

Teacher Guide

# Poetry to Ponder I

AN ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS FOR THE JUNIOR CYCLE

Mater Dei Education

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# The Lake Isle of Innisfree

The Lake Isle of Innisfree is a poem by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), an Irish poet and playwright. The Lake Isle of Innisfree is a small, uninhabited island on Lough Gill, in County Sligo. Yeats describes the inspiration for the poem coming from a 'sudden' memory of his childhood while walking down Fleet Street in London in 1888.

I

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree, And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made; Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee, And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

II

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow, Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings; There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow, And evening full of the linnet's wings.

III

I will arise and go now, for always night and day I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore; While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey, I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats

#### Analysis

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1. Notice how the poem is divided up into three 'sections'. In poetry, each section is called a **stanza**. This poem has 3 stanzas, and each stanza has 4 lines. Draw a simple illustration next to each stanza of the scene that stanza is describing and copy the definition of *stanza*.

*Ans:* The student should write down the definition of a **stanza** and draw a simple illustration next to each stanza.



William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was an Irish poet, dramatist, writer and one of the foremost figures of twentieth century literature. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival and became a pillar of the Irish literary establishment who helped to found the Abbey Theatre. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

2. Sensory imagery is descriptive language that appeals to one of the reader's five senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, smell. Copy the definition of sensory imagery and write down at least three examples of sensory imagery in the poem.

Ans: The student should write down the definition of **sensory imagery**. Any of the following are examples of sensory imagery from the poem: Of clay and wattles made, nine bean rows, bee-loud glade, crickets sing, midnight's all a glimmer, noon a purple glow, lake water lapping with low sounds, pavements grey.

3. The speaker is yearning for the peace found in Innisfree. What do you think this desire suggests about the impact of modern urban life on the human spirit ('urban' refers to cities)? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The desire for Innisfree suggests that the pace of modern life can be too much for man to truly thrive. There is no space to admire nature, allow things to grow, and listen to the sounds of nature. Instead, man is surrounded by artificial noise and constant demands of work.

4. You have likely noticed now that some lines of the poem rhyme. The particular way a poem rhymes is called the **rhyme scheme**. In some poems, rhyming lines are right next to each other. In others it is every other line, and some poems have a still more complex rhyme scheme. We can use letters to 'mark the rhyme scheme' of a poem. Simply assign a letter to the last word of a line, and when you find an ending word that rhymes with a previous ending word, mark it with the same letter. Marking the rhyme scheme helps us see the order the poet has put into the poem. An example is given below of how to mark the rhyme scheme for this poem.

#### I

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,	Α
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;	В
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,	Α
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.	В

#### Π

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,	С
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;	D
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,	C
And evening full of the linnet's wings.	D

Mark the rhyme scheme of the last stanza yourself, starting with the letter E.

*Ans: The student should write down the definition of rhyme scheme. The student should label the last four lines of the poem: E F E F:* 

I will arise and go now, for always night and day	Ε
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;	F
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,	Ε
I hear it in the deep heart's core.	F

5. A **poetic device** is a tool that a poet uses to convey meaning and enhance a poem's structure, sound, and/or rhythm. There are many different poetic devices. Today we will look at two poetic devices: alliteration and caesura. **Alliteration** is the occurrence of the same sound at the beginning of words that are near each other. (e.g., 'The silly snakes slurp some soup.') **Caesura** is an interruption, break, or pause <u>within</u> a line of poetry (this does not mean pausing at the end of a line). A caesura is usually marked by punctuation in the line such as a full stop, comma, dash, semicolon, colon, exclamation mark, or question mark.

Read through the poem again. Copy these definitions to your copybook and then underline all the examples of *alliteration* and highlight the examples of *caesura*.

*Ans: The caesuras (or caesurae if you prefer) are highlighted while examples of alliteration are underlined below:* 

I will arise and <u>go</u> now, and <u>go</u> to Innisfree And a small <u>cabin</u> build there, of <u>clay</u> and wattles made; Nine bean-rows will I <u>have</u> there, a <u>hive</u> for the <u>honey-bee</u>, And <u>live</u> alone in the bee-<u>loud</u> glade. And I shall have some <u>peace</u> there, for <u>peace</u> comes dropping slow, Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings; There midnight's all a <u>glimmer</u>, and noon a purple <u>glow</u>, And evening full of the linnet's wings. I will arise and go now, for always night and day I hear the <u>lake water</u> <u>lapping with low</u> sounds by the shore; While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavement's grey, I hear it in the deep heart's core.

6. The poem is conveying the speaker's longing for the peace and beauty of Innisfree. How do you think the use of caesuras helps convey the meaning of the poem? How do you think alliteration helps convey the meaning of the poem? (2-4 sentences)

The caesuras force the reader to pause and slow down, giving the reader a chance to internalise and appreciate the beauty and message of the poem. Alliteration makes the words sound more lyrical and blend together, adding to the beauty of the sound. The poem is about slowing down and pondering beauty, which the caesuras and alliteration help convey.

#### Discussion

 What does the speaker's yearning for the 'peace of Innisfree' suggest about the impact of modern urban life on the human spirit?

- 2. How does Yeats employ sensory imagery to convey the allure and enchantment of the natural world in the poem?
- 3. What is the difference between escapism and solitude/self-reflection? Does the speaker have an escapist attitude or one seeking solitude and self-reflection?
- 4. Explore the significance of the repeated phrase 'I will arise and go now' in the context of the poem's portrayal of the desire to return to a place of peace and beauty in contrast to modern city life.
- 5. Discuss the role of memory and imagination in the speaker's portrayal of the island of Innisfree. How does the portrayal reflect the human desire for a simpler, more fulfilling existence?

# Down by the Salley Gardens

'Down by the Salley Gardens' was written by Yeats and published in 'The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems' in 1889. Yeats indicated in a note that it was 'an attempt to reconstruct an old song from three lines imperfectly remembered by an old peasant woman in the village of Ballisodare, Sligo, who often sings them to herself.'

Ι

Down by the Salley gardens my love and I did meet; She passed the Salley gardens with little snow-white feet. She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree; But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

#### II

In a field by the river my love and I did stand, And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand. She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs; But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

Line 1: It has been suggested that the location of the Salley Gardens was on the banks of the river at Ballysadare near Sligo where the residents cultivated willow trees to provide roof thatching materials. 'Salley' or 'sally' is a form of the English word 'sallow', i.e., a tree of the genus *Salix*. It is close in sound to the Irish word *saileach*, meaning willow.

William Butler Yeats

#### Analysis

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1. Draw a simple illustration of each stanza.

Ans: The student should draw a an illustration next to each stanza.

 Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem. Down by the \*Salley gardens\*

*my love and I did meet*;	В
She passed the *Salley gardens*	Α
with little *snow-white* feet.	В
*She bid me take love easy,*	С
as the leaves grow on the tree;	С
*But I, being young and foolish,*	D
with her would not agree.	С
In a field by the river	E
*my love and I did stand*	F
And on my leaning shoulder	E
she laid her *snow-white* hand.	F
*She bid me take life easy,*	G
as the grass grows on the weirs;	Н
*But I was young and foolish,*	Ι
and now am full of tears.	H

3. In this poem, we will learn about two more poetic devices: repetition and simile. **Repetition** is the repeating words, phrases, lines, or stanzas in a poem. A **simile** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things using the words 'like' or 'as'. e.g. She is beautiful as a rose.

Copy these definitions to your copy and underline the similes in the poem.

*Ans:* The student should write down the definitions of **repetition** and *simile*. The similes are underlined in the poem above.

4. Write a star next to all the examples of repetition in the poem. (Repetition does not have to repeat words/phrases exactly.)

*Ans: The student should star the examples of repetition. The examples are starred in the answer to Question 2.* 

5. How do you think the poetic device of repetition helps convey the meaning of the poem? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Yeats uses repetition to emphasise some of the important lines of the poem. For example, 'She bid me take love/life easy' and 'I being young and foolish' are central to the meaning of the poem. Repeating those lines in both stanzas shows the reader how important those lines are to the meaning of the poem. The repetition also adds a lyrical quality to the poem, making it sound beautiful.

6. How do you think the poetic device of simile helps convey the meaning of the poem? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Yeats uses similes to convey the lady's attitude towards love and life. The two similes show the reader that the lady sees love and life as something natural, organic, and effortless, even amidst the chaos and business of life. The lady's understanding of love and life versus the speaker's understanding of love and life is the main subject of the poem. 7. What is the meaning of the line 'She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree'? How does the lady of the poem view love? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: It seems that the lady views love as something that should occur naturally and gradually. Leaves grow on a tree slowly and through a natural process which does not require strenuous energy. The lady is saying that love should be natural.

8. What is the meaning of the line 'She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs'? How does the lady view life? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The image of grass growing again conveys the message of life developing naturally, gradually, and effortlessly. However, grass growing on a weir adds to the image, since a weir is a low dam which water flows over. The image of grass growing on the weir shows that even in the midst of fast-paced life (like the fast-paced water flowing quickly over the weir), life should grow and develop naturally, not through force.

9. The speaker of the poem does not agree with the lady's view of love. What do you think is the speaker's view of love? Does he see love as an organic thing that grows over time? Or a thing that demands work and hard labour? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: We know that the lady's view of love is that it should be natural and effortless. The speaker has the opposite opinion. So, perhaps he sees love as something that is difficult, hard work, and should be present on demand rather than developing gradually over time.

10. Notice that the second stanza takes place in a field. What does a field make you think of? What might the field symbolise? How does the symbolism of the field contrast with what the lady is saying about life and love? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: A crop field makes one think of labour, work, planting seeds, growing plants, and harvesting the fruits. Perhaps a farming field symbolises the speaker's view of love as something difficult that must be worked for before you see the rewards. In contrast, a wild field, or a meadow, is beautiful and full of life without any effort put into it. A wild field represents the lady's view of love, which says it will grow effortlessly.

11. Is the speaker happy or sad at the end of the poem? Why is the speaker happy or sad at the end? (1-3 sentence)

Ans: At the end of the poem, the speaker is sad ('full of tears'). He is experiencing regret and sorrow because he did not listen to the advice of his love to 'take love easy' and 'take life easy'. Perhaps his failure to listen led to the relationship failing, or perhaps he spent life so focused on work and business that he realised he missed out on many precious moments.

#### Discussion

- 1. What is the significance of the Salley Gardens in the poem, and how does it contribute to the overall theme or message?
- 2. How does the use of natural imagery influence your experience of the poem?
- 3. This poem was set to music by Herbert Hughes to the traditional air 'The Maids of Mourne Shore' in 1909 and was subsequently recorded by many artists including John McCormack (1941), Clannad (1979) and the Waterboys (2008). Listen to a recording of the song. Do you prefer the poem or the song? Why? What makes a good poem become a good song?
- 4. Yeats said that 'Life is a long preparation for something that never happens.' How is this sentiment captured in 'Down by the Salley Gardens'? Do you think that sadness is easier to express in poetry than happiness? Why?

# Per Iter Tenebricosum

'Per Iter Tenebricosum', whose title translates to 'Through a Dark Journey,' invites readers on a contemplative exploration of the human experience. Gogarty's lyrical and introspective style weaves together themes of darkness, transformation, and self-discovery. Through vivid imagery and poetic language, 'Per Iter Tenebricosum' offers a thought-provoking journey through the depths of the human psyche, inviting readers to reflect on the universal aspects of the human condition.

> Enough! Why should a man bemoan A Fate that leads the natural way? Or think himself a worthier one Than those who braved it in their day? If only gladiators died Or heroes, Death would be his pride; But have not little maidens gone, And Lesbia's sparrow - all alone?

> > Oliver Gogarty

#### Analysis

1. Rewrite each sentence of the poem in your own words.

Ans: Answers will vary.

Stop! Why should a man complain about a future event that is natural? Why should a man think that he is better Than others who faced death before him? If only warriors or heroes faced death, Death would seem to be a very noble thing to face But haven't young girls died, And even Lesbia's sparrow faced death, all by itself?

2. What is the significance of the title and how does it relate to the meaning of the poem? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The title means 'through a dark path'. The title is referring to the passage of death, which is 'dark' because it is unknown. The poem is about man's need to face death, and the title 'through a dark **path**'



Oliver Gogarty (1878-1957) was an Irish poet, author, and surgeon. Born in Dublin, he became a prominent figure in the literary scene of the early 20th century. Gogarty's works often reflected his Irish heritage and were infused with a sense of romanticism. He was a close friend of fellow Irish writer James Joyce and appeared as a character in Joyce's novel *Ulysses*.

Line 8: Lesbia's sparrow is a reference to some poetry by the Roman poet Catullus (c.84-54 BC), which featured the pet sparrow of his love interest, Lesbia (a pseudonym for his real love interest). In his poetry, Catullus affectionately addresses the sparrow itself as a way of subtly expressing his love for Lesbia. He then recounts how tenderly Lesbia would hold the sparrow to her breast, how she would play silly games with it, and how the sparrow provided her relief from her sorrows or would playfully nip her finger. Catullus is jealous of the sparrow which receives so much love and affection from Lesbia. Catullus wishes that he had such a sparrow, for then it might lighten the heavy sorrow on his heart caused by Lesbia's indifference towards him. In a second poem, Lesbia's sparrow dies and Catullus curses death for bringing such sadness to his love, Lesbia.

suggests that death is not the end, but a path leading to something greater.

