a sweet and silly comparison to show how much she loves and needs him. |
| | She moves onto reminiscing about the worthless boys she used to love, and contemplates how they were not worthy of her attention. |
| | She ends with a contented voice, showing how happy she is now. |

| Possible Themes and Links: | Relationships and love – Sonnet 43, She Walks in Beauty and Valentine |
Cozy Apologia

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.
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.

Rita Dove

Fred stops Dove from ever feeling down—he is the constant
source of her happiness in a mundane life.

‘Apologia’ means defence so the title
could be considered to mean: a defence
of cosiness. She might feel the need to
defend her relationship as others might
consider it boring, when really they are
just content.

Fred is the name of Dove's
husband.

Dove uses the clichéd image
of a knight in shining armour,
suggesting that her husband
has been her saviour. 'Set me
free,' shows she might feel she
has been saved. The tone is
humorous but the sentiment is
real.

Hurricanes usually have
female names and the fact
that it's been given a male
name allows the memories of
previous relationships to
come back to Dove.

The 'worthless boys'
were not worth her time.
They were 'thin as
licorice' which suggests
that she wasted her time
on them. The boys are,
'hollow,' showing they
have no substance and
as they were empty.

Dove is embarrassed that
she is so happy and content
when it seems that nothing
exciting is happening in her
relationship. Their love is
simple and unexciting but it's
what works for them.

Dove is grateful to have this 'stolen
time' with her husband and enjoys
being able to reflect on their
relationship and how content they both
are.

'I' shows that this poem is likely
autobiographical. 'Anything' suggests that
everything her life is somehow associated
with her husband; their lives are
intertwined.

Everyday objects
emphasise her love for Fred: the
lamp may be symbolic of the
hope and light he
adds to her life,
the pen the
inspiration he
gives her.

Life passes us by and
we're often too busy to
actually think about the
person we love. She
uses this, 'stolen time' to
think about how much
she loves him.

Represents their busy and
perhaps often separate
lives.

Their love may not be
viewed as heavenly
as shown by 'Divine,' but
Dove is happy with their
everyday love. Their
love is unique.
A Wife in London by Thomas Hardy

Who, what, where, when and why:
The poem focuses on the experiences of a wife whose husband has died in the Boer War. She receives news of his death by Telegram, as a messenger delivers the news to her personally. The day after, a letter from her husband arrives detailing his hopes for his return. The letter has taken so long to be delivered that the news of his death comes before his actual letter.

Key Quotations:
- “She sits in the tawny vapour” - the word, “tawny,” shows the gloom of London. It is ominous and forebodes the news she is about to receive. The fact that she is surrounded by “vapour” is symbolic of the uncertainty that came when men went to war.
- “He – has fallen – in the far South Land” – “has fallen” is a euphemism for died, showing how the news is delivered sensitively even if it is quick. However, the dashes show her shock and she tries to understand what has happened.
- “His hand, whom the worm now knows” - morbid imagery emphasises the finality of death and perhaps mimics the horrible thoughts and imaginings she has about her now deceased husband.

Context:
- The poem is most likely related to the ‘Boer War’ but the fact that it is called, ‘A Wife in London’ suggests that this poem could represent any wife who was waiting for her husband to come home.

Structure:
- The poem is split into two, the first focusing on the day she is told her husband has died and the second where she receives a letter from him: ‘The Tragedy’ and ‘The Irony.’

Possible Themes and Links:
- London life, environment – Dulce et Decorum Est, Mametz Wood
- Relationships – The Manhunt
- Impact of war – Dulce et Decorum Est, Mametz Wood
A Wife in London

I - The Tragedy

She sits in the tawny vapour
That the City 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 is in her hand
Of meaning it dazes to understand
Though shaped so shortly:
He - has fallen - in the far South Land...

II - The Irony

'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 by brake and burn
In the summer weather,
And of new love that they would learn.

Thomas Hardy

The word, 'tawny' shows the gloom of London. It is ominous and forebodes the news she is about to receive.

The word 'webby' links to the claustrophobic feeling and the idea that she will continue to feel trapped.

'Shas fallen' is a euphemism for died, showing how the news is delivered sensitively even if it is quick.

'The fog' is pathetic fallacy as her depression begins to set in. It covers things up and might be symbolic of the slow and uncertain communications during war.

Morbid imagery emphasises the finality of death and perhaps mimics the horrible thoughts and imaginings she has about her now dead husband.

Shows hope for their happy summer days spent together upon his return – it was the simple pleasures he looked forward to the most.

The moment her life changes and her past becomes an old memory.

The city lanes are on top of each other, showing how close all the houses are to one another. It creates a claustrophobic atmosphere.

