APPRECIATING POETRY (ENG2B02)

STUDY MATERIAL

BA ENGLISH

II SEMESTER

CORE COURSE

CBCSS
(2019 ADMISSION ONWARDS)

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O, MALAPPURAM KERALA, INDIA 673 635.

19006

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

SECOND SEMESTER

BA ENGLISH (2019 ADMISSION)

CORE COURSE : ENG$_2$B02 : APPRECIATING POETRY

Prepared by :

Smt.Smitha N (Module 1),
Smt.Nabeela Musthafa (Module 2),
&
Sri.Justin Philip Cherian (Module 3)
Assistant Proffessors on Contract,
School of Distance Education.

Scrutinized by :

Dr.K.M.Sherrif,
Associate Professor & Head,
Dept. of English,
University of Calicut.

CONTENTS

Module 1	:	Some Key Concepts
Module 2	:	Poetic Forms
Module 3	:	World Poetry

Appreciating Poetry

Module I: Some Key Concepts

Basic Elements of Poetry

Many writers have tried to define poetry at different times. According to Encyclopedia of Britannica, poetry, "literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm. Poetry (ancient Greek: (poieo) = I create) is an art form in which human language is used for its aesthetic qualities, instead of, its notional and semantic content. It consists largely of oral or literary works in which language is used in an artistic manner that is felt by its user and audience to differ from ordinary prose. It may use condensed form to convey emotion or ideas to the reader's or listener's mind or ear. Poems frequently depend on the effect on imagery, word association, and the musical qualities of the language used. The interactive layering of all these effects to generate meaning is what marks poetry. Now let us have a look at the basic elements of poetry.

Prosody

Prosody is the study of meter, intonation, and rhythm of a poetic work. It is a phonetic term that uses meter, rhythm, tempo, pitch, and loudness in a speech for conveying information about the meanings and structure of an utterance. In addition, prosody is an important element of language that contributes toward rhythmic and acoustic effects in a piece of writing. It includes different elements, such as scansion, sound, pace, and meaning.

Types of Prosody

There are four distinguishable prosodic metrical patterns, which are:

Syllabic Prosody – Syllabic prosody counts a fixed number of syllables in each line, while accent, tone, and quantity play a secondary role.

Accentual Prosody – Accentual prosody measures only the accents or stresses in a line of verse, while the overall number of syllables may vary in a line. It is very common in Germanic, old English, and modern English verses.

Accentual-syllabic Prosody – Accentual-syllabic prosody counts both the number of syllables and accents in each line. We commonly find it in English poetry.

Quantitative Prosody – Quantitative prosody does not measure the number of syllables, rather depending upon duration of syllables. This can be determined by the amount of time used on pronunciation, such as a free-verse poem that consists of unmeasured lines. We find this type of prosody in Roman and classical Greek poetry, and only very rarely in English poetry.

Rhyhm

The word rhythm is derived from rhythmos (Greek) which means, "measured motion." Rhythm is a literary device that demonstrates the long and short patterns through stressed and unstressed syllables, particularly in verse form. A rhythm may be produced by the recurrence of a sound, but rhythm and sound are not identical. When we speak of the rhythm of a poem we mean the recurrence of stresses and pauses in it.

Types of Rhythm

English poetry makes use of five important rhythms. These rhythms are of different patterns of stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables. Each unit of these types is called foot. Here are the five types of rhythm:

1. Iamb (x /)

This is the most commonly used rhythm. It consists of two syllables, the first of which is not stressed, while the second syllable is stressed. Such as:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"
(Sonnet 18, by William Shakespeare)

2. Trochee (/ x)

A trochee is a type of poetic foot commonly used in English poetry. It has two syllables, the first of which is strongly stressed, while the second syllable is unstressed, as given below:

"Tell me not, in mournful numbers"
(Psalm of Life, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

3. Spondee (/ /)

Spondee is a poetic foot that has two syllables, which are consecutively stressed. For example:

"White founts falling in the Courts of the sun"
(Lepanto, by G. K. Chesterton)

4. Dactyl (/ x x)

Dactyl is made up of three syllables. The first syllable is stressed, and the remaining two syllables are not stressed, such as in the word "marvelous." For example:

"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,"
(Evangeline, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

The words "primeval" and "murmuring" show dactyls in this line.

5. Anapest (x x /)

Anapests are total opposites of dactyls. They have three syllables; where the first two syllables are not stressed, and the last syllable is stressed. For example:

" 'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house,"
('Twas the Night Before Christmas, by Clement Clarke Moore)

Rhythm in verse is determined by the presence of various kinds of metrical pattern

Metre

Meter is a stressed and unstressed syllabic pattern in a verse, or within the lines of a poem. Stressed syllables tend to be longer, and unstressed shorter. In simple language, meter is a poetic device that serves as a linguistic sound pattern for the verses, as it gives poetry a rhythmical and

melodious sound. For instance, if you read a poem aloud, and it produces regular sound patterns, then this poem would be a metered or measured poem. The study of different types of versification and meters is known as "prosody."The word Metre is derived from a Greek word 'metron' which means 'measure'.

Metre and Foot

A meter contains a sequence of several feet, where each foot has a number of syllables such as stressed/unstressed. Hence, a meter has an overall rhythmic pattern in a line of verse, which a foot cannot describe.

Types of Metre

English poetry employs five basic meters, including:

Iambic metre (unstressed/stressed)

Trochaic metre (stressed/unstressed)

Spondaic metre, (stressed/stressed)

Anapestic metre (unstressed/unstressed/ stressed)

Dactylic metre (stressed/unstressed/unstressed)

Meter has two subdivisions: qualitative metre, and quantitative metre.

Qualitative Metre

Qualitative metre contains stressed syllables with regular intervals, such as iambic pentameter containing even numbered syllables.

Quantitative Metre

Quantitative metre, however, is based on syllabic weight, and not stressed patterns, such as dactylic hexameters of classical Greek and classical Latin.

Examples of Metre

People become what they believe.
(Trochaic metre)

Those who can dream it, they really can achieve it.
(Dactylic/Spondaic)

Don't search faults. Find remedies.
(Iambic metre)

When you give and accept gratefully, you feel blessed.
(Anapestic metre)

Rhyme

A rhyme is a repetition of similar sounding words, occurring at the end of lines in poems or songs. A rhyme is a tool utilizing repeating patterns that bring rhythm or musicality to poems. This differentiates them from prose, which is plain. A rhyme is employed for the specific purpose of rendering a pleasing effect to a poem, which makes its recital an enjoyable experience. Moreover, it offers itself as a mnemonic device, smoothing the progress of memorization.

For instance, all nursery rhymes contain rhyming words in order to facilitate learning for children, as they enjoy reading them, and the presence of repetitive patterns enables them to memorize them effortlessly. A nursery rhyme example is given below with rhyming words in bold and italics:

"Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full!
One for the master, one for the dame,
And one for the little boy who lives down the lane."

Kinds of Rhymes

End rhyme occurs at the end of lines

Internal rhyme occurs within lines

Masculine or strong rhymes: a single stressed syllable -'hill' and 'still'

Feminine or weak syllable : two rhyming syllable, a stressed one followed by an unstressed one – 'hollow' and 'follow'.

Eye rhyme or courtesy rhyme: words spelt alike but not actually rhyming – 'love' and 'prove'.

Imperfect rhyme (also called partial, near, slant or off – rhymes): words which do not quite rhyme and so produce a sense discordance – 'soul' and 'wall'.

Half rhymes: repetition of the same consonant sounds before and after different vowels – 'groaned' and 'groined'.

Alliteration

Alliteration is derived from Latin's "Latira". It means "letters of alphabet". It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

But a better butter makes a batter better.

A big bully beats a baby boy.

Both sentences are alliterative because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. An important point to remember here is that alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds. Common Examples of Alliteration

Best Buy

Coca-Cola

Life Lock

Park Place

Chuckee Cheese's

Bed Bath & Beyond

Crispy Crème

We also find alliterations in names of people, making such names prominent and easy to be remembered. For instance, both fictional characters and real people may stand out prominently in your mind due to the alliterative effects of their names. Example: Ronald Reagan

Alliteration has an important role in poetry and prose. It creates a musical effect in the text that enhances the pleasure of reading a literary piece. It makes reading and recitation of the poems appealing and it renders flow and beauty to a piece of writing.

Assonance

Assonance takes place when two or more words, close to one another repeat the same vowel sound, but start with different consonant sounds.

For instance, in the following sentence:

"Men sell the wedding bells."

The same vowel sound of the short vowel "-e-" repeats itself in almost all the words, excluding the definite article. The words do share the same vowel sounds, but start with different consonant sounds – unlike alliteration, which involves repetition of the same consonant sounds. See a line from Words Worth's poem 'Daffodils', "A host of golden daffodils" ,there is a repeated 'o' sound., Below are a few assonance examples that are common.

"I feel depressed and restle"

"Go and mow the lawn".

"Men sell the wedding bells."

Diction

Diction can be defined as style of speaking or writing, determined by the choice of words by a speaker or a writer. Diction, or choice of words, often separates good writing from bad writing.

It depends on a number of factors. Firstly, the word has to be right and accurate. Secondly, words should be appropriate to the context in which they are used. Lastly, the choice of words should be such that the listener or reader understands easily.

Proper diction, or proper choice of words, is important to get the message across. On the other hand, the wrong choice of words can easily divert listeners or readers, which results in misinterpretation of the message intended to be conveyed.

Types of Diction

Individuals vary their diction depending on different contexts and settings. Therefore, we come across various types of diction.

Formal diction – formal words are used in formal situations, such as press conferences and presentations.

Informal diction – uses informal words and conversation, such as writing or talking to friends.

Colloquial diction – uses words common in everyday speech, which may be different in different regions or communities.

Slang diction – is the use of words that are newly coined, or even impolite.

Poetic Diction

Poetry is known for its unique diction, which separates it from prose. Usually, a poetic diction is marked by the use of figures of speech, rhyming words, and other devices. Debates about what constitutes poetic diction can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Neo- classical writers of the eighteenth century developed a special poetic diction that mostly derived from the characteristic usage of earlier poets such as Virgil, Edmund Spenser and John Milton. They often employed lofty and archaic words and used recurrent ‘epithets’ in their poetry. For instance “the finny tribe” for “fish”, the bleating kind” for “sheep” etc. In Wordsworth’s Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, he has strongly attacked the neoclassical doctrine of special language for poetry and claimed that there is n “essential” difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.

Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a word or phrase using figurative language—language that has other meaning than its normal definition. In other words, figures of speeches rely on implied or suggested meaning, rather than a dictionary definition. We express and develop them through hundreds of different rhetorical techniques, from specific types like metaphors and similes, to more general forms like sarcasm and slang.

Simile

Simile is a very common figure of speech that uses to compare two distinctly different things is indicated by words “like” and “as” .For example, “he is as tall as a mountain,” doesn’t mean he was actually 1,000 feet tall, it just means he was really tall.

Some other well-known similes you will often hear are:

As cute as a kitten

As happy as a clam

As light as a feather

As blind as a bat

Metaphor

In a metaphor, words are used in a manner other than their literal meaning. However, metaphors use figurative language to make comparisons between unrelated things or ideas. Metaphors are illustrations that make a strong point by comparing two things you wouldn't necessarily pair. E. g., "I'm drowning in a sea of grief."
Here grief is so overwhelming that the person feels helpless, like they're being pulled underwater.

"She was fishing for compliments."
The woman isn't literally casting a lure to hook compliments out of the ocean. Rather, it's a dead metaphor used to signify a desire for compliments.

Personification: is a figure of speech that attributes human qualities to that which is non – human. For example, when we say, “The sky weeps,” we are giving the sky the ability to cry, which is a human quality.

Another example from Emily Dickens’ poem “Because I Could not Stop for Death” ;

“ Because I could not stop for Death

He kindly stopped for me”

In this poem, a female speaker tells the story of how she was visited by "Death"—personified as a "kindly" gentleman—and taken for a ride in his carriage.

Oxymoron

Oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect. The common oxymoron phrase is a combination of an adjective proceeded by a noun with contrasting meanings, such as “cruel kindness,” or “living death”. Oxymoron produces a dramatic effect in both prose and poetry. For instance, when we read or hear the famous oxymoron, “sweet sorrow,” crafted by Shakespeare, it appeals to us instantly. It provokes our thoughts, and makes us ponder the meaning of contradicting ideas. This apparently confusing phrase expresses the complex nature of love, that can never be expressed through simple wordsShakespeare makes use of oxymora in his plays to develop a paradox.

