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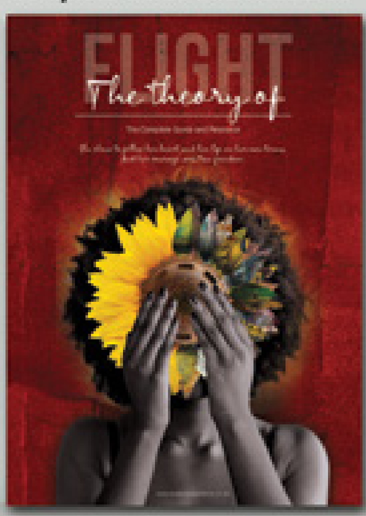

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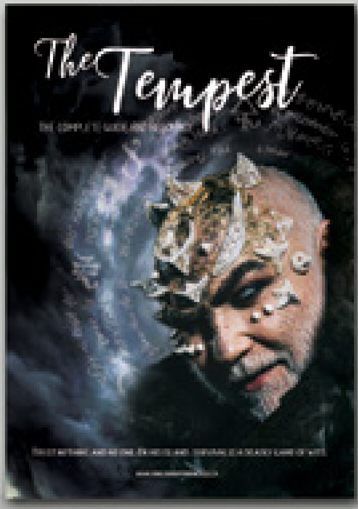

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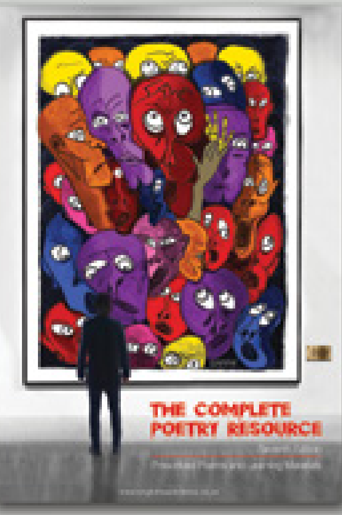

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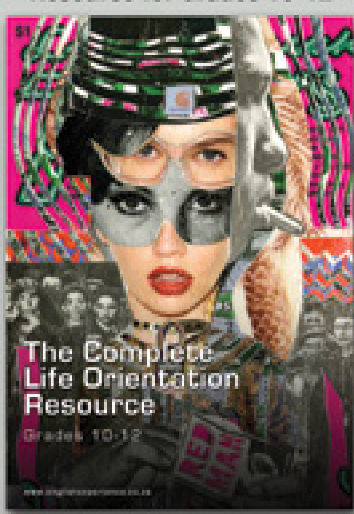

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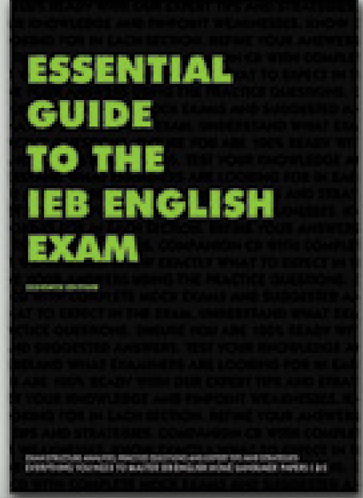

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THE COMPLETE POETRY RESOURCE

PRESCRIBED POEMS AND LEARNING MATERIALS FOR GRADE 12

SEVENTH EDITION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

About The English Experience....7
Our Approach....7
Using This Resource....8

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

Reading and Understanding Poetry....10
Answering Contextual Poetry Questions....15

THE RENAISSANCE

Introduction To The Renaissance Period....17
The Elizabethan Era....20
William Shakespeare (1564 — 1616)....24
- "Sonnet 104" 'To me, fair friend, you never can be old'....25
- Analysis....26
- Questions....28

The Jacobean Era....33
John Donne (1572 — 1631)....37
- "The Sun Rising"....39
- Analysis....40
- Questions....44

The Caroline Era....47
Edmund Waller (1606 — 1687)....51
- "Go, lovely Rose"....54
- Analysis....55
- Questions....57

THE ROMANTICS

Introduction To The Romantic Period....62
Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 — 1822)....68
- "Ozymandias of Egypt"....71
- Analysis....71
- Questions....76

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

THE VICTORIANS

Introduction To The Victorian Period 81

Matthew Arnold (1822 — 1888) 86
- "Growing Old" 89
- Analysis 90
- Questions 94

Christina Rossetti (1830 — 1894) 99
- "Remember" 102
- Analysis 102
- Questions 105

MODERNISM

Introduction To Modernism 110

E.E. Cummings (1894 — 1962) 113
- "nobody loses all the time" 117
- Analysis 118
- Questions 122

Cecil Day-Lewis (1904 — 1972) 126
- "Will it be so again?" 131
- Analysis 132
- Questions 138

Stephen Spender (1909 — 1995) 143
- "Moving through the silent crowd" 148
- Analysis 148
- Questions 153

Louis MacNeice (1907 — 1963) 157
- "To the Public" 162
- Analysis 162
- Questions 167

Sylvia Plath (1932 — 1963) 172
- "Mirror" 176
- Analysis 177
- Questions 185

AFRICAN POETRY

Introduction To African Poetry 189

Colonial African poetry 191

PHOTOCOPYING OF THIS RESOURCE IS IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE COPYRIGHT ACT (NO.98 1978)

William Plomer (1903 — 1973) ... 193
"Namaqualand after Rain" ... 198
Analysis ... 199
Questions ... 205
Alan Paton (1903 — 1988) ... 209
"The Discardment" ... 213
Analysis ... 214
Questions ... 218
V.N. Plaatje (1907 — 1961) ... 223
"What is in a Name" ... 226
Analysis ... 228
Questions ... 234
Post-colonial African poetry ... 237
Hugh Lewin (1939 — 2019) ... 244
"Touch" ... 248
Analysis ... 250
Questions ... 255
Mauri Yambo (1947 —) ... 261
"Cockroaches" ... 261
Analysis ... 262
Questions ... 267
Amin Kassam (1948 —) ... 271
"Strangers forever" ... 271
Analysis ... 272
Questions ... 278
Finuala Dowling (1962 —) ... 282
"For Oom Piet" ... 284
Analysis ... 284
Questions ... 288
Na Ncube (1966 —) ... 293
"The Tenant" ... 294
Analysis ... 294
Questions ... 299

UNSEEN POETRY

Introduction and Guidelines ... 304

© THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE 2022

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

UNSEEN POEMS

"Black Joy" — Koleka Putuma 306
Questions 307

"I've come to take you home" — Diana Ferrus 310
Questions 311

"The Aquasize Instructor" — Genna Gardini 316
Questions 317

"There is a me that I could be" — Lebogang Mashile 321
Questions 322

"Small bird singing in a bush" — Tatamkhulu Afrika 327
Questions 328

"The Rain" — Yewande Omotoso 332
Questions 332

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 337

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FOREWORD

ABOUT THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE

The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality English and Life Orientation educational resources for IEB educators and students. The team of passionate, talented experts behind The English Experience works tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate — enriching and challenging both educators and students — without losing sight of the important goals of academic success and examination readiness.

Focused on bringing the subject to life, every resource The English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features — including content and contextual questions and stimulating enrichment materials — designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the subject and to inspire the higher-order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 20 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as historical fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, pernickety proofreaders and obsessive fact checkers — together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who help to ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While academic success is a non-negotiable consideration, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.

Visit **www.englishexperience.co.za** to learn more about The English Experience and the range of educational resources the company publishes. You can scan this QR code using the camera on your device or phone to launch the site automatically. Please note that you may need to have a 'tag reader' app installed. There are free versions of these apps available, which you can download from the app store on your device.

OUR APPROACH

Perhaps the toughest challenge with teaching poetry to modern learners is convincing them that the effort often required to grasp the meaning of a poem is worth it. Decoding the language and deciphering the message of a poem can be taxing for young adults so it is perhaps not surprising that many of them see poems as works through which they must slog to earn marks or pass an examination.

This resource has been written with this reality in mind and particular attention has been paid to providing the kind of context and insight necessary to help students engage fully with each poem and to discover for themselves why it has captivated others.

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'The world is full of poetry. The air is living with its spirit; and the waves dance to the music of its melodies, and sparkle in its brightness.'

— James Gates Percival

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We believe that studying poetry rewards us with a broader, deeper understanding of ourselves and of the world around us; that is why this resource does more than provide learners with a detailed and, hopefully, eye-opening analysis of each poem. It also encourages them to engage with each work on a personal level and to uncover their own responses to the verse through the extensive contextual and intertextual questions.

Throughout this resource, students are challenged to agree or disagree with the analyses provided. By formulating and expressing their own responses to the opinions, ideas and themes explored in the pages of this resource, learners are encouraged to reflect and grow as individuals as well as students.

In the end, we have approached the poetry syllabus the same way we approach every text: with two interrelated goals in mind. Our first, non-negotiable objective is to ensure examination readiness and academic success. Our second ambition is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the works being studied.

USING THIS RESOURCE

This comprehensive resource ensures that educators are fully equipped to present the prescribed poems in context and in an interesting way, as well as ensuring that students have everything that they need to explore the syllabus with confidence.