‘Waning taper’ is a tall, thin candle that is going out. The simile might be symbolic of her future going out and becoming cold, now all hope and happiness is leaving her.

The dashes show her shock as she tries to understand what has happened.

'il's ironic she receives the letter after he's died.

The normality of the setting emphasises that this sort of news was typical of many wives when their husbands were at war.

There is some irony in ‘fresh’ since the letter would have been written a while before. It also shows the care and attention he gave when writing to his love.

Shows the excitement that he felt at the prospect of returning to his wife.

A sad tone as they will never be able to actually develop a ‘new love.’ The ending is simple because it emphasises that Hardy can’t describe the widow’s grief – this is how he’s going to end it.

'This poem is structured in two halves signifying the two parts to the story: before and after. It could be symbolic of the change her in her life after her husband’s death.

'This poem could be symbolic of the many wives waiting for their husbands to return from war in uncertain circumstances.
Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy

Who, what, where, when and why:
This poem describes someone giving a Valentine’s Day present to someone, but rather than it being the usual clichéd gift of chocolates or flowers, it’s an onion. The narrator argues an onion is more meaningful because of what it represents. The poem is, therefore, about love as well as gifts.

| Key Quotations: | “It will blind you with tears” - Has she been hurt before? Love isn’t always joyful and has the power to upset you as well. We have to mourn lost lovers and grieve for them.  
|                 | “Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips, possessive and faithful” - The adjective, “fierce” creates a sinister tone, almost as if the narrator isn’t stable – is her love too much? “Possessive and faithful” highlight that the same feeling can be seen in different ways. Love can be difficult when both people don’t share equal feelings.  
|                 | “Platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring, if you like” - the speaker intends to marry the other person – her gift has a much greater meaning than the mere onion it first appears to be. |

Context: | Throughout the poem, Duffy critiques society’s usual approach to Valentine’s Day. She argues it’s about more than materialistic presents.  

Structure: | The poem starts by challenging the usual. Clichéd gifts people receive on Valentine’s Day. As the poem progresses, she begins to explore the feelings and emotions associated with love too, but the good and the more sinister one. She ends the poem on an ominous note, almost as a warning that love can be dangerous. It’s not the superficial cute thing Valentine’s Day makes it out to be.  

Possible Themes and Links: | Relationships and love – Sonnet 43, She Walks in Beauty and Cozy Apologia
Valentine

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.

Carol Ann Duffy

The title of the poem suggests that the poem will focus on the joyous nature of love, but instead the poet delves into the less conventional and superficial meaning of love.

Instantly the narrator challenges the expectations of Valentine's Day. This might surprise the reader who may well expect a love poem based on the title.

The metaphor of 'an onion' is different to the usual ones we see in poetry. An onion adds depth and flavour to a meal and has a very distinctive taste, perhaps like the narrator's love which is powerful and cannot be ignored.

The moon is a traditional romantic symbol but it could also be used to be symbolic of mystery. 'It promises light' and gives hope and guidance, but does the promise falter?

Has she been hurt before? Love isn't always joyful and has the power to upset you as well. We have to mourn lost lovers and grieve for them.

Here she justifies herself to the reader – she wants the reader to know that this is her honest and truthful account.

Could the 'brown paper' suggest that the narrator isn't overcomplicating and overdressing things? She is honest about who and what she is.

Again, she challenges conventional gifts.

'Possessive and faithful' highlight that the same feeling can be seen in different ways. Love can be difficult when both people don't share equal feelings.

The adjectives 'fierce' and 'lethal' create a sinister tone, almost as if the narrator isn't stable – is her love too much, 'possessive'?

Love takes work. So long as a couple are 'faithful' and choose to be, a relationship can be successful.

Constant use of imperatives suggests that she is confident in communicating her love. Perhaps it could be forceful?

Intends to marry the other person – her gift has greater meaning than it first appears.

Ends on a really sinister tone. Love can be deadly and 'lethal,' suggesting that it can be the undoing of some people.

The verb 'cling' suggests that the narrator will keep going until they get what they want – again reinforcing the sinister tone.

