OZYMANDIAS

Percy Bysshe Shelley



WHAT HAPPENS? A ruined statue exposes the gap between a ruler's ambition and what survives.

BIG IDEA **Power leaves claims behind; surviving art makes those claims vulnerable to judgement.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone"

Contrasting adjectives

The monument's vast scale suggests power, but its missing body exposes that power as broken.

"sneer of cold command"

Alliteration

Hard consonants sharpen the impression of severity.

"Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Imperative and irony

The ruler commands admiration; the surrounding ruin makes the command an ironic warning about failure.

"Nothing beside remains."

Abrupt sentence

A short declaration punctures the ruler's expansive boast.

FORM

A 14-line sonnet in one stanza; mainly iambic pentameter with an interwoven rhyme scheme.

CONTEXT

Shelley published the poem in 1818. The ruined monument recalls Ramesses II; its political warning reaches beyond one ruler.

COMPARE IT WITH…

My Last Duchess: controlling men and the limits of power. The Prelude: human confidence challenged.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Opening encounter

DETACHED

The opening speaker reports a traveller, placing the ruler at several removes from the reader.

Statue and inscription

CRITICAL, THEN COMMANDING

Fragments reveal cruelty before the inscription briefly restores the ruler's own voice.

Final landscape

BLEAK AND IRONIC

The account answers the boast with emptiness, then expands beyond the monument.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

LONDON

William Blake



WHAT HAPPENS? A walk through the city reveals suffering and restrictive institutions.

BIG IDEA **Oppression is a system shaping bodies, voices and even the ways people imagine freedom.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“each chartered street,”

Repetition

The description of legally controlled space applies to both the street and the river, suggesting pervasive restriction.

“The mind-forged manacles I hear:”

Metaphor

Imprisonment becomes psychological as well as material.

“Runs in blood down palace walls.”

Violent imagery

The soldier’s distress becomes an accusation against royal power.

“the marriage hearse.”

Oxymoron

A union associated with new life is fused with death.

FORM

Four quatrains with alternating rhyme; the recurring patterns can suggest an enclosing social order.

CONTEXT

Published in Songs of Experience (1794), the poem attacks suffering within supposedly civilised institutions.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Checking Out Me History: institutional control. The Emigrée: contrasting visions of a city.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Stanza 1

OBSERVANT AND TROUBLED

A first-person walker encounters restrictions in streets, river and faces.

Stanzas 2–3

ACCUSATORY

Repeated cries connect private pain to mental constraint, Church and monarchy.

Stanza 4

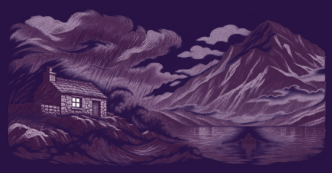
BITTER AND DESPAIRING

The focus on young people and marriage implies that suffering reproduces itself.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

EXTRACT FROM THE PRELUDE



William Wordsworth

WHAT HAPPENS? A youthful boating adventure becomes an unsettling encounter with nature.

BIG IDEA **Nature overturns the young speaker's self-assurance and remains powerful inside his imagination.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"an act of stealth"

Moral diction

The speaker recognises secrecy and wrongdoing even before the apparently pleasurable adventure begins.

"Went heaving through the water like a swan;"

Simile

The youthful rower imagines graceful command of the water.

"a huge peak, black and huge,"

Repetition

Scale overwhelms the earlier graceful self-image.

"a trouble to my dreams."

Psychological aftermath

The event continues after physical danger has passed.

FORM

An autobiographical verse extract in unrhymed iambic pentameter, or blank verse.

CONTEXT

Wordsworth's Romantic writing explores the mind's relationship with nature. The extract appears in the posthumous 1850 Prelude.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Storm on the Island: nature overturns human security. Ozymandias: limits of power.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Taking the boat

SECRETLY EXCITED

The apparent adventure begins with confidence mixed with awareness of wrongdoing.

Mountain encounter

AWED AND AFRAID

A peak appears to pursue the rower; the landscape seems capable of independent action.

After returning

DISTURBED AND REFLECTIVE

The adult narrator describes an enduring change in the child's thoughts and dreams.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

MY LAST DUCHESS

Robert Browning



WHAT HAPPENS? A Duke displays a portrait while revealing a disturbing need for control.

BIG IDEA **The Duke's attempt to control a woman's image exposes his own possessiveness.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,"

Possessive determiner

The introduction presents a relationship through ownership.

"My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name"

Status imagery

Inherited rank becomes his measure of personal value.

"I gave commands;"

Euphemistic statement

He withholds details while implying devastating authority.

"Taming a sea-horse,"

Symbolic artwork

The closing sculpture echoes his wish to dominate living beings.

FORM

A dramatic monologue in rhyming pentameter couplets; enjambment complicates its polished surface.

CONTEXT

Browning places the speaker in Renaissance Ferrara. Aristocratic marriage, inheritance and patronage shape the negotiation.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Ozymandias: pride and power.
Checking Out Me History: control over a person's story.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Showing the portrait

POLISHED AND PROPRIETORIAL

The Duke controls access to the picture and guides his visitor's attention.

Recalling her conduct

JEALOUS AND SELF-JUSTIFYING

Ordinary generosity becomes, in his account, an offence against his status.

Commands and next marriage

MENACINGLY CASUAL

The account of silencing gives way to another marriage negotiation and another artwork.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE



Alfred Lord Tennyson

WHAT HAPPENS? Soldiers follow a disastrous command and are commemorated for their courage.

BIG IDEA **Public honour celebrates the soldiers while the poem also records the failure that endangered them.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“Into the valley of Death”

Biblical allusion

The landscape frames the charge as an encounter with mortality.

“Some one had blunder’d:”

Plain statement

A brief admission separates command error from soldiers’ bravery.

“Into the jaws of Death,”

Personification

Danger becomes a consuming creature.

“Honour the Light Brigade,”

Imperative

The ending makes remembrance an audience responsibility.

FORM

Six stanzas with a strong driving rhythm, including dactylic movement, and recurrent phrases.

CONTEXT

The poem commemorates the 1854 cavalry charge during the Crimean War, prompted by a disastrous order.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Bayonet Charge: a different experience of battle. Exposure: the cost of military duty.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Advance

URGENT AND OMINOUS

Repetition propels the cavalry towards danger already known to the reader.

Battle and return

ADMIRING BUT COSTLY

Encirclement and violent action make courage visible; returning numbers are diminished.

Final address

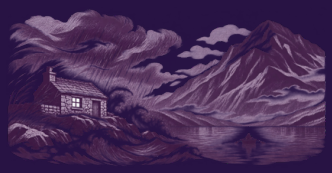
COMMEMORATIVE

The speaker turns to the audience and asks that the soldiers be honoured.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXPOSURE

Wilfred Owen



WHAT HAPPENS? Waiting soldiers are worn down by cold, fear and a lack of progress.

BIG IDEA **War destroys through exhaustion and waiting as well as battle; nature defeats the promise of military purpose.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“merciless iced east winds that knive”

Personification

Weather is imagined as a pitiless attacker.

“But nothing happens.”

Refrain

Repeated inaction becomes an account of gradual destruction.

“Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army”

Metaphor

Dawn brings another hostile force rather than rescue.

“All their eyes are ice,”

Metaphor

The final bodily image freezes perception and life together.

FORM

Eight five-line stanzas; recurring shortened endings and pararhyme prevent a reassuring resolution.