This resource includes: the full text of each of the 19 poems prescribed in the IEB Grade 12 syllabus; an introduction to the era in which each poem was written; a biography of every poet; an in-depth analysis of each poem and a set of stimulating contextual and intertextual questions that challenge students to think critically about, and to formulate their own responses to, each work.

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POETRY IN CONTEXT

The poems written by Europeans are arranged into sections (eras, time periods or artistic 'movements') that illustrate the progression of **European English poetry** through the five centuries covered by the syllabus, from the late Renaissance period in the 16th century to the Modernist movement of the 1950s.

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The purpose of this structure is to help students appreciate how European English verse has developed over the last 500 years and to provide them with a social, political and personal context that, it is hoped, will help them to understand better and to value more the work of each poet. With this in mind, we recommend working through this resource in chronological order.

The contexts in which the African poets included in the syllabus wrote are significantly different from their European counterparts and so they merit being considered separately. This has been facilitated through the inclusion of an **African poetry** section, which features an introduction to the traditional or pre-colonial literary styles and contexts of African poets, and two sub-sections: **Colonial African poetry,** which includes poets born between the mid-1800s and the early-1900s, a time during which many African kingdoms were subjugated and absorbed into the colonies and protectorates of the imperialist European nations, and **Post-colonial African poetry**, which includes poets born between the late 1930s and the 1970s, a time period during which the people of many African nations fought for their liberation and achieved independence. Again, South Africa offers a somewhat unique case because of the policy of Apartheid enforced between the 1940s and 1990s and so the impact of this is mentioned specifically.

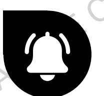
As its name suggests, the **Unseen poetry** section prepares students for analysing and interpreting unfamiliar poems that they have not read before. Working through the poems and questions in this section will help students to practise and develop the processes and skills required to respond to Question 4 of Paper I in the final examination. This section has been updated and revised and includes general guidelines on how to prepare for the contextual poetry section of the English Home Language examination.

Each section begins with an **introduction** to the period that draws attention to the major events and influences of the time, and some of the themes that are highlighted in the analyses that follow. After this introduction, a concise **biography** of each poet is presented, followed by his or her **poem**, an **analysis** of the poem and then a set of contextual and intertextual **questions**.

KEY TO USING THE BOXES IN THIS RESOURCE:

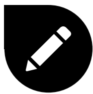
Definition or **Glossary**
Provides the meanings of words and terms used in the text

Information
Provides additional details or facts about a topic



Alert
Something to which you need to pay attention or of which you need to be aware

Quirky Fact
Fun, interesting, extraneous information



Checklist
A list of items or activities required to complete a task satisfactorily

Questions
Contextual and intertextual questions on the preceding poems

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'Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow.'
— James Gates Percival

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
We hope you enjoy this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any comments, queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing info@englishexperience.co.za or calling our offices on (011) 786-6702.

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INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

READING AND UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Reading and analysing poetry effectively is just as much about attitude as it is about mastering the necessary techniques. You will benefit from developing useful methods and honing your skills, but, ultimately, understanding poetry is about being open to new ideas and new ways of seeing the world around you.

Many readers complain that they develop a kind of 'block' when it comes to poetry, which prevents them from understanding the 'hidden message' in the poem; however, poets are not trying to trick or confuse readers. Their message is not actually 'hidden', but expressed in a way that is unique, complex and often very striking.

Poets do not wish to frustrate you, but they are trying to challenge or provoke you — not to work out an obscure meaning hidden behind fancy poetic techniques — but to think about their subject in a new, enlightening way. If a poem makes you think about an issue or look at something in a different light, then the poet has succeeded (and so have you!).

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Poets are often trying to challenge or provoke you to perceive something in a new, enlightening way.

Remember that interpreting a poem is not just working out what the poet means, but also **what the poem means to you**. This is more than just the fun, potentially enlightening part of the process. Developing and substantiating your own views is exactly the kind of independent, individual thinking the IEB encourages. It will also serve you well in the examination because the examiners will always prefer to reward a different, fresh interpretation.

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HOW TO ANALYSE A POEM

Before tackling a set of contextual questions about a poem, take the time to read through the verse carefully and to conduct a 'mini-analysis' (using the guidelines that follow). That way, when you tackle the questions, you are likely to have many of the answers at your fingertips already.

Even if you are unable to use all of your observations in your answers, conducting a 'mini analysis' is likely to enrich your understanding of the poem as a whole and ensure that your answers are as comprehensive and well-informed as possible.

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STEP 1: READ THE POEM

It rarely happens that you will understand a poem fully the first time you read it; most poems take several readings to be truly appreciated. Avoid trying to analyse the poem as soon as you start reading it. If you decide what the poem is about or what message it is trying to convey too early on, you may run the risk of missing an important point later and could try to 'force' a particular meaning on the poem. Be curious, be open-minded, ask questions and enjoy the poem before you start trying to deconstruct and analyse it.

- **Be curious**
- **Be open-minded**
- **Ask questions**
- **Enjoy the poem**

Simply reading the poem through several times without over-thinking it will help you to process the poet's meaning and technique(s). If you can, read the poem aloud. This will not only help you to detect patterns of rhyme and rhythm, but it will also often make the meaning of the poem clearer.

Be sure that you are reading the poem correctly by paying special attention to the use of punctuation or the lack thereof. The 'sentences' or 'pauses' within the poem, for instance, will help you to decipher its meaning. Make sure that you differentiate between **enjambed** and **end-stopped** lines.

Once you have read through the poem a few times, pick up a pencil and read through it again, this time, making notes or marks on the poem. *React to the poem* — write in the margins, circle words or phrases that stick out or confuse you, underline repeated words or striking images, and draw lines to indicate related ideas or metaphors.

An **enjambed** line occurs when a sentence or phrase (a unit of syntactic meaning) runs on from one line of verse to the next without a punctuation mark for pause, requiring you to read the two (or more) lines together to grasp their meaning fully.

An **end-stopped** line occurs when the sentence or phrase is completed at the end of the line of verse and is usually indicated by a full stop.

Consider the following extract taken from the opening lines of Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali's poem "An Abandoned Bundle":

The morning mist
and chimney smoke
of White City Jabavu
flowed thick yellow
as pus oozing
from a gigantic sore.

These lines don't make much sense if you stop or pause at the end of the first, second, third, fourth or fifth line. Read together, on the other hand, the six lines make up one thought. Notice the full stop at the end of the sixth line. This indicates that we should read these lines as one thought or unit of meaning.

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STEP 2: WHAT MIGHT THE MESSAGE BE?

Once you've read the poem through several times (not just once, but twice or even three times), you are likely to be ready to start deciphering its meaning. Before anything else, ask yourself: *What is the poem about? What message is the speaker trying to convey?*

If the poem is particularly long, it may help you to re-read each stanza and jot down a few words or phrases that summarise that stanza. Once you have done this, work out one or two sentences that accurately sum up the *subject* and *theme* of the poem.

When determining the subject and theme of a poem, it is important to know something about its *context*. Obviously, knowing a few facts about the poet — such as when he or she lived — will help with your understanding and appreciation of the poem.

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If you were to publish a poem now, your poem would be better understood by future generations if they knew a little about you as a person: for example, when and where you lived, your beliefs, what the social climate was, what society expected or frowned upon and what your personal philosophies included.

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The same is true for any poem and poet you encounter and so it is often very useful to familiarise yourself with the different literary periods and the common concerns or styles of these eras, as well as any major historical events that may have influenced the poets of a particular era.

Many people believe that any work of art — poetry included — should be seen as an independent entity, but you should be aware that no artist exists in a vacuum, free from outside influences. This is often particularly true of poets, who regularly feel compelled to offer commentary on their society, and to engage with the social or political concerns of the day.

Even if a poem has a 'universal' or timeless theme, it still helps to know what may have compelled the poet to put pen to paper. The date of birth of the poet will usually give you a good indication of the period or movement to which he or she belonged, particularly if you aren't given any additional information. Remember, however, that you should *avoid making sweeping statements or generalisations about a particular time period or literary movement.*

You should also determine who is speaking in the poem. Remember that the speaker is not necessarily the poet and the views expressed by the speaker are not necessarily an indication of the poet's own views. A 'persona' might have been adopted in order to tell a particular story or present a certain viewpoint. Just as authors create characters in novels, poets often create characters through which to tell the story of their poems.

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STEP 3: CLOSE READING

Conducting a close reading of a poem is a skill that you can learn and apply to any verse. Once you have mastered the technique of recognising particular poetic devices and the effects created by them, you will be able to adapt your approach to suit the text you have been asked to analyse.

First, consider what caught your attention (the phrases or words you underlined or circled when first reading the poem, perhaps). Why did these particular features strike you as effective or interesting? Is the poet using a particular poetic device or figure of speech? Why is the poet trying to draw your attention to this particular aspect of the poem?

Once you have dealt with the aspects of the poem that proved most striking to you, return to the beginning of the poem and work carefully through each line, taking note of the more subtle poetic devices and Figures of Speech employed by the poet. Again, ask yourself each time: why has the poet done this?