3. What is the message of the poem? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The poem tells men not to fear death or think that only strong and heroic men face death. The message of the poem is that even the smallest, weakest creatures must face death, but it is a natural and fitting occurrence.

- 4. What is the speaker's attitude in the poem? (1-3 sentences) Ans: The speaker is reprimanding men who complain about death. He has an unconcerned and hopeful view of death.
- 5. This poem uses the poetic device enjambment. **Enjambment** is a sentence or phrase that runs from one line of poetry into the next without a pause or break. Instead of stopping at the end of a line (which is called an end-stop), the thought continues, flowing smoothly into the following line.

Copy the definition to your copybook and underline the examples of enjambment in the poem.

*Ans: The student should copy the definition of enjambment. The examples of enjambment are underlined below.* 

Enough! Why should a man <u>bemoan</u> <u>A Fate</u> that leads the natural way? Or think himself a worthier <u>one</u> <u>Than those</u> who braved it in their day? If only gladiators died Or heroes, Death would be his pride; But have not little maidens gone, And Lesbia's sparrow - all alone?

6. How does enjambment help convey the meaning of the poem? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: Enjambment forces the reader to continue on to the next line without pausing. This helps convey the meaning of the poem, which is to face death straight on, without hesitation.

#### Discussion

- In the poem 'Per Iter Tenebricosum', what is the significance of the Latin title and how does it relate to the themes explored in the poem?
- 2. Discuss the use of imagery and symbolism in the poem. How do they contribute to the reader's understanding of the dark journey depicted in the poem?
- 3. Analyse the role of language and sound devices in the poem. How do they create a sense of rhythm or evoke specific emotions in the reader?

- 4. Reflect on the poem's exploration of the human condition. How does 'Per Iter Tenebricosum' examine the human experience of fear or the search for meaning in life? Does it make you think differently about these conditions?
- 5. Consider the poem's ending and its impact on the reader. Is it a strong climax to the poem? Why?

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This is one of Kipling's most famous poems and is often listed in popular polls among the most popular poems ever composed. In fact, during his lifetime, even Kipling started to resent the poem's popularity, saying it had been 'anthologised to weariness.' However, this should not detract from the poem's magnificent simplicity and beauty, which speaks the values of patience, resilience, humility, and perseverance.

I

If you can keep your head when all about you Are losing theirs and blaming it on you, If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, But make allowance for their doubting too; If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, Or being lied about, don't deal in lies, Or being hated, don't give way to hating, And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

#### Π

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master; If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim; If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster And treat those two impostors just the same; If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

#### III

If you can make one heap of all your winnings And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, And lose, and start again at your beginnings And never breathe a word about your loss; If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew To serve your turn long after they are gone, And so hold on when there is nothing in you Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'



Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was a British poet and novelist born in India. His most famous novels for children are considered classics, most notably *The Jungle Book, Kim* and *Just So Stories*. In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, as the first English-language writer to receive the prize, and at 41, its youngest recipient to date.

IV

 If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch, If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, If all men count with you, but none too much; If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run, Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

#### Rudyard Kipling

#### Analysis

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 What sort of qualities and characteristics does the speaker value? (3-4 sentences)

Ans: The speaker values patience, perseverance, self-confidence, humility, charity, prudence, wisdom, temperance, courage, and detachment from earthly things. There are references to enduring mistreatment quietly and not condemning those who mistreat you. The speaker talks about having high aspirations and success, but not being overly-upset or defeated if successes are taken away by others. The speaker also talks about the importance of persevering by sheer will-power even when it seems pointless.

2. Why do you think the speaker refers to triumph and disaster as 'imposters'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Perhaps the speaker refers to triumph and disaster as 'imposters' because neither are truly as important as they seem. The speaker's message is to avoid putting too much value on your successes or your failures; therefore, overvaluing triumph is a false good and being overly upset by failure is not necessary either.

3. In line 4, what does it mean to 'make allowance for their doubting'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Perhaps the speaker is saying to have compassion even on the people who judge you, because we do not know their reasons for misjudging or doubting us. Have mercy on them and do not descend to their level of judging.

4. What is the meaning of the line: 'If you can dream—and not make dreams your master'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker is saying that it is important to dream and have hopes and aspirations; however, you must not become so attached to your dreams that you lose sight of the reality in front of you or become a slave to your dreams.  What is the meaning of the line: 'If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew / To serve your turn long after they are gone'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker is saying that even when you feel that you have no courage or fight left, you must find the will to persevere and continue.

 What is the meaning of the line: 'If you can fill the unforgiving minute / With sixty seconds' worth of distance run—'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker calls the minute 'unforgiving' because time moves on no matter what, and every man only has a certain amount of time given to him on this earth. So, when the speaker says to fill every minute to the full 'sixty seconds' worth of distance run', he is saying to use each second of every minute to the full.

7. Find 2 examples of enjambment and 2 examples of caesura in the poem.

*Ans: Examples of caesura and enjambment are listed by stanza below. Stanza 1 Caesuras:* 

- 'Or being lied about, don't deal in lies'.
- 'Or being hated, don't give way to hating'.
- 'And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise'.

#### Stanza 1 Enjambment:

• 'If you can keep your head when all about you / Are losing theirs'.

#### Stanza 2 Caesuras:

- 'If you can <u>dream-and not make dreams your master'</u>.
- 'If you can <u>think-and not</u> make thoughts your aim'.
- Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken'.

#### Stanza 2 Enjambment:

• 'the truth you've spoken / Twisted by knaves to make a trap'.

#### Stanza 3 Caesuras:

- 'And lose, and start again'.
- 'Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"'

#### Stanza 3 Enjambment:

- 'If you can force your heart and nerve and <u>sinew / To serve</u> your turn'.
- 'And so hold on when there is nothing in you / Except the Will which says to them'.

#### Stanza 4 Caesuras:

• 'Or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch'.

- 'If all men count with you, but none too much'.
- '<u>And-which</u> is more-you'll be a Man, my son!'

Stanza 4 Enjambment:

- 'If you can fill the unforgiving <u>minute / With sixty</u> seconds' worth of distance run'.
- 8. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

*Ans:* With the exception of the first stanza, every other line rhymes. *Therefore, the rhyme scheme should be marked as:* 

AAAABCBC DEDEFGFG HIHIJKJK LMLMNONO.

9. This poem uses the poetic devices anaphora, apostrophe, and paradox. Anaphora is the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines. (This is similar to the poetic device repetition but is a more specific kind of repetition.) Apostrophe is a speech or address to a person who is not present or to a personified object. Paradox is a statement that appears at first to be contradictory, but upon reflection then makes sense.

Copy these definitions and give one example where each poetic device is used in the poem (3-5 sentences).

*Ans: The student should write down the definitions of anaphora, apostrophe, and paradox.* 

**Apostrophe** is used by the speaker addressing someone throughout the poem. It could be the speaker's son, ('you'll be a Man, my son!') or the speaker could be using 'son' as a general term of endearment to someone or even to the reader. **Anaphora** is used by constantly beginning lines with 'If you can...'. **Paradox** is used throughout the poem to convey that a true man is passionate about things, yet does not let himself be ruled by those things. For example, you must dream but not make dreams your master, and you must think, but not make thoughts your aim.

#### Discussion

- What does it mean to 'keep your head' in times of crisis and adversity, and how does this advice apply to our own lives?
- 2. In the poem, Kipling emphasises the importance of self-discipline and perseverance. How can these qualities contribute to personal growth and success?
- 3. Kipling suggests that maintaining both humility and confidence is crucial. How can one strike a balance between these seemingly contradictory traits in their own character?

- 4. The poem highlights the significance of treating triumph and disaster as the same impostors. How might adopting this perspective help us navigate the ups and downs of life?
- 5. Kipling advises readers to 'fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run.' What does this line imply about the value of time and the pursuit of meaningful action?
- 6. Consider the poem in the context of Christian anthropology. Are there any aspects that you might find troubling or in contradiction to a Christian view of the person?

# A Christmas Childhood

Kavanagh's 'A Christmas Childhood,' is a poem in two parts. Kavanagh wrote the second part in 1940 and the first part in 1943. The first part (stanzas I-IV) describes a place and explores, from an adult's perspective, how childhood is a time of innocence, an innocence that we inevitably lose. As a child he saw 'An apple tree/ With its December-glinting fruit', but just as Eve ate the apple which led to man's Fall and sinful state, Kavanagh knows that as we leave childhood behind us we lose our innocence. The Garden of Eden is no more, but Christmas is a time when an Eden-like world becomes possible. Adulthood, says Kavanagh, blinds us to the beauty, freshness, and innocence of childhood, but it can be recaptured occasionally, especially at Christmas time.

The second part of the poem introduces a cast of characters – Kavanagh's father, mother, and neighbours. In Antoinette Quinn's words: 'Through a series of crisp, lucid images it conjures up the child's sense of being part of a family and a closely-knit Catholic community.'

Everything is in harmony. The melodion calls to the Lennons and Callans and the stars dance to his father's music. Music unites one place and another, neighbour and neighbour. The imagery of County Monaghan blends with imagery from the Biblical account of Christ's birth: *'The light of her stable-lamp was a star'* and the *'three whin bushes'* become *'the Three Wise Kings'*.



Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967) was born in the village of Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan. His father was a shoemaker and had a small farm of land. One of ten children, Kavanagh became an apprentice shoemaker at the age of thirteen. He gave it up fifteen months later, admitting that he did not make one wearable pair of boots. For the next 20 years, Kavanagh would work on the family farm before moving to Dublin in 1939. Kavanagh's writing resulted in the publication of some poems in a local newspaper in the early 1930s. In 1939, his brother Peter, who was a Dublin based teacher, urged him to move to the city to establish himself as a writer. In addition to his poetry, Kavanagh wrote for the Irish Press newspaper and numerous magazines.

#### Ι

One side of the potato-pits was white with frost -How wonderful that was, how wonderful! And when we put our ears to the paling-post The music that came out was magical.

#### II

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
 Was a hole in Heaven's gable. An apple tree
 With its December-glinting fruit we saw O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me.

To eat the knowledge that grew in clay And death the germ within it! Now and then I can remember something of the gay Garden that was childhood's. Again.

#### IV

The tracks of cattle to a drinking-place, A green stone lying sideways in a ditch, Or any common sight, the transfigured face Of a beauty that the world did not touch.

#### V

My father played the melodion Outside at our gate; There were stars in the morning east And they danced to his music.

#### VI

Across the wild bogs his melodion called To Lennons and Callans. As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry I knew some strange thing had happened.

#### VII

Outside in the cow-house my mother
 Made the music of milking;
 The light of her stable-lamp was a star
 And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

#### VIII

A water-hen screeched in the bog,

Mass-going feet Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes, Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows wheel.

#### IX

*My child poet picked out the letters On the grey stone,* 

<sup>35</sup> In silver the wonder of a Christmas townland, The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.

#### Х

Cassiopeia was over Cassidy's hanging hill, I looked and three whin bushes rode across The horizon — the Three Wise Kings. Line 22. *To Lennons and Callans:* names of local families.

Line 37. *Cassiopeia*: a large constellation located in the northern sky. Line 39. *whin bushes*: gorse.

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XI

And old man passing said: 'Can't he make it talk -The melodion.' I hid in the doorway And tightened the belt of my box-pleated coat.

#### XI

I nicked six nicks on the door-post
 With my penknife's big blade there was a little one for cutting tobacco.
 And I was six Christmases of age.

#### XII

My father played the melodion, 50 My mother milked the cows, And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned On the Virgin Mary's blouse.

Patrick Kavanagh

#### Analysis

 This poem uses the poetic devices personification and metaphor. **Personification** is attributing human characteristics to a non-human thing. A **metaphor** is a figure of speech which describes one thing as something else (it is similar to a simile, but does not use the words like or as).

Copy the definition of *personification* and *metaphor* to your copy and then find the examples of personification in stanzas 5, 6, and 10.

*Ans: The student should write down the definitions of personification and metaphor.* 

- Stanza 5: 'There were stars in the morning east / And they danced to his music.'
- Stanza 6: 'Across the wild bogs his melodion called / To Lennons and Callans.'
- Stanza 10: 'I looked and three whin bushes rode across / The horizon.'
- 2. Find the examples of metaphor in stanzas 2, 7, and 10.

Ans: See the examples below.

- *Stanza 2: 'The light between the ricks of hay and straw / Was a hole in Heaven's gable.'*
- Stanza 7: 'The light of her stable-lamp was a star / And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.'

- Stanza 10: 'I looked and three whin bushes rode across / The horizon
   — the Three Wise Kings.'
- 3. Find the simile in the final stanza.

Ans: 'And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned / On the Virgin Mary's blouse.'

4. In each stanza, mark one description which creates vivid or sensory imagery.

Ans: Answers will vary.