“I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady”. (Hamlet by William Shakespeare)

In the above lines, Shakespeare brings two contradictory ideas: “be cruel … to be kind”. The contradiction is understood in the context of the play. Hamlet wants to kill Claudius, the murderer of his father, who has married his mother. Hamlet does not want his mother to be the beloved of his father’s murderer. Therefore, he is of the view that this murder will purge her.

Metonymy

It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is replaced by the name of something closely associated with the same thing or concept. For example, the word “crown” is used to refer to power or authority is a metonymy. It is not a part of the thing it represents. Metonymy is employed to add a poetic color to words to make them come to life. The simple ordinary things are described in a creative way to insert this “life” factor to literary works. For instance;

These lines are taken from “Out, Out”, by Robert Frost:

“As he swung toward them holding up the hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling”

In these lines, the expression “The life from spilling” refers to the spilling of blood. It develops a link between life and blood. The loss of too much blood means loss of life.

Synecdoche: is a type of metonymy in which a part of something represents the whole, or it may use a whole to represent a part. By using synecdoche, writers give otherwise common ideas and objects deeper meanings, and thus draw readers’ attention. Moreover it helps the writer to keep brevity.

For example, note the following lines from the poem ‘Ozymandias’ by Percy Bysshe Shelly)

“Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them.”

“The hand” in these lines refers to the sculptor, who carved the “lifeless things” into a grand statue.

Transferred Epithet: is a literary device which use as a modifier (usually an adjective) qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing. It is really a figure of description sharing similarities with personification and metonymy that arrest audiences with incongruity. An example of a transferred epithet is: "I had a wonderful day." The day is not in

itself wonderful. The speaker had a wonderful day. The epithet "wonderful" actually describes the kind of day the speaker experienced.

Poetic Forms

Lyric

Originally as its Greek name suggests, a lyric poem sung to the music of a lyre (a stringed musical instrument). It is related to the Classical Greek word ‘mele’ which means air, melody. But the lyric that is written today is defined as a short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker. It is during the Alexandrine period, the term lyric was meant any poem that was composed to be sung, a meaning that it retained till Renaissance. A lyric poem is relatively short one and noted for the presence of sensuality and passion. Romantic period in the British Literature is considered as the golden period of Lyric poems as the poets like Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats , Burns and Coleridge were written many beautiful lyric poems. Nineteenth century poets like, Tennyson, Browning and Arnold were also produced some very fine lyrics.

Examples: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” by W B Yeats, “Piano” by D H Lawrence, “O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast” by Robert Burns etc.

Ode

. Ode is a literary technique that is lyrical in nature, but not very lengthy. In odes the poets praise people, natural scenes, and abstract ideas. Ode is derived from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. It is highly formal and serious in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. However, the tone is often formal. A prominent feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme. Since the themes of odes are inspiring and lofty, they have universal appeal. Also, by using sublime and exceptional style, poets endeavor to compose grand and elevated types of odes

Odes are of three types, including (1) **Pindar ode**, (2) Horatian ode, and (3) **irregular ode.**

Pindar Ode

This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe, and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

Horatian Ode

The name of this de was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal, meditative and intimate.

Irregular Ode: This type of Ode is without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure such as the Pindaric ode. Hence, the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Sonnet

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word "sonetto," which means a "little song" or small lyric. In poetry, a sonnet has 14 lines, and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10 syllables. It has a specific rhyme scheme, and a volta, or a specific turn. Generally, sonnets are divided into different groups based on the rhyme scheme they follow. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab–cdcd–efef–gg, and in Italian abba–abba–cde–cde. The sonnet has become popular among different poets because it has a great adaptability to different purposes and requirements. In fact, it gives an ideal setting for a poet to explore strong emotions.

Types of Sonnet

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

- Italian Sonnet
- Shakespearean Sonnet
- Spenserian Sonnet
- Miltonic Sonnet
- Terza Rima Sonnet
- Curtal Sonnet

Haiku

A haiku poem has three lines, where the first and last lines have five 'moras', and the middle line has seven. The pattern in this Japanese genre is 5-7-5. The mora is another name for a sound unit, which is like a syllable, though there is a difference.

Haiku became popular as tanka poems in Japan during the 9th and 12th centuries. Initially, it was called "hokku" and Basho, Buson, and Issa were the first three masters of the haiku genre. Haiku poetry is also full of metaphors and personifications. However, this has often been argued against, since haikus are supposed to be written on objective experiences, rather than subjective ones. Haiku poems are usually about nature or natural phenomena.

"Autumn moonlight—
a worm digs silently
into the chestnut."

("Autumn Moonlight", by Basho)

Ballad

Ballad is a song , transmitted orally which tells a story. It was basically used in dance songs in ancient France. Later on, during the late 16th and 17th centuries, it spread over the majority of European nations.. Owing to its popularity and emotional appeal, it remained a powerful tool for poets and lyricists to prepare music in the form of lyrical ballads. The art of lyrical ballad, as well as ballad poetry, lost popularity during the latter half of the 19th century. In all probability the initial version of a ballad was composed by a single author, but he or she is unknown. Typically the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed and impersonal. Ballads, as stage performances, enjoyed the status of being one of the main sources of entertainment in ancient times. Legends and historical events were narrated in the form of a ballads, which would comprise song and dance.

Couplet

A couplet is a literary device that can be defined as having two successive rhyming lines in a verse, and has the same meter to form a complete thought. It is marked by a

usual rhythm, rhyme scheme, and incorporation of specific utterances. It could be an independent poem, and might be a part of other poems, such as sonnets in Shakespearean poetry.It is widely used in satres, epigrams, verse essays and narrative verses. If a couplet has the ability to stand apart from the rest of the poem, it is independent, and hence it is called a "closed couplet." A couplet that cannot render a proper meaning alone is called an "open couplet."

One of the commonly used couplet examples are these two lines from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

"The time is out of joint, O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!"

Types of Couplets

- Short Couplet
- Split Couplet
- Heroic Couplet (Closed and Open Couplets)
- Shakespearean Couplet
- Alexandrine Couplet
- Qasida
- Chinese Couplet

The rhyming couplets are usually used in poetry in order to make a poem interesting and rhythmic. They help create a rhyming effect in a poem. In literature, Chaucer, Dryden, Pope and Shakespeare have been famous for using rhyming heroic couplets.

Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue is a poetic form in which a person is speaking to himself or to an imaginary listener dramatically to reveal specific intentions of his actions. In this monologue, he or she reveals his character, temperament and their intentions. The most famous dramatic monologue ever written is "The Last Duchess" by the Victorian poet Robert Browning, who developed this poetic form. He liked to put words in the mouth of characters who were

conspicuously nasty, weak, reckless or crazy, for instance, Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" in which the speaker is an obsessively proud and jealous monk.

Features of a Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue has these common features in them.

a) A single person delivering a speech on one aspect of his life
b) The audience may or may not be present
c) Speaker reveals his temperament and character only through his speech

Elegy

Elegy is a form of literature that can be defined as a poem or song in the form of elegiac couplets that laments the death of a person with intense feeling. It often involves a poet who knows how to phrase thoughts imaginatively in the first person. Towards the end the poet generally tries to provide comfort to ease the pain of the situation. Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery, to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state.

A traditional Elegy is written in elegiac metre - alternating lies of dactylic hexameter and pentameter. A pastoral elegy is a distinct kind of elegy in pastoral setting with characters who are shepherds. It starts with the invocation of the muse and then proceeds by referencing traditional mythology.

Elegy is derived from the Greek work *elegus*, which means a song of bereavement sung along with a flute. The forms of elegy we see today were introduced in the 16th century. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", by Thomas Gray, and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", by Walt Whitman are the two most popular examples of elegy.

Satire

Satire is a type of literature that exposes and criticizes foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society, by using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule. The main intention behind writing a satire is to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. In satire,

writer uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption. The function of satire is not to make others laugh at persons or ideas they make fun of. It intends to warn the public, and to change people's opinions about the prevailing corruption and conditions in society.

There are two types of satire ; Formal and Informal. In formal satire the satiric voice speaks out in the first person. 'I' may addresses either reader or a character within the work. E. g., In Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot", Two types of formal satire are commonly distinguished; Horatian and Juvenalian. Named after the Roman satirist Horace, Horatian satire is gentle , humorous and light hearted. Horace himself described his aim as "to laugh people out of their vices and follies". Pope's "Moral Essays" is an example for Horatian satire. While Juvenalian satire , named after the Roman satirist Juvenal is abusive, scornful and sharp. Samuel Johnson's "London" (1738) and "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749) are distinguished instances of Juvenalian satire. Indirect satire is mainly found in Fictional narratives, in which the object of the satire are characters themselves and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say and do. John Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe is one of the best verse – satire in English,"Mac Flecknoe" is personal satire which the poet wrote to please himself.

Mock epic or Mock heroic is a type of satire that parodies classical heroic literature. It uses the conventions of epics and their elevated style to talk about less serious subjects. The mock heroic was popular during 17th century Italy and the Neoclassical England. A classical example of mock epic is Alexander Pope's "Rape of the Lock"

Free Verse

Free verse is a poetry that is free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm, and does not rhyme with fixed forms. Such poems are without rhythm and rhyme schemes, do not follow regular rhyme scheme rules, yet still provide artistic expression. In this way, the poet can give his own shape to a poem however he or she desires. Free verse is the literal translation of the French verse libre, a poetic form of the late 19th century France. It is based on natural rhythm

and normal pauses. Free verse is a feature of contemporary poetry which gives greater freedom to the poet.

Tanka

The tanka is a thirty-one-syllable poem, traditionally written in a single unbroken line originated in Japan in 7th century. A form of waka, Japanese song or verse, tanka translates as "short song," and is better known in its five-line.

In many ways, the tanka resembles the sonnet, certainly in terms of treatment of subject. Like the sonnet, the tanka employs a turn, known as a pivotal image, which marks the transition from the examination of an image to the examination of the personal response. Many of the great tanka poets were women, among them Lady Akazone Emon, Yosano Akiko, and Lady Murasaki Shikibu, who wrote The Tale of Genji, a foundational Japanese prose text that includes over 400 tanka.

Jintishi is one of the Chinese classical poetic Regulated verse form based on a series of set tonal patterns and strict structural features. The basic form of the jintishi has eight lines in four couplets, with parallelism between the lines in the second and third couplets. The couplets with parallel lines contain contrasting content but an identical grammatical relationship between words. All regulated verse forms are rhymed on the even lines, with one rhyme being used throughout the poem. Jintishi often takes history or politics as its themes.

Ghazal is a seventh century Persian poetic form originated in Arabia, and gained prominence in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century. Persian poets as Rumi and Hafiz had played an important role in popularizing Ghazal. In the eighteenth-century, the Ghazal was used by poets writing in Urdu, a mix of the medieval languages of Northern India, including Persian. Among these poets, Ghalib is the recognized master.It is a collection of couplets called **sher.** A Ghazal may consist of six or seven Shers. Each Sher is a complete statement in itself and contains an independent idea. These Shers are highly philosophical and exploring themes of love and suffering. The metre of the Sher is called **Beher**. The rhyming pattern of the Ghazal is known as **Kaafiya** and the refrain is called Radif. It is a very popular in India and Pakistan. Popular Ghazal singers are Ghulam Ali, Farida Khan and Jagjit Singh.

Rubai

Is a Persian verse form in the stanzaic structure of a quatrain. Rubai is the Arabic term for quatrain. Rubaiyat is a collection of quatrains. Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat is one of the most popular illustrations of this verse form.

Prose Poetry

Prose Poetry is a fusion of prose and poetry that exhibits poetic quality and using emotional effects and heightened imagery. Amy Lowell, Rainer Maria Rilke, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman are some of the major writers of Prose Poetry.

Narrative Poetry

It is a type of poetry that tells a story or narrates an event. In Western culture, narrative poetry dates back to the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh (before 2000 B C) and Homer 's epic *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It may well have originated much earlier. It has characters, settings and dialogues. Some of the popular narrative poems are "Out, Out" by Robert Frost, "The Owl and the Pussy Cat" by Edward Lear.

Performance Poetry

Performance poetry uses the stage as the page, transforming poetry readings into theatrical events. It is invented by Hedwig Gorski in the 1970s. While the recent revival of performance poets is seen as a reaction against mainstream, print-based poetry, the style reminds the classic role of the poet, who recited notable happenings, emotions, and perceptions. Quite often experimental rhythms are used to engage the attention of the audience. Patricia Smith's performance of "Medusa", a feminist poem and Sarah Kay's performance of "Hiroshima" are the two significant contributions in this genre.