Remember to consider the connotations of the words chosen by the poet, particularly any words that seem unusual or particularly arresting. Every word in a poem is carefully chosen by the poet, and should be considered in context in order to appreciate its impact or effect on your understanding of the poem as a whole. The word 'red', for example, could simply be a colour or it could be representative of anger, passion, hatred or danger.

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Punctuation or typography may give you further clues about the particular emphasis being given to a word by the poet. A word on its own line, for example, is always significant and the poet is drawing attention to it. Again, always ask: why has the poet made these particular decisions?

Be aware of the speaker's **tone**, as this will influence the way in which a poem should be read. Remember that 'tone' and 'attitude' are synonymous when analysing poetry and will, usually, be indicated by the use of particular diction (word choice), punctuation or typography. Try to learn and memorise as many words describing tone as possible so that you have a 'tone vocabulary' at your fingertips, allowing your answers to be more specific.

POPULAR POETIC TECHNIQUES

An important thing to remember is that every choice a poet makes is deliberately implemented to emphasise or enhance the meaning of the poem. Whenever you recognise a specific feature of a poem, your main concern should be determining why the poet has chosen to express him or herself in that way; for example, consider some of the possible effects of the popular poetic techniques described in the following glossary of terms (*overleaf*).

OPENING UP TO NEW IDEAS AND WAYS OF SEEING

In the end, understanding poetry has everything to do with being open to new ideas and taking your time when assessing each work. Taking into account pronouncements made by teachers, critics and fellow students is commendable, but every examiner will handsomely reward students who show that they have read the poem carefully and are not afraid to make unique observations in considered, well-constructed answers that reveal a clear understanding and are supported by evidence from the text.

TONE VOCABULARY

Words that describe **tone** can include: admiring, ambivalent, amused, anxious, angry, apologetic, bitter, celebratory, condescending, contemplative, critical, cynical, defensive, defiant, desperate, depressed, determined, disdainful, disgusted, disheartened, dramatic, earnest, enthusiastic, excited, fearful, formal, frank, friendly, frustrated, gloomy, happy, honest, hopeful, humorous, indifferent, indignant, informal, intimate, ironic, irreverent, judgmental, light-hearted, lofty, malevolent, malicious, melancholic, mischievous, mocking, negative, nostalgic, objective, optimistic, patient, patronising, pensive, perplexed, persuasive, pessimistic, reflective, regretful, remorseful, reverent, sarcastic, satirical, scathing, self-pitying, sensationalist, sentimental, serious, sincere, sceptical, solemn, stiff, straightforward, sympathetic, thankful, threatening, tragic, urgent, vindictive and witty.

CLOSE READING CHECKLIST

The basics:

Make sure that you are clear on the following:

- the subject (what the poem is about)
- the context (poet's background and/or literary period)
- the speaker
- the tone or attitude
- the theme or message

Style and technique:

Determine whether the poet has employed any of the following techniques:

- a particular form or structure (such as a sonnet or ode)
- unusual diction (word choice) or punctuation
- striking or unusual typography (layout of the poem)
- a specific rhyme scheme
- a regular rhythm or meter
- repetition or other forms of emphasis
- metaphors or similes
- Figures of Speech

REMEMBER: As well as pointing out the particular styles or techniques used by the poet, examine what effect they have and how these features enhance or impact on the meaning of the poem as a whole.

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

GLOSSARY OF POETIC TERMS AND FIGURES OF SPEECH

alliteration: the repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words (e.g. 'some sweet sounds')

allusion: a reference to a familiar literary or historical person or event, used to make an idea more easily understood

anadiplosis: the repetition of the word or phrase at the end of a line of verse at the beginning of the next

apostrophe: a statement or question addressed to an inanimate object, a concept or a non-existent/absent person

assonance: the repetition of similar vowel sounds in a line of poetry (e.g. 'fleet feet sweep by sleeping geese')

ballad: poem with either a ABCB or ABAB rhyme scheme and a repeated refrain, which was originally intended to be sung

blank verse: lines of poetry or prose in unrhymed iambic pentameter

caesura: an extended or dramatic pause within a line of verse

connotations: the range of associations that a word or phrase suggests, in addition to the straightforward dictionary meaning; for example, the word 'discipline' means order and control, but also has connotations of suffering and pain

convention: a customary or typical feature of a specific type of literary work (e.g. all sonnets contain 14 lines)

couplet: a pair of rhymed lines, often appearing at the end of a poem or stanza

diction: the selection and arrangement of words in a poem

elegy: a lyric poem written to grieve yet celebrate the life of a person who has died

epigraph: a short phrase or quotation at the beginning of a literary work that serves to introduce the theme or subject of that work

foot: a unit used to measure the meter of a poem; one foot is made up of two or more accented (stressed) or unaccented syllables

free verse: poetry without a regular pattern of meter or rhyme

hyperbole: a figure of speech in which something is deliberately exaggerated

iamb: a foot consisting of a short or unaccented (unstressed) syllable followed by a long or accented syllable

image / imagery: the verbal representation of a sense impression, a feeling, or idea

internal rhyme: two or more words that rhyme within a single line of verse

irony: when the intended meaning of a statement or comparison is the exact opposite of what is said

juxtaposition: the placement of two things (often abstract concepts) near each other in order to create a contrast

lyric: a poem expressing the subjective feelings or emotions of the poet

metaphor: a comparison between essentially unlike objects or ideas without an explicitly comparative word such as 'like' or 'as'

meter: the repetition of sound patterns to create a rhythm

metonymy: the name of one thing is replaced by the name of something closely associated with it (e.g. the place 'Hollywood' is regularly used to refer to the American film industry)

octave: a stanza or section of a poem that is eight lines in length and is often used in the sonnet form

ode: an extended lyric poem that is characterised by exalted emotion and a dignified style and that is usually concerned with a single, serious theme

onomatopoeia: a word that imitates the sound it describes (e.g. 'buzz', 'meow')

oxymoron: a descriptive phrase that combines two contradictory terms (e.g. 'Oh loving hate!' from *Romeo and Juliet*)

paradox: a statement that appears illogical or contradictory at first, but which may actually point to an underlying truth

parody: a humorous, mocking imitation of another literary work, usually deliberately exaggerating the styles and habits of the work being parodied for comedic effect

pastoral: derived from the word 'pastor', which means shepherd, a pastoral poem has a rural or nature-based theme

personification: inanimate objects or concepts are given the qualities of a living thing

pun: a play on words that have similar sounds, but different meanings

quatrain: a four-line stanza

rhythm (meter): the recurrent pattern of accents or natural stresses in lines of verse

satire: a work that criticises or ridicules human vices, misconduct or follies

sestet: a stanza or section of a poem that is six lines in length, often used in the sonnet form

simile: a comparison between two unlike things using comparative words, such as 'like', 'as' or 'as though'

sonnet: a fourteen-line poem, usually written in iambic pentameter

subject: what the poem is about; the person, event or theme that forms the focus of the poem

symbol: an object that means or represents something beyond itself

synecdoche: the use of a part to symbolise its corresponding whole (e.g. the word 'wheels' may be used to refer to a car)

theme: the main idea or message of a literary work

trochee: a foot consisting of one long or accented (stressed) syllable followed by one short or unaccented syllable (reverse of an iamb)

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ANSWERING CONTEXTUAL POETRY QUESTIONS

Answering contextual poetry questions effectively is as much about being methodical and prepared as it is about mastering how to read and understand poetry. The following list highlights some of the common mistakes to avoid and offers suggestions on how to answer such questions properly.

- **Read the questions carefully**

  Examiners want to see that you know what the poem is about; however, many questions are based on how the verse works; how the poem has been constructed, for instance, and what effect the poet has managed to achieve by using certain linguistic techniques. Ensure that you read the questions carefully and that you know exactly what is being asked before attempting to answer a question.

- **Avoid re-telling the 'story' of the poem**

  Avoid re-telling the 'story' of the poem unless you have been asked to paraphrase or summarise it.

- **Answer in coherent, well-structured sentences**

  Always answer in coherent, well-structured sentences and avoid awkward constructions, for example, instead of beginning your answers with 'That the man is …' or 'Because the man is …', use 'It is evident that the man is …' or 'The man is … therefore …'.

- **Avoid rewriting the question in your answer**

  It is also important to note that you are not expected to rewrite the question before you answer it. If the question asks: 'Quote an adjective that means "outspoken"', for example, avoid answering: 'An adjective that means outspoken is frank'. It is acceptable simply to write the answer: 'Frank'.

- **Take note of the mark allocation**

  The mark allocation is a clear indication of the length and depth of answer that is required. A one-word answer will not suffice for a question worth three marks.

- **Be aware of 'double-barrelled' or multi-layered questions**

  Many students do not answer the different aspects or sections of a given question; for example, if the question asks:

  'What emotion do the words in line 1 convey, and how does this emotion change by the end of the poem? Provide a reason for your answer.'

  This example question requires the student to do <u>three</u> things:

  1. State the emotion
  2. Explain how it changes by the end of the poem
  3. Provide a possible reason for the difference

- **Be prepared to comment on the effect of Figures of Speech**

  Identifying a figure of speech will be awarded a mark, but you are also expected to discuss how it adds to the meaning of the poem. Ask yourself the following questions:

  - What does the figure of speech contribute to the poem?
  - Does it clarify a point?
  - Is it unusual and therefore striking?
  - Does it emphasise a point or add humour?