What might the 'lethal' consequences be if the narrator doesn't get their way?
Death of a Naturalist by Seamus Heaney

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The poem is split into two parts. The first focuses on a childhood memory and the enjoyment that learning about frogs brings; a childhood curiosity is filled. The second part focuses on the present, and the narrator coming across frogs again. This time, they are sinister and gross, and he fears them. This is a coming-of-age poem that explores the idea that perception changes over time.

| Key Quotations: | • “Warm thick slobber of frogspawn” — something that might be seen as disgusting as an adult seems exciting as a child. The language used shows that the narrator is an innocent child.  
• “A coarse croaking that I had not heard before” — there has been a change in tone. What was once exciting to the young boy has now changed and become alien; he does not recognise the sound and the adjective “coarse” implies there was threat to it.  
• “The great slime kings were gathered there for vengeance” — “Great slime kings” show the power has shifted to the frogs. They rule the flax-dam now. |
| Context: | • Seamus Heaney suffered loss as a child after his brother died in a car accident when he was four years old. This is just one of many of his poems dealing with the theme of a loss of innocence.  
• Heaney enjoyed nature and grew up on a farm; the poem reflects his own childhood curiosity in the great outdoors. |
| Structure: | • In the first stanza, the speaker in the poem is excited about discovering new parts of nature and is joyful.  
• In the last stanza, it changes as he becomes more fearful of the nature around him. He is less excited about nature and more aware of the dangers it brings. |
| Possible Themes and Links: | • Loss of innocence — *Afternoons*  
• Childhood memories — *Excerpt from The Prelude*  
• Passing of time — *As Imperceptibly as Grief, Excerpt from The Prelude and To Autumn*  
• Nature - *To Autumn, As Imperceptibly as Grief* |
Flax is a type of plant.

The verbs, ‘festered,’ and ‘rotted,’ shows the decay of the plants – at this point it’s exciting, but it could symbolising the roting of his childhood innocence.

‘Best of all’ shows the excitement at the grossest part of nature (childhood innocence). ‘Slobber’ highlights how gross it would be to other people.

A simplistic discussion of how tadpoles are formed again highlights the innocence of the speaker, and the teacher trying to preserve this.

‘Then’ shows the shift in tone and innocence.

‘Invaded,’ ‘cocked on sods’ and ‘mud grenades’ all suggest a war between the speaker and the frogs – symbolic of the moment children begin to grow-up.

‘Great slimes kings’ show the power has shifted to the frogs. They rule the flax-dam now.

Death of a Naturalist

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 dragon-flies, 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.

Seamus Heaney

He now sees the dangers of the world – his childhood innocence is lost.

‘Clutch’ implies that they are now a danger – do they want vengeance for him stealing the spawn?

The “Death” that is referred to in the title is metaphorical – it alludes to a loss of innocence and childhood.

‘Heart’ suggests that this is the central place to his childhood world.

The sun is personified to show relentless and harsh summer can be – especially looking back on the long, hot summers of childhood.

‘Delicately’ is interesting as it shows the appreciation and beauty the young narrator finds in something that others would find so disgusting.

‘Jampotfuls,’ ‘jellied specks’ and ‘slobber’ all show how innocent and naïve the speaker of the poem is.

‘Wait’ and ‘watch’ show how excited the speaker is. They cannot wait to see the miraculous transformation.

The speaker remembers the little facts about frogs that children tend to cling to.

Change in perception – no longer fascinating.

‘I had not heard before’ shows the change in the speaker – the relationship has changed.

A simplistic discussion of how tadpoles are formed again highlights the innocence of the speaker, and the teacher trying to preserve this.
**Hawk Roosting by Ted Hughes**

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The speaker throughout the poem is a hawk. He is proud of his place at the top of the food chain and enjoys the power this brings. He is quite cruel in his outlook but the poem displays the thoughts behind dictatorship and what it means to have power.

| **Key Quotations:** | • “In sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat” — he enjoys killing so much he dreams about it. Every kill is “perfect” as he is so well-designed, he is unstoppable.  
• “Now I hold Creation in my foot” — arrogant tone. He is very self-assured and confident in himself. He knows he is at the top of the food chain.  
• “I am going to keep things like this” - shows the power that the hawk has. He is untouchable and at the top of the food chain. No-one can challenge them. |
| **Context:** | • Ted Hughes was Poet Laureate until his death in 1984. He wrote a lot of poems about the natural world.  
• Hughes has said that the poem was simply written to show a hawk’s natural way of thinking. He didn't want to portray him as cruel, but simply as the way a hawk would naturally be. |
| **Structure:** | • The clearly organised structure of the six stanzas reflects the hawk’s control the lands around him.  
• The steady and calm pace to the poem shows the control of the hawk; he has a regular pace and will not be rushed or hurried by anyone. |
| **Possible Themes and Links:** | • Power and control – Ozymandias  
• The natural world – To Autumn, Afternoons, Death of a Naturalist |
**Hawk Roosting**

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

Inaction, no falsifying dream

Between my hooked head and hooked feet;

Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!

The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray

Are of advantage to me;

And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.

It took the whole of Creation

To produce my foot, my each feather:

Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly

– I kill where I please because it is all mine.