Villanelle

The villanelle is a highly structured poem made up of five tercets (three line stanza) followed by a quatrain, with two repeating rhymes and two refrains. The word 'villanelle' is derived from

the Italian word ‘Vilano’ means rural, rustic and peasant. French poets who called their poems "villanelle" did not follow any specific schemes, rhymes, or refrains. Rather, the title implied that, like the Italian and Spanish dance-songs, their poems spoke of simple, often pastoral or rustic themes. Jean Passerat a 16th century French poet is generally credited with defining the specific characteristics of Villanelle. It has become increasingly popular among poets writing in English. An excellent example of the form is Dylan Thomas’s "Do not go gentle into that good night."

For Further Reading

M H Abrahams, *Glossary of Literary Term* (latest Edition)

X J Kennedy, Dana Gioia, ***An Introduction to Poetry,*** 1994 Harper Collins, New York

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/

https://www.britannica.com/

Module 2 : Poetic Forms

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was born in the year 1564 on Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare is the eldest of the eight children of John and Mary. At 18 years of age, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and they were blessed with three children over the course of the next few years. There are no records of what Shakespeare did between 1587 and 1592, thus these years are often referred to as the “lost years” by scholars. It was in London that he kicked off his career. He was the founding member of “The King's Men ". It was during his time in this company that he wrote some of his most famous tragedies like *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, as well as romances like *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. His works include around 37 plays, 154 sonnets and a variety of other poems. His immense popularity and success in the 1590s enabled him to buy a ‘New Place’, the second largest house in Stratford. Shakespeare died on the 23rd of April, 1616 at the age of 52 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church.

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY (SONNET XVIII)

Sonnet XVII is one of the best known from among the 154 sonnets written by Shakespeare.It is also one of the most straightforward poems both in language and intent. The poem is made up of fourteen lines in length, consisting of 3 quatrains and a couplet like a traditional sonnet. It follows the rhyme scheme abba cdcd efef gg. The sonnets were published in 1609 and the first 17 sonnets revolve around the subject of 'procreation". It is universally believed that Shakespeare's sonnets have been written for a "dark lady" and a "fair youth" though there is no written evidence for this. This is probably the first poem in the sonnets to not encourage procreation or hints at the possibility of preserving one's beauty without the need of procreating. One of the main themes of the poem is the preservation of the beauty of a young man(or the fair youth) through the lines of the poem defying time. The opening lines of this poem is one of the most quoted lines of Shakespeare's lines.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The speaker in the poem wonders aloud whether he should compare the young man to a summer's day. The most prominent figure of speech in this sonnet is the extended metaphor comparing the young man with a summer's day. Then he decides that the young man's attributes surpass that of a summer's day as it is more "lovely" and more "temperate". The speaker also comes to a realization that even summer is subject to change and will eventually lose its vibrancy. The speaker personifies nature here. The strong summer winds are a threat to the new flower buds of May, and at the same time summer doesn't last very long. Summer is thus destined to end. The summer sun is too hot and at other times it's not visible to our eyes. Here, "eye of heaven" and "gold complexion" are used as metaphors to describe the sun. The word "untrimmed" could signify two things, one it could refer to unadorned(not decorated) or can be taken as a metaphor for untrimmed sails on a ship. Here, nature is a ship with untrimmed sails or sails that havent been cut out for properly sailing through the sea. The sail of a ship is meant to provide it stability and decoration. So the speaker is referring to nature as a ship with sails that have not been adjusted to deal with changes in the wind in order to course through the sea correctly. The speaker here indicates that summer loses its beauty when nature is not paying

attention to her sailing and allows weather changes to happen. The speaker declares that everything beautiful must eventually fade away losing its charm. But as long as the poem is read, the young man in the poem will live forever in the lines of the poem. The beloved's summer is "eternal" in that it does not fade as it is captured in the words and lines of this poem. For ordinary people, usually summer passes by quickly and they age along with the passage of time but here both summer and the young man are turned eternal because they exist in the poem. In the final lines of the poem the poet personifies death. Here, death wont get a chance to claim the young man as his immortal now. The speaker predicts that this poem will continue to be read and the fair youth(or young man) will continue to be analyzed forever. As long as men live, see and read, this poem will continue to exist. Here the poet is emphasizing the immortality of both the poem and the young man in it. Here the word "thee" could refer to either the fair youth or us readers, or both.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. Why does the poet say that his beloved is superior to nature?
2. Explain the metaphor of the ship in the poem.
3. Explain the meaning of the closing lines of the poem.
4. How is time described in the poem?

II. Answer the following in a paragraph

1. Explain the three arguments in the poem.
2. Comment on the imagery in the poem.

III. Activity

Compare "Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's day" with "Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws" (Sonnet number 19)

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

Shakespeare, William. *Sonnet 18*. Ed. Amanda Mabillard. *Shakespeare Online*. 12 Nov. 2008. < http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/18detail.html >.

JOHN MILTON

John Milton was born in Breadstreet, London. He was a Puritan poet and a civil servant who had served the British Commonwealth. Milton is considered as one of the greatest English writers after Shakespeare. He wrote during a time of religious fluctuations and political upheaval. *Paradise Lost* is his magnum opus which was written after he became blind during the period of 1658-1664, which was later published in 1667. In 1671, he wrote a sequel to *Paradise Lost* named *Paradise Regained*.He faced imprisonment for his strong sentiments on popery and prelacy. Milton advocate the abolition of the Church of England and the execution of Charles I in his prose works. *Areopagactica* is one of his best known prose to date. Milton was a Puritan and his works revolve around themes of faith, liberty of the press, freedom of expression etc. He made excessive use of blank verse in his poetry for which he gained appreciation from the Romantic poets. John Milton wrote in English, Greek, Italian and Latin and was therefore renowned internationally.

WHEN I CONSIDER HOW MY LIGHT IS SPENT

It was in the year 1652 that the poet John Milton went completely blind. His talent at this point was not yet proven as his best work, namely, *Paradise Lost* was yet to be written. "When I consider how my light was spent" is also known as Sonnet 19 and it is a poem that ponders over how life before his blindness set in was spent. This sonnet was published under the collection *Milton's 1673 Poems*. Although Milton gave it the number 19, it was published as number 16 in the book. The sonnet is in the typical Petrarchan form with a rhyme scheme of a b b a a b b a c d e c d e.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

This poem begins with the speaker pondering over how he spent the years of his life. "Light" is used as a metaphor for life, and in a more literal sense it refers to the period of Milton's life in which he had his vision and he could see before blindness sets in. He laments that he is forced to live in a world that is "dark" even before half of his life had passed. "Talent" here refers to the

poet's skill with words as well as his love for writing upon which his livelihood depended upon. The word “Talent” may also refer to Milton’s skill in translating texts from foreign languages which was part of his job under the Cromwell government. “That one talent” also alludes to the *parable of the talents* in the gospel of Matthew. Being a Puritan, he relates the loss of his ability to write to the servant in Matthew 25 who buries the money given to him by God in the desert instead of investing it in a wise manner. Miltons devotion towards God is evident in the next few lines. He explains that his “soul is more bent” to serve God and present his accounts through writing. He yearns to serve God. The term “account” here refers to his records in writing as well as money. He is afraid God might scold (“chide”) him if he doesn't serve Him. Then the speaker wonders if God requires “labour” from the blind (“those without light”). To reply to this, patience is personified and in order to “prevent that murmur” in which the speaker is questioning God. Patience replies to the question by explaining that God has no need for works from man, but instead he loves best those who “bear his mild yoke”. Here, the word “yoke” literally refers to a wooden harness that is placed around the neck of plowing animals so as to direct them around the field. Metaphorically, this term(“yoke”) could probably refer to those who give over control of their lives completely to God and accept completely that their fate is controlled by God. The image that is clear here is that of God to drive and man to steer. Patience compares God with a king and he points out that God does not ponder over what a man is doing or what he attains, but rather what is important is staying patient when faced with adversities. Patience thus explains the true meaning of service to God, which is in the willing acceptance of the fate decreed upon him. The poem ends with a note of consolation as the speaker calls attention to the fact that those who are unable to rush over land and ocean, like Milton himself, who “only stand and wait” can also serve God. There is hope in the end, afterall, “darkness” prevails just before the breaking of “light” at dawn.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. What is the reply given by Patience to the poet?
2. Mention one example of personification in the poem.
3. What are the meanings of the word Talent?
4. Explain the last line of the poem.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph

1. Consider Milton's sonnet as a crisis poem.
2. Comment on the imagery of the poem.

III. Activity

Compare Andrew Marvell's "On Paradise Lost" and Colley Cibber's "The Blind Boy" with Milton's "When I consider how my light is spent."

JOHN KEATS

Born on 31st October, 1795, John Keats is the first child of Frances Jennings and Thomas Keats.His father died in an accident in 1804. His mother passed away in 1810 from a lung disease. In 1811, Keats joined as an apprentice in an apothecary in London. It was during this time that he first tried his hand at writing. Keats wrote short poems entitled "Imitation of Spenser " from here which was inspired by Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. His first volume of poems was however published in March 1817. *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* was Keats' next work to be published in May 1818.The first of his great odes, namely, *Ode to Psyche*, *Ode to a Grecian Urn* and *Ode to a Nightingale* were published in 1819. In the latter half of the same year, Keats produced his only drama, *Otho the Great*. His third and last volume, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Other Poems* were published in July 1820. Keats left for Italy on an invitation from the poet P.B.Shelley. Keats passed away in Rome in 1821 at the age of twenty five.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

La Belle Dame Sans Merci is a lyrical ballad by John Keats composed in the spring of 1819. The title literally means "the beautiful lady without mercy" and is taken from a medieval French poem by Alan Chartier. This poem probably sprung out of Keats own love story with Fanny Browne. He was head over heels in love with Fanny Browne, but Keats illness kept them both from being able to marry and live with each other.

BALLAD: Ballad is one of the oldest forms in English, older than Chaucer, and it arises out of folk literature just like the Epic. It was handed down from generation to generation through oral

tradition before the invention of printing. Hence, the ballad is short story in verse intended originally to be sung to an audience. The ballad makes use of supernatural elements frequently. It is written in the ballad measure. Usually, the story in a ballad begins suddenly without any introduction. Very often the same lines are repeated from stanza to stanza. There are primarily two kinds of ballad, the ballad of growth and the ballad of art. The ballad of growth is usually of unknown authorship and has been in existence since ages. The ballad of art on the other hand, is a literary piece of art and is a conscious attempt at the Ballad form of poetry like this poem by Keats. Other examples of such ballads are Scotts “Eve of St.John” and Keat’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The poem begins with the speaker noticing a knight wandering about alone in the streets. He wonders why the knight is in such a poor physical as well as emotional state. There is a sort of vulnerability apparent in the knight’s description by the poet. The physical state of the knight is mirrored by the landscape as well, this is one of the common features of Romantic poetry.Thus the knight is “alone and palely loitering” while in nature, the grass has withered and ”no birds sing”. The harvest season seems to be over, and everyone is preparing for winter. The “lily” on the knights brow symbolizes death as well as innocence. Hence in the next lines we find the knight's face looking anguished, pale and even feverish. While lily stands for purity, rose symbolizes love and desire. “Fast withereth too” may be referring to Keats's own physical state of declining health.

He strikes a conversation with this knight asking him about his troubles. The knight narrates the story of how he meets a mysterious woman on the hill side. But this woman seems to appear like a ‘faery’ as she disappears after making love with the knight leaving him feeling cheated. “Wild eyes” refer to the woman’s unpredictable nature. The knight tells the speaker how he was thus inspired to give her three gifts, namely, a wreath for her head, bracelets for her wrists and a pleasant smelling girdle for her waist (‘fragrant zone’). Note how all these three gifts are circular in shape, as if the poet is trying to convey how the knight may be trying to enclose her or keep her with him and under his control. But this idea of controlling her is in vain as she is a

bewitching lady with “wild eyes”. These gifts are also things used to adorn a woman. The knight then rides on a horse with her sitting “alongside” him singing a fairy song. The term “faery’s song” seems to hint at the woman’s other worldliness or extraordinariness. The mysterious woman seems pleased with these and returns these gifts with “sweet relish,wild honey and a manna-dew”.”Manna” is the name of the food that fell from heaven in the Old Testament. The lady's gifts are all symbolically food-related. The lady then takes the knight to “Elfin grot” which probably refers to small, fairy caves or the lady’s home. From here, she weeps loudly without revealing any reason and the knight shows his sympathy and love towards her by kissing her. The lady in turn, lulls the knight to sleep. In this sleep, the knight sees a nightmare of kings, princes and even warriors who convey the message that they have all been betrayed by this mysterious lady and he, the knight, is just another victim enslaved by her. When the knight finally wakes up from his sleep he finds himself alone on a “cold hill’s side”. He tells the speaker that this is how he ended up wandering about alone there.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. Identify the speaker of the poem.
2. Who are the men who have been seduced by the fairy? What adjectives are used to describe them?
3. Why do you think the poet has chosen a French title for the poem?
4. What happens to the knight at the end of the poem?