- **Be sincere in your response to the poem**

  Avoid stating that a poem is brilliant or deeply moving if you do not agree with this sentiment. You should engage with the text and formulate a genuine response to the verse, instead of expressing what you think is the expected opinion or a view you have gathered from a rushed reading of a study guide or website on the internet.

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- **Avoid sweeping, generalised statements**

  You are expected to validate your answers with evidence from the text. It is no use saying: 'This is a really effective line' or 'This simile is the best I have ever read'. To earn marks, you must PROVE the statements and observations that you have made.

- **Be prepared to offer your honest opinion about the issues the poem addresses**

  You should be familiar with the range of themes expressed in the poem and your answers should be well thought out, candid, insightful and well-supported with evidence from the poem.

THREE FINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- No statement will be given credit without evidence from the text
- There are no short cuts: revise your work and take the time to interpret the questions properly
- Poetry is meant to be enjoyed; approach a poem with the right attitude and the rest is likely to happen more easily than expected

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'But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.'
— William Butler Yeats

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

[30]

THE CAROLINE ERA

The period during the reign of King Charles I, from 1624 until his execution in 1649, is known as the Caroline era. The name 'Caroline' is derived from the Latin word for Charles: *Carolus*. This period is noted for the violent civil war waged between the supporters of the king and the supporters of Parliament. Scholars also consider this period as the time when the spirit and influence of the English Renaissance as a cultural and artistic movement began to wane and decline, perhaps in response to the politically turbulent and conflict-ridden atmosphere of the era.

A MAN OF CONTRADICTIONS AND CONTROVERSY

Charles was a man of contradictions and controversy. On the one hand, he was considered to be gracious and refined in person and a good deal more sober than his father had been. On the other hand, though, he proved to be belligerent, stubborn and catastrophically intractable. Charles inherited an adamant belief in the divine right of kings from his father but was unwilling to temper his convictions and seek compromise and consensus the way James had. Charles believed he was only answerable to God and therefore had no need to compromise or explain his actions. His open contempt and disregard for the authority of the English and Scottish Parliaments and the 'will of the people' made him increasingly unpopular and, ultimately, led to open warfare in 1642.

© British Museum (Wikimedia Commons)

Thomas Fairfax (1612-1671), Parliamentary commander-in-chief during the English Civil War, holding the severed head of Charles I in his left hand. The leopard behind Fairfax is a symbolic representation of Oliver Cromwell who was described as 'the tiger who tore kings apart'.

Charles is probably most famous for the way in which his reign ended. From 1642 to 1645, he fought the armies of the English and Scottish

Parliaments in the English Civil War. After his defeat, Charles was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death for high treason. He was executed by being decapitated in front of a crowd outside the Banqueting House at the Palace of Whitehall. His trial and execution were the first of their kind. While Charles faced his death with courage and dignity and became a martyr among his supporters, his death is considered to have been a vital step towards the advent of democracy in England.

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A TALENT FOR MAKING ENEMIES

Despite the diplomatic efforts of Elizabeth I and James I, English society was still beset by simmering religious disputes and political tensions, and the royal finances were still in a precarious position when Charles was made king in 1625. In contrast to the previous two monarchs, however, Charles was determined to pursue his policies and ambitions without discussion and negotiation. He had been a weak and sickly child, but by the time he ascended to the throne at the age of 25, he had largely overcome the infirmities of his childhood and become a skilled marksman, swordsman and horseman. He had not lost his childhood stammer, though, and this made him prone to being shy and insecure. Perhaps the remnants and memories of these early experiences contributed to his headstrong, inflexible temperament as king.

In any event, Charles was good at making enemies. He married the French Bourbon princess Henrietta Maria, a devout Catholic, and effectively aligned himself with the Catholic kingdoms against the Protestant nations and states in the Thirty Years War that raged in Europe from 1618 to 1648, even though English society was predominantly Protestant at the time. He also quarrelled terribly with his 15-year-old wife during the first few years of their marriage, even expelling her attendants and staff. Having upset English Protestants with his marriage, Charles angered the growing ranks of influential Puritans in Parliament by protecting the outspoken anti-Calvinist, Richard Montagu in the first year of his reign. Soon afterwards, he provoked widespread anger when he summarily dismissed Parliament and arrested the two members of it who had spoken out against his close confidant, the Duke of Buckingham, despite the increasing animosity of Parliament and the English people towards the Duke and his disastrous, unpopular and expensive military failures.

MONEY TROUBLES

Apart from Charles's unpopular religious and personal policies, it was clashes over money that really escalated tensions between him and the English people and Parliament. Charles had inherited large fiscal debts from Elizabeth and James and needed grants and loans from Parliament to avoid bankruptcy. Parliament was also meant to approve of any taxes the king imposed and make them legal, but Charles needed money and largely ignored this. When he confiscated the goods of a member who had not paid him, Parliament protested angrily. In response, Charles dismissed Parliament and imprisoned a further nine members, igniting widespread opposition.

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A member of Parliament kneels in front of Charles I after he arrived with armed guards and attempted to coerce Parliament to authorise his new taxes by force.

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Charles ruled England without Parliament for the next 11 years. He had to find ways to raise money. He resurrected forgotten laws and backdated them to fine people. He sold monopolies, despite the practice being illegal. He upset the Scottish nobility by seizing back lands from them and making them pay him rent. He restored the boundaries of the royal forests of England to their ancient limits, fined people who were found to be within these limits for encroachment, and then sold off the reacquired lands. His most unpopular action, however, was to impose a feudal levy known as 'ship money'. Previously, this tax was only raised during wars and on coastal regions, but Charles expanded it to the entire country. It was lucrative for Charles but infuriated the general population and turned the people against him even more.

A GROUND-BREAKING CONNOISSEUR AND COLLECTOR

Charles also needed money to support his great love for art. He was an avid collector and amassed a collection of an estimated 1 500 paintings, 500 sculptures and innumerable tapestries during his reign, including purchasing the bulk of the celebrated and famous collection of the Italian Duchy of Mantua in 1628. It took Charles two years to pay off the purchase, but it gave him a truly world-class collection and his palaces were full of prized Italian Renaissance pictures, the likes of which had rarely been seen in England before. He spent a fortune on the works of masters like Titian, Correggio, Da Vinci and Raphael, and also invited luminaries such as Van Dyck and Rubens to work in England. Charles appointed Van Dyck as his royal painter in 1633 and the Flemish master was a major influence over the king, assisting him with purchasing artworks and painting a large series of portraits of the king and the royal household. Rubens would later acknowledge Charles as 'the greatest amateur [lover] of paintings among the princes of the world'.

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Woman with a Fur Coat *(1535) was one of the first pieces Charles bought for his collection. It would have been a provocative piece, erotic, delicately sexual and highly suggestive for the time.*

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Another provocative and avant-garde piece in the collection was the sculpture of Samson Slaying a Philistine *by Giambologna. Over two metres high, the imposing work features a nude Samson about to strike one of the Philistines who had taunted him with the jawbone of a donkey. The spiralling movement of the two bodies means that there is no single viewpoint of the scene, and the work is obviously violent and sexually charged, themes that were typically avoided by the demure English court.*

The impact of this massive, extravagant and ground-breaking art collection on Caroline court culture was nothing less than transformative. Charles introduced the nation to the works of foreign masters and their contemporaries, profoundly altering how the English would appreciate art. Before Charles, Italian art was rare, if not totally absent, in the English court and tastes were demure; artworks that explored themes of sex and violence were generally avoided. Yet the aesthetic legacy of the collection spread across England, inspiring new standards and technical virtuosity and a willingness to explore more grandiose, vivacious and aggressive themes among English artists.

Ultimately, the fate of the collection was entwined with the connoisseur that assembled it. Within months of Charles's execution, most of the collection had been auctioned, gifted or used to settle debts by the government of Oliver Cromwell. The sales raised a good deal of money for the new Commonwealth but destroyed one of the greatest art collections of Europe. A number of the works were recovered by his son, Charles II, after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, but many remain dispersed across museums and private collections and, even today, lost works are being rediscovered.

CAROLINE THEATRE

In the Caroline era, theatre failed to achieve the widespread appeal and success it had enjoyed in the earlier Renaissance periods. Charles and his wife took over as patrons of the two main companies of actors, but the profession had started to wane. The Jacobean trend towards more intricate and expensive productions for smaller audiences in more exclusive venues continued. Outbreaks of plague shut the theatres for years at a time and the occupation was criticised by Puritans as little more than an immoral distraction — one that they finally managed to get made illegal by Parliament in 1648. Masques were still being written and performed, but the tremendous cost of these lavish productions was one of the grievances the Puritans and Parliament held against the king and his court.