CONTEXT

Owen wrote from his experience of the First World War. The collective voice centres soldiers’ suffering.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Storm on the Island: threatening nature. Bayonet Charge: different wartime experiences.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Opening watch

EXHAUSTED AND ANXIOUS

Silent waiting already causes bodily and mental pain.

Snow and imagined home

NUMB AND ESTRANGED

Dreams of warmth offer no secure escape; the men imagine themselves shut out.

Faith and burial

DESOLATE

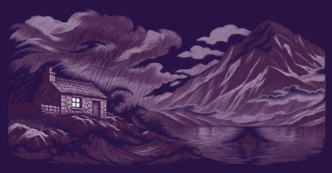
Religious doubt and frozen faces replace the expectation of a meaningful advance.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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STORM ON THE ISLAND

Seamus Heaney



WHAT HAPPENS? An apparently prepared community confronts a storm it cannot fully control.

BIG IDEA **Preparation offers limited protection when an invisible force makes human confidence collapse.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“prepared”

Declarative opening

The initial confidence becomes a position the poem tests.

“tame cat”

Simile

Familiarity offers a false expectation of safety.

“savage”

Tonal reversal

One adjective turns domestic comfort into danger.

“huge nothing”

Paradox

The unseen force feels enormous despite its intangibility.

FORM

One 19-line stanza, predominantly blank verse; conversational address gives way to military imagery.

CONTEXT

Heaney’s island setting invites a literal reading of extreme weather. Political resonance is possible, but should be argued from details.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Exposure: nature as an adversary. The Prelude: confidence overturned.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Opening houses

CONFIDENT

The collective speaker lists practical measures that seem to establish security.

Sea and wind

UNSETTLED

An apparently familiar environment turns threatening and attacks the home.

Last lines

FEARFUL AND QUESTIONING

The threat cannot be grasped; the ending makes fear itself part of the problem.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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BAYONET CHARGE

Ted Hughes



WHAT HAPPENS? A soldier's physical rush into battle disrupts abstract ideas of patriotic purpose.

BIG IDEA **Physical terror strips the soldier of the abstract ideals that might once have justified battle.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Suddenly"

In medias res

The opening denies the reader a calm approach to the action.

"cold clockwork"

Metaphor

The soldier imagines himself as a component in an impersonal mechanism.

"yellow hare"

Animal imagery

The injured creature exposes the indiscriminate cost of violence.

"etcetera"

Dismissive listing

Public ideals become dispensable when immediate survival dominates.

FORM

Three unequal stanzas in free verse; disrupted movement and enjambment follow a disorientated consciousness.

CONTEXT

Hughes was born after the First World War. The poem imagines combat rather than reporting his own military experience.

COMPARE IT WITH…

The Charge of the Light Brigade: public ideals versus individual experience. Remains: psychological cost.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Running

BREATHLESS AND SHOCKED

An abrupt start places the reader inside motion before an explanation arrives.

Hesitation

BEWILDERED

The soldier questions his place in forces larger than his understanding.

Hare and renewed charge

DESPERATE

Animal suffering precedes a return to instinctive survival.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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REMAINS

Simon Armitage



WHAT HAPPENS? A veteran's memory of a shooting continues to intrude after deployment.

BIG IDEA **A shooting that seems finished remains mentally present because responsibility and uncertainty have not ended.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"probably armed"

Qualification

The threat was never completely certain.

"possibly not"

Counterweight

The alternative possibility keeps moral doubt alive.

"blood-shadow"

Compound metaphor

A physical trace becomes an image of persistent memory.

"bloody hands"

Guilt imagery

The ending makes the narrator's own responsibility impossible to wash away.

FORM

A dramatic monologue in colloquial free verse; a short final stanza concentrates the personal aftermath.

CONTEXT

Armitage's The Not Dead project drew on veterans' accounts. The poem explores trauma without making every veteran's experience identical.

COMPARE IT WITH…

War Photographer: memory and responsibility. Poppies: conflict beyond the battlefield.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Shooting

CONVERSATIONAL, THEN GRAPHIC

An apparently routine account becomes a vivid description of bodily destruction.

Return home

INTRUSIVE AND REPETITIVE

The setting changes, but the killing returns through perception, sleep and dreams.

Final admission

ENTRAPPED AND GUILTY

The narrator's focus narrows from the group to personal responsibility.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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POPPIES

Jane Weir



WHAT HAPPENS? A parent recalls a son's departure through intimate domestic details.

BIG IDEA **Separation can turn ordinary acts of care into an intense private encounter with public conflict.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"spasms"

Bodily diction

A paper flower briefly evokes involuntary pain.

"blockade"

Military metaphor

The vocabulary of war enters a domestic fastening.

"song bird"

Symbolism

Release links independence with the parent's loss of control.

"playground voice"

Auditory memory

The ending reaches towards an earlier, familiar version of the child.

FORM

A first-person address in four unequal stanzas of free verse; recollection moves between domestic and commemorative spaces.

CONTEXT

Written for a contemporary collection responding to war. Remembrance symbols coexist with a parent's specific emotional experience.

COMPARE IT WITH…

War Photographer: private responses to public conflict. Kamikaze: family and loss.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Preparing to leave

TENDER BUT RESTRAINED

Clothes and touch carry feelings the speaker struggles to express.

Departure

PROUD AND BEREFT

The child's excitement is followed by the parent's solitary movements at home.

Memorial

LONGING AND UNCERTAIN

A search for connection ends in listening; the son's death is not explicitly confirmed.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

Carol Ann Duffy



WHAT HAPPENS? Developing photographs makes a photographer confront suffering and distant public reactions.

BIG IDEA **Making suffering visible does not guarantee that distant viewers will accept responsibility.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“ordered rows”

Visual arrangement

The darkroom imposes neatness on representations of suffering.

“priest”

Religious comparison

The work acquires the gravity of a ritual for the dead.

“half-formed ghost”

Metaphor

The photograph becomes an unsettling return of a person.

“impassively”

Adverb

The ending complicates whether apparent detachment protects or numbs him.

FORM

Four six-line stanzas with a recurring rhyme pattern; formal order contrasts with disturbing memories.

CONTEXT

Duffy considers the ethical work of conflict photography and a comfortable readership’s distance from violence.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Remains: memories that persist.
Poppies: personal and public loss.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Darkroom

SOLEMN AND CONTROLLED

Private processing resembles ritual, attempting to order what has been witnessed.

Emerging image

DISTRESSED

A developing face draws the photographer back into an encounter with death.

Publication and departure

BITTERLY DETACHED

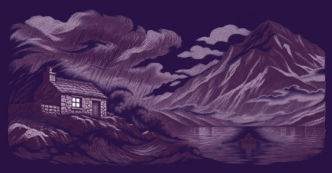
Editorial selection and brief public feeling limit the photograph’s power to change behaviour.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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TISSUE

Imtiaz Dharker



WHAT HAPPENS? Paper becomes a way to reconsider human systems, buildings and fragile lives.

BIG IDEA **Human structures might become more humane if they accepted permeability, fragility and change.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“light”

Recurring motif

Illumination passes through rather than simply defeating a material.

“borderlines”

Political image

Lines on paper can organise and restrict real human movement.

“paper kites”

Simile

Economic documents are reimagined as things that could release rather than govern.

“your skin”

Direct address

The final transformation brings the abstract argument back to human vulnerability.

FORM

Free verse in nine quatrains followed by a final single line; frequent enjambment loosens boundaries.