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph

1. Bring out the images of decay and desolation in the poem.
2. Discuss the significance of the repetition of the words ‘pale’ and ‘wild’ in the poem.
3. How does the woman lure the knight into a relationship?
4. Supernatural elements in the poem.

III. Write an essay on the following

1. Discuss the poem “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” as a ballad.
2. Discuss the significance of the imagery in the poem.
3. Justify the title of the poem.

IV. Activity

Compare “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” with “Lamia.”

PERCY BYSHE SHELLEY

P.B.Shelley was born the 4th of August, 1792 in Sussex, England. He attended Eton College from where he began writing poetry and later went on to study at Oxford University. But he was expelled from Oxford within a year for writing and publishing an article on atheism. Shelley then eloped with Harriet Westbrook and published his first long poem two years later. This poem was titled *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem*. This poem was a result of Shelley's friendship with William Godwin. Shelley later took Godwin's daughter, Mary as his second wife after the suicide of his first wife Harriet. Two years later he meets Byron in Switzerland and they develop a lasting friendship. This happy period in Shelley's life however came to an end when Harriet suicides and dies. He tries to gain custody of his children in vain. His later poems are marked by melancholy. Shelley died in 1822 when his boat was caught in a storm and he drowned.

ODE TO A SKYLARK

"Ode to a Skylark" was a poem that the poet is believed to have been inspired after a country walk in Italy one evening with his second wife, Mary. In "A Defence of Poetry", Shelley states that 'A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and seeks to cheer his own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel they are moved and softened yet know not whence or why'. Here, Shelley's notion of what a poet is and how poetry has the power to transform and uplift is made clear. Ode to a Skylark seems like a physical manifestation of these notions. The skylark is regarded as Shelley's greatest natural metaphor used for pure poetic inspiration and expression.

ODE: An ode refers to a form of poetry which is in the form of an address to a particular subject. The theme and treatment of the theme of an ode is usually in a dignified manner. It is longer than the lyric. /it is commonly addressed directly to the object or being it treats of. At times, public events like the death of distinguished personality, a national jubilee etc. form the subject matter of an ode. Originated in Greek, it was meant to be sung but the English Ode which the Romantics followed did not strictly adhere to the classical features. Therefore, the subject matter,

style, treatment etc. were different from classical Odes. Examples of some famous odes are Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode", Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" etc. Shelley's "To a skylark"

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The poem begins with an acknowledgment that the skylark that the speaker has spotted isn't just flesh and feather, it is in fact experienced as a spirit or an out of the world bird. True to the romantic spirit of the age on which the poem was written, the world portrayed in the poem is based on a Platonic philosophy. The beauty of the larks song lies in the fact that it is portrayed as instinctive and unpremeditated. The skylark is described as more of a cloud of a fire than a bird. It does not fly across the skies, rather it is described by the poet as sliding across the sky. The bird is imagined as pure emotional joy. As the day draws to an end, the sky turns a liquid purple and the lark gradually fades as it flies higher up and then disappears just like a star. Now the speaker can no longer see the bird, but he can still hear its beautiful song. The larks bursts of songs are described as rays of light. The larks song is also equated with moonlight. The words 'melts','rains','drops' etc. lend the lark's song an almost 'liquid' quality. The lark is then compared to a maiden of high class who is sad due to her experiences in love. She sings in order to pacify herself and that music which comes forth is filled with love that cannot be contained. The speaker then equates the song to the beautiful effects of light. In the coming few similes, the lark is compared to a glow worm and then to a rose who is losing its petals in the warm winds and at the same time giving off a sweet scent that makes bees or other insects faint. The speaker doesn't stop with his comparisons here, the larks music is further likened to spring showers that have the ability to refresh grass and flowers.He goes on to state that the skylark's song is way beyond all these worldly comparisons. It is way more joyous and clear, almost lending it the ability to renew the world in which we are living.

The effects of love and wine become insignificant when compared to the joyous song of the lark. Even songs sung at weddings or other celebrations seem to have secondary quality only when compared with the skylarks song. Now the speaker yearns to know what the skylark's source of inspiration is. Is the source of inspiration in the land or sea or the skies or maybe its love for fellow birds? Or is it simply because the lark has not experienced pain. The bird seems so much in love with life that it is untouched by any weakness,tiredness or thought of death unlike humans. The opening lines of stanza 18 are inspired from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act 4, Scene

4). These lines basically convey the idea that no matter how happy or sweet human life is , there is always a note of sadness somewhere to weigh us down. And even if they are able to break free from this sadness or negativity they could still not reach near to the joy portrayed by the skylark. Thus the poet reinstates the superiority of the skylarks song.

By using the image of a "skylark", the poet is probably referring to unappreciated art or poetry which needs attention just like the skylark. The rebel in Shelley envied the skylark's freedom. Both Keats' nightingale and Shelley's skylark are invisible , only their beautiful and pure voice is heard not their bodies. The skylark is actually a morning bird, but Shelley writes of the skylark in the evening. When compared to Wordsworth's skylark in "To a Skylark", Shelley's skylark has an other-worldly aura while Wordsworths is more earthbound. While Wordsworth's skylark is flesh and blood, Shelley's is a philosophical abstraction. The 'skylark' is referred to as a spirit because it is invisible and is spiritually present in it's music. Like the skylark, the poet may be physically absent, but spiritually present in his poetry. Like Keats, Shelley also feels the immortal joy or ecstasy of the free spirited bird. Imagery of 'light' overflows throughout the poem. Unlike man's poetry, the skylarks song has no undertones of sadness. In comparison, "Our sweetest song is those that tell the saddest song". The thought of death may always bear down on human thought and poetry. The skylark sings high above the ground. The "ground" here symbolizes harsh realities of mundane existence.Towards the end of the poem, the skylark symbolizes poetic inspiration for which the poet craves for, in order to create his own poetry.

PROBABLE QUESTIONS

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. Explain the phrase Chorus Hymeneal.
2. Quote any line from the poem that expresses the poet's wonder at the skylark.
3. Cite two similes from the poem.
4. How does the poet account for the ecstasy of the skylark?
5. What plea does the poet make to the skylark?
6. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of the saddest thought."Explain.
7. Explain the allusion in 'harmonious madness'.
8. Give two examples of caesura from the poem.

9. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem.
10. Identify the words in the poem that describe the movement of the bird.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. Illustrate the analogies that Shelley brings in to describe the skylark. How do they add meaning to the poem.
2. Transcendental elements in the poem.
3. How does the poet contrast the blissful existence of the skylark with the painful human condition.

III. Write an essay on the following

1. Discuss "Ode to a Skylark" as a Romantic poem.
2. How does the skylark become a metaphor for poetic inspiration?
3. The poem is a search for the ideal, the elusive and the transcendent. Elucidate.

IV. Activity

1. Compare Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark" with Wordsworth's "To the Skylark".
2. Read Thomas Hardy's "Shelley's Skylark" and discuss.

W.H. AUDEN

Wystan Hugh Auden was born in England on the 21st of February, 1907. He was educated at Oxford University and graduated from there in 1928. He lived in Berlin for a year and then returned back to England in order to become a teacher. He collaborated with Christopher Isherwood on a number of plays. Auden's first book titled 'Poems' was published privately by his friend, Stephen Spender, in the year 1928. Auden married Erika Mann, the daughter of the German novelist Thomas Mann, in the year 1935. Auden was a homosexual and this marriage was merely a marriage of convenience to enable Erika to gain citizenship in Britain and also escape Nazi Germany. In 1939, Auden and Isherwood emigrated to the US just before war broke out in Europe. It was in New York that Auden met Chester Kallman who turns out to be his companion for the rest of his life. Auden was granted US citizenship in 1946. Auden won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his poem, "The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue" in 1947. He

worked as professor of poetry at Oxford University from 1956 to 1961.Auden died in Austria on 29th September 1973.

IN MEMORY OF W.B.YEATS

ELEGY: An elegy is a poem written as a tribute to something or someone loved and lost. Most common themes of an elegy are lamentation for the dead, unrequited love, fall of a famous city etc. It is often elaborate in style just like the Ode. It has classical origins and it was originally written in elegiac measure with a dignified and solemn language. However, some of the best elegies written in the English language are touching poems that use simple language like Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard".In W.H.Auden's "In Memory of W.B.Yeats" unlike other elegies, human life goes on unaffected by the death. This elegy departs from traditional elegies in the fact that nature does not mourn the poet and is unaffected by the death of the poet. Also, Auden does not glorify the dead person (Yeats) as traditional elegies do, instead he criticizes Yeats and his works. It is more of a modern man's reaction or response towards death and loss and is therefore a detached account of Yeats' death and works. The poem is also a meditation on the role and place of poetry in the modern world.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The poem begins with the description of the day W.B.Yeats died. Both the physical world and the poet's body are in a frozen state in the cold winter and this image is juxtaposed here. A variety of rural and urban images together shed light on the standstill status of European politics just before the beginning of the world war. Everything together suggests that the day the poet died was a dark, cold day, literally for the entire world. Here, the concept of universal mourning typical to elegies is implied. Although the poet is dead, his poetry still survives along with all its limitations, weaknesses and failures. These works of W.B.Yeats are handed down from one generation to the next and will continue to exist independent of his personal history, thoughts or experiences. The living may interpret it in different ways in different eras. The world moves on unaffected by the death of the poet. People will continue to talk of liberty, equality and democracy while their freedom is in constant danger. But in between all these, a few people will

remember the poet and his works. Here, continuance of life and the inevitability of death are juxtaposed together.

In the second section, the speaker addresses the dead poet with compassion. He is described as "silly" like all poets or sensitive people. But his poetry is free of this weakness that he has. Although Yeats spent a lot of his time and effort for Irish nationalism , Ireland still remains the same. The speaker feels that even great poetry dont have the power to correct or modify the course of history and thus emphasizes on the futility of poetry in the modern world. Infact, poetry belongs more to the spiritual world rather than the material world. But great poetry still survives and inspires others because it springs out of the suffering of the poet. Here, "mouth" is used as a metaphor to refer to both the poet and poetry.

The poem concludes by summing up Yeats achievements. Some of the messages conveyed through the poem are that a poet's work becomes independent of him after the poet's death as they are interpreted in different ways which are not under his control. Throughout the poem, we find weather and water taking is personified. The funeral is taking place and the author is invoking the Earth in order to receive the body of the poet and simultaneously regrets that Ireland is now devoid of its poetry. Time is a villian who usually destroys the beautiful and innocent, yet Time loves the poet and if forgiving towards him. Time will forgive all political and private weaknesses that Yeat's had and will instead glorify his poetic achievements. Yeats' poetry has the power to transform the curse of fallen humanity into a vineyard of human freedom. The speaker ends the poem in an optimistic note, hoping that Yeats' poetry will enlarge our sensibilities and help us in living a better life.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. Why does Auden say "He disappeared in the dead of winter"?
2. Explain the lines "the words of a dead man/ are modified in the guts of the living"?
3. Explain the last two lines of the poem.
4. Comment on the prophetic aspect of the poem.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. What is Auden's attitude towards poetry?
2. Comment on the imagery in the poem.
3. Attempt a comparison between the second and the third parts of the poem.
4. How does Auden describe the day on which Yeats died?

III. Write an essay on the following.

1. "In Memory of W.B.Yeats" is not just about Yeats. It is about poetry and poets. Discuss.
2. Discuss the elegiac elements in "In Memory of W.B.Yeats."

IV. Activity

Discuss the different types of elegies e.g. Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written on a Country Churchyard" and Milton's "Lycidas".

FURTHER REFERENCE

"'In Memory of W.B.Yeats': Elegy For a Man and Ideal"
https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1003&context=englsp

DYLAN THOMAS

Dylan Thomas was born in Wales in the year 1914, the very same year that World War I began. Therefore, we find his reaction to the two world wars leaving a strong influence on his writings. His very first book of poetry made him instantly famous. He was also known to be a heavy drinker and unfortunately, two years into writing "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" about his father's approaching death, he himself dies. His premature death at the age of 39 is similar to the early death of another Romantic poet, John Keats. Both of them passed away before expressing their literary potential to its fullest. But just like Keats, Dylan has also left behind a few enduring works that are enough to last through ages.

DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

This poem is one of Dylan Thomas' most famous poems and it is known by its first line "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night". This particular poem is also the most famous example of the poetic form called villanelle. Thomas Dylan uses this poem to address his dying father and the poem is a lament on the loss of his father's health and at the same time an encouragement to cling on to life.

VILLANELLE : The term "villanelle" is derived from the Italian word "villano" which means 'peasant'. In literature, villanelle is defined as a poetic device which requires a highly structured poem. The poem must have 19 lines and a fixed form. The villanelle is made up of five tercets,a quatrain and a couplet at the end of the quatrain. It is divided into 3 segments. The first segment is termed the "introduction", the second is called the "development" and the third is called the "conclusion". Villanelle helps in building up the intensity and tone of a poem.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The poem begins with the speaker addressing an unknown listener, advising him not to "go gentle into that good night". Here the term "night" is used as a metaphor for death. From this metaphor, we could derive that a person's lifetime could be represented by a day and sunset could represent the coming demise. Death is symbolized in the phrases "that good night", "close of the day" and "the dying of the light". The speaker believes that old men shouldn't slip away easily into death. Instead, they should "burn and rave" struggling fiercely. Dylan here is trying to show his father that everyone will die one day, but everybody should fight for their life instead of readily accepting death. According to the speaker, wise men do accept death as a natural part of life and yet they try to hold on to life in order to be able to leave their mark in history as a great scholar, philosopher or so. "Words" here may refer to actions, speech or work of art. Good people, mourn that they couldn't accomplish more when they see the last moments of their lives pass by. And so they resist the coming darkness of their deaths. The phrase "crying how bright" could refer to these men telling their stories in a limelight. But the speaker goes on to say that their deeds will not be remembered no matter how significant their achievements are. The word "green bay" refers to an ever-lasting sea which marks their place in history. After they

think about their past, these good men decide that they need to live even if it is just to leave their names written down in the pages of history.

The next category of men referred to by the speaker here are wild men. These wild men have wasted away their lives chasing what they could not attain and realize too late that their end is coming. The phrase “caught and sang the sun” is symbolic of how these men lived their lives in adventures and excitements. They are sad when they realize their life is coming to an end because they wasted their time living their lives in folly. They refuse to give in to death because they need time to correct their follies perhaps or live more adventures. The final group the poet talks of is “grave men”. “Grave men " may refer to serious men or those who are nearing death and feeling their health withering away. Their eyes also seem to lose power along with the rest of their body. But what still remains is a passion for life in their eyes. These men are struggling for survival. Here the poet is probably trying to give hope to his father that even in his frail state, he could find happiness in living longer. In the final stanza, the poet makes it clear that all men, irrespective of their experiences or situations fight for life or more time to live. He urges his father also to do the same thing. In the final lines, we feel the pain and passion experienced by the speaker or poet while he nearly begs his father not to give in and leave this world. It seems as if his father has peacefully accepted and come to terms with his approaching death. The progression of the poem from wise men to grave men might be a reference to the poet's father’s life progression from being a military man to this current,frail state. Feeling his father giving in, he tries to convince his father that he has not yet left his mark upon the world and needs to live more to do so. But it must also be noted that Dylan refers to death as that “good night” and not a terrifying or negative one. There is a sort of peaceful surrender in that very phrase. But over and above all, the final message or plea that the poet makes to his dying father is to choose life.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. What is a villanelle?
2. What prompted the poet to write the poem?
3. What is the prayer that the poet makes at the end of the poem?
4. What does night stand for in the poem?

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. Describe the attitude of the poet towards life and death.

2. Explain the significance of the title of the poem.

III. Write an essay on the following

1. "Do not go gentle into that good night" is one of the finest villanelles in English literature. Comment.
2. Discuss the critical observation that "Dylan Thomas has great mastery in handling varying moods."

IV. Activity

Discuss the theme of death in some important poems of twentieth century e.g. Dylan Thomas' "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London", Philip Larkin's "Aubade", John Donne's "Death, be not proud."

ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning is one of the most famous and widely read poets of the Victorian Era alongside Tennyson. Born in London in 1812, he wrote his first poem at the age of 14. He dropped out of the University of London after a year of study. He tried his hand at drama, but was unsuccessful. Some of his early works include *Sordello*(1840) and *Pippa Passes*(1841) which is verse drama. It was in 1844, that he comes across a volume of poems by an invalid, Elizabeth Barrett, which impresses him and he consequently sends her a fan letter. Both of them fell into a courtship that was the most celebrated in the Victorian era. Since Elizabeth Barrett's father didn't approve of their marriage, they both eloped and secretly married two years later. The next 15 years, they both spent living in Italy. Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in 1861, after which Robert Browning gained a reputation as a poet. Some of his most celebrated dramatic monologues include *My Last Duchess*, *Fra Lippo Lippi* and *Porphyria's Lover*. Browning died in 1889, a time in which he was considered as one of the great poets of England, next to Wordsworth. He had a natural talent for depicting action in character, rather than character in action, as he himself puts it. So intense and intimate are Browning's involvement in the lines and feelings of his characters that some critics claim them to be no more than projections of his own personality and pre-occupations. Few of the major subjects that dominate Browning's poetry are the worlds of love and art and the problems of religious faith and doubt.

MY LAST DUCHESS

Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess* was published in “Dramatic Lyrics” in 1842, in “Dramatic Romances and Lyrics” in 1849 and finally in “Dramatic Romances” in 1863. In form, *My Last Duchess* is a dramatic monologue. The poem attempts to reveal the Duke’s character as well as the character of man to whom the Duke is speaking in the poem. Critics and scholars generally agree that the incident described in the poem has a basis in history and that the Duke is a poetic recreation of Alphonso II, Duke of Ferrara (1523), the story of whose first and second marriage is similar to the story of Browning's Duke in the poem. His first wife , Lucrezia, who died possibly a virgin at the age of 17, under suspicious circumstances might be the model of the Last Duchess. After the death of Lucrezia, the Duke did negotiate for his second marriage through the agent of the court of Tyrol, and this agent, who was a native of Innsbruck may be the man in the poem to whom the Duke is speaking to. The poem attempts to reveal not only the Duke’s character, but also the character of the epoch to which he belongs. It draws attention to the nature of the bond of marriage that existed in the Italian Renaissance. The wife, in those days, was regarded as the private possession of the husband, something like an object of art or architecture. The lesson that we draw from the character of the Duke is that wealth, aesthetic appreciation and social status when devoid of love and understanding lead to a dangerous and distorted personality and this is a favourite theme of Browning’s, who always emphasizes on the need for love in life. The poem is an excellent example of Browning's conversational style. What sets this poem apart from Browning’s other poems is the economy of expression as compared to tedious ramblings that is one of his usual features.

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE: The dramatic monologue is a poetic form and not a dramatic art form. It is part drama and part poetry as B.Prasad notes. It is a speech in the form of poetry addressed to a silent listener. It is a study in character, however it lacks action and exchange of speech as in drama. Now the person who delivers the speech is made to reveal his character and motives through the monologue at the same time also giving the readers glimmers of the nature of the listener and the kind of responses he is giving. Robert Browning is considered to be one of the chief exponents of this form of poetry though Tennyson also used it with masterly skill, as in *Ulysses*.It is similar to soliloquy, and yet different from it. It is similar because in both these

devices, a speaker expresses his thoughts uninterrupted by other. However, the difference lies in the fact that while dramatic monologue presupposes the presence of a passive listener, soliloquy is devoid of any such presumption. In a dramatic monologues, sometimes the character of the passive listener is also indirectly hinted at or revealed. In a typical dramatic monologue, Browning captures the salient features of a person's character at a crucial moment when he is most likely to speak about himself and his past. Though an early attempt, “My Last Duchess” is one of Browning's finest monologues. In a nutshell, a monologue is poetry, drama and philosophy all rolled into one single piece of art form.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

When the poem opens, we find the Duke talking to the envoy, while showing him the portrait of his Last Duchess which was painted by Fra Pandolf. Here, the Duke is negotiating a proposal for marriage to the Count's daughter, mainly for the sake of the dowry she will bring in. Before going down to meet the company assembled there, he draws aside a curtain from a canvas revealing to the envoy the portrait of his previous duchess. He goes on to narrate the chilling tale of the fate of his Last Duchess. The Duke here delivers a tailored speech full of calculated phrases, pauses etc. all of which are meant to impress and manipulate the audience(the envoy). The character of the last Duchess is revealed in the description of the “spot of joy” in the lady's cheek. In contrast to the Duke’s character, she is described as a tender -hearted lady for whom even the slightest show of courtesy was enough to make her smile and blush. Now the Duke, with his inflated ego and a fiercely possessive nature could not bear her smiling at everyone and looking everywhere. His possessive nature is again stressed upon in the lines, “(since none puts by the Curtain I have drawn for you, but I)”. He is jealous of even the painter who painted this portrait as his remarks are taken as compliments by the young Duchess. The Duke acknowledges that the Duchess loved him and smiled at him whenever he passed, but then “who passed without much the same smile”. What irritated him the most was the feeling that the lady, with her easy smile and blushes, was equating the Duke with his “nine-hundred years old name” with everybody else and everything. The Duke tries to create an impression of false modesty when he confesses that he lacks “skill in speech”. Burning with jealousy and paranoid sort of possessiveness, the Duke decides to silence the Duchess once and for all and “all smiles stopped

together". His purpose in narrating this tale of cold hearted murder to the envoy is obviously to forewarn the envoy of the code of conduct that is expected from his second wife. Then with a cool un-interestedness, he dismisses the thought of the young lady and turns to the question of dowry which he is expecting from the Count whose daughter he is about to marry. In the very same breath, he also makes it clear that he is more interested in the daughter than the dowry which reveals the Duke's hypocritical nature. On the way down , he shows the envoy a sculpture of Neptune taming a sea-horse, a rare piece that is part of his great collections. Just as the "spot of joy" contains the essence of the last Duchess' character, the statue of Neptune taming the sear-horse embodies the character of the Duke. He expects his second wife to submit to his will or else he will tame her like Neptune taming the seahorse. The last line of the poem ends with a firm, personal pronoun, "me", which once again reflects the Duke's egotism which is in sharp contrast with the courteousness and politeness that he shows in dealing with the envoy.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. "I gave commands, then all smiles stopped together."Explain.
2. What is the significance of the allusion to Neptune taming a sea horse?
3. "The Count your master's known munificence/Is ample warrant that no just pretence/Of mine for dowry will be disallowed."What does this tell you about the duke?
4. Comment on the stanzaic structure of the poem.
5. Who is the listener of the poem and what is the context which occasions the monologue?

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. Discuss the significance of the title "My Last Duchess."
2. Do you think that the duke is proud, egoistic and arrogant? Substantiate with examples.
3. How does the duke establish that the duchess can be pleased very easily?
4. "Who'd stoop to blame this sort of trifling?"- What does this tell you about the duke?
5. What idea does the poem give you about the position of women in Victorian England?

III. Write an essay on the following

1. Discuss the poem as a dramatic monologue.
2. Attempt a character sketch of the duke and the duchess.
3. Discuss the elements of irony in the poem.

IV. Activity

Compare “My Last Duchess” with “Porphyria’s Lover”.

JOHN DONNE

Donne was born in London in 1572 as the son of a rich iron merchant. Donne is considered as the leader and founder of the metaphysical school of poetry. The content of Donne’s poetry show the working of a mind quick to understand similarities in entirely different things and concepts. One of his most famous conceits is in “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” where he compares two separated lovers to the two legs of a compass. His conceits, coupled with witticism made him an obscure poet. Ben Jonson, his friend and admirer, said that Donne was the first poet to be remembered for not being understood.

METAPHYSICAL POETRY: Metaphysical poets refer to a group of writers who appeared at the beginning of th e17th Century. The term “metaphysical” was first used by Dr. Johnson, who borrowed it from Dryden’s phrase for Donne : “He affects the metaphysics”. The metaphysical poets were men of learning and to show their learning through poetry was part of their endeavour. They never imitated anything and so their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural. Different ideas were brought and merged together in their poetry. One of the common features in their poetry was the comparison between two entirely different things or images. They hoped to say what was never said before, hence the novelty in expression.While they focused on bringing novelty and learning into poetry, their poems ended up being difficult to understand for common man. Their scholarship is often reflected in the scholarly allusions in their verses, especially of Donne’s and Cowley’s. Metaphysical poetry may be divided into two types ,namely, religious and amorous. Amorous verse was written by courtly poets like Carew, Suckling etc. while religious verse was written by Herbert Crashaw and Vaughan.