There is no sophistry in my body:

My manners are tearing off heads –

The allotment of death.

For the one path of my flight is direct

Through the bones of the living.

No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.

Nothing has changed since I began.

My eye has permitted no change.

I am going to keep things like this.

Ted Hughes

---

‘Roosting’ shows that the hawk is settled and comfortable where he is.

‘The top’ shows his position in the food chain – he is in control. ‘My wood’ also shows his dominance in the area.

‘Convenience’ suggests that the world has been adapted for him.

All parts of nature are to his advantage – everything is in his favour.

The verb, ‘locked,’ shows that he is focused on his surroundings.

He can look down on the world and watch it revolving for him.

He is perfect – you cannot argue with his body.

Contrast of ‘bones’ and ‘living’ shows he has the potential to take life away.

Can be interpreted as the sun supporting him.

He will always be at the top of the food chain; it is nature and this will keep being the case. He cannot be challenged.

Arrogant tone – doesn’t need to look at the world to know it’s his.

The reality of life is better than his dreams – he doesn’t need to escape.

His dreams are ‘perfect kills,’ highlighting his enjoyment. Thinking about death is enjoyable for him.

Arrogant tone here – he is the one scrutinising the earth.

He thinks he is like God.

Still emphasises his God-like status in his own eyes. He has power over all other Creations.

Selfish and power obsessed – also emphasises his obsession with death.

He doesn’t try to hide his violent nature; he is proud of it.

He is in control and decides who lives and dies. He looks down upon a graveyard.

The lack of ‘arguments’ show that this is a dictatorship. No one can challenge his authority.

He is the one who decided (‘permitted’). He makes the rules and others have to follow them.
To Autumn – John Keats

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The poem, 'To Autumn' by John Keats is an ode to autumn, meaning it is a poem which has been written in dedication to the season. There are three stages of the poem as Keats focuses on the ripe fruits that are ready to be harvested before moving onto the animals getting ready for hibernation. He ends the poem by focusing on the end of the season and the winter coming.

| **Key Quotations:** | “Fill all fruit with ripeness to the core” - suggests that autumn is brilliant because everything is ready to be shared with the world. There is so much of everything that everyone can enjoy what it brings.  
“On a half-reap’d furrow sound asleep” - she is “sound asleep” as she is exhausted from everything she brings to the world. She is so adept at bringing autumn to the world that she is able to take time.  
“Where are the songs of Spring?” - when people miss the songs of spring, they can instead enjoy the “music” that autumn has to offer. |
| **Context:** | Keats was a Romantic poet and wrote a lot about nature and the natural world. This ode shows his love of the natural world, especially as he personifies autumn all the way through.  
The poem could be his way of trying to make a lasting impression – he doesn’t want to be like autumn which is fleeting. He wanted his memory to live on despite his early death at 25. |
| **Structure:** | The first stanza is a celebration and it suggests that autumn begins in a rich and calm way.  
In the second stanza, Keats speaks directly to autumn and makes the suggestion that autumn is in no rush to move on.  
The final stanza shows change, just as the season is changing from autumn to winter. Keats recognises this and is accepting of the fact he cannot control this. |
| **Possible Themes and Links:** | The passing of time – Afternoons, Death of a Naturalist, As Imperceptibly as Grief  
The natural world – Excerpt from The Prelude, Death of a Naturalist |
To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun; Conspiring with his how to load and bless With fruit the vines that round the thatch eaves run; To bed 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’erbrimm’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, They 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 swathe 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 oozing 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 willows, 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.

John Keats

A celebration of the season

A season of change

‘Mellow’ suggests autumn is calm – the changes aren’t disruptive, just at times unwanted.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!

‘Conspiring’ suggests autumn is secretive – it likes to surprise.

With fruit the vines that round the thatch eaves run; To bed 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’erbrimm’d their clammy cells.

It tricks everyone that summer will never end.

Suggests that autumn works closely with summer to produce wonderful things – the fruit, the harvest crops.

‘Swell,’ ‘plump,’ and ‘o’erbrimmed,’ suggest that there is an abundance of crops and fruit.

It tricks everyone that summer will never end.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store? Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor, They 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 swathe 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 oozing hours by hours.

There are sign of autumn everywhere – everyone has seen her.

‘Drows’d in the fume of poppies’ implies that autumn is incredibly beautiful and exhilarating to see. She is ‘sound asleep as she is exhausted from everything she brings to the world.

She needs to spend time resting after all her hard work creating the beautiful things in the season, so she has to, ‘steady thy laden head.’

‘Oozing’ reflects the time that autumn has got to enjoy watching what she has created.