CONTEXT

Dharker connects everyday paper, written histories and built environments. The poem invites interpretation rather than a single architectural prescription.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Ozymandias: impermanence. London: systems that organise human lives.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Paper and records

REFLECTIVE

Light passing through a delicate material suggests a different kind of power.

Maps and money

QUESTIONING

Ordinary documents reveal the systems through which people organise life.

Architecture and skin

VISIONARY AND INTIMATE

Imagined construction becomes a final recognition of the living body.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

THE ÉMIGREE

Carol Rumens



WHAT HAPPENS? A displaced speaker protects a luminous memory of a city against threatening reports.

BIG IDEA **Remembered belonging can resist political exclusion while remaining selective and idealised.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“sunlight-clear”

Compound adjective

Memory is made bright and apparently certain.

“branded”

Violent verb

Attachment becomes a permanent mark, carrying pleasure and pain.

“docile”

Personification

The remembered city seems available to care for and control.

“shadow”

Contrasting imagery

Even darkness is interpreted as evidence that remembered light persists.

FORM

Three stanzas of free verse; recurring light imagery links each movement of the speaker’s recollection.

CONTEXT

An unnamed city prevents a single historical identification. Displacement and hostile national boundaries shape the imagined situation.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Checking Out Me History: identity and resistance. London: contrasting city experiences.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Childhood city

AFFECTIONATE AND DEFIANT

Reports of change cannot displace the speaker’s luminous first memory.

Language and borders

PROTECTIVE

Time and restriction intensify the need to preserve an internal homeland.

City in exile

LOVING BUT THREATENED

Personification brings the city close while hostile voices make belonging precarious.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

CHECKING OUT ME HISTORY



John Agard

WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker challenges a selective education and reclaims neglected historical figures.

BIG IDEA **Identity develops through questioning the histories that institutions choose to make visible.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Dem tell me"

Refrain

Repeated instruction becomes evidence of an imbalance of authority.

"Blind"

Metaphor

Selective education is presented as an obstruction to self-knowledge.

"healing star"

Metaphor

Seacole becomes a source of guidance as well as medical care.

"carving"

Creative verb

The ending presents identity as an active, ongoing achievement.

FORM

A performance-oriented poem with contrasting stanza shapes, rhythms and typography rather than a fixed metre.

CONTEXT

Agard challenges a colonial education and celebrates histories of Black resistance and care. His chosen voice asserts cultural authority.

COMPARE IT WITH…

The Emigrée: protecting identity.
London: institutional power.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Repeated teaching

MOCKING AND FRUSTRATED

An imposed curriculum is made audible through recurrent reports of what is taught.

Alternative histories

CELEBRATORY

Distinct verse passages give neglected figures the imaginative space denied to them.

Ending

SELF-ASSERTIVE

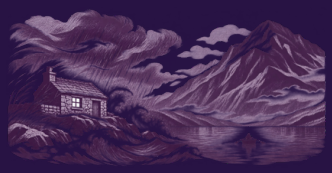
The speaker moves from receiving a history to actively shaping an identity.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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KAMIKAZE

Beatrice Garland



WHAT HAPPENS? A daughter recounts a pilot's return and the family's subsequent rejection of him.

BIG IDEA **A decision to survive can lead to social exclusion so severe that ordinary ideas of life and death become unstable.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"one-way"

Fatalistic adjective

The mission's intended endpoint is embedded in its preparation.

"incantations"

Ritual diction

Patriotic teaching acquires the repetitive force of a spell.

"green-blue translucent sea"

Sensory imagery

The living world offers a vivid alternative to the mission.

"which"

Interrogative word

The ending leaves the relative costs of different deaths unresolved.

FORM

Seven six-line stanzas; a daughter's account incorporates imagined memories and uncertainty about the pilot's mind.

CONTEXT

Kamikaze missions were Japanese suicide attacks in the Second World War. The poem examines the family cost of expectations of honour.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Poppies: family and conflict. The Emigrée: belonging and exclusion.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Departure

CEREMONIAL AND EXPECTANT

Preparations establish a mission shaped by national duty and anticipated death.

Sea and childhood

SENSUOUS AND SPECULATIVE

The daughter imagines what natural beauty and remembered family life might have awakened.

Return and rejection

COLD AND MOURNFUL

Physical survival is followed by a loss of recognition within the family.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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WHEN WE TWO PARTED

Lord Byron



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker revisits a secret relationship through grief, betrayal and silence.

BIG IDEA **Secrecy and betrayal leave a relationship emotionally unfinished long after its end.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“In silence and tears,”

Repeated phrase

The ending shows that time has not supplied a new response.

“Colder thy kiss;”

Comparative adjective

Expected warmth becomes an intensified sign of emotional distance.

“A knell in mine ear;”

Metaphor

Hearing the former lover’s name resembles hearing a funeral bell.

“In secret we met –”

Retrospective revelation

Secrecy explains why suffering has remained privately contained.

FORM

Four eight-line stanzas with recurring rhyme and short lines; the final phrase returns to the opening.

CONTEXT

Byron’s lyric presents a wounded speaker. Treat the voice as a constructed perspective rather than a transparent autobiography.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Neutral Tones: painful memory. Winter Swans: a contrasting possibility of repair.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Separation

GRIEVING

Physical coldness makes the original parting feel like a warning of future hurt.

Public name, private history

ASHAMED AND RESENTFUL

Other people’s conversation reopens a wound they do not know exists.

Imagined reunion

UNRESOLVED

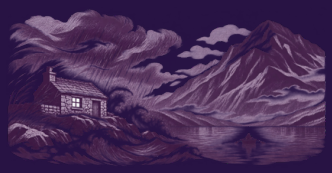
A future encounter circles back to the emotional language of the separation.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Percy Bysshe Shelley



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker uses examples from nature to argue for physical closeness.

BIG IDEA **A speaker turns the apparent harmony of nature into a persuasive argument for intimacy.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"The fountains mingle with the river"

Recurring verb

Different elements seem to participate willingly in union.

"All things by a law divine"

Religious diction

The appeal claims a higher authority for the speaker's desire.

"See the mountains kiss high Heaven,"

Personification

The landscape is made to model human intimacy.

"If thou kiss not me?"

Conditional question

The argument ends by making nature's apparent harmony depend on a personal response.

FORM

Two eight-line stanzas with alternating rhyme; each ends in a direct question to the beloved.

CONTEXT

Shelley's Romantic attention to nature becomes a rhetorical strategy. The speaker's claim is an argument, not an objective natural law.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Sonnet 29: longing for presence. Porphyria's Lover: unequal ideas about desire.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Water and wind

PLAYFULLY ASSURED

Examples of mingling present togetherness as the normal condition of nature.

First question

PERSONALLY INSISTENT

The general principle becomes a request involving the speaker and addressee.

Mountains to last question

INTENSIFYING

Kissing imagery accumulates until the practical desire is made unmistakable.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

Robert Browning



WHAT HAPPENS? A possessive speaker kills the woman he claims to love.

BIG IDEA **The lover's claim to preserve a perfect relationship reveals possession, violence and distorted moral reasoning.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"The sullen wind was soon awake,"

Pathetic fallacy

Hostile weather establishes emotional disturbance before the relationship is explained.

"That moment she was mine, mine, fair,"

Repetition

Affection is replaced by a claim of ownership.

"No pain felt she;"

Self-justification

The assertion tries to control how the reader judges the killing.

"And yet God has not said a word!"

Distorted reasoning

Silence supplies no reliable moral approval, despite the speaker's implication.