A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning was first published in 1633, two years after Donne died, in a poetry collection titled *Songs and Sonnets*. However this poem is believed to have been written in 1611 by John Donne to comfort his wife, Anne More, while he was away in France on

government business and she remained back home in England. The title forbids mourning when lovers part. The poem is composed of nine stanzas with four lines in each stanza. One of the major themes of the poem is the contrast between the common love of people on earth and the unique, otherworldly love between the speaker and his beloved. The entire poem conveys the notion that the speaker and his beloved don't whine or cry while they are separated rather they stay true to each other and their love expands when they are apart from each other.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The poem begins with the speaker stating that good men die in peace and they are ready to part with their souls. Friends of the dying souls of good men would ponder over whether the person is dead or not. The poet goes on to advise his beloved that they both must accept their separation just as these good men accept death. The physical bond between the lovers may “melt”, but we must not cry over it. He advises his lover not to be like common lovers who cannot bear physical separation because their love depends merely on physical attraction. “Moving of th’ earth” refers to earthquakes, which frighten people and make them argue over how it happened and what the meaning of it is. On the other hand, movement of planets and heavenly bodies around the orbits in the solar system, although a greater movement than an earthquake is considered as harmless or innocent. Similarly, the speakers and his lovers love is like the “trepidation of the spheres”, the movements of which are not felt due to the depth of their love and the spiritual quality that their love bears. The term “sublunary lovers” refers to common men as lovers. These common lovers cannot bear the slightest physical movement as their love is based on sensual attraction. Here Donne is also implying that the love of the speaker and his beloved is on a much higher plane as compared with other common peoples love. The love of the speaker and his beloved bears an otherworldly quality which does not care about the closeness or physical presence of the eyes, lips or hands. Spiritually and emotionally, both of them remain united because their souls are one. In fact their separation only expands their love just like gold stretches and expands when beaten thin.

In the next and most famous metaphysical conceit, the speaker compares their souls to the pointed legs of a compass used to draw circles and arches. One pointed leg remains fixed at the center. But this leg leans towards the other when the other one goes around while drawing a

circle. The fixedness of the leg at the center helps the other to move neatly and complete the circle so that the moving leg gets back to where it began. Here the poet is probably referring to the importance of the beloved's fidelity or loyalty when the lover is away to maintain the relationship and make sure the lover comes back to her.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. How does the lover praise his beloved?
2. What is the metaphysical conceit employed in the poem?
3. Why does the lover forbid mourning?
4. What is the context of the poem?
5. Why should the parting couple"melt" and "make no noise"?

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. Explain the conceit employed by Donne in the poem.
2. What are the arguments used by the lover to console his beloved?

III. Write an essay on the following.

1. Discuss the features of metaphysical poetry as evident in Donne's poem.

IV. Activity

1. Read Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and identify the metaphysical elements.
2. Attempt a comparison of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" with "The Flea".

ALEXANDER POPE

Alexander Pope was born in Lombard Street, London on 21 May 1688. Because of his religion , Pope was barred from attending public school or university and was thus largely self-educated. He read widely and taught himself French, Italian, Latin and Greek. At 12 years, he began suffering from a debilitating bone deformity which would plague the rest of his entire life. He remained a hunchback, only four feet six inches tall, but proved his genius at a very early age and still remains the most quoted writer after Shakespeare. He is a representative poet of the Neoclassical age as well as a satirist. Pope's first important work, "The Pastorals" (1709) was published when he was just sixteen years old. This was followed by *Essays on Criticism* (1711) and *Windsor Forest* (1713). His final important works were *The Satires* and *The Epistles.* Pope

perfected the use of heroic couplet and used it in most of his poems. Heroic couplet was the most preferred form as it was the closest to the verse of Virgil and Homer. Alexander Pope died at Twickenham on May 30,1744.

ESSAY ON MAN (EPISTLE I,SECTION II)

"Essay on Man" is a philosophical poem where the poet tries to justify the ways of God to man. This poem is written in heroic couplets of iambic pentameter. It was published in 1733-34. It was actually conceived as part of a larger work that the poet could never complete. It contains four epistles, out of which we are dealing with the first one. The first epistle explores man in relation to the universe, the second one deals with man in relation to himself, the third one is concerned with main in relation to society and the final one is about man in relation to happiness. Pope's "Essay on Man" was an attempt to explain the basis of contemporary moral philosophy based on the Newtonian universe of order and regularity. What seems in the natural world as chaotic is the product of a divine plan which man can comprehend through his marvelous mental faculty called reason. The poem asserts the existence of a 'Divine Intelligence' (or God).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"An Essay on Man" describes the order of the universe with relation to a hierarchy, or chain , of being. Because of man's ability to reason, humans are placed above animals and plants in this hierarchy. The human condition is compared to that of an ox and a horse.

This particular section in Epistle I states that man is imperfect , but at the same time perfectly suited to his place within the hierarchy of creation according to the general order of things. The basic message conveyed in this section is condensed into the beginning lines of the final stanza in section II, "Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault; Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought." Pope makes use of this section in order to enumerate the follies of "Presumptuous Man". The poet states that human beings tend to focus more on their limitations and inabilities rather than their abilities and skill. He further emphasizes that God has the ability to mould and pilot our fate. He also asserts that we can only analyze what's around us and because of that we cannot be sure of the existence of a greater being or sphere beyond our level

of comprehension. The speaker conveys that it is more logical to perceive the universe as functioning through a hierarchical system.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. 'Man is as perfect as he ought' - Explain.
2. What does the poet mean by the expression 'Wisdom infinite'?
3. Comment on Pope's use of the heroic couplet.
4. Why does Pope address man as 'presumptuous'?
5. Explain the expression 'scale of reas'ning life'.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. What does the contrast between the 'steed' and the 'ox' signify?
2. How does Pope establish that perfection is 'relative'?
3. Neoclassicism as a literary movement.

III. Write an essay on the following

1. How does the poem 'vindicate the ways of God to man?'
2. The poem is a reflection on the reigning scientific thought of the day. Discuss.
3. Discuss Alexander Pope as a Neoclassical poet.

IV. Activity

Read "Essay on Man" (Epistle I Section I and III) and discuss how Pope develops his argument on man and God.

STANLEY KUNITZ

Stanley Jasspon Kunitz was born on the 29th of July, 1905 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Stanley Kunitz did his Bachelor's and Master's from Harvard University and taught at colleges like Columbia, Princeton and Yale. He was also the Poet Laureate in 2000. "The Layers" was first published in 1978. Some of his other works are *The Testing-Tree* (1971), *The Terrible Threshold* (1974), *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz* (1979) and *Next- to -Last Things* (1985). He died on the 14th of May, 2006 in Newyork.

THE LAYERS

In this poem, the poet takes us beneath the surface of things and into “the layers”. He ponders over the meaning of the trials and tribulations he has faced in his past as he looks towards the future. There are times when he is de-motivated to continue and yet determined to fight such negative feelings at other times. The speaker attempts to find a ray of light in the darkness. He believes that he is being led to an infinite path of growth and renewal. “The Layers” is both a haunting, yet hopeful poem. It is composed of free verse in a single stanza. Here, Kunitz goes beneath the surface of things, deep into the layers of complexities of life. The poem emphasizes the need for acceptance of the failures and sorrows of one’s life as a need for further growth and development. The poem can be described as a quest for identity. The poem gives the message that the past is more like a guide to the future.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The speaker begins the poem by stating that he has experienced “many lives”. The phrase “some of them my own” could refer to reincarnation. There seems to be no hint at the speaker’s gender or age, thereby making him a universally relatable character. He goes on to state that he is no longer the same as he was before. His life experiences have moulded him. There seems to be a fixed “principle of being”, a sort of guiding light that directs and leads the speaker on. This concept could symbolize the soul or intuition working as the guiding force or the “principle of being”. The speaker is full of emotions when talks of past attachments, loves and lives that are no more. He recalls previous connections that influenced him. Such “true affections” are many and “scattered” across various places and time periods. The speaker wonders how to move beyond these past attachments as well as hardships. He feels a deep sense of emotional loss and then finally regains himself and accepts all the hardships and heartaches of the past. He realizes the importance of leaving everything behind in order to move forward. He needs to move forwards and grow wiser from these tumultuous experiences. He then reflects on an old friend of his who was swept away by the hardships of life as he just couldn't move on with the journey. These memories hit the speaker like a “manic” or a “dust” storm. The speaker then gets himself to “turn” away from his painful memories. The repetition of the verb “turn” is symbolic of change and the beginning of a new life cycle. When the speaker looks back upon his past

experiences he is now able to look at them as learning experiences. The term “road” here probably hints at an inner journey as well. He does not mourn or whine about the past anymore instead he accepts every “stone” as a “precious” opportunity for him which allowed him to grow wiser as a person.

The speaker then talks of the toughest times in his life. The phrase “the moon was covered” may indicate the loss of light to guide him or help him out of “wreckage”. But then he finds a guiding voice within himself who speaks directly to him advising him to “live in the layers, not on the litter.” The voice coming from the clouds seems powerful and omnipresent. Here, the “layers” probably refers to a deeper, more conscious exploration of one’s life. Meanwhile, the word “litter” may refer to the surface or unwanted, superficial things in life. The speaker accepts the limitations of poetry in conveying his real thoughts. He finds himself unable to use language to accurately convey the future. The phrase “next chapter” refers to the next phase of the speaker’s life. The word “transformations” refers to the possible changes that will continue to happen in the speaker’s life. According to the speaker, life is not about endings or death , rather it is about renewal and continuation in life. Throughout the poem, there is a strong determination to stay young mentally and face life no matter what.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. “I am not done with my changes.” Explain.
2. What symbols does Kunitz use throughout the poem to signify death?
3. What does the poet convey through the paradoxical expression ‘feast of losses’?
4. What is the figure of speech in the expression ‘scavenger angels’ and what does it convey?
5. “Live in the layers, not on the litter.” Explain.
6. Can you guess the age of the speaker? Justify your answer.

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. Discuss the significance of the title “The Layers.”
2. Images of loss in the poem.
3. How do the past experiences of the poet transform him?
4. Symbolism in the poem.

5. What obstacles does the speaker have to overcome in order to experience a transformation?
6. What is the poet's attitude to adversities?

III. Write an essay on the following

1. "The Layers" is all about transformations. Elucidate.
2. Discuss the poem as a metaphor for the journey of life.
3. "The Layers" celebrates the insight that man gains as he carries on with his life. Discuss.

IV. Activity

Given below is an excerpt from Stanley Kunitz's "Testing Tree"

In a murderous time
the heart breaks and breaks
and lives by breaking.
It is necessary to go
through dark and deeper dark
and not to turn.

Compare the above lines with "The Layers."

LEONARD COHEN

Leonard Cohen(1934-2016) is a Canadian singer,songwriter and poet. "Let Us Compare Mythologies"(1956) was his first book of poetry. His next major work was "The Spice-Box of Earth" in 1961 which was the work which gave him a distinct voice in Canadian poetry. His other important poetry collections are *Death of a Lady's Man* (1978), *Book of Mercy* (1984), *Stranger Music : Selected Poems and Songs* (1993) and *Book of Longing* (2006). Later he moved on to composing songs as he did not find writing poetry that profitable. Cohen was 53 when "I Am Your Man" was released and it soon turned out to be his most successful record since his 1967 debut. According to Cohen, it was an album that "broke down three or four times in the making of it" and yet turned out to be a big hit. He suffered from depression and other health issues and had a hard time earning money out of songwriting. It is believed that he even considered retiring and joining a monastery instead, but then put off the thought because he knew he didn't have the spirituality required for it.

