



# *The Poetry Response*

## *Advanced Placement Summer Institute*

*2011*

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## Poetry Response Assignment

Students sometimes cringe when they learn that a major focus of this course is poetry. As children most of you loved poetry, reciting nursery rhymes and chanting limericks. What happened? We don't have the answer, but one of our goals this year will be to rekindle your enthusiasm for and appreciation of poetry.

Laurence Perrine suggests, "People have read poetry or listened to it or recited it because they liked it, because it gave them enjoyment. But this is not the whole answer. Poetry in all ages has been regarded as important, not simply as one of several alternative forms of amusement, as one person might choose bowling, another, chess, and another, poetry. Rather, it has been regarded as something central to existence, something having unique value to the fully realized life, something that we are better off for having and without which we are spiritually impoverished."

John Ciardi writes, "Everyone who has an emotion and a language knows something about poetry. What he knows may not be much on an absolute scale, and it may not be organized within him in a useful way, but once he discovers the pleasure of poetry, he is likely to be surprised to discover how much he always knew without knowing he knew it. He may discover, somewhat as the character in the French play discovered to his amazement that he had been talking prose all his life, that he had been living poetry. Poetry, after all, is about life. Anyone who is alive and conscious must have some information about it."

This year we are approaching poetry two ways. We are studying some poems in class, learning about the tools and devices poets use in their craft, talking about what a poem means or how it made you feel, or seeking answers to questions we raised while reading or studying. We might call this our structured or formal study of poetry. But we are also studying poetry informally through poetry responses.

You will be writing responses about every two weeks. Please look closely at the list of dates to know when these responses are due. You will have a different list of poems each quarter. Your first job is to get to know them. To that end, you

will read all the poems from the list at least once every week. Read them at different times, in different places, and in different moods. You will notice how the poems will reveal themselves to you over the weeks. Although you will respond on paper to only one poem for each assignment, you want to become acquainted with all the poems on the list.

For each assignment date, you will choose one poem from the list and write a response to that poem. These responses are to be a minimum of about 200 words, or the equal of one typed page. Place the response in "the box" at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Late poetry reactions do not receive credit.

You may approach this assignment several ways. Sometimes students write an analysis of the poem. They explain what is going on in the poem and relate what they think the theme is. Others begin with the theme and elaborate on that, while some apply the poem to themselves by relating a personal experience. Occasionally a student will write a response on one line from the poem. What you do with the response is up to you as long as you say something. Students who explain that they "could not understand the poem no matter how" they tried do not get credit. You will not like all the poems, but if you choose to write that you dislike a poem because of its content or style, support that with concrete detail.

*Adapted from Danny Lawrence;  
Career Center, Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

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## Poems for Response: Second Quarter

Choose one of the following poems for each of the poetry responses. All are found in Meyer, *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. on the indicated pages. Use a poem once only during the quarter. Write on one poem only for a poetry response.

Yousif al-Sa'igh, "An Iraqi Evening," p. 1309

Margaret Atwood, "February," p. 910

Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish," 781

Anne Bradstreet, "To My Dear and Loving Husband," p. 1241

Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool," p. 860

Randall Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," p. 832

E. E. Cummings, "In Just—," p. 1034

John Donne, "Death, be not proud," p. 1058

H. D., "Heat," p. 881

Linda Pastan, "Pass/Fail," p. 1252

Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays," p. 771

Seamus Heaney, "The Forge," p. 1013

Robert Herrick, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," p. 842

Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," p. 1162

John Keats, "La Belle Dame sans Merci," p. 1335

Millay, "I will put Chaos into fourteen lines," p. 1011

Robert Morgan, "Overalls," p. 1051

Sharon Olds, "Rites of Passage," p. 1047

Marge Piercy, "The Secretary Chant," p. 770

Henry Reed, "Naming of Parts," 943

Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz," p. 999

Shakespeare, "When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes," p. 1344

Shelley, "Ozymandias," p. 1344

Cathy Song, "The Youngest Daughter," p. 857

Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," p. BC-C

Walt Whitman, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer," p. 1352

Richard Wilbur, "A Late Aubade," 846

William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say," p. 1353

William Wordsworth, "The world is too much with us," p. 1009

William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium," p. 1359

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### Due Dates

<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	
<b>4</b>	
<b>5</b>	

<b>6</b>	
<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b>	
<b>9</b>	
<b>10</b>	

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## Poems for Response: Second Quarter, 2009-2010

Choose one poem for each of the poetry responses. Use a poem once only during the quarter. Write on one poem only for a poetry response. The dates for the second quarter are given here; changes may be announced in class. Use this log page to record the poem you choose to write on and the type of response you write. This page will help you complete a variety of responses.