In 1648, all theatres and playhouses were ordered to be boarded up or pulled down, all actors were to be incarcerated and whipped, and all audience members were to be fined. Theatres remained shut until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

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CAVALIER POETRY

One form of artistic expression that flourished during the Caroline era was **Cavalier** poetry. It was a flamboyant, triumphant and boisterous form of verse that deliberately rejected the solemn, restrained, austere principles promoted by the Puritans and many Protestants at the time. The Cavalier poets were typically aristocrats and royalists, born into wealthy families. In general, they preferred to write poetry about sensual pleasures, romantic love and seizing the day or living in the moment, rather than addressing more weighty conventional poetic subjects such as religion, philosophy and morality. Their poems were usually lyrical, straightforward and short. They expressed a desire to live life to the fullest, revel in society, make money and have sex. They supported the monarchy and won favour with Charles by writing verse that promoted the crown and praised the king. Notable Cavalier poets include **Robert Herrick**, Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling, and Thomas Carew.

STOP HORSING AROUND!

Parliamentarians (supporters of the English Parliament) adopted the French word **Cavalier** as a derogatory way to describe Royalists (supporters of the monarchy). The word meant 'horse rider' and was intended as an insulting reference to the long hair the Royalists favoured wearing and their penchant for 'horsing around'. The Cavaliers, in turn, referred to their counterparts as 'Roundheads', a condescending reference to the shaved heads of the young London apprentices who had been vocal supporters of Parliament in the build up to the civil war.

Illustrations of a typical Royalist or 'Cavalier' (pictured left) *and Parliamentarian or 'Roundhead'* (pictured right) *from the English Civil War.*

In reality, it was difficult for soldiers to tell who their enemy was on the battlefield because both sides in the civil war were local Englishmen. As a result, the two sides wore brightly colours strips of cloth to identify themselves. The Royalists wore red sashes, and the Parliamentarians wore yellow ones.

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GET IT WHILE YOU CAN

Published in 1648, **Robert Herrick**'s famous poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" epitomises the Cavalier poetry of the time. The speaker encourages young women to take advantage of the amorous attention and appreciation they receive while they are young and beautiful, and to take a lover (or two) and enjoy every moment. The speaker argues that following the social and moral conventions of the time and spending their youth being prim and proper, modest and coy is a terrible waste. He suggests they should rather have their fun while they can and then get married because all beauty fades, sexual primes do not last, they will lose the attention they now enjoy and, in the end, life is short. The witty poem would have been scandalously cheeky at the time and an expression of the exuberant enjoyment of life that typified the Cavaliers, as well as an obvious rejection of the sober, modest attitudes of the Puritans.

"TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME"

Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a getting;
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best, which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

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EDMUND WALLER (1606 — 1687)

Born in 1606, Edmund Waller was elected to Parliament at the age of 18 years old and was the youngest person in the House of Commons at the time. In spite of his youth, Waller quickly gained a reputation as a masterful, amusing orator. He was a true politician and far more pragmatic than principled in his attempts to navigate the turbulent, violent circumstances of the time. He only retired from politics a year before his death in 1687. Waller started writing verse in his thirties and was highly regarded as a poet during his life and throughout the 18th century. He is known for developing a smooth, regular style of verse, which included the heroic couplet **and the four-stress alliterative meter, that would be adopted and refined by prominent poets later and become the predominate form of verse in the 18th century.**

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POLITICS, POETRY AND PEACE

Edmund Waller was the son of a wealthy lawyer and related to several prominent Parliamentarians, including Oliver Cromwell, who was his mother's cousin-in-law. His father died when he was 12 years old and when Waller turned 21, he inherited an estate worth around R6.5 million and became a wealthy young man. He received an excellent education, attending Eton College and then King's College, Cambridge, after which he studied law at Lincoln's Inn in London, from where he graduated as a lawyer at the age of 16 in 1622. Two years later, Waller was elected to Parliament and served there until Charles I dissolved it in 1629.

It was during the 11 years that Charles ruled without Parliament that Waller devoted time to reading and writing verse. He became a member of the Great Tew Circle, which was a group of clerics and literary figures who gathered at the manor house of Great Tew in Oxfordshire in the 1630s. The group was a collection of artists, thinkers, clerics and patrons of the arts who held moderate, tolerant and predominantly humanist views. They met outside London to escape the partisan and fractious religious atmosphere of the time. Several of the members also belonged to the 'Sons of Ben', a literary group that admired and followed the spirited, and rather hedonistic, proto-cavalier philosophy and style of poet and dramatist, Ben Jonson. Membership of the Great Tew Circle had a strong influence on Waller and during the build-up to the civil war, he supported moderates who kept trying to negotiate peace.

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The execution of Tomkins and Challoner in 1643. One of the two men is depicted making a speech from the ladder, prior to their hanging.

'HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

The **heroic couplet** typically consists of a pair of rhyming lines written in iambic pentameter. The term is usually reserved for couplets that are closed or distinct and self-contained, rather than enjambed. The context of the lines also needs to have a heroic or epic setting. A frequently-cited example illustrating the use of the form is the following passage describing the River Thames from the poem "Cooper's Hill" by John Denham:

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream

My great example, as it is my theme!

Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull;

Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

Commonly used in epic and narrative poetry, the form had been pioneered by Geoffrey Chaucer in the late 1300s but had largely fallen out of use until it was revived and developed by Waller. After Waller's death, it became the dominant form of poetic expression in the early 18th century.

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BETRAYAL, BRIBERY AND BANISHMENT

Despite championing ideas like religious tolerance and peace, Waller drifted across to the Royalist cause as war broke out and was arrested in 1643 for planning to take London by force and turn it into a stronghold loyal to the king. Known as 'Waller's Plot', the plan had started as the idea to force Parliament into negotiations for peace by withholding taxes but escalated into a scheme to organise an armed insurrection within the city. After he was arrested, Waller made a full confession

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and implicated his co-conspirators, including his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Tomkins. By betraying the others and paying lavish bribes, Waller managed to avoid the death sentence, but he was banished into exile and heavily fined. The others, including Tomkins, were executed two months after their arrest.

While Waller lived in exile in Paris, a collection of his poems, simply titled *Poems*, was published in England in 1664. Despite the fact that his poems had been in circulation for many years before being officially published, the collection, which included "Go, lovely Rose", proved enormously popular and was reprinted a further five times during his lifetime. Part of the reason for the popularity of his collection was the fact that the poems were lyric verses that could be set to music easily, such as "Go, lovely Rose", which became a popular song at the time as well.

THE POWER OF POLITICAL POETRY

Waller used his many family and political connections and his popularity as a poet to ask for a pardon and, eight years later, was allowed to return to England in 1652. The England to which Waller returned was a very different place, though. Charles I had been tried and executed and the country was, effectively, a republic. Oliver Cromwell was in charge of the newly created Commonwealth and the balance of power had shifted from the old aristocracy to the rising middle classes of Puritan Protestants. The focus of Waller's poetry shifted from love and romance to politics as he ingratiated himself with Cromwell by writing flattering poems about the greatness and success of the Lord Protector and his government, even writing several worshipful elegies about Cromwell after he died in 1658.

When the monarchy was restored under Chares II two years later, Waller penned a fawning poem titled "To the King, Upon His Majesty's Happy Return". Upon Charles's observation that "Panegyrick to my Lord Protector", the poem Waller had written worshipping Cromwell in 1655, was by far the better verse, Waller supposedly answered, 'Sir, we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as in fiction.' In the end, his flattery succeeded, and Waller returned to Parliament and served under both Charles and his successor, James II. Waller continued to be regarded as one of the best speakers in Parliament and was known as an advocate for religious tolerance, reconciliation and national unity.

In his later years, Waller's focus as a poet shifted again and he began addressing spiritual themes more than politics or love. He published a collection titled *Divine Poems* the year before he died and two other collections, *The Maid's Tragedy Altered* and *The Second Part of Mr Waller's Poems*, were published after his death; however, none of his later work achieved anywhere near the popularity and success of his early poems and first collection.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Waller is often considered to have been rather pragmatic and sensible in matters of marriage, choosing to find a good match and marry well rather than for love. If true, there is a certain irony to this as his poetic talent first won acclaim and popularity for his verses exalting love, romance and courtship. His first wife was a wealthy London heiress called Anne Banks, whom he married when he was 25, but she died giving birth to their second child, three years later. A decade afterwards, when he was banished into exile, Waller married Mary Bracey from Thame, Oxfordshire. The couple had nine children and were together until Mary died, 33 years later.

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Between his two marriages, Waller unsuccessfully courted Lady Dorothy Sidney and Lady Sophia Murray. Using the playful, affectionate monikers 'Sacharissa', for Lady Sidney, and 'Amoret' for Lady Murray, Waller wrote and dedicated many poems to both ladies, including a poem discussing the friendship between the three of them. Many of these poems were included in his popular *Poems* collection. The two ladies appear to have delighted and tormented Waller, but Lady Sidney seems to have been the main target of his affections. She was popular and celebrated, not only for her beauty, but for her wit, charm and intelligence, and she rejected his official proposal of marriage in 1635. The nickname Waller gave her, 'Sacharissa', was a name he coined from the Latin word for sugar (saccharum) and the Greek word for grace (charissa). The name Waller used for Lady Murray was also based on a Latin word, the noun amor (love), with the diminutive ending 'et', which suggests the meaning of 'little loved one'. Interestingly, Amoret is a character in Edmund Spenser's epic poem "The Faerie Queene", which had been published 40 years earlier, and was a symbol of the virtue of married love.