FORM

A 60-line dramatic monologue; a recurring ABABB rhyme pattern gives disturbing order to the account.

CONTEXT

Victorian dramatic monologues often expose speakers indirectly. The woman's wishes reach us only through the killer's unreliable account.

COMPARE IT WITH…

The Farmer's Bride: possessiveness and silencing. Love's Philosophy: persuasion and desire.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Arrival

DEPENDENT AND WITHDRAWN

Porphyria brings warmth and initiates physical closeness while the speaker remains passive.

Decision and killing

POSSESSIVE AND CHILLING

Her affection is interpreted as complete ownership and used to justify violence.

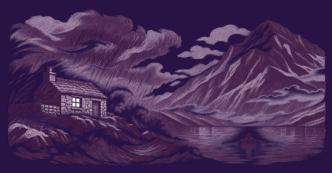
Aftermath

DISTURBINGLY COMPLACENT

The speaker arranges the body and reads divine silence as if it confirmed his conduct.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

SONNET 29 – ‘I THINK OF THEE!’



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

WHAT HAPPENS? Thoughts of the beloved become so abundant that the speaker calls for real presence.

BIG IDEA **Imagination nourishes love but must give way when it conceals the real person it desires.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“my thoughts do twine and bud”

Extended plant metaphor

Thoughts grow vigorously, but their abundance risks concealing the beloved’s distinct reality.

“I will not have my thoughts instead of thee”

Early argumentative turn

The refusal redirects the poem away from imagining the beloved and towards a real encounter.

“Renew thy presence;”

Imperative

The speaker actively asks for the beloved’s return.

“I am too near thee.”

Reversal

The final intimacy transforms the meaning of the opening declaration.

FORM

A 14-line Petrarchan sonnet with an early argumentative turn and an extended plant metaphor.

CONTEXT

From Sonnets from the Portuguese (1850), the poem gives a woman an assertive voice in the expression of desire.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Love’s Philosophy: desire for closeness. Letters From Yorkshire: connection across distance.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Thoughts grow

EXUBERANT

The speaker’s imagining spreads so vigorously that it begins to hide its object.

Turn towards presence

URGENT AND COMMANDING

A qualification redirects the poem from fantasy towards an encounter.

Final closeness

JOYFUL

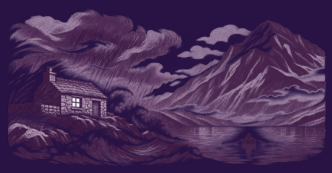
Physical presence makes the opening activity of imagining unnecessary.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

NEUTRAL TONES

Thomas Hardy



WHAT HAPPENS? A remembered meeting in a bleak landscape becomes an image of failed love.

BIG IDEA **A failed relationship makes one memory into a lasting lens through which the speaker interprets love.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“the sun was white, as though chidden of God,”

Colour imagery

The sun fails to provide the warmth conventionally associated with it.

“a few leaves lay on the starving sod;”

Personification

The earth seems deprived of nourishment, reflecting the relationship.

“The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing”

Superlative paradox

A smile, normally a sign of life, becomes an image of emotional extinction.

“keen lessons that love deceives,”

Personification

The speaker converts a particular loss into a broad, pessimistic lesson.

FORM

Four quatrains with enclosing ABBA rhyme; the final stanza returns to details from the opening.

CONTEXT

Written in 1867, Hardy’s lyric uses a remembered landscape to test optimistic expectations about love.

COMPARE IT WITH…

When We Two Parted: enduring hurt.
Winter Swans: weather and relationships.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Pond and winter

BLEAK

Colour and life appear drained from the setting.

Eyes and smile

BITTER

The lovers’ exchanges make intimacy seem exhausted and hostile.

Later lesson

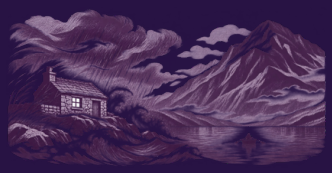
DISILLUSIONED

The remembered scene becomes a general belief about deception in love.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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LETTERS FROM YORKSHIRE



Maura Dooley

WHAT HAPPENS? Correspondence connects people whose daily lives are physically far apart.

BIG IDEA **An ordinary exchange of letters makes different lives mutually accessible without erasing their distance.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“singing”

Personification

Warming hands give physical work an unexpectedly joyful sensory quality.

“heartful”

Compound word

The speaker’s writing life is crowded with emotional and public concerns.

“air and light”

Metaphor

The letter carries an experience of the outdoor world.

“icy miles”

Setting and metaphor

Distance feels severe, making continued communication more valuable.

FORM

Five tercets in free verse; enjambment allows thought and communication to move across stanza boundaries.

CONTEXT

Dooley places contemporary writing and news alongside gardening and seasonal labour. The relationship need not be labelled romantic.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Sonnet 29: thought and presence. Follower: different relationships with rural work.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Garden and letter

WARMLY OBSERVANT

A seasonal sight prompts communication from the correspondent’s working day.

Different lives

QUESTIONING

The speaker briefly tests whether physical labour offers a more authentic life.

Shared news

CONNECTED

Separate homes remain separate, but words establish an imaginative meeting place.

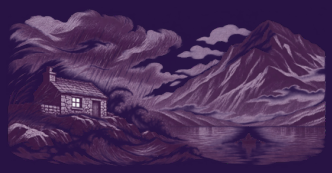
FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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EXAM STASH

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

THE FARMER'S BRIDE



Charlotte Mew

WHAT HAPPENS? A farmer describes his young wife's withdrawal while revealing his own frustration.

BIG IDEA **The farmer's account exposes how sympathy can coexist with a failure to respect another person's freedom.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Three Summers since I chose a maid,"

Agency

The opening centres the farmer's decision, not a mutual agreement.

"We chased her, flying like a hare"

Simile

The pursuit makes the bride seem hunted.

"And turned the key upon her, fast."

Action

The practical detail exposes confinement beneath claims of concern.

"her eyes, her hair, her hair!"

Repetition

The fractured ending reveals intensifying fixation rather than understanding.

FORM

A dramatic monologue in six unequal stanzas; rural speech and shifting line lengths develop an uneasy personal voice.

CONTEXT

Mew gives the husband the speaking role while making the young bride's fear visible through the limitations of his account.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Porphyria's Lover: possessive narrators. Follower: a contrasting rural relationship.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Marriage and flight

BAFFLED

The farmer recalls the bride's fear while presenting the marriage as his own choice.

Capture and domestic life

UNEASILY DESCRIPTIVE

Images of vulnerable animals reveal a woman who seeks safety away from men.

Attic and final outburst

FRUSTRATED AND DESIROUS

The speaker's attention narrows to her body, leaving the threat unresolved.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

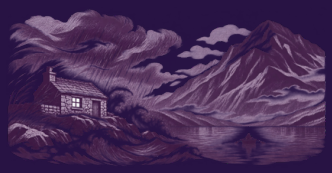
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EXAM STASH

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

WALKING AWAY

Cecil Day-Lewis



WHAT HAPPENS? A parent remembers a child's move towards independence.

BIG IDEA **A parent's love must make room for the child's independence, even when separation feels painful.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"satellite"

Simile

The child moves outward while remaining part of a relationship.

"wrenched"

Violent verb

A small separation is felt with disproportionate emotional force.

"half-fledged"

Bird imagery

The child's developing independence is real but incomplete.

"letting go"

Final principle

Love becomes an action that accepts separation rather than preventing it.

FORM

Four five-line stanzas with recurring ABACA rhyme; reflective first-person address looks back over eighteen years.