I AM YOUR MAN

"I am Your Man" was first released in February, 1988. It was praised by critics and described as the album in which Cohen returned to form. It was ranked as 51 on *Pitchfork's* list of the 100 best albums of the 1980s. "I am You Man" is a romantic song which describes the passionate love of a man towards his beloved. There is a sense of desperation on the part of the man in love here that is hinted at throughout the course of the song. The poem is composed in free verse in asymmetrical stanzas. The poem describes the lover's willingness to take on any role in order to please the beloved. He regrets the promises he could not keep to his beloved and hopes she would forgive as he is ready to stoop as low as he possibly could. The poem is strewn with erotic imagery and this also conveys the desperation of the lover.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The speaker begins by stating that he is ready to do anything that his beloved asks him to. He is ready to pretend also if need be , or if that is what she would enjoy. The phrase "another kind of love" could refer to sensual or physical love alone. The speaker goes on to say he is ready to hold her hand and be her partner. He is also willing to stand while she strikes him in anger (probably for not keeping the promises he had made in the past). He admits that he is also ready to be a boxer along with her in the same boxing ring. He is ready to be a doctor and examine her or even a driver to take her anywhere she desires. Being a boxer in the same ring, a doctor who would examine "every inch" of her, a driver who asks her to "climb inside" all have sexual connotations. It is almost as if he is inviting her to make love.Through the above lines, the speaker confesses that he is ready to be either a dominant partner in the physical love making process or a submissive one, as per her wish. The moon being too bright might refer to an unfavourable night for making love as its "too bright". The chain being too tight might be symbolic of an aggressive act of making love or that his mind is restrained. The beast here might be a reference to the beast within the lover's mind or in his subconscious mind. "Ah, but a man never got a woman back" shows that the speaker is pessimistic about getting his beloved back due to the promises he broke. He thinks begging at her knees is of no use. Instead, he is ready to

crawl and fall at her feet. The next line, “And I’d howl at your beauty like a dog in heat” could refer to complimenting the beloved’s beauty while they are engaged in love making. The line “And I’d claw...sheet” again is a reference to aggressive love making due to the use of the words “claw” and “tear”. The lines “I will steer.....disappear for you” convey that he is ready to give her her space as well, he is ready to let her be alone when she needs to. He is even ready for just a temporary love affair who “only want to walk with me a while”. He is also ready to be the father to her child. There is a sense of urgency, aggressive love and desperateness that pervades throughout the poem.

I. Answer the following in two or three sentences.

1. What does the expression ‘dog in heat’ signify?
2. What does the act of wearing a mask signify?
3. What do ‘chain’ and ‘beast’ suggest?
4. How does the poet justify his situation of making promises not keeping them?

II. Answer the following in a paragraph.

1. What are the different roles the lover is willing to take on to satisfy his beloved?
2. What effect does the action words ‘crawl’,’fall’,’howl’,’claw’, and ‘tear’ create in the poem?

III. Write an essay on the following

1. “I am Your Man” as the supreme expression of desperate love.
2. Imagine you are the poet’s beloved. How would you respond to his pleas?

IV. Activity

Read Leonard Cohen’s “”Ain’t No Cure for Love” and compare it with “I’m Your Man.”

Module 3

World Poetry

Childhood

Rainer Maria Rilke

(Notes compiled from Internet Sources)

Text of the poem

It would be good to give much thought, before
you try to find words for something so lost,
for those long childhood afternoons you knew
that vanished so completely -and why?

We're still reminded-: sometimes by a rain,
but we can no longer say what it means;
life was never again so filled with meeting,
with reunion and with passing on

as back then, when nothing happened to us
except what happens to things and creatures:
we lived their world as something human,
and became filled to the brim with figures.

And became as lonely as a shepherd
and as overburdened by vast distances,
and summoned and stirred as from far away,
and slowly, like a long new thread,
introduced into that picture-sequence
where now having to go on bewilders us.

About the Author

Rainer Maria Rilke was born in Prague in 1875. He had an unhappy childhood. He published his first volume of poetry *Leben and Lieder* in 1894. His second collection *Sacrifice to the Lares* was published in 1895-96. In 1896, the third collection *Dream – Crowned* was published. In 1897 Rilke visited Russia which had a profound impact on his writing. His first great work *The Book of Hours* was published in 1905. It was followed by *New Poems* in 1907. His last two works were *Diuno Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus*, both written in 1923. He died in 1926.

Analysis of the poem

"Childhood" is a poem of thirty-three lines divided into four stanzas. The title would generally lead the reader to expect a poem describing a time of innocence and joy, and while "Childhood" does this to some extent, it also describes a contrasting sad side to childhood. The poem is written in the third person, which often serves to distance the poet from the speakers or perspectives in the poem. However, in "Childhood" the unnamed, pale child and his feelings of loneliness, isolation, and sadness resemble Rilke's remembrance of his own childhood quite closely.

"Childhood" begins with a short description of school; it is shown in an entirely negative light. The atmosphere is stuffy, the hours spent there are long and boring, and the feelings the child experiences are of anxiety and loneliness. The relief and joy of dismissal contrasts sharply with the "heavy lumpish time" in school. The streets ring out with children's voices, the town squares are full of bubbling fountains, and the outdoor world has endless space and possibilities. At the end of the first stanza a small child is introduced as different from all the others. Though he shares in the exultant feeling of release from school, he walks a different path, alone and lonely.

The second stanza shows the wider world from the child's perspective, one both distanced and perceptive. He watches men and women, children in brightly colored clothes, houses, here and there a dog. This description of the physical world suddenly changes to intense emotions underlying the seemingly simple neighborhood scene; feelings of silent terror alternate with trust. The stanza ends, as they all do, with a few words or phrases expressing the child's and poet's emotional perspective of the scene or event described. After observing the peaceful setting and sensing the conflicting emotions of fear and trust, there is a feeling of senseless sadness, dreams, and horror.

The third and fourth stanzas narrow their focus to the child's more immediate environment and playtime. As daylight begins to fade, the small, pale child plays with balls, hoops, and bats, rushes around blindly playing tag, and bumps into some grown-ups in the process. Evening quietly arrives; playtime is over as the child is led home firmly by the hand. Sometimes the child plays for hours at the pond with his sailboat, trying to forget the others whose boats are prettier. The poem ends with the boy contemplating his reflection in the water, "looking up as it sank down," wondering where childhood is taking him, where it all will lead.

Tonight I can Write the Saddest Lines

Pablo Neruda

Text of the poem

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, ‘The night is shattered
and the blue stars shiver in the distance.'

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms
I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me sometimes, and I loved her too.
How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense without her.
And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

What does it matter that my love could not keep her.
The night is shattered and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight searches for her as though to go to her.
My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

Another's. She will be another's. Like my kisses before.
Her voide. Her bright body. Her inifinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my arms
my sould is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer
and these the last verses that I write for her.

About the Poet

Pablo Neruda was a Chilean poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1971. His poetry was influenced by surrealist and symbolist movements. The Heights of Macchu Picchu, The Residence Cycle and Canto General are some of his major poems. *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* is his most famous work. Neruda is known for his love poems. But he has written a lot of political poems as well. Due to his extreme popularity as a poet who wrote about love his political poems are often overlooked. He wrote poems about a wide range of topics. Neruda had to hide from the dictator of Chile due to his political writings. He is considered as one of the greatest Latin American writers of all time. Harold Bloom included Neruda in the list of 26 writers central to the Western tradition in his book *The Western Canon*.

Analysis of the Poem

The poet in this poem is talking about his lost love. He feel that the immense sorrow he feels will enable him to write the saddest lines ever written. He uses night imagery to convey his sorrow. He feels that the night is shattered like his heart. He imagines that it is the night wind that is singing the song for him. Although the poet is sure about his love for his lover, he expresses doubts about his lover's love by saying that she loved him sometimes. This suggests that the poet's lover was not very constant in her love for the poet. The night reminds him of the times that he spent with his lover. He says that no one can resist loving her beautiful eyes. The poet feels sad that they are no longer in love with each other. His song is fuelled by the sorrow that lost love has caused him. He projects his sorrow on nature and feels that the night is as sad as him. He is unable to come to terms with the loss and his eyes keep searching for her even though he knows that she is no longer with him. He feels that they were different from what they are now. The absence of love has changed the lovers. The poet feels that he is no longer in love with her. However he cannot forget the way he loved her. He is also sad that she will from now on belong to someone else. Everything that he once loved about her will also belong to someone else. The poet is not sure whether he is still in love with her or not. He feels that although love is short, it is difficult to forget the love that we once had. The night reminds him of the time that he spent with her. He has decided to move on in life and forget his love. He feels certain that this poem is the last he will write for her. However his soul cannot come to terms with the loss.

Some Advice to Those Who Will Serve Time in Prison

Nazim Hikmet

Text of the Poem

If instead of being hanged by the neck
you're thrown inside
for not giving up hope
in the world, in your country, in people,
if you do ten or fifteen years
apart from the time you have left,
you won't say
“Better I had swung from the end of a rope like a flag”-
you'll put your foot down and live.
I might not be a pleasure exactly,
but it's your solemn duty
to live one more day
to spite the enemy.

Part of you may live alone inside
like a stone at the bottom of a well.
But the other part
must be so caught up
in the flurry of the world
that you shiver there inside
when outside, at forty days' distance, a leaf moves.
To wait for letters inside
or to sing sad songs,
or to lie awake all night staring at the ceiling
is sweet, but dangerous.

Look at your face from shave to shave,
forget you age,
watch out for lice,
and for spring nights:
and always remember
to eat every last piece of bread -
also, don't forget to laugh heartily.
And, who knows,
the woman you love may stop loving you.
Don't say it's no big thing:
it's like the snapping of a green branch
to the man inside.

To think of roses and gardens inside is bad,
to think of seas and mountains is good.
Read and write without stopping to rest,
and I also advise weaving,
and also making mirrors.
I mean it's not that you can't pass
ten or fifteen years inside,
and more -
you can,
as long as the jewel
in the left side of your chest doesn't lose its luster!

About the Poet

Nazim Hikmet is considered as the “first modern Turkish poet”. Hikmet was influenced by Communist ideals. He studied in Moscow and met many artists and writers. Later on, he went back to Russia as his writing was censored in Turkey. After returning to Turkey later, he wrote nine books of poetry. He also worked as a journalist, script writer and translator. After being jailed for his political beliefs, Hikmet decided to leave turkey for good in 1951. Initially

Hikmet's poetry was political in nature. Later on, he focused on Turkish folk tradition. Unlike the highly stylized poetry of other Turkish poets, Hikmet wrote in a colloquial and conversational fashion. He was often compared to the American poet Walt Whitman. Hikmet was admired by people all over the world. Pablo Picasso and Pablo Neruda were two of his supporters when he was imprisoned in Turkey. Hikmet died in Moscow in 1963.

Analysis of the Poem

Hikmet was imprisoned for his political views while he was living in Turkey. Hence he had firsthand knowledge of the impact of prison on the inmates. In this poem he tells people ways to overcome the challenges one faces in prison. The most important thing is not to think that death is better than prison. Your death is want your enemies want, therefore living is a kind of victory over your enemies. Prisoners have to make up their mind to survive, come what may.

A prisoner lives a dual life as half of him is tied down to the prison whereas the other half is concerned about what is happening in the outside world. Longing is something that will weaken a prisoner. Therefore it is not wise to wait for letters, sing sad songs r stay awake at night. What one should do instead is to groom oneself well, forget how old one is and eat as much as possible to retain physical health. It is also important to remain happy as sorrow can kill people when they are imprisoned. While we are in prison, our lovers might ditch us. This should not be taken too lightly as it is indeed a great emotional blow to the prisoner.

While in prison it is better to think about the freedom in nature symbolized by seas and mountains rather than homely pleasures symbolized by roses and gardens. A prisoner may lose the love of his family, but his people and nature are eagerly awaiting his return. It is also important keep oneself occupied by reading or writing, as it helps one to free oneself from the confines of prison. One should also keep boredom away by weaving or making mirrors. Doing time in prison is not impossible for people, as long as their hearts don't give up.

Mother to Son

Langston Hughes

Text of the Poem

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

About the Poet

Langston Hughes was an important poet of the Harlem Renaissance (also known as The New Negro Renaissance). He is often called the Dean of African American Writers. He wrote extensively about the discrimination faced by black people in America. Through his writing he tried to create positive images of black life and identity. He used a simple and direct style in his writings. He often wrote about the poorest of the poor among the black people. He is often referred to as the Poet laureate of the Negro race. His first collection *The Weary Blues* was published in 1926. It contains the famous poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" which he wrote while crossing the Mississippi river to meet his dying father. He was a believer in the American

dream like Walt Whitman and was severely criticized by later Afro American writers for this belief.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem Mother to Son is an advice that a black mother gives to her son. Unlike white folk, the life of black people is no crystal stair. It is a difficult climb. The stairs are not smooth and there are nails on the stairs which might injure the people who climb them. It has splinters and the boards are damaged in places threatening the safety of the people who use them. The black people are not welcome on the stairs; there are no carpets laid out for them. The white folk do not consider black people's lives as lives worthy of being lived. So they are not at all concerned about the dignity of the lives of the black people.