When people miss the songs of spring, they can instead enjoy the ‘music’ that autumn has to offer.

‘The red breast’ is the robin, a sure sign that winter is coming and autumn is closing.

The swallows are gathering so they can move to warmer countries for the winter. They have accepted that autumn has come to an end.

When the wind ‘lives or dies’ it represents that autumn is dying and coming to an end; there is a battle between life and death.
Afternoons by Philip Larkin

Who, what, where, when and why:
The poem, written by Larkin, focuses on young mothers who spend their lives looking after their young families. In marrying young, Larkin observes through his poem that their identities are lost – they are mothers and therefore it consumes their lives. The poem shows that he possibly doesn’t agree with the notion of marrying young. He believes that it is inevitable, like the passing of time, and therefore the poem has a melancholy tone to it.

| Key Quotations:                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                           |
| • “Summer is fading the leaves fall in ones and twos” – symbolic of time passing and the lives of the young mothers disappearing before their very eyes. |
| • “An estateful of washing” – focuses on the domestic aspect of their lives; their role is to look after the young ones, house and husband. “Estateful” shows that all the mothers are the same. |
| • “Something is pushing them to the side of their own lives” - They might not realise what is, ‘pushing’ them out of their own life, but it is their children and the expectations motherhood brings. “Pushing” shows they have no choice. They are no longer in control of their lives and instead they are secondary to their children, who are the most important things in their life. |

| Context:                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                           |
| • Larkin never left the UK in the whole of his life – his poetry reflects his observation of British life. |

| Structure:                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                           |
| • The first stanza starts with Larkin focusing on the passing of time as the young mothers give up their lives to care for their children. |
| • The second stanza focuses on how alone the mothers are, as the fathers are largely absent. Their promising relationships were a lie as the women fend for themselves. |
| • The last stanza focuses on the children and how their lives have become more important than the mothers’ lives. The children make demands and the mothers pander to them. |

| Possible Themes and Links:                                                                               |
|                                                                                                           |
| • Time passing – To Autumn and As Imperceptibly as Grief |
| • Loss of innocence/growing up – Death of a Naturalist |
Afternoons

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
That are still courting-places
(But the lovers are all in school),
And their children, so intent on
Finding more unripe acorns,
Expect to be taken home.
Their beauty has thickened,
Something is pushing them
To the side of their own lives.

Philip Larkin

‘Afternoons’ suggests that this is the stage of life that the mothers are in: the afternoon where they’ve had children and their lives are no longer their own. Their job is to care for everyone else.

‘Summer’ could symbolically link to happiness, but as it is ‘fading’ it shows some unrest in the mothers’ lives.

The adjective ‘new’ could symbolise that this is a new stage in the mothers’ lives. It might also suggest that this ‘new recreation ground’ is a new generation of children, ready and waiting to become the next line of mothers.

Time passing is so gradual that they barely even notice it happening.

The trees ‘bordering’ could link to them being trapped in their lives — there is no escape now.

‘Hollows’ suggests that there is emptiness in the mothers’ lives. They ‘assemble’ as it is part of their new routine. It shows the lack of choice in their lives, as though this is simply how it goes for everyone in their position.

The freedom the children have is something the mothers crave; childhood is simpler, but with the passing of time and adulthood, problems come.

The women have no ‘skilled trades,’ and therefore aren’t seen as qualified as their husbands who have the jobs and earn the money to support the families. They’re underappreciated.

The wedding album which hold happy memories is a distant memory — ‘lying’ shows it’s been discarded.

Their old ‘courting places’ are no longer needed — the romance in their lives has gone.

‘The lovers’ are now the young teenagers of the estate, who have time for romance and excitement. They are the next generation to become the mothers who live unfulfilled lives.

The word, ‘estateful,’ shows that all the mothers are the same.

‘The lovers are now the young teenagers of the estate, who have time for romance and excitement. They are the next generation to become the mothers who live unfulfilled lives.

Larkin may here be hinting at how their beauty has gone now. As it has ‘thickened,’ perhaps so have their waistlines, as the mothers do not have time to look after themselves. They may have had to ‘thicken’ their skin as well to the realities of the world.

They might not realise what is, ‘pushing’ them out of their own life, but it is their children and the expectations motherhood brings. ‘Pushing’ shows they have no choice. They are no longer in control of their lives and instead they are secondary to their children, who are the most important things in their life.
Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen

Who, what, where, when and why:
Dulce was written by Wilfred Owen, a soldier who experienced first-hand the effects of war. He wrote this poem to show the terrifying and barbaric conditions that men fought in for their country. He argued that there is nothing honourable about dying for your country when it completely destroys your mind and body. In the poem, details about the casualties soldiers faced in WW1 are described clearly throughout and the reader is left with a sense of hopelessness at the end of the poem.