CONTEXT

Day-Lewis explores parenthood through a remembered school departure, connecting one small incident to continuing separation.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Mother, any distance: independence.
Follower: changing family roles.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

School memory

AFFECTIONATE AND WISTFUL

A child crossing a playing field becomes an image the parent cannot forget.

Images of release

ANXIOUS

Natural comparisons show independence as fragile, necessary growth.

Reflection

PAINFULLY ACCEPTING

The parent makes a distinction between loving someone and retaining control of them.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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EDEN ROCK

Charles Causley



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker imagines young parents calling from across a stream.

BIG IDEA **Precise family memories make an uncertain crossing feel both intimate and mysterious.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“twenty-five”

Precise age

The father appears in youth rather than as an elderly parent.

“three suns”

Unreal light

The intensified brightness transforms an ordinary sky into a visionary setting.

“other bank”

Symbolic boundary

Physical distance suggests a possible threshold beyond the picnic scene.

“like this”

Ambiguity

The final phrase withholds a complete explanation and invites reflection.

FORM

Four quatrains lead to a tercet and an isolated final line; a calm first-person vision develops into an ambiguous ending.

CONTEXT

Causley draws on family memory. The stream can suggest a boundary between life and death, but the poem never names a single meaning.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Before You Were Mine: imagining young parents. Walking Away: separation and connection.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Parents and picnic

AFFECTIONATE AND PRECISE

Ages, clothing and household objects make the vision vividly particular.

Light and stream

DREAMLIKE

Ordinary recollection becomes less realistic as the parents beckon from another bank.

Last isolated line

SURPRISED AND CONTEMPLATIVE

The speaker acknowledges an unexpected experience without defining it.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

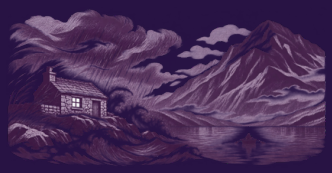
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EXAM STASH

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

FOLLOWER

Seamus Heaney



WHAT HAPPENS? A child admires a skilled farming father; the ending reverses who follows whom.

BIG IDEA **Admiration for a parent's mastery develops into an uneasy recognition that dependence can reverse.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"full sail"

Simile

The father's shoulders suggest strength and controlled movement.

"expert"

Minor sentence

The isolated judgement concentrates the child's admiration.

"stumbled"

Verb

The son's uncertain movement contrasts with paternal precision.

"stumbling"

Role reversal

The changed subject complicates whether following means care, burden or persistent memory.

FORM

Six quatrains with alternating full and slant rhymes; the final stanza turns from childhood to the present.

CONTEXT

Heaney's rural childhood informs the precision of farming language. The poem also explores inheritance and a son's different adult path.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Walking Away: changing family roles. Climbing My Grandfather: admiration through movement.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Father at work

ADMIRING

Detailed observation presents a skilled body controlling the plough and horses.

Child following

SELF-DEPRECATING

The son wants to imitate that competence but remembers clumsiness and dependence.

Present reversal

UNEASY

The father becomes the follower, changing the title's original relationship.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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MOTHER, ANY DISTANCE

Simon Armitage



WHAT HAPPENS? Measuring a home becomes an exploration of dependence and independence.

BIG IDEA **Moving towards independence stretches a family bond without making its value disappear.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Anchor"

Metaphor

The mother offers security, which can also imply being held in place.

"Kite"

Metaphor

The adult child imagines movement that still depends on a line.

"breaking point"

Double meaning

A physical limit also names a moment of change in the relationship.

"fall or fly"

Alliteration and alternatives

The ending leaves independence open to risk as well as fulfilment.

FORM

A sonnet-like poem of 15 lines in three unequal stanzas; the extra line unsettles a fixed inherited boundary.

CONTEXT

A familiar task of measuring a new home becomes a metaphor for an adult child's continuing relationship with a mother.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Walking Away: releasing a child.
Climbing My Grandfather: security and exploration.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Measuring together

PRACTICAL AND AFFECTIONATE

The shared job establishes that even an adult requires help.

Moving upstairs

EXPANSIVE

The tape becomes a connection through space and accumulated years.

Hatch and sky

EXHILARATED AND UNCERTAIN

The final threshold opens onto freedom with no guarantee of safety.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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BEFORE YOU WERE MINE



Carol Ann Duffy

WHAT HAPPENS? A daughter imagines her mother's youthful life before motherhood.

BIG IDEA **A daughter's imaginative love recovers the mother's independent youth while questioning a child's possessive claims.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Marilyn"

Cultural allusion

A film-star comparison makes the remembered young woman glamorous.

"possessive"

Self-description

The speaker recognises her own childhood claim on the mother.

"ghost"

Metaphor

Memory brings back an earlier identity that cannot be physically recovered.

"sparkle"

Dynamic verb

The ending preserves vitality rather than reducing the woman to a parental role.

FORM

Four five-line stanzas in free verse; direct address crosses between imagined photographs and personal memory.

CONTEXT

Duffy looks beyond the role of mother to a woman's social life, glamour and desires before her child existed.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Eden Rock: imagined parental youth.
Follower: admiration and changing perspective.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Young woman and friends

PLAYFUL AND ADMIRING

The daughter pictures a lively identity from before her own birth.

Imagined past and memory

AFFECTIONATELY POSSESSIVE

The speaker recognises both the mother's freedom and the demands motherhood brought.

Dancing recollection

CELEBRATORY

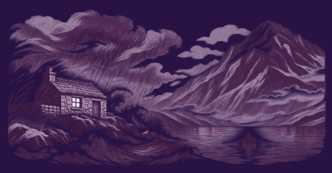
Movement keeps the youthful woman imaginatively alive across time.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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WINTER SWANS

Owen Sheers



WHAT HAPPENS? A couple's strained walk moves towards renewed closeness.

BIG IDEA **A damaged relationship can begin to repair through shared observation and a small physical movement.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"apart"

Spatial adjective

The walk's physical arrangement embodies the couple's estrangement.

"unison"

Coordinated movement

The birds offer an image of acting together without losing individuality.

"porcelain"

Metaphor

Apparent delicacy is combined with the swans' balanced strength.

"folded"

Closing verb

The hands settle into closeness, suggesting gentleness rather than forced repair.

FORM

Six tercets followed by a final couplet; enjambment and the changed ending shape movement towards pairing.

CONTEXT

Sheers makes a wintry landscape and observable animal behaviour a means of exploring a human relationship.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Neutral Tones: contrasting outcomes.
Love's Philosophy: nature and intimacy.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

After rain

STRAINED

The couple move through a saturated environment while maintaining emotional distance.

Watching swans

TENTATIVELY HOPEFUL

Synchronised movement offers an alternative pattern of relationship.

Hands meet

QUIETLY RECONCILIATORY

Physical closeness develops before either speaker explains it.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

SINGH SONG!

Daljit Nagra



WHAT HAPPENS? A shopkeeper celebrates marriage while customers complain about the shop.

BIG IDEA **Private tenderness and cultural self-expression challenge the idea that commercial duty should define a life.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“bride”

Recurring noun

The speaker keeps returning from business demands to the new relationship.

“Tartan sari”

Juxtaposition

The clothing image brings cultural influences together with playful confidence.

“moon”

Romantic image

The ordinary shop setting opens onto a shared imaginative world.

“priceless”

Double meaning

The final judgement uses commercial language to move beyond a financial valuation.