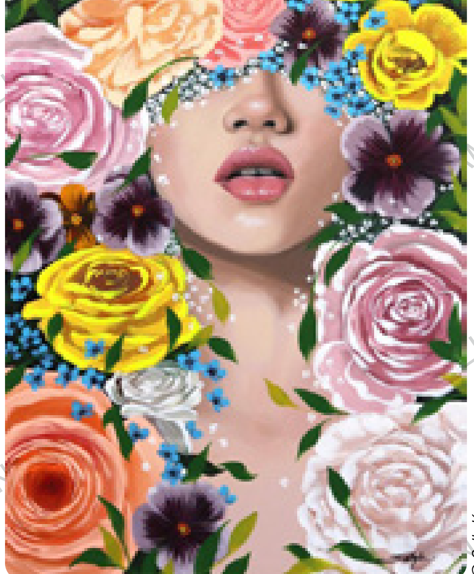
"GO, LOVELY ROSE"

Go, lovely Rose, **1**
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be. **5**

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died. **10**

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer her self to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired. **15**

Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and faire. **20**



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GLOSSARY

shuns (line 7): avoids, rejects

graces (line 7): beauty

uncommended (line 10): not praised or complimented

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ANALYSIS

"Go, lovely Rose" explores a common theme in Cavalier poetry: the brevity of youth and beauty and the importance of seizing the day and living life to the fullest. The poem describes a lyrical reverie the speaker has while holding a beautiful rose that he intends to send to the woman he loves. He wishes the rose to communicate more than just his feelings to the woman in question and wants it to remind her that beauty like hers should be admired and enjoyed, not hidden away or withheld, because, just like the rose in his hand, it too will wither and fade.

'A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME …'

In "Go, lovely Rose", the speaker uses a combination of flattery and argument to persuade the woman he loves to accept his advances. He flatters the woman by comparing her to the 'lovely' (line 1) rose he sends her. He suggests that both the rose and the woman are 'sweet and fair' (line 5), 'rare' (line 17) and 'wondrous' (line 20). The speaker's choice of flower seems obviously symbolic as roses have been prized for their beauty and fragrance since ancient times — for instance, the rose was closely associated with **Aphrodite**, the goddess of love and beauty, in ancient Greece — and the flowers remain symbols of romance, love, beauty and purity today. Indeed, like many lovers would nowadays, the speaker uses the flower to convey and express his amorous feelings to the woman in a straightforward manner.

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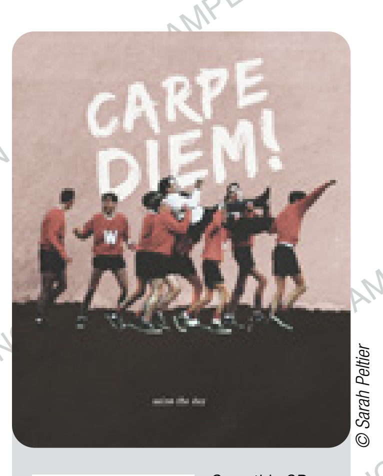
Venus Verticordia *(1868) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The goddess* **Aphrodite** *is depicted surrounded by red roses.*

In a somewhat startling twist, however, the speaker also uses the impermanence and short lifespan of his gift to persuade the woman to allow him to court her. He urges the woman to look at the dead flower and realise that she, too, has no time to waste and must **seize the day** while she is young and beautiful. He implores her not to 'blush' (line 15) but rather allow her beauty to be admired and appreciated (by him, of course).

CARPE DIEM

'Carpe diem' is a Latin phrase that is often translated as 'pluck the day' or '**seize the day**'. It was first used by the Roman poet Horace in his collection of odes, published in 23 BCE. The phrase is used to represent Horace's injunction to 'pluck the day, trusting as little as possible in the next one'. It has become a common expression of the importance of making the most of the time you have and of living life to the fullest. This sentiment has been a common theme in art and literature and was a particular preoccupation of Cavalier poets like Waller. One of the most well-known modern uses of the expression is in the 1989 film, *Dead Poets Society*, when English teacher John Keating, played by Robin Williams, tries to stir the souls of his students using Robert Herrick's poetry and reminding them of their mortality: 'Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary'.

The modern equivalent is the acronym YOLO, which is an abbreviation of the expression 'you only live once'. This expression has also appeared in literature throughout the ages but was made popular in the 1960s by the comedian Joe E. Lewis, who joked, 'you only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough'. In 2011, the phrase and acronym were reintroduced to a new generation by the Canadian rapper, Drake, in his song "The Motto".



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Scan this QR code to open a YouTube clip of the famous 'Carpe Diem' scene in Dead Poets Society.

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STRUCTURE

"Go, lovely Rose" is a lyric poem that comprises four stanzas, each of which is a quintain (or quintet) and five lines long. The first and third lines of each stanza contain four syllables, two pairs of syllables or iambs in which the first syllable of each pair is unstressed and the second one is stressed. The remaining lines of each stanza contain eight syllables, four pairs of syllables that are also iambs. The rhyme scheme matches this meter and is ABABB. In effect, the last two lines form a rhyming couplet. The rhythm and rhyme of the poem are pleasurably predictable and lend a highly musical, song-like quality to the verse.

EXPRESS MY LOVE TO HER

The first line of the first stanza suggests that the speaker is addressing a flower, a 'lovely rose' (line 1). He wants the rose to convey a message to the woman who 'wastes her time and me' (line 2). In the next three lines, the speaker explains that he wants to compare the woman to the rose so that she will understand '[h]ow sweet and fair' (line 5) she is in his estimation. The speaker's intention seems straightforward. He wants to pay the woman a compliment and express his admiration for her so has chosen a beautiful flower to send to her because its beauty reminds him of hers. Yet line 2 hints that there may be more to this gesture than there appears to be at first. The speaker describes the woman as someone who 'wastes her time and me' (line 2). It's a description that introduces a subtle sense of unease. In his opinion, she is wasting 'her time' (line 2), which suggests she is not doing something he thinks she should be, and also implies that there is not an unlimited amount of time available to her to do whatever this activity is — exactly why and how she is squandering her time is not yet clear. The speaker believes that she is also 'wast[ing]' (line 2) him. Does he mean that she is wasting his time as well? Is she causing him to waste away or to go to waste?

© Linda Apple

UNSEEN BEAUTY IS A WASTE

In the second stanza, the speaker begins to explain what he believes is being wasted. He expands his description of the woman, who is 'young' (line 6) and 'shuns to have her graces spied' (line 7), which suggests that she is shy, coy or modest and hides herself away. The speaker instructs the rose to explain to the woman that its beauty would have gone unnoticed and unappreciated if it had grown in a desert 'where no men abide' (line 9). His observation implies that it would have been a waste of a beautiful flower for it not to be seen and appreciated.

© Barbara Rockhold

REVEL IN YOUR YOUTH AND BEAUTY

The speaker clarifies his argument in the first two lines of the third stanza. He states that a reclusive or 'retir[ing]' (line 12) beauty, one

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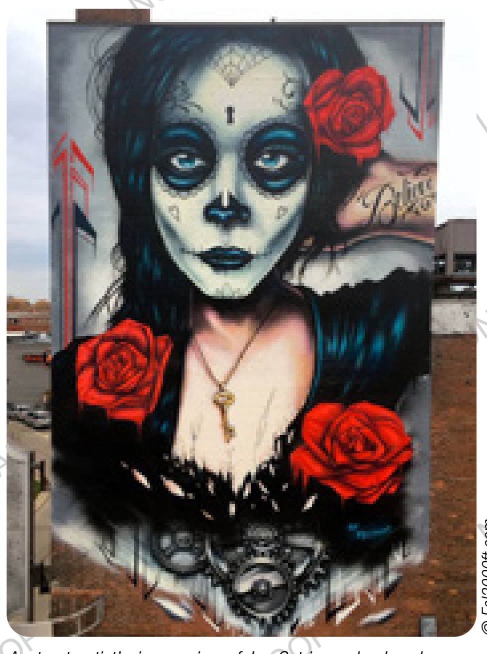
that is hidden away, kept out of sight and the 'light' (line 12), has little value or 'worth' (line 11). He asks the rose to urge the woman to avoid this fate — of dying without being praised and appreciated — by revealing herself to him and allowing herself to be 'desired' (line 14) and 'admired' (line 15).

ALL BEAUTY FADES

The first line of the final stanza is abrupt, unsettling and startling. Having delivered the speaker's message to the woman, the rose is instructed to 'die' (line 16). The speaker explains that this last act will remind the woman that all 'rare' (line 17) and beautiful things, such as the rose and her, share the 'common fate' (line 17) of death. The speaker maintains that witnessing how swiftly the beautiful flower has withered and died will shock the woman and help her realise that her own beauty will fade and wither away. He concludes his argument with the rather forlorn and ominous suggestion that the more delicately beautiful and 'wondrous sweet and faire' (line 20) a thing is, the shorter its lifespan or 'share' (line 19) 'of time' (line 19) will be.