- 5. What is your favourite image in the poem? Why? (1-3 sentences) *Ans: Answers will vary.*
- 6. How do the metaphors in the poem help convey the message of the poem? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The metaphors show how a child can look at the ordinary, like light coming through hay and whin bushes on the horizon, and see something extraordinary in it. The metaphors show how childhood innocence can see God in the ordinary details.

7. What do you think the speaker of the poem is saying about childhood? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker is reminiscing about the wonder he had as a child. He seems to be saying that a child-like heart is able to see 'magic' in everything and see the beauty in the world. Christmas tends to bring out the child-like in people or make people remember their childhoods.

 Imagine you are writing your own 'Christmas Childhood'. What is one image you would put in the poem? Write a description of the image using sensory adjectives. (2-4 sentences) *Ans: Answers will vary.*

#### Discussion

- 1. How does the poem 'A Christmas Childhood' explore the theme of nostalgia and the longing for a simpler time?
- 2. In what ways does Patrick Kavanagh use vivid imagery to evoke a sense of childhood wonder and innocence in the poem?
- 3. What is the significance of the contrast between the harsh realities of adult life and the wonder-filled memories of the poet's childhood in the poem?
- 4. How does the poem challenge conventional ideas of Christmas and present a more personal and intimate portrayal of the holiday season?
- 5. What role does nature play in the poem, and how does it contribute to the overall mood and atmosphere?
- 6. How does the poet convey the passage of time and the fleeting nature of childhood in the poem?

## I See His Blood upon the Rose

Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887-1916) was an Irish nationalist, poet, journalist, and revolutionary who was one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising. The poem is a universal Easter contemplation that speaks of God's love as revealed through the suffering and rising of Jesus Christ. In this poem, all created things seem to remind the poet of God's incredible love, dramatised through the person of Christ.

> I I see his blood upon the rose And in the stars the glory of his eyes, His body gleams amid eternal snows, His tears fall from the skies.

> > II

I see his face in every flower; The thunder and the singing of the birds Are but his voice—and carven by his power Rocks are his written words.

#### III

All pathways by his feet are worn, His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea, His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn, His cross is every tree.

Joseph Mary Plunkett

#### Analysis

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1. What are the natural things that make the speaker 'see' the Crucifixion? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: In the first stanza, the speaker sees the blood of Jesus in the rose, Jesus' body in the snow, and Jesus' tears in the rain. In the third stanza the speaker sees the crown of thorns in every earthly thorn, and the cross of Jesus in every tree.



Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916) was an Irish nationalist, poet, journalist, and a leader of the 1916 rising. His intellectual interests stemmed from both his parents and his travels. Thomas MacDonagh encouraged his interests in poetry and assisted him in publishing 'The Circle and The Sword' in 1911. He later shifted his interest towards politics. He was later executed on the 4th of May 1916.

2. Why do you think the author chose to pair the Crucifixion with beautiful images of nature? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Perhaps the speaker links the Crucifixion to natural images to show that the through the death of Jesus on the Cross, life is given to the whole world. The Crucifixion also ends in the beauty and glory of the Resurrection. The natural images could also call the reader to remember the redemption and new life that comes after the Crucifixion.

3. What do you think is the symbolism of the rose? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The rose could be a symbol of the Crucifixion. The red of the rose calls to mind the blood of Christ. Roses are often a sign of love, and the Crucifixion was the ultimate act of love. Finally, though a rose is a beautiful flower, it has thorns on its stem. Similarly, the glory of redemption (the flower of the rose) only came after suffering (the thorns).

4. What are the 2 metaphors in the second stanza? What is the metaphor in the third stanza? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: In stanza two the first metaphor is: 'The thunder and the singing of the birds / Are but his voice.' The second metaphor in stanza two is: 'Rocks are his written words.' In the third stanza the metaphor is: 'His cross is every tree.'

#### 5. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

Ans: The rhyme scheme should be marked as ABAB CDCD EFEF:

I see his blood upon the rose And in the stars the glory of his eyes,	
And in the stars the glory of his eyes,	Α
	В
His body gleams amid eternal snows,	Α
His tears fall from the skies.	В

#### Π

I see his face in every flower;	С
The thunder and the singing of the birds	D
Are but his voice—and carven by his power	С
Rocks are his written words.	D

#### III

All pathways by his feet are worn,	Ε
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,	F
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,	Ε
His cross is every tree.	F

#### Discussion

- How does the poem 'I See His Blood Upon the Rose' by Joseph Mary Plunkett juxtapose the beauty of nature with the brutality of Christ's Crucifixion?
- 2. Explore the symbolic significance of the rose in the poem. How does it serve as a powerful metaphor for both Christ's sacrifice and the resilience of faith?
- 3. Discuss the use of vivid imagery and sensory details in the poem. How do they contribute to the reader's emotional response and understanding of the crucifixion?
- 4. Reflect on the poem's tone and mood. How does Plunkett's choice of language and poetic devices convey a sense of reverence and awe?
- 5. Analyse the religious and spiritual themes present in 'I See His Blood Upon the Rose'. How does the poem explore concepts of redemption, sacrifice, and the power of faith?

# I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' is a poem by William Wordsworth, a famous English poet of the Romantic era. It was written in 1804 and first published in his collection *Poems in Two Volumes* in 1807. The poem was inspired by a walk that Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy took along the shore of Ullswater Lake in the Lake District, where they saw a large number of daffodils dancing in the breeze. The poem expresses the speaker's joy and admiration for the beauty of nature and the lasting impact that it has on his memory and imagination. The poem uses imagery, simile, personification, rhyme, and metre to convey its theme.

Ι

I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

#### II

Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

#### III

The waves beside them danced; but they Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: A poet could not but be gay, In such a jocund company: I gazed—and gazed—but little thought What wealth the show to me had brought.



William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was a renowned English poet and a key figure in the Romantic movement. Born in Cockermouth, England, he became one of the Lake Poets, along with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. Wordsworth's poetic works, including 'Lyrical Ballads' and 'The Prelude,' emphasised the beauty of nature, the significance of human emotions, and the spiritual connection between man and the natural world. His contributions to literature and his unique perspective on the human experience continue to be celebrated and studied around the world.

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For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.

#### William Wordsworth

#### Analysis

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1. What is the simile in the first stanza? What does it tell us about the speaker at the beginning of the poem? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The simile in the first stanza is 'I wandered lonely as a cloud / That floats on high o'er vales and hills'. The simile shows us that the speaker feels isolated and alone. A cloud is often associated with sadness.

2. What is the second stanza talking about? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The second stanza is about the beauty of the daffodils. It compares the beauty of the daffodils to the stars in the sky.

3. What is the meaning of the lines 'I gazed—and gazed—but little thought / What wealth the show to me had brought'. (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker is looking upon the beauty of the daffodils, but he doesn't realise how valuable that moment is. The beauty of the daffodils gave him a treasure which could always bring him joy.

4. What is the final stanza talking about? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The final stanza talks about the speaker having moments when he lies on the couch in a sad, thoughtful mood. During those times he thinks back on the daffodils and his heart is filled with joy.

5. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

Ans: The rhyme scheme should be marked: ABABCC DEDEFF GHGHII JKJKLL:

Ι

<i>I wandered lonely as a cloud</i>	A
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,	В
When all at once I saw a crowd,	A
A host, of golden daffodils;	В
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,*	С
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*	С

Continuous as the stars that shine	D
And twinkle on the milky way,	Ε
They stretched in never-ending line	D
Along the margin of a bay:	Ε
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,*	F
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*	F

#### III

The waves beside them danced; but they	G
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:	H
A poet could not but be gay,	G
In such a jocund company:	H
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought*	Ι
What wealth the show to me had brought.*	Ι

#### IV

For oft, when on my couch I lie	J
In vacant or in pensive mood,	Κ
They flash upon that inward eye	J
Which is the bliss of solitude;	Κ
And then my heart with pleasure fills,*	L
And dances with the daffodils.*	L

6. A **couplet** is a pair of successive rhyming lines, usually of the same length. Copy the definition to your copybook and mark the couplets in the poem with a star.

Ans: The student should copy the definition of **couplet**. The couplets in the poem are the last two lines of each stanza as marked with \* in the answer to Question 5.

7. Find an example of personification in stanza 1, stanza 2, and stanza 3.

Ans: Personification examples below.

- Stanza 1: The daffodils are: 'Fluttering and dancing in the breeze'.
- Stanza 2: The daffodils are: 'Tossing their heads in sprightly dance'.
- Stanza 3: The ocean is personified in the line: 'The waves beside them danced'.
- 8. Find the simile in stanza 2.

Ans: The simile in stanza 2 is: 'Continuous as the stars that shine / And twinkle on the Milky Way'.

9. What is the effect of personifying the daffodils? How does it make the reader respond to the image? (2-3 Sentences)

Ans: Personifying the daffodils allows the reader to have a clear image of the scene in his mind. It also evokes a personal connection with the daffodils.

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10. What is the importance of memory in the poem? (1-3 Sentences)

Ans: The speaker's memory is what allows the speaker to think back on the daffodils and be filled with joy. No matter what the current situation is, the speaker's memory allows him to be present elsewhere and enjoy the happiness of those memories.

11. How does nature affect the speaker? (1-3 Sentences)

Ans: Nature brings the speaker out of his loneliness and fills him with a sense of the sublime. Nature is able to lift his spirit and sustain him in times of sadness.

#### Discussion

- 1. How does the speaker's encounter with nature evoke a sense of joy and inspiration?
- 2. Discuss the role of memory and its impact on the speaker's recollection of the daffodils. Why is this memory so important to the poet? What point is he making about memory?
- 3. Analyse the use of personification in the poem, particularly in the portrayal of the daffodils. How does it contribute to the reader's emotional connection with nature?
- 4. Reflect on the theme of the sublime in 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'. How does Wordsworth capture the transcendent power of nature and its ability to uplift the human spirit?
- 5. Explore the contrast between the solitude and the communal experience portrayed in the poem.
- 6. Wordsworth was a *pantheist*. What evidence can you find of this in the poem?

Pantheism is the doctrine which identifies God with the universe, or regards the universe as a manifestation of God. This often extends to an understanding that God is everything and everything is God where the doctrine diverges from Christian understanding of the sacred.

## The Donkey

'The Donkey' is a poem by G.K. Chesterton. The poem is told from the perspective of the self-hating donkey Christ rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The poem is a four-stanza poem that is divided into sets of four lines, or quatrains. These quatrains follow a consistent rhyme scheme, conforming to the pattern of ABCB DEFE, alternating end sounds as the poem progresses.

I

When fishes flew and forests walked And figs grew upon thorn, Some moment when the moon was blood Then surely I was born.

#### Π

With monstrous head and sickening cry And ears like errant wings, The devil's walking parody On all four-footed things.

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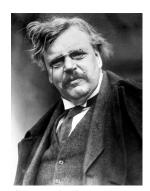
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#### III

The tattered outlaw of the earth, Of ancient crooked will; Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb, I keep my secret still.

### IV

Fools! For I also had my hour; One far fierce hour and sweet: There was a shout about my ears, And palms before my feet.



Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874 – 1936) was an English writer, philosopher, Christian apologist, and literary and art critic. His works ranged from the fictional priest-detective *Father Brown*, to his apologetics works such as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*.

G.K. Chesterton

#### Analysis

1. Notice that each stanza has 4 lines. A four-lined stanza is called a **quatrain**. Copy the definition to your copybook.

Ans: The student should copy the definition of quatrain.

2. This poem has a distinct metre. In poetry, **metre** is the rhythm of the poem. There are different types of metre, but this poem is written in an iambic metre. Copy this definition to your copybook.

Ans: The student should write down the definition of metre.

3. **Iambic metre** follows the pattern of unstressed syllable, stressed syllable. Think of a heartbeat. It goes ba-BUM, ba-BUM, ba-BUM. If we were to think of a heartbeat as a poetic metre, it would be *iambic*. The first syllable is 'unstressed' (less emphasis) and the second syllable is 'stressed' (more emphasis). If we were to read the first line of the poem in an exaggerated way to hear the metre, it would sound like this: 'when FISHes FLEW and FORests WALKED.' (Capital syllables get extra emphasis.)

Copy this definition to your copybook. Then read through the poem out loud, emphasising the iambic metre.

Ans: The student should copy the definition of *iambic metre*.

4. What phrases in the poem indicate that the donkey is self-hating? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The first stanza gives outrageous images such as fishes flying and forests walking. The donkey says he must have been born at such a time, implying that he sees himself as a creature that is as ridiculous as fishes flying or forests walking. The donkey says he has a 'monstrous head', a 'sickening cry', and ugly ears. He even compares himself to the devil. He also refers to himself as an outlaw and as dumb.

5. How does the poet challenge the typical notions of greatness through the donkey in the poem? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The donkey is an ugly, lowly, unattractive creature. By worldly standards, he is the lowest of all; however, it is the lowly donkey that gets to carry God Himself as the people joyfully welcome him on Palm Sunday. One would think the Messiah would choose a great, noble, beautiful animal to carry Him, but instead he chooses the donkey. Christ disregards the exterior signs of greatness, such as status or physical beauty.