FORM

A dramatic monologue in free verse with recurring complaints and a final call-and-response exchange.

CONTEXT

Nagra’s crafted British Asian voice uses phonetic spellings and mixed cultural references to assert identity, humour and belonging.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Love’s Philosophy: desire. Before You Were Mine: identity beyond an expected role.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Shop and marriage

ENERGETIC AND COMIC

The speaker’s desire interrupts the expected routine of running a shop.

Wife and complaints

DEFIANT AND PLAYFUL

Public dissatisfaction contrasts with admiration for the bride’s independent identity.

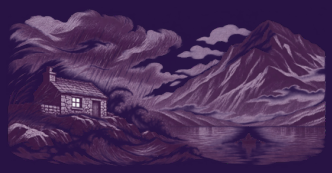
Night-time exchange

INTIMATE

The commercial setting becomes a space where affection exceeds monetary value.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

CLIMBING MY GRANDFATHER



Andrew Waterhouse

WHAT HAPPENS? A child's exploration of a grandfather becomes an imagined ascent.

BIG IDEA **Intimate observation turns a grandfather's ageing body into a landscape of adventure and security.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"free"

Double meaning

The climb begins without equipment, suggesting both risk and trust.

"warm ice"

Oxymoron

A familiar body is made strange through an unexpected tactile comparison.

"summit"

Extended metaphor

The grandfather's head completes the imagined mountain ascent.

"good heart"

Literal and figurative

The final pulse connects bodily life with moral affection.

FORM

One 27-line stanza of free verse; an extended climbing metaphor sustains a continuous upward exploration.

CONTEXT

Waterhouse's poem imagines family intimacy through mountaineering language, combining a childlike scale with close sensory attention.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Follower: admiration. Mother, any distance: exploration and safety.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Brogues and clothes

ADVENTUROUS

The decision to climb makes an ordinary relative seem vast and worth exploring.

Hands and shoulder

CAREFUL AND TRUSTING

Worn skin and scars reveal history while also supplying secure holds.

Head and heart

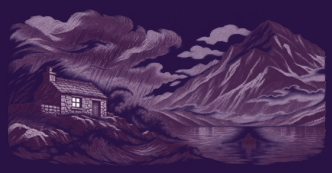
PEACEFUL

The ascent ends in rest, warmth and confidence in the grandfather's goodness.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING



William Wordsworth

WHAT HAPPENS? A resting speaker enjoys a grove but repeatedly returns to sadness about human conduct.

BIG IDEA **Nature's apparent harmony prompts a repeated question about the harm humans do to one another.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"I heard a thousand blended notes,"

Auditory imagery

Different sounds combine without losing their individual existence.

"And much it grieved my heart to think"

Emotional verb

Enjoyment and moral pain exist at the same time.

"Their thoughts I cannot measure:—"

Admission of limitation

The speaker does not claim complete access to the birds' experience.

"What man has made of man?"

Repeated question

Human suffering is presented as something humanity itself has produced.

FORM

Six quatrains with alternating rhyme; the shorter fourth lines repeatedly bring reflection to a point.

CONTEXT

Published in Lyrical Ballads in 1798, the poem connects Romantic attention to nature with an ethical question about humanity.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Shall earth no more inspire thee: different appeals to nature's restorative power. Like an Heiress: pleasure disrupted by human damage.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Resting and listening

PEACEFUL, THEN TROUBLED

Pleasant surroundings do not prevent sad thoughts from entering the speaker's mind.

Flowers, birds and branches

WONDERING

Small movements are interpreted as signs of pleasure, though the speaker admits limits to knowledge.

Returning question

LAMENTING

The poem finishes by testing human conduct against the speaker's belief in natural harmony.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

ENGLAND IN 1819

Percy Bysshe Shelley



WHAT HAPPENS? An attack on monarchy and institutions ends with a conditional hope of renewal.

BIG IDEA **Institutions that claim to sustain England are presented as draining its life, yet collapse may create an opening for change.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;”

Literal and figurative adjective

The accusation extends from physical decline to a failure to perceive suffering.

“But leechlike to their fainting country cling”

Simile

Rulers depend upon and weaken the country they govern.

“A people starved and stabbed in th’ untilled field;”

Alliteration

Linked verbs join material deprivation to direct violence.

“a glorious Phantom may”

Modal verb

Political renewal remains a possibility, not a guaranteed prediction.

FORM

A 14-line political sonnet with an unconventional rhyme arrangement; the main sentence delays its hopeful possibility.

CONTEXT

Shelley’s poem responds to political repression in 1819, the year of Peterloo, when cavalry attacked a reform meeting.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Thirteen: distrust of authority. A Century Later: resistance to oppressive power.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

King and princes

SCATHING

The opening catalogue strips royal rank of dignity and presents government as parasitic.

People and institutions

INDIGNANT

Starvation and violence connect public suffering to army, law, religion and parliament.

Final possibility

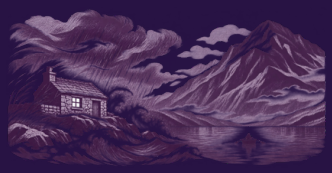
CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL

The burial image is reworked into a possible source of renewal rather than certain despair.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

SHALL EARTH NO MORE INSPIRE THEE



Emily Brontë

WHAT HAPPENS? A persuasive speaker invites a lonely dreamer to return to nature's comfort.

BIG IDEA **Nature's imagined voice offers an isolated mind a forceful invitation back into relationship.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Thou lonely dreamer now?"

Direct address

The listener's inwardness is recognised as both imaginative and isolating.

"In regions dark to thee;"

Metaphor

Mental distress becomes a landscape through which thought wanders.

"I know my magic power"

Repetition

Repeated certainty strengthens the promise of understanding and relief.

"Then let my winds caress thee;"

Personification

Nature offers a form of bodily tenderness rather than a purely abstract remedy.

FORM

Seven quatrains with alternating rhyme; recurring questions and imperatives create a sustained persuasive address.

CONTEXT

Written in 1841, the poem draws on the Romantic idea of nature's restorative influence. The speaker can be read as nature personified.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Lines Written in Early Spring: nature and troubled thought. A Portable Paradise: carrying a restorative place within.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Opening questions

CONCERNED

The speaker challenges the assumption that an unhappy dreamer can no longer be inspired.

Memories and power

REASSURINGLY CONFIDENT

Knowledge of the listener's desires becomes a claim that comfort remains possible.

Final invitation

TENDER BUT INSISTENT

The request to return gathers natural touch, companionship and healing into one appeal.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

IN A LONDON DRAWINGROOM



George Eliot

WHAT HAPPENS? A confined view of a smoky city becomes an account of hurried, joyless human life.

BIG IDEA **A narrow urban view expands into a criticism of a society that restricts attention, feeling and individuality.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Like solid fog:"

Simile

Built structures acquire the enclosing quality of an atmospheric obstruction.

"Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye"

Personification

Looking becomes a frustrated need for nourishment.

"All closed, in multiplied identity."

Paradoxical phrasing

Repetition erases the distinctiveness identity should imply.

"The world seems one huge prison-house & court"

Metaphor

The final judgement makes urban deprivation a form of punishment.

FORM

A single stanza of 19 lines in blank verse; the unbroken form can reinforce the oppressive continuity of the scene.

CONTEXT

Eliot describes an industrial urban environment, connecting smoke and repeated architecture to the experience of modern city life.

COMPARE IT WITH…

A Wider View: industrial confinement and the desire for more space.
Thirteen: city life under restriction.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Window view

CONFINED AND DISSATISFIED

Smoke and opposite houses block the sky and give the eye little variety.