**Due dates:**

1	Friday 13 November 2010	
2	Thursday 18 November 2010	
3	Wednesday 24 November 2010	
4	Thursday 2 December 2010	
5	Wednesday 8 December 2010	
6	Thursday 16 December 2010	
7	Thursday 6 January 2011	
8	Wednesday 12 January 2011	

## Poetry Response Student Log

	Date	Poem	Response
1	Wed 3 Oct	<i>Ozy</i>	<i>Personal, political</i>
2	Fri 12 Oct	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Political</i>
3	Wed 17 Oct	<i>Naming Parts</i>	<i>Political *</i>
4	Fri 26 Oct	<i>We Cool</i>	<i>Personal, structure</i>
5	Wed 31 Oct	<b>L A T E</b>	<b>L A T E</b>

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6	Wed 14 Nov	<i>Wild Swans</i>	<i>Analysis, personal</i>
7	Fri 23 Nov	<i>Belle Dame</i>	<i>Structure, analysis</i>
8	Wed 28 Nov	<i>In Just---</i>	<i>Mythology, fig. lang.</i>
9	Fri 7 Dec	<i>Golden Retrievals</i>	<i>Form, personal</i>
10	Wed 12 Dec	<i>Death not proud</i>	<i>Rhyme, meter</i>
11	Fri 21 Dec	<i>To the Virgins</i>	<i>Personal, humor, structure</i>
12	Wed 9 Jan	<i>That the Night Come</i>	<i>Scansion</i>
13	Fri 18 Jan	<i>the Forge</i>	<i>Comparison (theme)</i>

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14	Wed 6 Feb	<i>Out, Out</i>	<i>Theme, relates to AILDying</i>
15	Fri 15 Feb	<i>When I consider</i>	<i>Personal, thematic</i>
16	Wed 20 Feb	<i>When in disgrace</i>	<i>Political, personal</i>
17	Fri 29 Feb	<i>Birches</i>	<i>Comparison (Out out)</i>
18	Wed 5 Mar	<i>Fern Hill</i>	<i>Cultural, structure</i>
19	Fri 14 Mar	<i>Leda and the Swan</i>	<i>Compare (Wild swans), personal</i>
20	Wed 19 Mar	<i>Late Aubade</i>	<i>Diction, patterns</i>
21	Fri 28 Mar	<i>Mother 2 Son</i>	<i>Political, Theme, Personal</i>
22	Wed 2 Apr	<i>Song</i>	<i>'spacey' personal</i>

100

23	Wed 16 Apr		
24	Fri 25 Apr		
25	Wed 30 Apr		

## Poetry Response: Quiz 1

1. Henry Reed's "Naming of Parts" is about the parts of (A) a medical exam (B) a mythical island (C) the United States (D) a rifle (E) the human heart.
2. Shelley's "Ozymandias" takes its title from (A) a river in Greece (B) an ancient king (C) the name of a poetic figure of speech (D) a Mediterranean warship (E) a set of prehistoric caves.
3. The speaker in Shakespeare's sonnet says that 'when in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes' things get better when he (A) happens to 'think on thee' (B) begins to count his blessings (C) remembers that God is forgiving (D) considers the wonders of nature (E) sees one 'less blest than I.'
4. The speaker in Williams's "This Is Just to Say" asks forgiveness for (A) killing a tree (B) breaking a promise (C) stealing a bicycle (D) leaving a wheelbarrow out in the rain (E) eating some plums.
5. Donne's "Death Be Not Proud" ends with (A) "Die not, poor Death" (B) "Ask not for whom the bell tolls" (C) "Death, thou shalt die." (D) "Good fences make good neighbors" (E) "Only the good die young."
6. The rivers in Langston Hughes's "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" are rivers (A) the speaker has visited on vacation (B) leading to the North and freedom from slavery (C) that symbolize oppression and slavery (D) representing experiences of the speaker's ancestors (E) destroyed by pollution and waste.
7. The "real cool" people in Gwendolyn Brooks's poem (A) remain in school (B) provide comfort to their parents in their old age (C) become famous as entertainers or athletes (D) write poetry (E) die young.
8. The knight in Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" is (A) Sir Lancelot (B) pale and alone (C) the future King Arthur (D) defending his castle and title (E) not a knight at all but a lowly peasant.
9. The setting of Sharon Olds's "Rite of Passage" is (A) a birthday party (B) a wedding (C) the sailing of a ship to a war zone (D) a deserted garden (E) a graduation ceremony.
10. In "February," Margaret Atwood uses as both an audience and a symbol (A) her cat (B) a snow storm (C) the woman next door (D) a veterinarian (E) two calendars.