Key Quotations:
- “Bent double, like old beggars under sacks” — the image of the soldiers goes against the proud, triumphant images people would have seen in propaganda. They directly show the pressure their bodies were put under and that they had been reduced to, “beggars.”
- “He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning” — the image of a man dying from a gas attack is harrowing and haunting. The use of, “drowning,” shows that there is no escape from the gas as it infiltrates their lungs.
- “The old Lie: Dulce et Decorum est pro patria mori!” — the final words of the poem show Owen’s feelings on war: it isn’t honourable to die for your country, especially in the cruel and harsh conditions these soldiers were. It was a shameful way to die and truly harrowing to witness.

Context:
- Wilfred Owen was killed fighting for his country on the 4th November, 1918. This was one week before WW1 ended and Armistice was declared.
- His mother was informed of his death during the celebrations of Armistice, when she received a Telegram to tell her the sad news.

Structure:
- The first stanza has a very slow pace, reflecting the never ending feeling of their marching. It doesn’t feel like it will ever stop, and the language and pace reflects this.
- The second stanza becomes quicker in pace, with lots of one word sentences and exclamation marks to show the surprise and horror that soldiers were feeling during the attack.
- The pace in the final stanza slows again as the poet deliberates on the effects of war. An accusatory tone is created when he directly addresses the reader — “you” and “my friend.” This is uncomfortable as the reader is made to feel responsibility. Really, Owen wanted those in charge to feel guilt.

Possible Themes and Links:
- Impact of war – Mametz Wood, The Manhunt
- Patriotism – The Soldier
Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—
An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime.—

Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen

The poem is a Latin phrase meaning, ‘It is sweet and honourable.’ However, Owen argues throughout the poem that there is nothing honourable in the deaths of trench warfare.

The similes show that the men have been weakened by war – they’re old before their time.

‘Men marched asleep’ hints at the sheer exhaustion the soldiers suffered from. The metaphor emphasises that their lives are one long march.

The pace of the poem quickens as the men are under attack. The panic in their voices shows the urgency.

The thin green alludes to the gas attacking the men. The metaphor of the ‘green sea’ shows the power of the gas in taking the men down and ‘drowning’ them.

The image haunts him at all times – seeing a friend and comrade die. ‘Helpless’ suggests that there was nothing he could do – but he likely still feels guilt for this.

The verb ‘flung’ shows that there is no time for grief and respect. This is part of their lives now.

The list of verbs emphasises the horror of his death.

Directly addresses the reader – no one would convince anyone to go to war if they knew the horrors of it.

Latin for: ‘it is sweet and honourable to die for your country.’ He calls it, ‘an old lie,’ showing that there is no honour in it war is cruel, destructive and beyond the cruelty of our wildest imagination.

Auditory description – you can hear the destruction of their bodies through the language.

‘Incurable’ shows that these men will have to live with these scars forever. ‘Innocent’ highlights that none of them deserve this fate.

‘Desperate glory’ suggests that the country are so in need to make war sound honourable they have to lie about the reality of it. Why would men go if they didn’t lie?

The image of the soldiers goes against the proud, triumphant images people would have seen in propaganda. They directly show the pressure their bodies were put under and that they had been reduced to, “beggars.”

‘Limped’ and ‘blood-shod’ emphasise the pain and suffering they’re going through physically. ‘Lame’ reminds the reader of exhausted animals – the men are hardly human due to fatigue.

The simile suggests that the men are stumbling, blindly, like a man on fire.

The verb ‘trudge’ emphasises how slowly the men are walking as the conditions would have been awful. Trudge hints at the amount of mud clinging to their boots.

The detailing of the man dying is very graphic: the poet’s language shows that these images would haunt the soldiers.

The image of the men goes against the proud, triumphant images people would have seen in propaganda. They directly show the pressure their bodies were put under and that they had been reduced to, “beggars.”

The simile suggests that the men are stumbling, blindly, like a man on fire.

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‘Desperate glory’ suggests that the country are so in need to make war sound honourable they have to lie about the reality of it. Why would men go if they didn’t lie?
Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Who, what, where, when and why:
Ozymandias was written by the Romantic poet, Percy Shelley (a man – don’t refer to him as her because his surname was Shelley!). It’s about a traveller coming across a decaying statue in the desert that was made for the pharaoh, Rameses II (Ozymandias). The statue is crumbling but the parts that remain create the impression that Rameses II was a cruel and harsh ruler. Shelley suggests this is how the sculptor intended him to look. His legacy is gone as nothing else surrounds the statue.