People and vehicles

ALIENATED

Movement offers no relief because hurried individuals fail to notice one another.

Closing judgement

CONDEMNING

The apparent street scene becomes a metaphor for systematic imprisonment.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

ON AN AFTERNOON TRAIN FROM PURLEY TO VICTORIA, 1955

James Berry



WHAT HAPPENS? A stranger's friendly conversation exposes assumptions about race and migration.

BIG IDEA **A courteous exchange reveals the gap between declaring racial solidarity and understanding another person's world.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"startled"

Verb

The greeting unsettles a speaker who was not expecting the encounter.

"thoughtful"

Repetition

Pauses suggest an internal response larger than the spoken answer.

"Africa"

Geographical misconception

The woman's question exposes the limits of her proclaimed solidarity.

"sincere"

Evaluative adjective

The speaker acknowledges intention while the reader remembers the mistake.

FORM

A free-verse dialogue with repeated speech tags; a reflective memory interrupts the spoken exchange.

CONTEXT

The title locates the encounter in postwar Britain. Berry migrated from Jamaica and explores racial assumptions through a carefully shaped conversation.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Name Journeys: cultural identity in England. Homing: pressure surrounding speech and belonging.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Greeting

POLITE AND SURPRISED

A stranger's approach produces a possible opening towards connection.

Memory and questions

THOUGHTFUL AND WRY

The speaker's private associations complicate a conversation shaped by geographical misunderstanding.

Closing response

GENEROUS BUT QUALIFIED

The woman's sincerity is recognised without erasing the limits of her understanding.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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NAME JOURNEYS

Raman Mundair



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker connects a name and language to migration, cultural stories and misrecognition.

BIG IDEA **The journey of a name exposes a struggle to keep cultural history audible within an environment that mishears it.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“wilderness”

Cultural allusion

An epic landscape supplies a language for displacement.

“silk”

Textile imagery

Cultural and personal journeys are imagined as interwoven rather than isolated.

“milk teeth”

Bodily metaphor

Language loss is linked to a vulnerable phase of growing up.

“echo chamber”

Metaphor

An apparently receptive language-space instead repeats its own assumptions.

FORM

Free verse arranged in couplets; enjambment links cultural allusion, migration and the physical effort of speech.

CONTEXT

Mundair brings South Asian epic references into an English-language poem, requiring the reader to encounter an inherited cultural world.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Homing: language and identity. pot: displacement and the demand to recover history.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Epic identities

SEARCHING AND INTIMATE

Connections to Rama and Sita frame personal experience through existing cultural stories.

Journey and changed speech

STRAINED

Migration becomes audible through the body’s effort to accommodate new sounds.

English reception

FRUSTRATED

Other people’s difficulties with the name become a wider failure to recognise its history.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

EXAM STASH · examstashhq.com

POT

shamshad khan



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker addresses a museum pot, questions its removal and imagines returning it home.

BIG IDEA **Addressing a displaced object becomes a way to question the authority of museums and recover the human relationships behind display.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“fragile”

Adjective

Physical delicacy can serve as a reason for preventing movement.

“looter’s”

Possessive noun

A possible history of violence disrupts neutral language about acquisition.

“loved”

Verb

Use is recast as a relationship of care rather than simply possession.

“growl”

Imperative

The request for a response exposes the object’s silence and the speaker’s longing.

FORM

Free verse with irregular spacing, questions and repeated address; the unresponsive object prevents a completed dialogue.

CONTEXT

Dedicated to a Nigerian pot in Manchester Museum, the poem questions provenance, empire and return.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Name Journeys: displaced cultural history. A Portable Paradise: recovering a sense of home.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Questions about arrival

SUSPICIOUS AND PROBING

The speaker tests explanations that make the pot’s displacement seem accidental or legitimate.

Making and use

AFFECTIONATE

Imagined touch and daily usefulness restore a human history obscured by exhibition.

Return and silence

HOPEFUL, THEN UNRESOLVED

The speaker’s own experience of return becomes an invitation the pot cannot answer.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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A WIDER VIEW

Seni Seneviratne



WHAT HAPPENS? A city walk imaginatively joins a present-day speaker to an industrial ancestor.

BIG IDEA **Looking beyond the limits of working life allows a descendant to recognise both an ancestor's aspiration and a continuing connection.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"dreams"

Metaphorical elevation

Hope is imagined as something placed beyond polluted everyday surroundings.

"dust"

Sensory detail

Work enters the body, making industrial conditions materially present.

"echo"

Auditory image

The descendant's steps seem to answer an earlier life.

"arcs"

Geometric verb

The final movement connects generations through a line that exceeds either individual.

FORM

Free verse moves between a historical third-person account and a first-person present, ending in an imagined shared perspective.

CONTEXT

The poem locates family history in Leeds's industrial buildings, including textile mills and the River Aire.

COMPARE IT WITH…

In a London Drawingroom: industrial restriction. Homing: heritage recovered in the present.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Ancestor's surroundings

CONSTRAINED BUT ASPIRING

Crowded housing and dangerous conditions give urgency to the desire for a broader horizon.

Walk after work

IMAGINATIVELY RELEASED

Looking at striking architecture briefly exceeds the narrowness of repetitive labour.

Descendant's walk

CONNECTED AND EXPANSIVE

The two periods meet in a vision that extends beyond a single lifetime.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

HOMING

Liz Berry



WHAT HAPPENS? A speaker recalls a suppressed accent and imagines releasing its words into her own speech.

BIG IDEA **Recovering a suppressed regional voice becomes an act of love and cultural inheritance.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“box”

Extended metaphor

An accent is imagined as a physical inheritance that can be locked away.

“rusted”

Adjective

Long suppression has made release difficult, not unnecessary.

“furnace”

Metaphor

The speaker’s mouth becomes a place where inherited language is remade with force.

“pigeons”

Simile

Freed words resemble creatures able to find their way home.

FORM

Free verse with enjambment and dialect words; the movement from containment to release shapes the poem’s argument.

CONTEXT

Berry’s Black Country vocabulary challenges the social hierarchy that treats some accents as less legitimate than standard speech.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Name Journeys: linguistic pressure. A Wider View: recovering the lives of earlier generations.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Accent hidden

RESTRAINED AND HURT

Lessons and punishment explain why a family voice has been kept out of public hearing.

Accent escaping

AFFECTIONATELY ATTENTIVE

Small sounds reveal a linguistic identity that suppression has not entirely erased.

Inheritance and return

DEFIANT AND LIBERATING

The speaker wants to use the words herself and send them openly into the world.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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A CENTURY LATER

Imtiaz Dharker



WHAT HAPPENS? An attack on a schoolgirl becomes a vision of continuing education and collective resistance.

BIG IDEA **Violence cannot fully control the imagination or the collective demand for education.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“battle”

Extended metaphor

Going to school acquires the danger and resolve of a military campaign.

“orchard”

Natural imagery

Mental life is imagined as fertile despite an attempt to destroy it.

“ordinary”

Adjective

The aspiration is access to everyday freedoms, not exceptional privilege.

“standing up”

Double meaning

Physical action also becomes a political refusal to submit.

FORM

Free verse shifts from an external description to the girl’s direct address and a widening collective ending.

CONTEXT

The poem responds to the attack on Malala Yousafzai and echoes the battlefield vocabulary of First World War poetry.