## Poetry Response: Quiz 1

Answer the following questions with a word or phrase. (Use a complete sentence, go to jail.)

11. Henry Reed's "Naming of Parts" is about the parts of what?

*a rifle*

12. What does the speaker in Shelley's "Ozymandias" find in the desert?

*a broken statue*

13. What does the speaker in Shakespeare's sonnet say makes things better when he feels "in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes"?

*"thee" (a lover / a girlfriend / a friend...)*

14. What has the speaker in Williams's done that he apologizes for?

*eaten some plums*

15. What are the final word of Donne's "Death Be Not Proud"?

*Death, thou shalt die.*

16. What are two of the rivers named in Langston Hughes's "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"?

*Euphrates, Congo, Nile, Mississippi*

17. What happens to the "real cool" people in Gwendolyn Brooks's poem?

*They die.*

18. What does the knight in Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" look like?

*"alone and palely loitering"*

19. What is the setting of Sharon Olds's "Rite of Passage"?

*her son's birthday party*

20. To what sport does Margaret Atwood refer in "February"?

*ice hockey*

## T e a c h e r ' s   D i s c u s s i o n   G u i d e s

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### TP - COASTT: a mnemonic for poetry

<b>Title</b>	multiple meanings?
<b>Paraphrase</b>	Rephrase the poem
<b>Connotation</b>	meaning beyond the literal.
<b>Organization</b>	organizational patterns,
<b>Attitude</b>	Identify the tone—both the speaker's and the poet's attitude
<b>Shifts*</b>	Locate shifts in speaker, tone, setting, syntax, diction...
<b>Title</b>	Examine the title again
<b>Theme</b>	Determine what the poem says

#### Signals

- Key words (*still, but, yet, although,...*)
- Punctuation (consider every mark)
- Stanza or paragraph divisions
- Changes in line or stanza length or both

#### Types

- Structure (how the work is organized)
- Changes in syntax (sentence length and construction)
- Changes in sound (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance...)
- Changes in diction (level or type)

#### Patterns

- Are the shifts sudden? progressive? recursive? Why?

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### APPROACHING THE POEM

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#### Level 1

- Detail:      What details stand out? Is there an obvious pattern?
- Diction:    [1] Characterize it [2] Is it consistent? varied? shifting?
- Syntax:     [1] What level is it? [2] Characterize it [3] Is it balanced? varied? shifting?
- Imagery:    [1] What images dominate? To which sense do they appeal?
- Structure:   What are the parts? Is it a fixed form?

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#### Level 2

- Rhetoric:   Which words have the strongest connotations?
- Which figures of speech dominate?
- Is there antithesis? irony? parallels? paradox?
- Sounds:    Rhyme? Rhythm? alliteration? assonance? consonance?

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#### Level 3

- Themes:    How do the elements combine to produce or emphasize the theme(s)?



*Elizabeth Bishop*

## One Art

The art of losing isn't hard to master;  
so many things seem filled with the intent  
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

5 Lose something every day. Accept the fluster  
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:  
places, and names, and where it was you meant  
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

10 I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or  
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,  
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.  
15 I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture  
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident  
the art of losing's not too hard to master  
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

From *The Complete Poems 1927-1979* by Elizabeth Bishop, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. Copyright © 1979, 1983 by Alice Helen Methfessel. Used with permission.