

English 3201

# Poetry Unit

## Workbook

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

***“Poetry is thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.”*** - Thomas Gray

Instructions: Study each of the poems included in this workbook. Consider each for its structure (poetic form) and the various devices used by the poet to convey tone, mood and theme. Moreover, consider the work’s impact on you and your own reflections about yourself and the world around you.

Complete each question in the spaces provided. Be sure to always use complete sentences. If, however, you require extra writing space, feel free to attach extra loose leaf to the back of this booklet. (clearly labelled, of course)

(a) **Funeral Blues**  
by W.H. Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone.  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling in the sky the message He is Dead,  
Put crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever, I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

1. In a paragraph, reflect on this poem; what are your impressions of it? Do you like it? Why/Why not? Consider and identify the literary or poetic elements that impacted your feelings.

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2. Explain the terms *tone* and *mood*. Explain how Auden uses tone to evoke a particular mood here.

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3. Through definition, identify any two poetic devices used here. Explain how each is effective.

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(b) ***Wife in London***  
by Thomas Hardy

I-- The Tragedy

She sits in the tawny vapour  
That the City lanes have uprolled,  
Behind whose webby fold on fold  
Like a waning taper  
The street-lamp glimmers cold.

A messenger's knock cracks smartly,  
Flashed news is in her hand  
Of meaning it dazes to understand  
Though shaped so shortly:  
He--has fallen--in the far South Land . . .

## II--The Irony

'Tis the morrow; the fog hangs thicker,  
The postman nears and goes:  
A letter is brought whose lines disclose  
By the firelight flicker  
His hand, whom the worm now knows:

Fresh--firm--penned in highest feather -  
Page-full of his hoped return,  
And of home-planned jaunts by brake and burn  
In the summer weather,  
And of new love that they would learn.

4. In a paragraph, reflect on this poem; what are your impressions of it? Do you like it? Why/Why not? Consider the specific lines/phrases which grabbed your attention or contributed to the poem's mood.

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### (c) *Thistles* by Ted Hughes

Against the rubber tongues of cows and the hoeing hands of men  
Thistles spike the summer air  
And crackle open under a blue-black pressure.  
Every one a revengeful burst  
Of resurrection, a grasped fistful  
Of splintered weapons and Icelandic frost thrust up  
From the underground stain of a decayed Viking.  
They are like pale hair and the gutturals of dialects.  
Every one manages a plume of blood.  
Then they grow grey like men.  
Mown down, it is a feud. Their sons appear  
Stiff with weapons, fighting back over the same ground.

5. Define *imagery*. From Hughes' poem, identify an example of each type of imagery. Why is imagery an effective poetic tool here?

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6. Research a little about the life of the poet (particularly about his marriage to poet Sylvia Plath). How does what you learned impact your reflection of this poem?

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(d) ***My Mistress' Eyes***  
by William Shakespeare

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.  
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.

7. Through definition, identify the poetic form of this selection.

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8. Identify and define any two poetic devices used in this poem. Explain how each is particularly effective.

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(e) ***Out, Out***  
by Robert Frost

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard  
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,  
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.  
And from there those that lifted eyes could count  
Five mountain ranges one behind the other  
Under the sunset far into Vermont.  
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,  
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.  
And nothing happened: day was all but done.  
Call it a day, I wish they might have said  
To please the boy by giving him the half hour  
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.  
His sister stood beside him in her apron  
To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw,  
As if to prove saws know what supper meant,  
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—  
He must have given the hand. However it was,  
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!  
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,  
As he swung toward them holding up the hand  
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep  
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—

Since he was old enough to know, big boy  
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—  
He saw all was spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—  
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!'  
So. But the hand was gone already.  
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.  
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.  
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.  
No one believed. They listened to his heart.  
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.  
No more to build on there.  
And they, since they  
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

9. Through definition, identify the poetic form of this selection.

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10. This poem's title is an example of poetic *allusion*. Do some research (hint: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) and explain why Frost's title is a fitting choice.

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11. Explain why the final two lines of the poem are of particular importance.