Key Quotations:
- “I met a traveller from an antique land” – the narrator of the poem tells the story through the voice of a “traveller” they met. The word “antique” shows that the area he speaks of is old and whilst the buildings have decayed, the memory of them still remains.
- “Look on my works, ye mighty and despair” – the ruler of this land was clearly a dictator. He would have been cruel and unjust. When he addresses “ye mighty” in the poem, the only people mightier than him (in his eyes) would have been the Gods, so it’s likely he’s trying to intimidate the Gods with his power.
- “Nothing beside remains” – this shows the impact of decay and time. Nothing can last forever, no matter how powerful you are.

Context:
- Percy Bysshe Shelley was a Romantic poet; he wrote a lot about the power of nature (the decay of the statue) and the power of art (the sculptor who made the statue is the one we value and remember now).
- Shelley was a radical thinker and opposed power. His poem has a strong message, warning people against believing they’re invincible – it often leads to your downfall, and ultimately nothing is more powerful than time and nature.

Structure:
- The poem is a sonnet in term of structure, but it is a merging of two different types of sonnet. Could this link to the broken statue and Rameses’ rule?
- The story is like a narrative being told from the point of view of a traveller – it is through his voice we are told the story of the statue.

Possible Themes and Links:
- Power – Hawk Roosting, London
- Nature and time – To Autumn, Mametz Wood
Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command;
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

Percy Shelley

This is the name given to Rameses II, an Egyptian pharaoh who was known for being a dictator.

The word “antique” shows that the area he speaks of is old and whilst the buildings have decayed, the memory of them still remains.

‘Vast’ shows the size of the statue, and therefore the power the pharaoh had when he was alive. ‘Trunkless’ shows this power is nothing now it has decayed.

‘Half sunk’ makes it seem as though the statue is being mocked; it can be half-seen but doesn’t have its full power.

‘Frown’ and ‘wrinkled lip’ hint at the unkindness and severity of Ozymandias.

The sculptor’s impressions are all that remain of the statue. Rameses II will be remembered as the sculptor wanted – art has more power than rulers.

‘Shattered’ reminds us that decay and time are always more powerful than any dictator; at the end of the day, all humans lose power in death and nature is victorious over all – it lasts forever.

‘King of Kings’ and ‘Ye Mighty’ hint that the dictator believed he was more powerful than the Gods – he wanted to threaten them.

‘Colossal wreck’ is used as an oxymoron to show how something so magnificent and powerful can be reduced to dust over time. Similarities can be drawn between humans and the buildings we create – we all become dust eventually.

‘Nothing besides remains’ and ‘decay’ show the passing of time and the power of nature. The whole kingdom has disappeared. His legacy no longer lives on.

The verb ‘despair’ suggests that he wants his followers to feel fear and uncertainty when looking upon him. He doesn’t want them to feel safe.

The sands ‘stretch far away’ showing just how much nature there is – it will always win and outlast humans. ‘Boundless and bare’ also show the full impact of the stone that has now turned to dust.
Mametz Wood by Owen Sheers

Who, what, where, when and why:
The poem is written by Owen Sheers, a Welsh poet, who wanted people to remember the Welsh soldiers who lost their lives in WWI. The poem focuses on the land of Mametz Wood and the unearthing of the soldiers buried within it. As their bodies are discovered, their memories are able to live on and their stories are unearthed – they may be gone but they’ll forever be remembered for their bravery and sacrifice.

| Key Quotations: | “The wasted young, turning up under their plough blades” – the adjective, “wasted” highlights that the loss of life was unnecessary, especially when the young had their whole lives ahead of them. |
|                | “Like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the skin” – creates the image of a body ridding itself of toxins from a wound, like the earth repairing itself after the horrors of war. The “foreign body” is the soldiers’ bodies, which have been buried in a land far away from home; their memories are being unearthed by the farmers. |
|                | “A broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm” – the word “mosaic” emphasises how tiny their pieces of bone are after the destruction they have been through. They men ploughing the field could put together the pieces of bone to build a bigger picture of what happened to these men. It also hints at their fragility. |

| Context:       | In WWI, many battles were fought. Mametz Wood was one of the biggest ones and formed part of the Battle of the Somme. The poem is about a group of Welsh soldiers who were ordered to take Mametz Wood. |
|                | The battle lasted five days and 4,000 men died in it. |
|                | Owen Sheers is Welsh and wanted to give these soldiers the memory that they deserve and reward their bravery on the battlefield. |

| Structure:     | The poem begins with a focus on the land the soldiers are buried in. |
|                | It then begins to focus on the soldiers who are buried in the land – it starts with fragments of their bodies, before focusing on their whole skeletons. |
|                | The final stanzas begin to consider deeper messages of the wasted life that war brings with it. |

|                          | Fragility of soldiers/human life – Manhunt |
Mametz Wood

For years afterwards the farmers found them – the wasted young, turning up under their plough blades as they tended the land back into itself.