6. We get an unappealing description of the donkey in the poem. Why is it fitting that Jesus chose the donkey to ride on Palm Sunday? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: It is fitting that Christ chose the donkey to ride on Palm Sunday because the entry into Jerusalem was ultimately leading him towards His Crucifixion. Though Jesus enters in glory on Palm Sunday, He is about to be subjected to complete humiliation on Calvary. Jesus is about to take on something externally ugly and unappealing. Similarly, the donkey is ugly and unappealing externally.

7. Underline as many examples of alliteration in the poem as you can find.

Ans: Examples of alliteration are underlined below.

When fishes flew and forests walked And figs grew upon thorn, Some moment when the moon was blood Then surely I was born. With monstrous head and sickening cry And ears like errant wings, The devil's walking parody On all *four-footed* things. The tattered outlaw of the earth, Of ancient crooked will; Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb, I keep my secret still. Fools! For I also had my hour; One far fierce hour and sweet: There was a shout about my ears, And palms before my feet.

- In 'The Donkey' by G.K. Chesterton, how does the poet challenge conventional notions of greatness and highlight the value of humility through the depiction of the donkey?
- 2. Discuss the symbolism of the donkey in the poem. How does it represent an under-appreciated and misunderstood figure that carries a deeper significance?
- 3. Explore the theme of paradox in 'The Donkey.' How does Chesterton use seemingly contradictory qualities to convey a profound message about the nature of strength and worth?
- 4. Analyse the use of descriptive language and imagery in the poem. How do the vivid descriptions of the donkey's physical appearance and surroundings enhance the message of the poem?

# Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Shakespeare's sonnet 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' is one of his most famous and admired works, celebrating the beauty and timelessness of love. The poem opens by comparing the subject to a summer's day, but quickly asserts that the beloved's beauty surpasses even the finest elements of nature. Unlike summer, which fades, the poem suggests that true beauty, captured in verse, can transcend time. Through this, Shakespeare explores themes of love, immortality, and the enduring power of poetry.

Shakespeare was a master of the sonnet (literally 'little song'). The sonnet is a 14-line poem with a variable rhyme scheme originating in Italy and brought to England in the sixteenth century. The sonnet traditionally reflects upon a single sentiment or feeling, with a clarification or 'turn' of thought in its concluding lines.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate. Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

- Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimmed; And every fair from fair sometime declines, By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed; But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
- Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
  Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
  When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
  So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

#### Analysis

1. What comparison does the speaker make in the first line, and how does it frame the poem? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker compares the subject of the poem, his beloved, to a summer's day. This frames the poem as an exploration the beloved's beauty and its lasting quality, emphasising that the beauty of his beloved surpasses even the most delightful aspects of summer.



William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English playwright, poet, and actor widely regarded as one of the greatest writers in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist. Born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's works, such as *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, continue to be celebrated for their depth, complexity, and enduring themes. His immense contributions to literature and theatre have solidified his status as an iconic figure whose works are studied, performed, and enjoyed by audiences across the globe.  What qualities of summer does the speaker describe in lines 2-4? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker describes summer as being rough, fleeting, and sometimes too hot or dim. This highlights the imperfection of summer compared to the subject's consistent and unchanging beauty.

3. What is the meaning of the line 'But thy eternal summer shall not fade'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker claims that the subject's beauty will not fade, as it is preserved eternally through the poem. This contrasts with the natural cycle of decay in the physical world.

4. How does the speaker ensure the subject's immortality in the poem? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The speaker ensures the subject's immortality through the written word, declaring that as long as people read the poem, the subject's beauty will live on. The act of writing becomes a tool to defy time and preserve the beloved forever.

5. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

Ans: The rhyme scheme of the sonnet is: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	Α
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.	В
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	Α
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.	В
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	С
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;	D
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	С
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;	D
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,	Ε
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,	F
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,	Ε
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.	F
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,	G
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	G

6. Shakespeare is considered the master of the sonnet, a 14-line poem. Shakespeare's sonnets are also known as Elizabethan sonnets (after Queen Elizabeth I who reigned during Shakespeare's lifetime). Theses are 14-line poems comprised of 3 quatrains and a couplet, following the rhyme scheme *ABAB CDCD EFEF GG*, and often written in *iambic pentametre*. Copy these definitions to your copybook. Identify the first line of each *quatrain* in this sonnet.

Ans: The first quatrain begins with the line 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' The second quatrain begins with the line 'Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines.' The third quatrain begins with the line 'But thy eternal summer shall not fade.'

7. Identify the couplet in the poem.

Ans: The couplet in the poem is the last two lines: 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.'

8. Find an example of metaphor in the poem.

Ans: An example of metaphor is 'thy eternal summer shall not fade,' where the subject's beauty is metaphorically compared to an everlasting summer.

9. What is the effect of the metaphor 'thy eternal summer'? How does it shape the poem's tone? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: The metaphor of 'thy eternal summer' conveys a sense of timeless beauty and perfection. It underscores the permanence of the beloved's beauty through the poem.

10. What is the role of time in the sonnet? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Time is portrayed as a force that typically leads to decay and loss, but the speaker challenges this by claiming the poem can defy time. Through the poem, the subject's beauty is preserved indefinitely.

 How does the structure of the sonnet contribute to its meaning? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The structure follows the traditional Elizabethan sonnet format, with three quatrains developing the argument and the final couplet providing a resolution. This allows the speaker to build a case for the subject's immortal beauty, culminating in the triumphant assertion of poetry's power.

12. How does the speaker use nature imagery in the sonnet? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The speaker uses nature imagery, such as a summer's day, rough winds, and the sun, to create a contrast between the beloved's perfect beauty and the often unattractive qualities of nature. This imagery helps emphasise that the beloved is more beautiful and more perfect than even the most beautiful summer's day.

13. Overall, what is the metre of the poem? (1 sentence)

Ans: The metre of the poem is iambic.

14. How many *iambs* are in each line of first stanza? (Remember, think of an *iamb* as a heartbeat: *ba-BUM*) (1 sentence).

Ans: There are five iambs in each line of the first stanza.

15. *Pent* is the Greek root meaning *five* (e.g. a *pentagon* is a five-sided shape). When there are 5 *iambs* in a line of poetry, the metre gets a special name: **iambic pentametre**. Copy this definition to your copybook.

- 1. What does the speaker compare the subject to at the beginning of the poem? Why is this comparison important?
- 2. How does the speaker describe summer? Does he think summer is perfect or not?
- 3. What does the speaker mean when he says, 'thy eternal summer shall not fade'?
- 4. How does the speaker believe the subject's beauty will last forever? Do you agree?
- 5. What do you think is the most powerful line in the poem? Why do you like it?

### Going to Knock

'Going to Knock' was published in 2010 in Catherine Phil MacCarthy's collection titled 'The Invisible Threshold.' The context of the poem revolves around a pilgrimage to Knock, Ireland's national Marian shrine where the Virgin Mary appeared, along with Saint John and Saint Joseph on August 21st, 1879. Today, it is an important international pilgrimage site.

In the poem, the speaker reminisces about a past train journey to Knock, where they were accompanied by Paddy Clohessy. The memories of the journey are interwoven with recollections of the speaker's childhood fascination with a 'tiny glass basilica' and its contents, which might symbolise both religious devotion and the imaginative power of youth. As the poem unfolds, the juxtaposition of mundane discussions about farming and life with moments of introspection and spiritual significance creates a contemplative atmosphere that explores themes of faith, memory, and the human experience.

Catherine Phil MacCarthy (1954-) is a native of Crecora, Co Limerick and has lived in Sandymount, Dublin since 1987. She has published five collections of poetry, and a novel, and is a free-lance tutor in Poetry and Creative Writing. In her own words, her poems explore from several angles the idea of 'threshold' or 'the liminal', the state of being in transition from one moment to the next.

Long before he took me all the way on the train with Paddy Clohessy talking about the county team, calf prices that spring, cows giving the best milk (we knew them all by name), their conversation mellow

as an old whiskey, I used to take down the tiny glass basilica from the white mantelpiece in my parents' bedroom and shake the water inside to watch snow fall in a blizzard over shoulders

> of men and women on a pilgrimage for sins, and stand still in the room when the electric light

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blinked and dimmedthe moment of apparitionhearing an ocean sway in the branches of a pine,

 <sup>25</sup> knowing it's dark by starlings rummaging in eaves of the barn and the tick of a yard-light is my mother going out
 <sup>30</sup> to close the hens, asleep on one leg, on the rungs of a shed.

Catherine Phil MacCarthy

#### Analysis

1. Recall that each section of the poem is called a **stanza**. Copy the definition to your copy. (Always write down bold words and their definitions in your copybook.) How many stanzas are there in the poem?

*Ans: The student should copy the definition in his or her copybook. There are four stanzas in the poem.* 

2. What is the setting of the first stanza of the poem? What is happening? (1-2 sentences)

*Ans: The speaker is remembering a train journey to Knock. On the train Paddy Clohessy is talking about sports and farming.* 

3. In the second stanza, the speaker recalls another memory that happened 'long before' the train journey with Paddy Clohessy. Describe the memory in your own words (1-3 sentences).

Ans: The speaker remembers going to her parents' room as a child and taking their Knock shrine snow globe off the mantelpiece. She would shake the snow globe and watch the snow fall on the picture of Knock inside, which depicted pilgrims gathering at the shrine.

4. The third stanza is a continuation of the speaker's childhood memory of looking at the Knock snow globe. In your own words, explain what the speaker is imagining as a child in the third stanza. (2-4 sentences)

Ans: As the speaker looks at the snow globe, the lights in her parents' room flicker. She imagines this as the moment when Our Lady of Knock appears. The branches of the pine tree outside are rustling. The sound leads her to imagine the waves of the ocean.

5. The fourth stanza is the final part of the speaker's childhood memory standing in her parents' room. How does the speaker know it is dark outside without looking? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: She hears the starlings (garden birds) settling onto the roof to rest. She also hears the 'tick' of the garden light switching on, which her mother always does at night before closing in the hens.

6. Recall that a **poetic device** is a tool that a poet uses to convey meaning and enhance a poem's structure, sound, and/or rhythm. In this poem we will look at three familiar terms: sensory imagery, simile, and enjambment.

**Sensory imagery**—descriptive language that appeals to one of the reader's 5 senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, smell.

**Simile**—a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things using the words 'like' or 'as'.

**Enjambment**—the continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line.

Copy these definitions to your copybook.

*Ans: The student should copy the definitions of poetic device, sensory imagery, simile, and enjambment, in his or her copybook.* 

7. List three examples of sensory imagery in the poem.

Ans: The student could list any of these examples of sensory imagery: 'tiny glass basilica', 'white mantelpiece', 'watch snow fall in a blizzard', 'the electric lights blinked and dimmed', 'hearing an ocean sway in the branches of a pine', 'starlings rummaging', or 'tick of a yard light'.

8. Find a simile in the poem. What meaning does the simile convey? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The simile in the poem is 'their conversation mellow as an old whiskey'. The simile suggests that the conversation is familiar, comfortable, and not rushed. A 'mellow' person is someone who is easy-going, or something that is pleasant or calming. A whiskey would be consumed slowly, savouring each sip.

9. Notice the consistent use of enjambment throughout the poem. Enjambment makes the reader continue on to the next line without stopping. Enjambment is a clever poetic device to use in this text because the poem is a memory. How does enjambment help convey meaning in the poem? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: The constant continuation from one line to the next reminds the reader of a stream of consciousness (moving from one thought to the next without stopping). The use of enjambment conveys to the reader that the poet is reliving a memory.

#### Discussion

 How does the speaker's childhood fascination with the glass basilica and its contents (water and 'snow') symbolise a deeper meaning in the poem?

- 2. In what ways does the train journey with Paddy Clohessy and discussions about farming, milk, and calf prices contrast or connect with the speaker's introspective moments? Do you think that this has any significant connection to the apparition?
- 3. Explore the significance of the 'moment of apparition' when the electric light blinks and dims. What emotions or thoughts does this evoke, and how does it relate to the overall theme of the poem?
- 4. What role does nature play in the poem? How do the references to the pine tree, starlings, and the ocean contribute to the poem's atmosphere and message?
- 5. Consider the theme of memory and its influence on the poet's perception of the past and the present. How do childhood memories interweave with the present moment in the poem?



The Apparition mosaic at Knock Basilica (PJ Lynch/Travisanutto Mosaics, Spilimbergo, Italy) represents the evening of the 21st of August 1879 at Knock which was witnessed by 15 local people. With over 1.5 million individual pieces of coloured glass combining in one of the largest mosaics of its kind in Europe, the mosaic captures the apparition as well as its the witnesses who stood in the pouring rain for over two hours in prayer on that evening.

### Seascape

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Seascape is a poem by Wystan Hugh Auden, a famous English-American poet and critic. It was written in 1936 and first published in his collection 'Look, Stranger!' in 1936. The poem is a lyrical description of an island scene, where the speaker invites the stranger to observe the beauty and movement of the sea, the cliffs, the shingle, the gull, and the ships. The poem suggests that the sea is a source of delight and discovery, as well as a symbol of life and memory. The poem uses imagery, rhyme, metre, and repetition to convey its theme.

Ι

Look, stranger, at this island now The leaping light for your delight discovers, Stand stable here And silent be, That through the channels of the ear May wander like a river The swaying sound of the sea.