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A street artist's impression of La Catrina, who has become an icon of the Mexican Day of the Dead celebration. She is a modern allusion to Mictecacihuatl, the Aztec goddess of the lowest level of the underworld and 'Lady of the Dead'. Her name, Catrina, is a reference to her being a beautiful or 'elegant skull' and she is typically portrayed wearing a beautiful gown and symbolic red rose.

? QUESTIONS

1. How does the speaker use the theme of beauty to convey his message? (2)

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2. How does the structure of the poem support the speaker's message? (2)

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

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3. Choose a word from the poem that means:
   a) compare
   b) perceive (2)

4. Identify the metaphor used in the poem, and comment on its effectiveness. (3)

5. Describe the tone of the first stanza of the poem. Quote from the poem to support your answer. (2)

6. What does 'light' (line 12) represent in the context of this poem? (1)

7. How does the mood of the poem change in the final stanza? Quote from the poem to support your answer, and comment on the impact this has on the argument being made by the speaker. (3)

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8. Identify the juxtaposition in line 17 and comment on its effectiveness. (2)

9. Consider the following poem by Cavalier poet Andrew Marvell. Both "Go, lovely Rose" and "To His Coy Mistress" address the themes of beauty and seizing the day ('carpe diem'). In a well-structured paragraph, explain how the speakers in both poems use flattery and the prospect of death to persuade their intended readers. Provide evidence in the form of quotations from both poems to support your answer. (8)

"TO HIS COY MISTRESS" – ANDREW MARVELL

Had we but world enough and time, **1**
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side **5**
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. **10**

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, **15**
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate. **20**
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found; **25**
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust; **30**
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires **35**
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power. **40**
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun **45**
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

GLOSSARY

coyness (line 2): feigning shyness or modesty, reluctance

Ganges (line 5): great river on the plains of northern India

Humber (line 7): large tidal estuary on the east coast of northern England

vault (line 26): chamber beneath a church or in a graveyard used for burials

hue (line 33): colour or shade

transpires (line 35): discloses, reveals

sport (line 37): (archaic) entertain, amuse

languish (line 40): weaken, wither, fade

slow-chapped (line 40): slowly devouring

strife (line 43): angry or bitter disagreement

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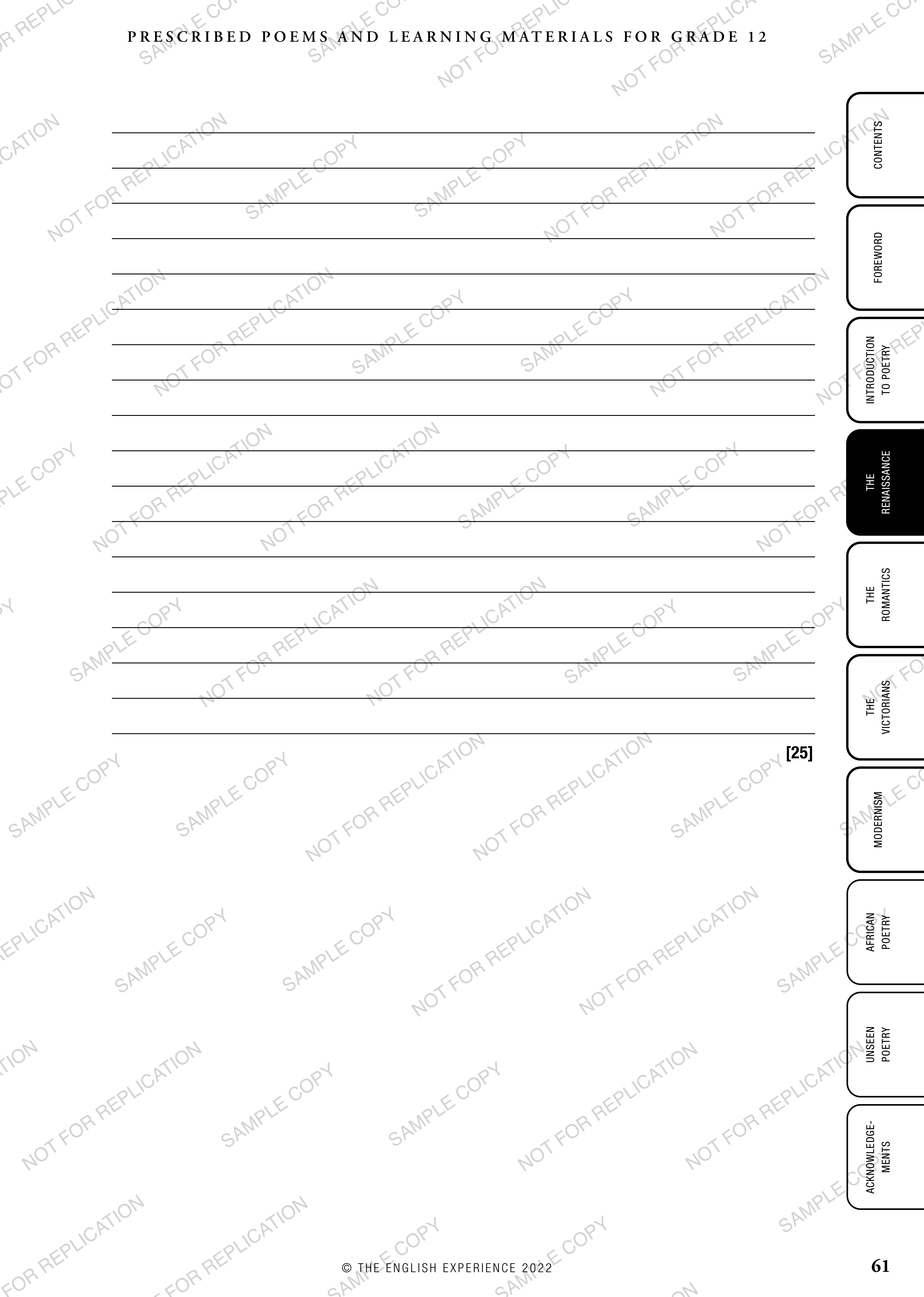

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MODERNISM

INTRODUCTION TO MODERNISM

Artistic expression in the 20th century was dominated by what is known as the Modernist movement. The use of the term 'modern' can be confusing. Today, we use the term 'modern' to describe anything that was created in the last couple of decades, but when we refer to Modernism, we are describing a particular artistic and philosophical movement that is associated with the turn of the 20th century and the beginning of what is considered 'the modern age'.

Although it is considered a relatively recent movement in art and literature, many critics believe **Modernism** to be the pinnacle of artistic expression in Western history. They argue that its roots lie in the questioning of religion and humanity's place in the universe that began during the Renaissance, questioning which was then further developed and refined by the rationality of the Enlightenment period, the excesses of Romanticism and the realism of the Victorian era. From this perspective, they argue that Modernism is the culmination of 300 years of cultural development initiated by the Renaissance.

© Tate Gallery, London (Wikipedia)

Painted in 1923, On White II *is widely considered as one of the greatest masterpieces by the famous Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky, who is credited with creating the first fully abstract painting. In* On White II*, the use of white colour is said to represent life and all of the opportunities that are available, and the use of black colour inside the white represents death and how all of those opportunities can be taken away in an instant.*

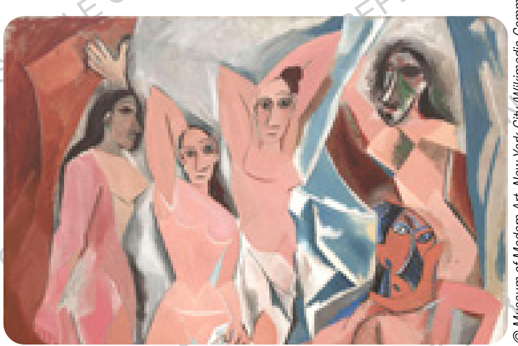
1900: THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN AGE

Modernist artists recognised that the turn of the 20th century marked the beginning of a 'modern age'. They were excited by this idea and wanted to reflect the new age in which they were living by interrogating artistic rules and conventions and then reinventing them. The Cubist deconstructions of **Pablo Picasso** and Georges Braque, for instance, illustrate how artists were taking the conventions of painting and twisting them into exciting new shapes.

The influence of Modernism wasn't limited to art, however; for instance, Modernist architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and **Le Corbusier** were changing the way buildings were being designed and important Modernist intellectuals, such as **Sigmund Freud**, who revolutionised the way we think about the mind, and **Karl Marx**, who suggested a radically new political and economic structure for society, were fundamentally changing the way people saw themselves and the world around them.

DEFINED BY WHAT IT IS NOT?

Scholars continue to debate the exact definition of **Modernism**, but broadly agree that it is a style or movement in art, literature, philosophy and architecture that rejects classical or traditional forms and experiments with new methods of artistic expression.