A chit of bone, the china plate of a shoulder blade, the relic of a finger, the blown and broken bird’s egg of a skull, all mimicked now in flint, breaking blue in white across this field where they were told to walk, not run, towards the wood and its nesting machine guns.

And even now the earth stands sentinel, reaching back into itself for reminders of what happened like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the skin.

This morning, twenty men buried in one long grave, a broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm, their skeletons paused mid dance-macabre in boots that outlasted them, their socketed heads tilted back at an angle and their jaws, those that have them, dropped open.

As if the notes they had sung have only now, with this unearthing, slipped from their absent tongues.

Owen Sheers

The title focuses on the final resting place of these men – it is their burial ground.

Highlights the huge loss of life – there are so many that it takes years for them to all be found.

The adjective, ‘wasted’ highlights that the loss of life was unnecessary, especially when the young had their whole lives ahead of them.

‘Tended’ shows the care and attention the men put into the land. The farmers have to care for the land as it has been so badly wounded by the war.

Relic makes the remainders of their bodies sound like important artefacts to be preserved and remembered.

A chit is a note – it suggests that the bones have a message to share (in this case the soldiers’ stories).

The metaphors show the fragility of these men.

The earth is personified here – ‘sentinel’ links to the soldiers standing watch, only here it is the earth doing so. It cannot rest because of what it has seen – it needs to make everything right.

See the notes in key quotations

Switches to the present tense – we still see the effects of war, even today.

The men are united in death, joined together for eternity.

A graphic image of the soldier. The ‘socketed heads’ focuses on the decay of their bodies and the wasted lives, whilst ‘those that have them,’ again emphasises the horrors of war.

Memory of the songs soldiers would have sung to keep their spirits high. The Welsh soldiers in particular were known for their songs.

Their ‘absent tongues’ no longer exist as those in command robbed them of their voices. Their voices are allowed to speak again with the ‘unearthing’ of their bodies. The truth, and their stories, are allowed to speak again.
**Excerpt from The Prelude by William Wordsworth**

**Who, what, where, when and why:**
The poem is a magical description of a young boy’s adventures outside on a cold evening. He ignores his mother’s calls to come in and instead continues to play outside. There is a freedom to his playing, as his games remind him of hunting. The natural world provides a joyous experience to him. There is a sense of nostalgia to the poem as Wordsworth celebrates the innocence of childhood and the happiness of the freedom it brought.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Quotations:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “It was a time of rapture: clear and loud” — there is something magical and enlightening about this evening. There is a sense that this day is life changing for the boy and he is on a journey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare” — the adventures the boy has on the ice is comparable to hunting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “The orange sky of evening died away” — this represents the finality of the exciting day the boy has had and the end of childhood for Wordsworth as well; the wonder of evening and twilight is replaced with the darkness of night, and innocence is replaced with adult responsibility.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• William Wordsworth was another one of the great Romantic poets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Prelude explores Wordsworth wonder at his childhood memories, exploring outside and having adventures during winter. It is nostalgic in tone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The poem begins with the end of the day – the sun is setting and the warm lights of homes provide all the light they need.</td>
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<td>• In the middle of the poem, Wordsworth focuses on the adventures he had outside on the ice, playing chase whilst ice-skating.</td>
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<td>• The end of the poem sees the day come to a close, as the stars appear and the sun sets.</td>
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<th>Possible Themes and Links:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The natural world, passing of time — Death of a Naturalist, To Autumn</td>
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</table>
Excerpt from The Prelude

And in the frosty season when the sun
   Was set, and visible for many a mile
   The cottage windows through the twilight blaz’d,
I heed not the summons, happy time
   It was, indeed, for all of us; to me
   It was a time of rapture: clear and loud
   The village clock toll’d six; I wheel’d about,
   Proud and exalting, like an untir’d horse,
That cares not for his home—All shod with steel,
We hiss’d along the polish’d ice, in games
   Confederate, imitative of the chace
   And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
   The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
   So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
   And not a voice was idle; with the din,
   Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
   The leafless trees, and every icy crag,
   Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills
   Into the tumult sent an alien sound
   Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
   Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
   The orange sky of evening died away.

William Wordsworth

This represents the finality of the exciting day the boy has had and the end of childhood for
Wordsworth as well; the wonder of evening and twilight is replaced with the darkness of night, and
innocence is replaced with adult responsibility.