#### II

Here at the small field's ending pause Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges Oppose the pluck And knock of the tide, And the shingle scrambles after the sucking surf, and the gull lodges A moment on its sheer side.

#### III

Far off like floating seeds the ships Diverge on urgent voluntary errands; And the full view Indeed may enter And move in memory as now these clouds do, That pass the harbour mirror And all the summer through the water saunter.

Wystan Hugh Auden



Wystan Hugh Auden (1872-1957) was a British-American poet, playwright, and critic. W.H. Auden was a major influence in the poetry world and beyond in the 20th Century. His first book *Poems*, was published in 1930. Shortly before the Second World War Auden immigrated to America. In 1948 Auden won the Pulitzer Price for 'The Age of Anxiety.'

Line 9. *chalk wall*: limestone cliffs, possibly reminiscent of the southern English coast.

Line 12. *And the shingle .... surf*: the personification of small stones moving in the breaking waves.

#### Analysis

1. In your own words, explain what each stanza is describing. (1-4 sentences per stanza)

*Ans: The first stanza invites the stranger to stand silently, look at an island, and listen to the sea.* 

The second stanza describes the cliff the stranger is standing on as he looks out at the island. The walls of the cliff are white (chalk) and they stand strong against the waves as the sea breaks against them and creates foam. Small stones get sucked into the water as waves are drawn back into the sea. Seagulls rest on little ledges of the steep cliff.

The third stanza describes ships in the distance going in all different directions. Then there is a description of the clouds moving across the ocean.

2. The first simile in the third stanza compares the ships in the distance to seeds floating in the water. What is the second simile in the third stanza and what is its meaning? (1-4 sentences)

Ans: The simile in the third stanza is 'And the full view/ indeed may enter/ And move in memory as now these clouds do/ That pass the harbour mirror/ And all the summer through the water saunter.' The simile compares the memory of the seascape view to the clouds passing by. The clouds saunter across the sea, which means to walk in a slow, relaxed manner. The simile suggests that the beautiful view of the sea can be recalled by the stranger's memory at any time, bringing him back to this peaceful place. Just like the clouds, the memory of the seascape can effortlessly saunter across his mind at any time.

 Recall the poetic device of alliteration, the occurrence of the same sound at the beginning of words that are near each other. Copy the definition to your copybook and underline the examples of alliteration in the poem.

Ans: The student should copy the definition of alliteration.

Look, stranger, at this island now The leaping light for your delight discovers, Stand stable here And silent be, That through the channels of the ear May wander like a river The swaying sound of the sea. Here at the small field's ending pause Where the chalk wall <u>falls</u> to the foam, and its tall ledges Oppose the pluck And knock of the tide And the shingle scrambles after the sucking surf, and the gull lodges A moment on its sheer side. <u>Far</u> off like floating seeds the ships

Diverge on urgent voluntary errands; And the full view Indeed may enter And <u>move</u> in <u>memory</u> as now these clouds do, That pass the harbour mirror And all the <u>summer</u> through the water <u>saunter</u>.

4. **Personification** is the poetic device which attributes human characteristics to a non-human thing. Copy the definition to your copybook and list three examples of personification in the poem.

The student should write down the definition of personification.

Ans: The following are possible examples of personification in the poem: wander like a river, pluck and knock of the tide, shingle scrambles after the suck-ing surf, ships diverge on urgent voluntary errands, [the clouds] through the water saunter.

#### Discussion

- 1. How does the poem explore the theme of human insignificance in the face of nature's immensity?
- 2. Analyse the role of the sea in the poem and its symbolic significance.
- 3. Discuss the contrast between the permanence of nature and the transience of human life portrayed in the poem.
- 4. Explore the use of vivid imagery in 'Seascape' and its impact on conveying the atmosphere and emotions within the poem.
- 5. Reflect on the role of time and its passage in the poem.
- 6. Analyse the relationship between the speaker and the natural world in 'Seascape'. How does the speaker's interaction with the sea reflect his inner thoughts and emotions, and how does this resonate with the notion of a Creator?

transcience is a state lasting only for a short time.

# It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free

'It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free' is a sonnet by William Wordsworth, a famous English poet of the Romantic era. It was written in Calais, France in August 1802 when Wordsworth was on a walk with his daughter Caroline. The poem was published in his collection 'Poems', in Two Volumes in 1807. The poem expresses the speaker's awe and reverence for the beauty of nature and the presence of God in the evening scene. The speaker contrasts his own feelings with those of his child, who seems indifferent to the solemnity of the moment. The speaker concludes that the child's nature is not less divine, but rather more attuned to God's constant presence. The poem uses imagery, personification, alliteration, and metaphor to convey its theme.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, The holy time is quiet as a Nun Breathless with adoration; the broad sun Is sinking down in its tranquility; The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea; Listen! the mighty Being is awake, And doth with his eternal motion make A sound like thunder—everlastingly. Dear child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here, If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, Thy nature is not therefore less divine: Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year; And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine, God being with thee when we know it not.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was a renowned English poet and a key figure in the Romantic movement. Born in Cockermouth, England, he became one of the Lake Poets, along with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. Wordsworth's poetic works, including 'Lyrical Ballads' and 'The Prelude,' emphasised the beauty of nature, the significance of human emotions, and the spiritual connection between man and the natural world. His contributions to literature and his unique perspective on the human experience continue to be celebrated and studied around the world.

Line 12. *Abraham's bosom:* the place of eternal rest which the poor man, Lazarus finds in the parable from Saint Luke's gospel (Luke 16:19-31).

William Wordsworth

#### Analysis

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 This poem is a sonnet. A sonnet is a 14 line poem. You have previously learned about a type of sonnet called a Shakespearean sonnet, also known as an Elizabethan sonnet. Now we are learning a new sonnet form—the *Petrarchan sonnet*. A **Petrarchan** sonnet is a sonnet divided into an octave and a sestet. An octave is an 8-line stanza, and a sestet is a 6-line stanza. There is a characteristic rhyme scheme of a Petrarchan sonnet which you will soon discover. A Petrarchan sonnet has a change in focus or subject called the *volta*. Volta is Italian for 'turn'. The **volta** is a turn (or change) in thought or argument in the sonnet which comes after the octave. Copy these definitions to your copybook.

*Ans: The student should write down the definitions of* **sonnet**, *Petrarchan sonnet, octave, sestet, and volta.* 

2. Label the octave and sestet in the poem.

*Ans:* The student should label the first 8 lines of the poem as the octave and the final 6 lines of the poem as the sestet.

3. The particular way a poem rhymes is called the **rhyme scheme**. To make a visual representation of which lines in the poem rhyme, we use letters at the end of each line of poetry. To mark the rhyme scheme simply assign a letter (starting with A) to the last word of the line. When you find an ending word that rhymes with a previous ending word, mark those lines with the same letter. If there is no previous ending word that rhymes, give that line a new letter. For example:

The people along the sand	A
All turn and look one one way.	В
They turn their back on the land,	A
They look at the sea all day.	В
Happy the people who look on the sea.	С

# Copy the definition of rhyme scheme and mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

Ans: The student should write down the definition of *rhyme scheme*.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,	Α
The holy time is quiet as a Nun	В
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun	В
Is sinking down in its tranquility;	Α
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;	Α
List <u>en! th</u> e mighty Being is awake,	С
And doth with his eternal motion make	С
A sound like thun <u>der–eve</u> rlastingly.	Α
Dear chi <u>ld!</u> dear Girl <u>!</u> that walkest with me here,	D
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,	Ε
Thye nature is not therefore less divine:	F
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;	D
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,	F
God being with thee when we know it not.	Ε

4. A **caesura** is an interruption, break, or pause *within* a line of poetry (this does not mean pausing at the end of a line). Copy the definition of *caesura* and find two examples of caesura in the octave. What does caesura force the reader to do when reading the poem? How do the caesuras help convey the meaning of the poem? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The student should write down the definition of caesura.

The possible examples of caesura are underlined in the poem above. Caesura forces the reader to pause or slow down. The caesuras in the poem help convey the sense of wonder and awe that the speaker is experiencing. They mirror the poem's serene, meditative atmosphere, allowing the reader to slow down and reflect, much like the quiet, peaceful evening he describes.

5. In your own words, explain the scene depicted in the octave. (1-3 sentences)

*Ans:* It is a beautiful, calm, quiet evening. The sun is setting. God is present.

6. What is the simile in the octave and how does it enhance the message of the poem? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: The simile is: 'The holy time is quiet as a Nun/ breathless with adoration'. The image of a Nun in adoration suggests that one can be caught up in a similar kind of moment when beholding God's creation. The quietness of the evening is compared to a nun's quietness during worship, suggesting that the evening holds a spiritual and reverent stillness. The nun, in her devotion, is so absorbed in her worship that she becomes almost 'breathless' with awe and reverence. This description extends to the evening, which seems so still and full of awe that it is almost 'breathless.' Overall, the simile conveys the message that God is present in nature and that nature evokes wonder and awe.

7. What is the child's reaction to the nature before her and what does the speaker think of her reaction? What is his conclusion about the girl's nature? (1-4 sentences)

Ans: The little girl does not appear to be moved at all by the beautiful sunset before her. It has not moved her to contemplate God like it did for the speaker. The speaker comments that her lack of reaction is not an indication that she is 'less divine' than he. He concludes that she actually experiences God's closeness constantly and is always in His presence, even when adults cannot see it.

8. Explain the *volta* in the sonnet. In other words, how does the octave differ from the sestet? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: In the octave the speaker is describing nature and the peaceful moment. In the sestet he addresses the little girl and reflects on her child-like nature and closeness to God.

- 1. How does the natural setting and the presence of the child contribute to the speaker's spiritual experience?
- 2. Discuss the theme of divinity in the poem. How does Wordsworth use the beauty of nature and the child's innocence to explore the connection between the earthly and the divine?

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- 3. Explore the role of perspective and perception in the poem. How does the speaker's observation of the child and the natural world transform his understanding of God's presence?
- 4. Analyse the use of imagery and sensory details in the poem. How do they enhance the reader's emotional response and bring the scene to life?
- 5. Consider the poem's closing lines. How do they encapsulate the speaker's perception of the divine?

## Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

It has been commonly speculated that Yeats saw himself as the Aedh (pronounced AY) character in this poem, and wrote it for Maud Gonne, who was the subject of his unrequited love. The original themes that form the Aedh character can be traced back to the poetry of John Keats, in particular his ballad 'La Belle Dame sans Merci.'

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths, Enwrought with golden and silver light, The blue and the dim and the dark cloths Of night and light and the half light, I would spread the cloths under your feet: But I, being poor, have only my dreams; I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Line 2. *Enwrought:* an improvised spelling of *inwrought*, meaning worked or woven into material, especially decoratively.

William Butler Yeats

#### Analysis

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 You may have noticed that there is no particular rhyme scheme or rhythm to the poem. This poem is written in free verse. Free verse is a style of poetry that does not use any regular rhyme scheme or metre. Copy the definition into your copybook.

Ans: Copy the definition of *free verse* to your copy.

2. Underline or highlight the words that are repeated throughout the poem.

Ans: Students should circle all the references to cloths, light, dreams, and feet.

3. How does the speaker describe the cloths of heaven? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Some of the cloths are embroidered with gold and silver light. The 'cloths of night' are blue, dim, and dark. There are also cloths of 'light' and 'half light'.

4. What do you think the cloths symbolise? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Perhaps the cloths symbolise the sun and the moon, heaven, or the world. Or, the cloths could symbolise material goods and comforts. There are other possibilities as well, answers will vary.

5. What do you think this line means: 'I have spread my dreams under your feet'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Perhaps it means that all of his life's goals and dreams are at the service of the person he is speaking to. Or perhaps his dreams symbolise the speaker's heart, and he has given his heart over to the person he is addressing. This answer has other possibilities and answers will vary.

- 1. What is the significance of the title 'Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven' and how does it relate to the themes explored in the poem?
- 2. Explore the metaphor of 'the heavens' embroidered cloths' in the poem. What deeper meanings or emotions does it evoke?
- 3. Analyse the role of love and its influence on the speaker's aspirations and desires for a higher existence.
- 4. Discuss the theme of unattainability in the poem. How does the speaker's acknowledgment of the impossibility of possessing the 'cloths of heaven' shape their perspective on life and longing?
- 5. Reflect on the impact of the poem's closing line, 'Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.' How does it encapsulate the vulnerability and fragility of the speaker's aspirations?

# The House Beautiful

### Background

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'The House Beautiful' is a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, a Scottish writer and poet. It was published in his collection *Underwoods* in 1887. The poem describes the simple and bleak house and moor where the speaker lives, but also celebrates the beauty of nature and the seasons that surround it. The poem suggests that God's creation is enough to make the earth a cheerful and changeful place, even without human adornment. The poem uses imagery, contrast, and repetition to convey its theme.

#### Ι

A naked house, a naked moor A shivering pool before the door, A garden bare of flowers and fruit, And poplars at the garden foot: Such is the place that I live in, Bleak without and bare within.