COMPARE IT WITH…

England in 1819: oppressive power and hope. Thirteen: young people exposed to institutional harm.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Journey to class

THREATENING

The language of combat makes an ordinary school day a situation of exceptional danger.

Attack and inner world

RESILIENT

The wounded mind is pictured through growing natural spaces rather than destroyed possibility.

Girl’s reply and others

DEFIANT AND COLLECTIVE

One survivor’s refusal becomes a movement of schoolgirls continuing towards education.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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THE JEWELLERY MAKER



Louisa Adjoa Parker

WHAT HAPPENS? A skilled craftsperson makes beautiful objects while imagining the wealthy women who will wear them.

BIG IDEA **Beautiful luxury depends on skilled human labour whose rewards remain unequally distributed.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“surgeon”

Simile

The comparison gives the craft precision and professional seriousness.

“soldiers”

Simile

Arranged tools suggest discipline before the delicate creative work begins.

“butterflies”

Metaphor

Worked metal seems to acquire the movement and beauty of living nature.

“plain”

Contrasting adjective

The wife’s limited adornment exposes the gap between creating luxury and owning it.

FORM

A free-verse narrative portrait; sensory detail and the later imagined customers connect workshop and consumer worlds.

CONTEXT

Parker draws attention to artisanal skill and the economic distance between a maker’s household and the purchasers of luxury goods.

COMPARE IT WITH…

A Wider View: labour and inherited work. Like an Heiress: beauty, wealth and responsibility.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Daily journey

FAMILIAR AND ROOTED

Repeated work across generations places the maker within family and neighbourhood.

Tools and metal

ADMIRING

Precise comparisons reveal discipline and the creative transformation of materials.

Wife and imagined wearers

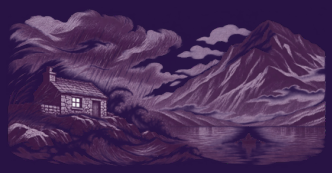
REFLECTIVE AND UNEQUAL

Desire to adorn his own household contrasts with the wealthy bodies he imagines serving.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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WITH BIRDS YOU'RE NEVER LONELY



Raymond Antrobus

WHAT HAPPENS? A noisy cafe prompts memories of a forest, hearing, trees and a woman's inherited knowledge of birds.

BIG IDEA **A more attentive relationship with nature unsettles narrow assumptions about hearing, solitude and belonging.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"slam"

Onomatopoeic verb

The cafe's noise feels abrupt and invasive.

"silence"

Reconsidered noun

A quiet soundscape need not mean emptiness or disconnection.

"sturdiness"

Abstract noun

The trees' physical assurance becomes something the speaker envies.

"family"

Metaphor

Urban trees are understood through the relationships their setting prevents.

FORM

Free verse presented in couplets; movement between cafe, forest and remembered conversation joins contrasting kinds of listening.

CONTEXT

Antrobus writes from a D/deaf perspective. The poem also values Maori knowledge transmitted between generations.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Lines Written in Early Spring: attention to nature. Homing: knowledge passed between generations.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Cafe and recollection

OVERLOADED AND DISTRACTED

Ordinary machinery makes hearing difficult while the speaker thinks about a different soundscape.

Forest and hearing aids

ATTENTIVE AND QUESTIONING

Switching sound off reveals a form of presence that does not depend on audible noise.

Woman and London trees

CONNECTED, THEN SORROWFUL

Inherited knowledge of birds leads to concern for isolated trees in an urban world.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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A PORTABLE PARADISE

Roger Robinson



WHAT HAPPENS? Advice from a grandmother becomes a method of carrying and recovering an inner refuge.

BIG IDEA **A remembered place can be carried as a private source of strength and deliberately revisited under pressure.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“concealed”

Adjective

The refuge remains private and protected from external interference.

“ridges”

Tactile imagery

An imagined paradise becomes something the hand can trace.

“anthem”

Auditory imagery

A personal refuge acquires the emotional force of a homeland.

“lamp”

Symbolism

Deliberate illumination makes the preserved inner world available again.

FORM

Four stanzas of free verse; repeated conditional openings turn inherited advice into a practical sequence.

CONTEXT

Robinson draws on a grandmother’s advice and a portable sense of Caribbean belonging, while leaving room for different personal refuges.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Homing: inheritance as strength. Name Journeys: carrying cultural identity into unfamiliar spaces.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Grandmother’s instruction

PROTECTIVE

A valued place becomes an intimate possession that others need not recognise.

Pressure

RESOURCEFUL

Touch, smell and sound give the imagined refuge sensory immediacy.

Sustained stress

QUIETLY HOPEFUL

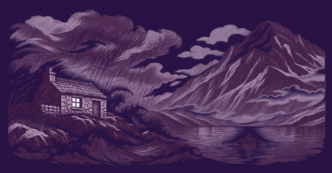
The advice changes from carrying a hidden comfort to making space to attend to it fully.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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LIKE AN HEIRESS

Grace Nichols



WHAT HAPPENS? A return to a beloved coast reveals pollution and leads to uneasy retreat and reflection.

BIG IDEA **An inherited love of place becomes morally uncomfortable when the speaker confronts environmental damage and her own ability to retreat.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

“jewels”

Wealth metaphor

The sea’s beauty initially appears as an inherited treasure.

“rubbish”

Tonal disruption

Waste interrupts the attraction of the remembered coast.

“tourist”

Self-comparison

The speaker acknowledges her own position as a temporary visitor able to leave.

“sanctuary”

Religious diction

The hotel offers shelter, but its comfort complicates the environmental reflection.

FORM

A 14-line, sonnet-like poem in free verse; the turn from coastal beauty to rubbish unsettles its initial abundance.

CONTEXT

A return to the Atlantic coast reveals consumption’s environmental cost and the privileges of tourism.

COMPARE IT WITH…

Lines Written in Early Spring: nature and human harm. With Birds You’re Never Lonely: connection to threatened environments.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Return to Atlantic

DRAWN AND NOSTALGIC

The sea seems to offer the treasure of childhood memory.

Rubbish at seawall

DISAPPOINTED AND ACCUSATORY

Human waste displaces the expected abundance of natural beauty.

Hotel retreat

UNEASY AND REFLECTIVE

Concern for the planet coexists with access to comfort away from the damaged shore.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

THIRTEEN

Caleb Femi



WHAT HAPPENS? A boy stopped by police recalls an encouraging school visit from one of the officers.

BIG IDEA **Racialised suspicion can make a child's public promise of a future feel conditional and unsafe.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"cornered"

Verb

The encounter is presented as entrapment rather than a neutral conversation.

"Thirteen"

Repetition

Insistence on age challenges the treatment of a child as an adult threat.

"supernovas"

Extended metaphor

The school's apparent celebration of potential is vulnerable to reinterpretation.

"dying stars"

Metaphorical reversal

The ending recasts brilliance as a sign of impending destruction.

FORM

Free verse in second-person future tense; the street encounter is interrupted by a remembered school assembly.

CONTEXT

Femi examines a Black boy's encounter with police, contrasting institutional encouragement with institutional suspicion.

COMPARE IT WITH…

England in 1819: the failure of powerful institutions. A Century Later: vulnerable young people and resistance.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Stop near home

STARTLED AND VULNERABLE

The boy's age clashes with the adult criminal description imposed upon him.

School memory

HOPEFUL, THEN PLEADING

An officer who once praised children's potential does not now provide recognition or reassurance.

Remembered explanation

BLEAKLY IRONIC

A scientific detail transforms the earlier language of promise into a forecast of collapse.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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