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(f) ***Spirit of Radio***  
by Neil Peart

Begin the day with a friendly voice  
A companion unobtrusive  
Plays that song that's so elusive  
And the magic music makes your morning mood

Off on your way, hit the open road  
There is magic at your fingers  
For the Spirit ever lingers  
Undemanding contact in your happy solitude

Invisible airwaves crackle with life  
Bright antennae bristle with the energy  
Emotional feedback on timeless wavelength  
Bearing a gift beyond price, almost free

All this machinery making modern music  
Can still be open hearted  
Not so coldly charted  
It's really just a question of your honesty, yeah  
Your honesty  
One likes to believe in the freedom of music  
But glittering prizes and endless compromises  
Shatter the illusion of integrity

For the words of the prophets were written on the studio wall  
Concert hall  
And echoes with the sounds of salesmen

12. Define *tone*. Identify the tone of this selection. How is this particular tone achieved?

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13. To what is Peart referring when he states, *But glittering prizes and endless compromises shatter the illusion of integrity.* ? Do you agree with his statement? Give specific examples from your own experiences and observations to explain why or why not.

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(g) ***The Sounds of Silence***  
by Paul Simon

Hello Darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk with you again  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone  
Narrow streets of cobblestone  
'Neath the halo of a street lamp  
I turned my collar to the cold and damp  
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light  
That split the night  
And touched the sound of silence

And in the naked light I saw  
Ten thousand people, maybe more  
People talking without speaking  
People hearing without listening  
People writing songs that voices never share  
And no one dared  
Disturb the sound of silence

"Fools", said I, "You do not know  
Silence like a cancer grows  
Hear my words that I might teach you  
Take my arms that I might reach you"  
But my words, like silent raindrops fell  
And echoed

In the wells of silence  
And the people bowed and prayed  
To the neon god they made  
And the sign flashed out its warning  
In the words that it was forming  
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls  
And tenement halls"  
And whispered in the sounds of silence

14. What poetic device is used in the first line? How does it help to establish the mood?

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15. Define *theme*. Identify the theme of this poem. Support your answer with specific reference to the poem.

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{\*Bonus: What other poem from this workbook alludes to this one? How?

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(h) **Sea Fever**  
by John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking,

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

16. What is *parallelism*? Give two separate examples from the poem. Why is it effective?

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17. Using specific examples, explain how Masefield uses *diction* to convey a particular *tone*.

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(i) ***Vincent***  
by Don McLean

Starry, starry night  
Paint your palette blue and gray  
Look out on a summer's day  
With eyes that know the darkness in my soul  
Shadows on the hills  
Sketch the trees and the daffodils  
Catch the breeze and the winter chills  
In colors on the snowy linen land

Now I understand what you tried to say to me  
And how you suffered for your sanity  
And how you tried to set them free  
They would not listen, they did not know how  
Perhaps they'll listen now

Starry, starry night  
Flaming flowers that brightly blaze  
Swirling clouds in violet haze  
Reflect in Vincent's eyes of China blue  
Colors changing hue  
Morning fields of amber grain  
Weathered faces lined in pain  
Are soothed beneath the artist's loving hand

For they could not love you  
But still your love was true  
And when no hope was left inside  
On that starry, starry night  
You took your life as lovers often do  
But I could have told you, Vincent  
This world was never meant  
For one as beautiful as you

Starry, starry night  
Portraits hung in empty halls  
Frameless heads on nameless walls  
With eyes that watch the world and can't forget  
Like the strangers that you've met  
The ragged men in ragged clothes  
A silver thorn, a bloody rose  
Lie crushed and broken on the virgin snow

Now I think I know what you tried to say to me  
And how you suffered for your sanity  
And how you tried to set them free  
They would not listen, they're not listening still  
Perhaps they never will

18. Define poetic *apostrophe*. Explain why it is effective here. (may require mini research)

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19. The third line of the chorus says, "How you tried to set them free." To whom does *them* refer? Explain your answer.

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20. Listen to this song. Comment on how the lyrics and the accompanying music (i.e. instrumentation, tempo, vocal timbre) work together to create a particular mood.

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(j) Student Selection

21. Identify/attach a copy of your favorite poem. Disseminate it. Consider and discuss the following:

- Poetic form
- Identify at least three poetic devices and discuss their effectiveness.
- Explain the words/phrases/lines you find most appealing.
- Why did you choose this poem above all others?