#### Π

	Yet shall your ragged moor receive
10	The incomparable pomp of eve,
	And the cold glories of the dawn
	And when the wind from place to place
	Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
	Your garden gloom and gleam again,
15	With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
	Here shall the wizard moon ascend
	The heavens, in the crimson end
	Of day's declining splendour; here
	The army of the stars appear.
20	The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,
	Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
	And oft the morning muser see
	Larks rising from the broomy lea,
	And every fairy wheel and thread
25	Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.



Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was a Scottish novelist, poet, and essayist best known for his literary classics such as Treasure Island, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Kidnapped. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Stevenson overcame frail health in his early life and embarked on a career in writing that would leave an indelible mark on literature. Through his captivating storytelling, he crafted tales of adventure, mystery, and moral dilemmas that continue to captivate readers of all ages and solidify his legacy as one of the most celebrated authors of the nineteenth century.

Line 22. *muser:* a reflective thinker.

Line 23. *the broomy lea: Broom* a wild bush with tiny yellow, also called *Scotch Broom*; a *lea* is a patch of meadow or open ground. When daisies go, shall winter-time Silver the simple grass with rime; Autumnal frosts enchant the pool And make the cart-ruts beautiful; And when snow-bright the moor expands, How shall your children clap their hands! To make this earth, our hermitage, A cheerful and a changeful page, God's bright and intricate device Of days and seasons doth suffice.

#### Robert Louis Stevenson

### Analysis

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1.	Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.	
	Ans: The rhyme scheme is shown below.	
	A naked house, a naked moor,	Α
	A shivering pool before the door,	Α
	A garden bare of flowers and fruit	В
	And poplars at the garden foot;	В
	Such is the place that I live in,	С
	Bleak without and bare within.	С
	Yet shall your ragged moor receive	D
	The incomparable pomp of eve,	D
	And the cold glories of the dawn	Ε
	Behind your shivering trees be drawn;	Ε
	And when the wind from place to place	F
	Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,	F
	Your garden gloom and gleam again,	G
	With leaping sun, with glancing rain.	G
	Here shall the wizard moon ascend	H
	The heavens, in the crimson end	H
	Of day's declining splendour; here	Ι
	<i>The army of the stars appear.</i>	Ι
	The neighbour hollows dry or wet,	J
	Spring shall with tender flowers beset;	J
	And oft the morning muser see	Κ
	Larks rising from the broomy lea,	Κ
	And every fairy wheel and thread	L
	Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.	L
	When daisies go, shall winter time	М
	<u>Silver</u> the simple grass with rime;	М
	Autumnal frosts enchant the pool	N
	And make the cart-ruts beautiful;	N
	And when snow-bright the moor expands,	0
	How shall your children clap their hands!	0
	To make this earth, our hermitage,	Р

A cheerful and a changeful page,	Р
God's bright and intricate device	Q
Of days and seasons doth suffice.	Q

2. Recall that the **metre** of a poem is the rhythm of the poem. There are different names for different types of *metres*. We already learned about iambic metre. **Iambic metre** is made up of *iambs*—words that follow the pattern of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Think of a heartbeat. It goes *ba-BUM*, *ba-BUM*, *ba-BUM*. If we were to think of a heartbeat as a poetic *metre*, it would be *iambic*. The first part of the heartbeat is 'unstressed' (less emphasis) and the second part of the syllable is 'stressed' (more emphasis).

Read the first line of the poem out loud to yourself, emphasising the unstressed and stressed syllables. Can you hear the *iambic*, or 'heartbeat' rhythm? Now read the rest of the poem in the same way. Copy the definition to your copybook and then underline any lines or words that do not seem to follow the pattern.

Ans: The student should copy the definitions of **metre** and **iambic metre**. The lines which do not seem to follow the pattern are underlined in the previous question/answer. There may be some variation depending on the way that the student chooses to read some words.

3. We already learned the term for a poem that has five *iambs* per line of poetry (10 syllables per line, following the unstressed, stressed pattern)– **iambic pentametre**. (The prefix *pent* comes from the Greek word for *five*.) The prefix *tetra* comes from the Greek word for *four*. A line of poetry that has four *iambs* is called **iambic tetrametre**.

Copy these definitions to your copybook. How many *iambs* are in the first line of this poem and what metre is it written in?

*Ans:* Students should write down the definitions of *iambic pentametre* and *iambic tetrametre*.

*Ans: There are four iambs in the first line of the poem. The poem is written in iambic tetrametre.* 

4. Take a look at the lines you underlined because they did not fit the rhythm of the rest of the poem. Make a mental note of what is different about those lines. Are there too many syllables (it breaks the tetrametre)? Or does the natural stress of a word break the iambic pattern?

*Ans: Students should take a note of why the lines they underlined break the predominant rhythm.* 

5. How is the house described in the first stanza? (1-2 sentences)

*Ans: The house is described as empty, depressing, and without any life. A shivering pool and barren land indicate that it is winter time.* 

6. What do the following lines mean? (2-5 sentences):

'Yet shall your ragged moor receive The incomparable pomp of eve, And the cold glories of the dawn Behind your shivering trees be drawn;'

Ans: The 'ragged moor' describes a stretch of uncultivated land that is irregular and wild. The 'pomp of eve' is the splendid view and colours that evening (eve) brings. The 'cold glories of the dawn' describe the beautiful scenes and colours that morning brings. Despite the run-down appearance of the house, it will be covered in the beauty of the evening and the morning.

 According to the poet, what will make the gloomy garden 'gleam again'? What other beauties will appear over the garden? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The rushing wind, the shining sun, and the falling rain will bring life back to the garden. Over the gardens, the breathtaking sight of a rising moon will appear, accompanied by the red skies of a sunset and thousands of stars overhead.

8. In your own words, describe what a 'morning muser' will often see. (1-3 sentences)

Ans: Someone looking out in the morning will see larks (birds) flying up from the shrubs on the empty land and fairy-like spiderwebs covered with dew drops, sparkling like a diamond.

9. What will happen after 'the daisies go' (after the spring daisies die)? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: At the end of spring (when the daisies die), winter will cover the grass with silver frost, and the frosts will make the lake and tracks of the cart enchanting and beautiful. When children see the vast land covered in snow, they will clap their hands in delight.

10. In your own words, explain the last 4 lines of the poem. (2-5 sentences)

Ans: The poet compares this earth to a hermitage. A hermitage is where a monk lives alone. Typically it is a place of prayer and penance, where the comforts of life are stripped away. The poet is saying that to bring joy and variety to our earth, which can sometimes feel bleak or painful, God gives man beauty and variety in the changing of the day (in the beauty of dawn and evening) and in the changing of the seasons (in the different beauties that each season offers).

- 1. In the poem, what is the significance of the house as a symbol? How does it represent more than just a physical dwelling?
- 2. Discuss the theme of imagination and its role in the poem. How does the speaker's imaginative vision transform the ordinary house into something magical and extraordinary?

- 3. Analyse the use of language and poetic devices in the poem. How do the rhythm, rhyme, and imagery contribute to the overall tone and mood?
- 4. Reflect on the themes of regeneration and hope in 'The House Beautiful'.
- 5. What role do the seasons and God's plan have in the poem?

### Mater Dei

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Padraic Colum was born in Galway in 1905. The landscape and scenery of the west of Ireland played a large part in his later poetry. He worked in the civil service in Dublin and Wexford. His friends included the novelist James Plunkett (author of *Strumpet City*) and the poets Austin Clarke, Robert Farren and F.R. Higgins. He wrote a number of plays and the first of Fallon's verse plays for radio, *Diarmuid and Gráinne*, was broadcast by Radió Éireann in November 1950. He moved to Kinsale after retirement. He died in 1974 in Cornwall, while visiting his son, Conor, himself a well-known sculptor. He is buried in St. Eltin's Cemetery in Kinsale.

I

In March the seed Fell, when the month leaned over, looking Down into her valley. And none but the woman knew it where she sat In the tree of her veins and tended him The red and ripening Adam of the year.

#### Π

Her autumn was late and human. Trees were nude, the lights were on the pole All night when he came, Her own man; In the cry of a child she sat, not knowing That this was a stranger.

#### III

Milk ran wild Across the heavens. Imperiously He Sipped at the delicate beakers she proffered him. How was she to know How huge a body she was, how she corrected The very tilt of the earth on its new course.



Padraic Colum (1905-1974) was an Irish poet and playwright.

Lines 1-2. These lines refer to the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, when the Angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Saviour.

Line 4. *the woman:* refers to the Virgin Mary.

Line 7. *Her autumn…human:* the end of Mary's pregnancy takes place in the early winter (traditionally we celebrate Christ's birth is celebrated on December 25) rather than earlier in the autumn when the apples ripen.

Line 8. *the lights were on the pole:* could refer to the star above the manager or may also refer to the lights of Bethlehem which was crowded with people.

Line 12. *a stranger*: possibly a reference to John's gospel prologue; 'He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.' (Jn 1:11)

Line 13. *Milk ran wild:* an image of Mary suckling the Christ child. Line 15. *sipped ... him:* an image of the

baby at the breast.

Lines 17-18. Mary's birth of the Christ is compared to Archimedes' claim that he could adjust the tilt of the Earth. However, there is also a spiritual aspect to the image because Christ's coming will not physically move the Earth but will offer redemption to fallen man.

Padraic Colum

### Analysis

1. What Church feast day occurs on 25 March? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: The feast of the Annunciation (also known as the Incarnation—when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and she conceived Jesus in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit) is celebrated on 25 March.

2. What liturgical season usually spans most of the month of March? What do we do and think about during that liturgical season? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: Usually, Lent takes up most of the month of March. During Lent we practice forms of penance such as fasting from something, doing acts of service, and renewing a commitment to prayer. We ponder our sins and our need to repent during Lent.

3. The poem begins with the lines 'In March the seed / Fell'. What does New Testament event (think of the seed) and what Old Testament event (think of the word 'fell') does it make the reader think of? How do those events relate to the rest of the poem? (2-5 sentences)

Ans: The opening line of the poem calls to mind two occurrences. It clearly is a reference to the Annunciation (25 March) when 'the seed fell' from Heaven and God became man as a baby in the womb of Mary. It is fitting to begin with Jesus' conception since the poem ends with his birth. The opening line also makes the reader think of Lent, which occurs in March, and the **fall** of Adam (the Father, or **seed**, of all mankind), which brought about sin and the need for a Saviour to save man from his sins. It is also fitting to begin with a reference to the fall of mankind, because the poem ends with a reference to how Christ's birth will bring redemption for all men.

 What Biblical event do these lines make you think of?: 'In the tree of her veins and tended him / The red and ripening Adam of the year.' (1-2 sentences)

Ans: The reference to a tree, the description 'red and ripening', and naming Adam make the reader again think of the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit (often imagined as a red, ripe apple.

5. If Jesus is sinless, why do you think the poet describes Him as 'The red and ripening Adam of the year'? (2-3 sentences)

Ans: In Scripture, Jesus is referred to as the new Adam, because just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), sin is defeated and mankind is redeemed through one man (Jesus). 'Red and ripening' is a reference to Jesus growing in the womb of Mary like a fruit which grows on a tree and is ready to be picked once it is fully ripe.

 Why do you think Mary's pregnancy is called a late autumn? (1-3 sentences) Ans: Typically, Autumn is the time of harvesting the crops which have been growing. Jesus has been growing in Mary's womb and is now ready to be born, but a bit later than Autumn. He is born in the winter.

7. What do the closing lines mean: 'how she corrected / The very tilt of the earth on its new course'? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: By Mary's 'yes' to bearing Christ into the world, she played a critical role in the salvation of mankind. Through Mary's 'yes', the world which was previously doomed to sin and death now has a new course. Now, mankind has the offer of redemption.

8. What is the term for a poem that does not use any regular rhyme scheme or metre?

Ans: A poem that does not use any regular rhyme scheme or metre is called free verse.

- A metaphor is a comparison between two unrelated things that share common characteristics. Can you identify at least one metaphor in the first stanza and explain why you think the poet uses this comparison.
- 2. The second stanza ends with the line 'That this was a stranger.' What do you think the poet means by this line?
- 3. In the third stanza, the poet uses the word 'Imperiously.' What does this word mean, and why do you think the poet chose this adjective to describe the child?
- 4. What did you like about this poem and why? What did you dislike about this poem and why?

## My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose

The poem 'My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose' was written by Robert Burns in 1794. As one of Scotland's most famous poets, Burns drew inspiration from traditional Scottish ballads and folk songs. In this romantic poem, Burns compares his love to a vibrant and enduring red rose, expressing the depth of his affection. The poem captures the timeless and universal theme of love's beauty and intensity, presenting it in a simple yet poignant manner.

Ι

O my Luve is like a red, red rose That's newly sprung in June; O my Luve is like the melody That's sweetly played in tune.

#### II

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
 So deep in luve am I;
 And I will luve thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry

III

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, And the rocks melt wi' the sun; I will love thee still, my dear, While the sands o' life shall run.

#### IV

And fare thee weel, my only luve! And fare thee weel awhile! And I will come again, my luve, Though it were ten thousand mile.

15



Robert Burns (1759-1796) was a Scottish poet and lyricist, widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland. Born into a farming family, Burns's work reflects his experiences of rural life and the struggles of the common people. His poems and songs, including 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'To a Mouse,' showcase his ability to capture raw emotions and celebrate the beauty of nature. Burns's legacy continues to inspire generations with his passionate expressions of love, social commentary, and Scottish cultural identity.