The mother says that the most important thing for a black person is to not give up and keep on climbing. Even if it is not easy, it is essential for the black people to survive. There are lots of twists and turns in the lives of black people and lots of unexpected things happen to them. Sometimes they do not know what is happening to them. It is like climbing a stair in the dark. You do not know what awaits you at the next turn. But it is foolish to turn back as that is exactly what the white people want the black people to do. They want to make sure that the black people stay home and do not fight for their rights. Climbing down will make life more difficult for the black people. The black people don't have the option of falling or failing. The mother wants her son to consider her as a role model. Even through all the difficulties, the mother has persevered and kept going up the stairs.

Stonemasons, My Father and Me

Namdeo Laxman Dhasal

(Notes based on Internet sources)

About the Poet

Dhasal was a Marathi poet and Dalit activist from the Mahar community. He experienced the hardships that Dalit people go through in India during his childhood itself. In 1972 he published his first anthology of poems titled Golpitha. He wrote in the Marathi language. Apart from poetry he also published two novels and a number of prose pieces. Inspired by the work of Dr B. R. Ambedkar and the Black Panther movement of the United States, he founded the Dalit Panthers movement. Dhasal also started a magazine called Vidroh to publish the works of the Dalits.

Analysis of the Poem

The stonemasons in the poem are the *vadari,* an untouchable caste originally from the Telugu-speaking region bordering Maharashtra on the east. The vadaris break rocks and stones for a living, often traveling around the country or migrating from region to region in large groups,

hiring out their services in the construction industry. They include specialized stonemasons, but the majority of them, including the women, end up spending their lives manually splitting down stone into blocks, gravel, and chips for a variety of engineering and architectural purposes, including use in mortar and paved roads. It is backbreaking, unrewarding, dehumanizing work, often assigned in modern India (and elsewhere) to convicts sentenced to hard labor.

The poem begins by saying that the stonemasons give dreams to the stones. Without the genius of the stonemasons, the stone is devoid of any life and merit. The narrator of the poem has followed his father into stonemasonry. Although the stonemasons give life to the stones, they themselves do not lead a proper life. They are not respected or paid well for their profession. It is the blood of the stonemasons that run in their creations. While stonemasons build houses for others with their hard work, they themselves often do not have houses to live in.

Without Title

Diane Glancy

Text of the Poem

- For my Father who lived without Ceremony

It's hard you know without the buffalo,
the shaman, the arrow,
but my father went out each day to hunt
as though he had them.

He worked in the stockyards.
All his life he brought us meat.
No one marked his first kill,
no one sang his buffalo song.
Without a vision he had migrated to the city
and went to work in the packing house.
When he brought home his horns and hides
my mother said
get rid of them.
I remember the animal tracks of his car
out the drive in snow and mud,
the aerial on his old car waving
like a bow string.
I remember the silence of his lost power,
the red buffalo painted on his chest.
Oh, I couldn't see it
but it was there, and in the night I heard
his buffalo grunts like a snore.

About the Poet

Diane Glancy is an American poet who shares Native American ancestry on her father's side. She found that the narrative about Native Americans did not fit with the kind of life that her father lived. The traditional narrative was that Indians (Native Americans) were buffalo-hunters, who lived in tents. However her father was a farmer and they lived in a house rather than a tent. Glancy wanted to problematize the representation of marginalized people like the Native Americans who were considered as uncultured outsiders by the white American society. Moreover she considers herself as a feminist. She has taught English and Native American culture at a college in Minnesota.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem is about a Native American who feels lost in the modern world cut off from the wild to which his ancestors belonged. He longs for buffalos, hunting and the Native American way of life which accommodated arrows and the shaman. Now he feels as if these elements of his life have been taken away from him. The father is ready to give up tradition for the sake of his children. Unlike the native way of living, the Native American lives an insignificant life devoid of any purpose. He is employed in a packing house. Buffalo songs which were part of his culture have been forgotten. The first kill of an individual was celebrated by the community. But that is no longer relevant in the modern world. The Native American has lost his vision. His wife who is not a Native American does not approve of his old ways of living. The buffalo horns and hide (skin) were considered as trophies from the hunt. But that is no longer important for him as his wife will not allow him to bring it inside the house. The animal tracks that he followed once have been replaced by the tracks left by his car in the snow and mud. Instead of the bow string he sees the aerial on his car. He has been stripped of his culture. He feels like a powerless man in the modern world. He suffers everything for the sake of his family. But deep inside he is a lonely man separated from his clan. The red buffalo painted on his chest grunts at night expressing its disapproval of his life. Others hear it as his snore.

The ceremonies of the Native Americans are no longer observed by the man. The glory of his past is now a distant memory. What happens is that the man feels out of place and robbed of his identity. Without the presence of nature, the man feels incomplete. Earlier he was his own master. Now he works like a slave in the packing house. His efforts are no longer applauded. He has no achievements to celebrate.

Anniversaries of War

Yehuda Amichai

About the Poet

Yehuda Amichai is an Israeli poet who won the prestigious Irael Prize. He is considered as the poet laureate of Israel. *Now and in Other Days* published in 1955 was his first work. He has written children literature, short stories as well as plays. His only novel is *Not of This Time Not of This Place* published in 1963. It was later dramatized as a play titled *Bells and Trains* in 1967. Critics often refer to him as the "The Walt Whitman of Jerusalem". Having suffered the atrocities of war first hand as a soldier Amichai became a pacisfist.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem talks about the visit that the narrator made to Tel Gath which is considered as the birth place of Goliath. Goliath was a giant who was killed by David according to the Bible. Tel refers to a site which has multiple layers of soil; each layer corresponding to a particular period in history. The narrator discusses wars which took place at the place at different points in history. Tel Gath is also famous for its winepresses (a place where wine is made). As a historical site, the narrator is aware of the fact that wars have been fought at the place even during the middle ages.

Personally, the narrator has a memory associated with the war, as he too fought a war at the place. He is taking his children along with him so that they will forgive him for what he did and what he did not do. He knows that wars are not decided by powerless individuals like him. The narrator is trying to teach his children about the history of war. The narrator although he is at Tel Gath in the present, travels back in time to the period when wars were fought in the middle ages. He is reminded of a Jewish poet who fought and also wrote poems during the middle ages. His name was Shmuel Ha- Nagid. The poet identifies himself with the poet from the middle ages as

he too was a soldier-poet. Although he feels that the former was a greater poet than himself. The poet talks to his children whereas Nagid talked to his heart. The mound is a place where a lot of death and destruction has happened. However the poet feels that he and his children stand there as symbols of resurrection that overcame death. He knows that their life too will end. But the eternal cycle of births and deaths will continue irrespective of what men do.

Be Drunk

Charles Baudelaire

Text of the Poem

You have to be always drunk. That's all there is to it–it's the
only way. So as not to feel the horrible burden of time that breaks
your back and bends you to the earth, you have to be continually
drunk.
But on what? Wine, poetry or virtue, as you wish. But be
drunk.
And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace or the green grass of
a ditch, in the mournful solitude of your room, you wake again,
drunkenness already diminishing or gone, ask the wind, the wave,
the star, the bird, the clock, everything that is flying, everything
that is groaning, everything that is rolling, everything that is
singing, everything that is speaking. . . ask what time it is and
wind, wave, star, bird, clock will answer you: "It is time to be
drunk! So as not to be the martyred slaves of time, be drunk, be
continually drunk! On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish."

About the Poet

Charles Baudelaire was a French poet who lived in the nineteenth century. In his anthology *Flowers of Evil* published in 1857 he dealt with taboo topics like sex and lesbianism. These poems were condemned publicly. Baudelaire believed that art was no subject to the rules of morality. He also translated Edgar Allan Poe. Poe influenced his aesthetic theory of poetry. He

was also popular for his art criticism. His prose poetry was equivalent to Impressionistic painting and influenced writers like Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine and Stephen Mallarme. The symbolists considered Baudelaire as their pioneer. Arthur Rimbaud called him 'the king of poets, a true God'. Marcel Proust considered him as one of the greatest poet of the nineteenth century.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem begins with an exhortation to be drunk. The poet declares that being drunk is the only way to escape the tyranny of time which breaks your back. Being drunk helps the poet to go beyond the usual and the ordinary. It is not necessary that one should get drunk by the consumption of alcohol. It is enough if people can get drunk on poetry or virtue also. If ever one finds out that they have come out of the drunken state, it is time to get drunk again. The whole of nature keeps reminding the individual that it is time to get drunk. When people are drunk, they forget about time completely. When a person is fully immersed in an activity, he or she does not feel the passage of time. The trick is to be passionate about something in life. It could be poetry or wine or virtue. But whatever it is, one has to be fully devoted to it. Without this passion and dedication one cannot live meaningfully. The poet may have felt that most people are living without any purpose. They are not interested in anything and just want to kill their time by doing routine things. They are barely alive. It is in this context that the poet exhorts the people to get drunk.

Landscape of the Capibaribe River

Joao Cabral De Melo Neto

About the Poet

Joao Cabral De Melo Neto is a Brazilian poet who served as a diplomat for his country. He is identified with the Generation of 45, a group of poets of the post world war II period. Their poetry is marked by a bare and austere style. There are traces of surrealism and cubism in his early poetry. His most famous work is *The Death and Life of Severino*. He is often considered as a member of the concrete poetry movement. Some of his important works are *A Knife of All Blade*, *Museum of Everything* and *Two Parliaments*. His last work is *Walking around Seville*.

Neto is noted for his use of concrete visual imagery in his poems. His poems are not lyrical and he does not use romantic and sentimental elements in his poetry. He believes that writing poetry is a very deliberate process and there is nothing accidental or unpremeditated in art.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem describes the Capibaribe river without any sentimentality. The images in the poem describe a landscape and waterscape that are scarred by waste, poverty and environmental pollution. The poet makes a lot of social commentary through the poem. The poet says that the river does not know the blue rain, the rose coloured fountain, the water in the pitcher and breeze on the water. These are images of relative purity. Thus the poet is suggesting that the river is not at all pure. Then the poet goes on to say that the river knows silt, mud and rust. All three are images of pollution and degradation. This suggests that the river is slowly dying.

The poet also says that the river must have known the octopus. This suggests that the biodiversity which once existed in the river is no longer present there. The poet uses the image of the river to make comments on the society at large. The stagnation of the river is symbolic of the stagnation of hospitals and asylums in the place. As long as the river keeps flowing, it can maintain its purity. But the dirt and silt in the river is slowly choking it to death. The sugar factories mentioned in the poem also contribute to the pollution of the poem. Towards the end of the poem the poet challenges the use of the colour blue to represent rivers on maps. The rivers with all their pollution are almost brown in colour. Thus brown is a better colour to represent rivers on maps. He says that it is true not just of the Capibaribe river, but almost all rivers in the world.

Homeward

Bassey Ikpi

About the Poet

Bassey Ikpi is a Nigerian born American poet who made her name as a word artist. At the age of four, Ikpi had to leave Nigeria to join her parents in Oklahoma. However she was never able to let go of her Nigerian identity. She became interested in performing her poetry while studying English at the University of Maryland. Her histrionic skills helped her to excel in the field of performance poetry. She suffered from bi-polar disorder and later on founded Siwe project to promote mental health among people. "Sometimes Silence is the Loudest Kind of Noise" is one of her famous poems. She also published a collection of essays titled *I'm Telling the Truth But I'm Lying* on the effects of psychic problems.

Analysis of the Poem

Homeward is a poem which talks about the loss of culture in a foreign land. The poem begins with a reference to the poet's grandmother who is a representative of the Nigerian culture throughout the poem. The grandmother connects the poet with her Nigerian self. Her skin smells of Nigerian history. She reminds the poet of her childhood in Nigeria. The poet recollects memories involving her grandmother while she was in Nigeria. She says that she was taken to America on an iron bird. However when the bird returned with the girl, she was no longer the girl who went away from her grandmother. The white man's language had destroyed her ability to speak her mother tongue properly. She finds it difficult to utter some of the words in her native language.

The poet says that she finds herself unable to express her love for her grandmother in their native language. The poet does not still believe that she belongs to America. She has not accepted America as her home. She feels that Nigeria is her true home. She wonders what she will teach her children. She wants to talk to them about the place that shaped her. She wants them also to consider Nigeria as their home. The poet feels that she has inherited the strength of women in her native country. However some of it has been lost in her life in America. Life in places like Oklahoma, Washington DC and Brooklyn has not helped her to remember her roots. However they have not made her forget Nigeria either. She feels divided between her American and

Nigerian self. She feels that she is both and neither at the same time. While Nigeria asks her to remember her identity, America wants her to forget it. But for her past, future, children and grandmother, the poet wants to remember her identity as a Nigerian woman.

.