Line 8. gang dry: go dry.

Robert Burns

#### Analysis

1. What are the two similes in the first stanza? What meaning do the similes convey? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The two similes in the first stanza compare the speaker's love to a red, red rose and a melody. Comparing his love to a rose gives the image of his love being beautiful and life-giving. Comparing his love to a melody 'sweetly played in tune' conveys the image of his love bringing delight and lifting the spirits

 Hyperbole is when a poet uses exaggerated statements or claims to convey a message. Copy the definition to your copybook. What examples of hyperbole can you find in the poem and what message is the poet conveying? (3-5 sentences)

*Ans: The student should write down the definition of hyperbole. The following are examples of hyperbole in the poem:* 

'And I will luve thee still, my dear, / Till a' the seas gang dry'

'Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, / And the rocks melt wi' the sun'

'And I will come again, my luve, / Though it were ten thousand mile'

The seas will never go dry and rocks will never melt in the sun. The first two hyperboles convey that his love will never end. The third hyperbole shows that the speaker's love will not be affected by distance.

3. Highlight or underline the examples of repetition in the poem.

Ans: The student should underline all the repetitions of: 'O my luve', 'red', 'I will luve thee still, my dear', 'Till a' the seas gang dry', and 'fare thee weel'.

4. Most of the poem is written in what metre?

*Ans:* Most of the poem is written in iambic metre. Some lines are iambic tetrametre (4 iambs per line) and some lines are iambic trimeter (3 iambs per line). Some lines are not iambic.

5. Many artists have put this poem to music, including Robert Burns himself. One famous version was arranged by Chris Hazell. Listen to a version of the poem put to song with Chris Hazell's arrangement. What is the effect of putting the poem to music? Do you prefer the work as a song or as a poem? (2-5 sentences)

Ans: The music amplifies the romantic tone. Music adds a layer of emotional expression, making the words feel more meaningful. The music also enhances the rhythm and flow. Burns wrote the poem with a lyrical quality, using a rhythm that fits well with traditional Scottish folk tunes. When put to music, the natural cadence of the words flows more smoothly, making the experience of the poem feel almost like a serenade. (Answers will vary.)

- In the poem 'My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose' by Robert Burns, how does the poet use vivid imagery and metaphor to convey the depth of his love?
- 2. Discuss the theme of enduring love in the poem. How does Burns capture the timeless nature of love through his comparison of his 'luve' to a red rose?
- 3. Explore the role of nature in the poem. How does Burns use the natural world to symbolise and enhance the intensity and beauty of his love?
- 4. Reflect on the poem's structure and rhythm. How does the rhyme scheme and musicality contribute to the overall tone and emotional impact of the poem?
- 5. Analyse the impact of repetition in 'My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose'. How does the repetition of certain phrases and words emphasise the speaker's profound affection?

# The Splendour Falls

'The Splendour Falls' is a poem written by Alfred Lord Tennyson which captures the beauty and tranquility of nature and the passage of time. It is widely believed that Tennyson wrote 'The Splendour Falls' while staying in Killarney in 1842. During his visit, he was deeply moved by the stunning landscapes of Killarney, particularly the beauty of its lakes, mountains, and waterfalls, which would have provided a strong visual and emotional backdrop for the poem. Though Tennyson also drew inspiration from his travels in the Alps, Killarney's natural beauty seems to have been the immediate source of inspiration for the poem, making it a key location in its creation.

I

The splendour falls on castle walls And snowy summits old in story: The long light shakes across the lakes, And the wild cataract leaps in glory. Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

5

10

15

#### II

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear, And thinner, clearer, farther going! O sweet and far from cliff and scar The horns of Elfland faintly blowing! Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying: Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

### III

O love, they die in yon rich sky, They faint on hill or field or river: Our echoes roll from soul to soul, And grow for ever and for ever. Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred Lord Tennyson



Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was a renowned English poet and one of the most significant figures of the Victorian era. Born in Lincolnshire, Tennyson gained popularity for his lyrical and narrative poetry, which often delved into themes of love, nature, and the Arthurian legends. His notable works include 'The Lady of Shalott,' 'In Memoriam A.H.H.,' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.' Tennyson served as the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom during Queen Victoria's reign, leaving a lasting impact on English literature.

Line 10. *The horns of Elfland:* 'Elfland' is a mythical home of the elves which arises in both Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon mythology.

#### Analysis

1. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem.

The splendour <u>falls</u> on castle <u>walls</u>			
And snow summits old in story :	В		
The long light shakes across the lakes,	С		
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.			
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,			
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.	D		
O <mark>hark</mark> , O <u>hear</u> ! how thin and <u>clear</u> ,	Ε		
And thinner, clearer, farther going!	F		
O <mark>sweet</mark> and <u>far</u> from cliff and <u>scar</u> .	G		
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!			
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:			
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.			
O love, they <u>die</u> in yon rich sky,			
They <mark>faint</mark> on hill or <mark>field</mark> or river:	J		
Our echoes <u>roll</u> from soul to soul,	Κ		
And grow <mark>for ever</mark> and <mark>for ever</mark> .	J		
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,	L		
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.	L		

2. Internal rhyme is rhyming that occurs within a single line of verse. For example, 'The <u>cat sat</u> on the <u>mat</u>.' Highlight or underline the examples of internal rhyme in the poem. Notice that the lines which do not rhyme with another line have internal rhymes.

*Ans: The student should write down the definition of internal rhyme. Examples of internal rhyme are underlined in the answer to Question 1.* 

- 3. Highlight or underline the examples of alliteration in the poem. *Ans: Examples of alliteration are highlighted in the answer to Question* 1.
- 4. The **tone** of the poem is the author's attitude towards the subject. Think of it as the mood of the poem. What does the tone convey in the first four lines of the first stanza? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The student should write down the definition of **tone**. Words like 'splendour,' 'glory,' and 'summits old in story' evoke a majestic, almost timeless feeling. There's a sense of wonder and reverence in the description of the landscape, with the 'long light' and 'wild cataract' contributing to a feeling of liveliness and energy. The tone conveys both serenity (from the light and lakes) and intensity (from the leaping cataract), creating a vivid atmosphere.

5. What is a bugle and what was it typically used for? (1-2 sentences sentence)

Ans: The bugle is a trumpet-like instrument associated with military use. It was used to signal commands or convey messages across distances such as calling for help, signaling the beginning of battle, commanding soldiers to retreat from the battle, or telling soldiers to advance in battle.

6. What is the tone of the last two sentences of the first stanza? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: The blow of the bugle is described as 'wild', which conveys a sense of life and energy; however, the echo of the horn coming back is 'dying, dying, dying', which evokes a sense of sadness and mortality.

 Throughout the poem, how is the blow of the bugle answered? (1-2 sentences)

Ans: Throughout the poem the sound of the bugle is only answered by the sound of its own echoes in the distance, gradually dying out.

8. What is the tone of the first four lines of the second stanza? How does the tone change at the end of the stanza? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The exclamation marks and description of the bugle sound as 'clear and farther going' lifts the mood back up and conveys a sense of hope. The 'horns of Elfland faintly blowing' conveys a sense of mystery and wonder as well. The stanza ends again with the sound of the bugle sending out a signal, this time hoping for the reply of the 'purple glens'. However, once again the echoes of the bugle are 'dying, dying, dying', bringing back the theme of mortality.

9. In the third stanza, what happens to the echoes of the bugle in the first two lines? What happens to the echoes in the third and fourth lines? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: In the first two lines of the final stanza, the blow of the bugle is sent up into the sky, but the echoes slowly die out in the sky and on the hill, field, and river. In the third and fourth line, the echoes of the bugle continuously grow and live on forever, passed on from one soul to the next.

10. Given the description of the echoes growing forever and being passed on from soul to soul, what is the tone of the final two lines of the poem? (2-5 sentences)

Ans: The final two lines of the poem are the same as the last two lines of the first stanza; however, given their new context the lines have more hope now. The blow of the bugle is full of life and energy, and even though the echoes are physically 'dying, dying, dying', now the reader knows that in another sense, the echoes of the bugle will be passed on from soul to soul and never die. The tone of the final two lines, while still reminding the reader of mortality, also have a sense of hope because of the echoes that will love on in the souls of men.

### Discussion

- 1. What is the significance of the bugle in this poem, and why is it used to set the echoes 'flying'?
- 2. How do the echoes in the poem symbolise something larger than just sound, especially in the repeated phrase 'dying, dying, dying'?
- 3. In what ways does the contrast between the wild, vibrant scenes and the fading echoes reflect on the nature of time and impermanence?
- 4. The poem refers to 'horns of Elfland'—how does this mystical or otherworldly element affect the mood and meaning of the poem?
- 5. What role does memory and the passage of time play in the poem, particularly in the lines 'Our echoes roll from soul to soul, / And grow for ever and for ever'?

## The Planter's Daughter

'The Planter's Daughter' is a simple poem by Austin Clarke which, on the surface, is concerned with the relationships between the native tenantry and the English and Scottish planters who arrived in Ireland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The central feature of the poem is the poet's obvious admiration for the planter's daughter. She represents a traditional Celtic ideal of female beauty, she is the *spéirbhean*, the *aisling* and other heroines of Celtic literature. Like all of these, there is an air of unreality about the planter's daughter, there is an element of the supra-natural in the poet's description of her.

Clarke uses suggestion rather than obvious or exact description to present the beauty of the planter's daughter. The richly suggestive imagery conveys to the reader an individual image of the planter's daughter. In this poem she represents an ideal Ireland, where both native and planter cultures are fused to create a greater one. The poem has contemporary overtones, as Clarke is concerned with the national-unionist divide in Ireland at the time and his portrait of the planter's daughter is designed to produce an image of a unified country. The setting for the poem is typical of the Irish countryside in a period prior to electrification. A local fishing community is gathered at night and the main topic of discussion was the beauty of the planter's daughter.

Austin Clarke (1896-1974) was an influential Irish poet and playwright. Born in Dublin, Ireland, he initially pursued a career in law but later turned to writing, becoming one of Ireland's most notable literary figures of the twentieth century. Clarke's works often delved into themes of Irish history, politics, and identity, and he was known for his lyrical and evocative writing style. His poetry reflected a deep connection to the Irish landscape and explored the complexities of human emotions. Alongside his poetry, Clarke also wrote plays and contributed to literary journals, leaving a lasting impact on the Irish literary scene.

Ι

When night stirred at sea And the fire brought a crowd in, They say that her beauty Was music in mouth And few in the candlelight Thought her too proud, For the house of the planter Is known by the trees.

II

Men that had seen her Drank deep and were silent, The women were speaking Wherever she went -

5

Line 7. The *planter* in Ireland was a settler on confiscated land. Speaking in relation to this poem, Clarke commented that 'in barren Donegal, trees around a farmstead still denote an owner of planter stock.'

As a bell that is rung Or a wonder told shyly, And O she was the Sunday In every week.

Austin Clarke

#### Analysis

 A metaphor is a figure of speech which describes one thing as something else (it is similar to a simile but does NOT use the words like or as). Copy the definition of *metaphor* to your copy. What metaphor is used for the beauty of the planter's daughter in the first stanza? What meaning does the metaphor convey? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The student should write down the definition of **metaphor**. In the first stanza, her beauty is likened to 'music in the mouth'. The metaphor conveys that her beauty is something more than just a visual or physical beauty. Her beauty is captivating, familiar, harmonious, and brings joy.

2. What do the following lines mean and why do you think the men were silent: 'Men that had seen her / Drank deep and were silent'? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: The phrase 'drank deep' suggests that the men fully absorbed or took in the sight of her. It implies that seeing her was an intense, almost overwhelming experience. Drinking deeply from a cup brings a sense of refreshment or completeness. Their silence after seeing her could be a silence of awe, a silence of contemplation, or a silence of reverence.

3. What metaphor is used for the planter's daughter in the second stanza? What meaning does the metaphor convey? (1-4 sentences)

Ans: In the second stanza, the planter's daughter is likened to 'the Sunday in every week'. Sunday is a day of rest, spiritual reflection, and a break from the demands of the workweek. It's often associated with calmness, comfort, and renewal. The planter's daughter is like a sanctuary or a moment of repose in the midst of life's challenges. Just as people look forward to Sunday, they might similarly anticipate and cherish her presence.

#### Discussion

- 1. What do you think the poet intends with the lines 7-8? Is there a deeper symbolic meaning to the trees?
- 2. Different kinds of response are described in the second stanza. What do these imply about the people who admired the planter's daughter?

15

- 3. What sort of community does the poem evoke? What details suggest the setting? How would you describe the atmosphere in the poem?
- 4. It has been remarked that Clarke sees politics and religion as closely related. What evidence is there to support this hypothesis in the poem? Are there political and religious undertones to the poem which the poet would like to explore?

## Canal Bank Walk

'Canal Bank Walk' was composed in the 1950s and was inspired by Kavanagh's walks along the Grand Canal in Dublin, Ireland. The poem explores the poet's profound connection with nature, the beauty he finds in the simple and ordinary aspects of life, and the solace he derives from the tranquil surroundings of the canal. It is a celebration of the natural world, reflecting on the joy of being immersed in nature and finding moments of peace and inspiration amidst the bustling cityscape.

Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal Pouring redemption for me, that I do The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal, Grow with nature again as before I grew.

- The bright stick trapped, the breeze adding a third Party to the couple kissing on an old seat,
   And a bird gathering materials for the nest for the Word Eloquently new and abandoned to its delirious beat.
   O unworn world enrapture me, encapture me in a web
- Of fabulous grass and eternal voices by a beech, Feed the gaping need of my senses, give me ad lib To pray unselfconsciously with overflowing speech For this soul needs to be honoured with a new dress woven From green and blue things and arguments that cannot be proven.

Line 3. banal: ordinary, commonplace.

Line 11. *give me ad lib:* give me the gift of spontaneous prayer.

#### Patrick Kavanagh

#### Analysis

1. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem and highlight or underline any alliteration.

*Ans: Alliteration is highlighted below with the rhyming scheme indicated.* 

<i>Leafy-with-love</i> banks and the green waters of the canal	Α		
Pouring redemption for me, that I do			
The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal,	Α		
Grow with nature again as before I grew.	В		
The bright stick trapped, the breeze adding a third	С		
Party to the couple kissing on an old seat,	D		
And a bird gathering materials for the nest for the Word	С		

Eloquently new and abandoned to its delirious beat.						D	
0 unworn	world	enrapture	me,	encapture	me in a	web	Ε
<i>Of fabulous grass and eternal voices by a beech,</i>						F	
Feed the gaping need of my senses, give me ad lib						Ε	
To pray unselfconsciously with overflowing speech						F	
For this soul needs to be honoured with a new dress woven					G		
From green and blue things and arguments that cannot be proven.					G		

2. How many lines are in the poem and what is the name for a poem with that many lines?

Ans: There are 14 lines in the poem, which means it is a sonnet.

3. What is the main topic of the octave? What sensory imagery is in the octave? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The octave is a vivid description of nature—specifically the canal bank. The poet gives images such as leafy banks, green waters, a bright stick trapped, a breeze, and a bird gathering materials.

4. What does it mean to 'wallow in the habitual, the banal, / Grow with nature again as before I grew'? (2-5 sentences)

Ans: The word 'wallow' often has a negative connotation, implying indulgence in a way that might be excessive or unproductive. However, in this context, it seems to suggest a deep immersion or surrender. 'Habitual' refers to regular, repeated actions, while 'banal' means commonplace or unremarkable. Together, this phrase suggests the speaker's desire to immerse himself in the simplicity of the ordinary and find meaning in something seemingly unremarkable, like the canal bank. To 'Grow with nature again as before I grew' seems to express a desire to return to a simpler, more grounded way of living—one that embraces the routine and ordinary aspects of life without striving for extraordinary experiences. There is a longing to reconnect with nature and to grow naturally as he did in his past.

5. What desire does the speaker express in the sestet? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: In the last 6 lines of the poem, the speaker expresses his desire for the beauty of creation to captivate his mind and his senses, fill the emptiness he feels in his heart, and give him the ability to pray freely from the heart. He is expressing a desire for his soul to be renewed through the beauty of creation.

6. What might the dress woven from green and blue things symbolise? (2-4 sentences)

Ans: Green and blue are colours associated with the earth. Green makes us think of plants, grass, and new life. Blue makes us think of water and air, and usually conveys a sense of calm. The soul receives a 'new dress' at Baptism, when it is given a new identity in Christ. The speaker is experiencing a need for a renewal or rebirth of life and identity within himself, which will come from immersing himself in God's creation.  What is the importance of 'arguments that cannot be proven'? (2-5 sentences)

Ans: This phrase introduces the idea of embracing mysteries, uncertainties, and the intangible aspects of life. These are ideas or beliefs that cannot be definitively proven but are still valuable, and even essential, to human nature. It suggests that part of what the soul needs is not just the tangible, material aspects of life, but also deeper, more meaningful truths which require faith and a supernatural understanding.

#### Discussion

- 1. The poet sees nature as 'pouring redemption' for him. What does he mean?
- 2. The poet sees as his duty to wallow in 'the habitual, the banal'. What commonplace things does he present to us in a new light? In what sense do these body out the poem's central message?
- 3. What is the effect of such words as 'delirious', 'enrapture', 'fabulous', 'overflow'? How do they contrast and interact with the very ordinary objects named and described in the poem? How does this contrast contribute to the poem's total impact?
- 4. What do 'the green and blue' things in the final line stand for? Why arguments that 'cannot be proven'?
- 5. Is it helpful to know that when the poet wrote the sonnet, he had come out of hospital having been very close to death? Read the poem through, perhaps aloud, and see in it a new sense of gratitude and wonder of the world.

## God's Grandeur

God's Grandeur is a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, an English poet and Jesuit priest. It was written in 1877 but was not published until 1918, after his death. The poem is a sonnet that praises the glory and power of God in his creation, despite the damage that humans have done to it. The poem expresses the speaker's awe and wonder at the presence of God in the world, which he compares to a flame, oil, and a bird. The poem also laments the indifference and ingratitude of humans, who have polluted and exploited the earth. The poem affirms that nature is never exhausted or destroyed by human actions, but always retains a freshness and vitality that reflects God's spirit. The poem uses imagery, metaphor, rhyme, and metre to convey its theme.

Ι

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

Π

And for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; And though the last lights off the black West went Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs — Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Gerard Manley Hopkins



Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 – 1889) was an English poet and Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame placed him among leading English poets. His *prosody* – notably his concept of sprung rhythm – established him as an innovator, as did his praise of God through vivid use of imagery and nature.

Line 2. The poet compares to the sparkling of metal foil when moved in the light.

Line 12. *black West:* Hopkins wrote this poem in 1877 at the advent of street lighting in the Western world.

#### Analysis

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1. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem. Underline any alliteration.

<i>The <u>world</u> is charged <u>with</u> the grandeur of God.</i>				
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;				
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil	В			
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?	Α			
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;	Α			
And all is <u>seared</u> with <u>trade;</u> bleared, <u>smeared</u> with <u>toil;</u>	В			
And wears man's smudge and shares <u>man's smell:</u> the <u>soil</u>	В			
Is <u>bare</u> now, nor can foot feel, being shod.	Α			
And for all this, <u>nature is never</u> spent;	С			
There lives the <u>dearest</u> freshness deep down things;	D			
And though the last lights off the black <u>West went</u>	С			
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs–	D			
<u>Because</u> the Holy Ghost over the <u>bent</u>	С			
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.	D			

2. Enjambment, from the French meaning 'striding over,' is a poetic term for the continuation of a sentence or phrase from one line of poetry to the next. A **caesura** is a pause other than at the end of the line. Highlight the examples of enjambment and underline the examples of caesura in the poem.

*Ans: The examples of enjambment are highlighted in yellow below. The examples of caesura are highlighted in green.* 

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil Crushed Why do men then now reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell; the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. And for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; And though the last lights off the black West went Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs– Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah ! bright wings.

3. Pick one of the similes in the first stanza and explain the meaning it conveys. (2-4 sentences)

Ans: (Option 1) 'It will flame out, like shining from shook foil'. This line suggests that the divine grandeur, while ever-present, manifests itself in sudden, brilliant flashes. The imagery of 'shining from shook foil' refers to the way light catches and glimmers from metallic foil when it is moved or shaken, indicating moments of striking brilliance.

Ans: (Option 2) 'It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil, / Crushed'. Hopkins compares God's greatness to oil that accumulates and becomes more concentrated when crushed. This suggests that the greatness of God's presence builds up over time, becoming more evident as it gathers and intensifies, much like oil becomes more pronounced when pressed. The word 'ooze' suggests that God's greatness cannot be contained—it runs through everything.

4. What style of sonnet is this poem? Elizabethan or Petrarchan?

Ans: The rhyme scheme and division of the poem into an octave and sestet indicates that this is a Petrarchan sonnet.

5. What message does the poet convey in the last 5 lines of the octave? (Lines 4-8) (3-6 sentences).

Ans: Hopkins is questioning why people no longer recognise divine authority or moral guidance (God's 'rod'). Generations of men have damaged the world, particularly by trade and labour. 'Bleared' and 'smeared' convey a sense of pollution and degradation caused by these activities. The soil is described as 'bare', meaning it has been stripped of its natural richness. The phrase 'nor can foot feel, being shod' suggests that people, metaphorically and perhaps literally, are so disconnected from the earth (being 'shod' means wearing shoes) that they can no longer experience or be attuned to nature. Overall, these lines reflect the poet's concern that human activity, driven by trade and toil, has led to the destruction of the natural world's beauty.

6. In a sonnet, the *volta* is the turn of thought or argument. In Petrarchan sonnets it usually occurs between the closing lines of the octave (the opening 8 lines) and the opening lines of the sestet (the final 6 lines). At what line does the volta occur in this sonnet? Explain the meaning of the first 2 lines of the sestet. (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The volta occurs in line 9. The poet was previously lamenting the state of the world, but then he says that despite all this, 'nature is never spent'. In other words, despite man's destruction, nature lives on and is never exhausted. The second line of the sestet suggests that despite what it may look like on the surface, there is a perpetual, underlying life at the core of creation, and regeneration is always possible.

7. What is the significance of line 12? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The morning and the 'brown brink eastward' indicate the rising of the sun, which is a symbol of hope. After every dark night, light comes again.

8. According to the poet, what is the ultimate cause of nature never being spent, the freshness of deep down things, and the morning? (1-3 sentences)

Ans: The Holy Spirit (often associated with a dove) watches over the world. The image of the Holy Spirit as a dove brooding 'with warm breast and with ah! bright wings' suggests a nurturing, protective, and rejuvenating presence. It conveys a sense of divine care and renewal, ensuring that nature remains vibrant and alive despite any evil impacts.

### Discussion

- How does Hopkins' use of vivid and contrasting imagery in 'God's Grandeur' convey the tension between the destructive actions of humanity and the enduring power of God's presence in the natural world?
- 2. Discuss the significance of the phrase 'seared with trade' in the context of the poem. What does it reveal about the detrimental effects of industrialisation on the spiritual and natural realms?
- 3. Analyse the role of the sonnet form in 'God's Grandeur'. What does Hopkins convey in the octave? What change in thought does the *volta* convey? What does he convey in the sestet. How does he use metre and rhyme to convey the meaning of the poem?
- 4. Explore the theme of renewal and rebirth in the poem. How does Hopkins suggest that even in the face of human destruction, God's grandeur continues to revitalise and restore the world?
- 5. In what ways does 'God's Grandeur' express a sense of paradox? Consider the juxtaposition of darkness and light, despair and hope, and desolation and beauty in the poem.
- 6. Discuss the relationship between nature and spirituality in 'God's Grandeur'. How does Hopkins convey the idea that the natural world is a manifestation of God's glory and a source of spiritual inspiration?

## Glossary

*Alliteration*: the occurrence of the same sound at the beginning of words that are near each other.

*Anaphora*: the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines.

*Apostrophe*: a speech or address to a person who is not present or to a personified object.

Caesura: an interruption, break, or pause within a line of poetry.

*Couplet*: a pair of successive rhyming lines, usually of the same length.

*Elizabethan sonnet*: also known as the *Shakespearean sonnet*; comprised of 3 quatrains and a final couplet; following the rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFEF GG; often written in iambic pentametre.

*Enjambment*: a sentence or phrase that runs from one line of poetry into the next without a pause or break.

*Free verse*: a style of poetry that does not use any regular rhyme scheme or metre.

Hyperbole: exaggerated statements or claims to convey a message.

*Iambic Metre*: follows the pattern of unstressed syllable, stressed syllable.

*lambic Pentametre*: metre in which there are 5 iambs in a line of poetry (10 syllables following the unstressed, stressed pattern).

*lambic Tetrametre*: metre in which there are 4 iambs in a line of poetry (8 syllables following the unstressed, stressed pattern).

Internal Rhyme: rhyming that occurs within a single line of verse.

*Metaphor*: a figure of speech which describes one thing as something else.

*Metre*: the rhythm of the poem.

*Octave*: 8-line stanza of poetry.

*Paradox*: a statement that appears at first to be contradictory, but upon reflection then makes sense.

*Personification*: attributing human characteristics to a non-human thing.

*Petrarchan sonnet*: a sonnet comprised of an octave and sestet with the volta occurring usually after the octave.

*Poetic device*: a tool that a poet uses to convey meaning and enhance a poem's structure, sound, and/or rhythm.

*Quatrain*: a 4-line stanza.

*Repetition*: the repeating words, phrases, lines, or stanzas in a poem.

*Rhyme scheme*: the particular way a poem rhymes.

*Sensory imagery*: descriptive language that appeals to one of the reader's five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell.

Sestet: 6-line stanza of poetry.

*Simile*: a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things using the words 'like' or 'as'.

*Sonnet*: a poem of 14 lines.

Stanza: a section of poetry.

*Tone*: the author's attitude towards the subject of the poem; the mood of the poem.

*Volta*: Italian for 'turn'. The *volta* is a turn (or change) in thought or argument in the sonnet which comes after the octave.

### Artwork Acknowledgements

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