© Museum of Modern Art, New York City (Wikimedia Commons)

***Pablo Picasso**'s* "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" *("*The Young Ladies of Avignon"*) triggered massive controversy when it was painted in 1907, due to the experimental nature of its composition. Critics have since hailed it as re-inventing the art of painting.*

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The Villa Savoye in Paris has become an icon of modernist architecture for its simple, clean and elegant lines and unfussy ribbon of glass windows around its façade. It was designed and built in 1928 by French architect **Le Corbusier**, who promoted architecture that was 'functional', 'pure', and free of any decoration or historical associations and who coined the famous slogan: 'a house is a machine for living in'.

© Valueyou (Wikipedia)

Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis, a form of talk therapy in which therapists help their patients explore how their unconscious minds are influencing their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Freud developed a wide range of theories, models and techniques that have saturated contemporary Western thought — including the concepts of the id, ego and superego, the unconscious mind, the death drive, the libido, the Oedipus complex, penis envy, and dream analysis — all of which have been celebrated, debated and criticised ever since.

'The more perfect a person is on the outside, the more demons they have on the inside.'

© Freud.org.uk

Karl Marx developed a series of theories about society, economics and politics that has had a profound impact on world politics and intellectual thought. His most famous works are the 1848 pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto* and a three-volume series of books published between 1867 and 1883, entitled *Das Kapital*.

Writing as the working classes of Europe were rebelling and protesting against their lack of economic rights and political power, Marx proposed that capitalism encouraged those who had money (capital) to exploit workers in order to create a profit. He argued that 'profit' was the 'surplus value' created when workers were underpaid for their efforts or labour. He maintained that capitalists — the wealthy — were able to underpay workers because they could use their money to manipulate the government or ruling regime to protect them. Marx proposed replacing this system with one based on common (communism) or social (socialism) ownership rather than private ownership — a system in which the factories are owned by 'the people' and the profits they make are shared equally among everyone. He is considered one of the most influential figures in human history and is credited with being one of principal founders of the modern social sciences.

'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.'

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LITERARY PIONEERS

Ezra Pound's call to *Make It New* in 1934 is often cited as embodying the spirit of Modernist literature. The rejection of traditional forms and an emphasis on innovation and experimentation were the driving forces behind the poets and novelists of the movement. Pound proved to be one of the most influential founding fathers of Modernism and was a mentor to other major literary figures of the day, including T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce.

The term Modernism brings together a number of disparate sub-movements from around the world, from the free forms of the Beat poets in **America** to the radical perspectives on gender and sexuality of Britain's Bloomsbury Group.

The Beat poets were a group of writers who rejected societal norms and embraced experimental countercultures. Notable members of this group of writers were Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road* and *Doctor Sax*, and Allen Ginsberg, whose famous poems include "Howl", "America" and "A Supermarket in California".

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

The 'Bloomsbury Group' was a close-knit circle of progressive writers and thinkers that got its name from the area of London in which they all lived. The group included **Virginia Woolf**, author of *Mrs Dalloway and To The Lighthouse*, and EM Forster, who wrote the literary classic *Howard's End*.

In many respects, the main unifying factor between these diverse sub-movements (apart from the timing of their development) was the will of the writers to express themselves and their worlds in new and innovative ways.

BE DIRECT. BE BRIEF. BE MUSICAL.

Early Modernist poets were often preoccupied with objectivity and making intellectual statements about society. Their work focused on breaking with the past and rejecting what they considered as outmoded or ineffective literary traditions and forms.

Ezra Pound developed his theory of poetry in 1912. His stated aim was clarity. He said he was rebelling against abstraction, romanticism, prescribed rhetoric and the over-use of adjectives. He laid out the following three principles for his writing:

1. Be direct – regardless of whether the topic or entity is subjective or objective.
2. Be brief – avoid all unnecessary words, particularly adjectives.
3. Be musical – make the words flow, but not necessarily in a pre-set, rigid sequence.

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"AND THE DAYS ARE NOT FULL ENOUGH" – EZRA POUND

And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass.

Modernism was slightly different on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In Britain, the literary movement was best exemplified by novelists and poets who reflected on the political and social changes of the 'modern age'. In **America**, it represented the idea of a completely new, 'modern society'. This notion was more easily assimilated in America because it was still a relatively young country, having gained independence a mere 200 years before. Modernism has since come to be considered the first authentic Western artistic movement to develop on that continent.

A WRITER'S WRITER

Virginia Woolf is considered one of the most important modernist authors and public intellectuals of the 20th century. She was a prolific writer and published eight novels, a body of autobiographical work and more than 500 essays and reviews. Her writing is notable for its lyricism, stylistic virtuosity and for being highly experimental: she was one of the pioneers of the use of 'stream of consciousness' as a narrative device and is renowned for using the vibrant internal worlds of the characters in her novels to refract, dissolve and transform an otherwise frequently uneventful and commonplace external narrative. She struggled with mental illness and displayed symptoms that would be diagnosed as bipolar disorder today, although there was no effective treatment in her day. The sea and water are recurring motifs in her work and, ultimately, she drowned herself in 1941, at the age of 59. Many authors have stated that their work has been influenced by her, including Margaret Atwood, Michael Cunningham, Gabriel García Márquez and Toni Morrison.

'Growing up is losing some illusions, in order to acquire others.'

© George Charles Beresford (Wikimedia Commons)

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SHATTERED BY WAR

Many Modernist writers in Europe, such as William Butler Yeats, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, were heavily influenced by the political turmoil created by war, revolutions and imperialism in the early years of the 1900s.

The key event of this time period was, of course, World War I (1914-1918). This 'war to end all wars' was the culmination of almost 200 years of instability that had begun with the French Revolution and led to a shift in the way not only artists, but all citizens, understood the world. The previous religious and political structural frameworks, which had provided an illusion of stability, were shattered by the war and the artists and writers of the Western world were exploring what lay behind these illusions.

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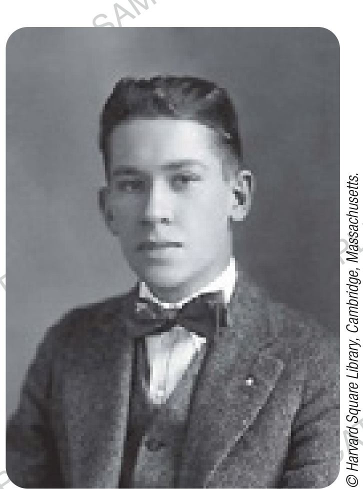
Guernica *is a famous anti-war painting by Pablo Picasso depicting the suffering of people and animals whose lives were wrenched apart by violence and chaos. Prominent in the composition are a gored horse, a bull, screaming women, dismemberment, and flames. The original painting is over 7.5 metres long and 3.5 metres high.*

E.E. CUMMINGS (1894 — 1962)

Edward Estlin Cummings (also styled e e cummings) wrote more than 2 900 poems and is generally regarded as one of the most preeminent and popular American poets of the 20th century, yet he was also author of two novels, four plays, a series of essays and 133 original works of visual art, including oil paintings, watercolours and drawings. While Cummings is known for the iconoclastic (rule breaking) syntax, experimental language, and provocative, exuberant typography of his verse, he wrote many sonnets and traditionally structured poems as well. Cummings is also known for not avoiding controversial subjects, writing numerous erotic poems and including ethnic slurs and derogatory words in some of his verse. The collection he published in 1950, *Xaipe: Seventy-One Poems*, provoked outrage among readers because it included poems that featured racial slurs against Irish immigrants and African Americans. His friends and publisher begged him to withdraw the works, but Cummings insisted they remain in the collection, pointing out that the poems were criticising prejudice, not condoning it.



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E.E. Cummings's Harvard graduation photograph (1915).

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A MAN OF LETTERS

Cummings wanted to be a poet from childhood and wrote poetry daily from the age of eight years old. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and was the son of a Harvard professor. He attended Cambridge Latin High School, where he learnt Greek and Latin, and enrolled at Harvard University afterwards, earning both a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Master of Arts (MA) from there. He demonstrated poetic ability and his iconocalstic approach to syntax from an early age, writing the following poem to his father at the age of six:

FATHER DEAR. BE, YOUR FATHER-GOOD AND GOOD,

HE IS GOOD NOW, IT IS NOT GOOD TO SEE IT RAIN,

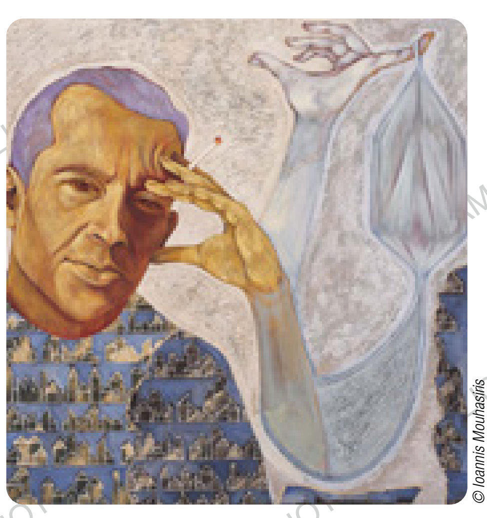
FATHER DEAR IS, IT, DEAR, NO FATHER DEAR,

LOVE, YOU DEAR,

ESTLIN.

WARTIME PARIS AND THE DADAISTS

France and the city of Paris had a significant influence on Cummings. He first visited the country in 1917, after enlisting as an ambulance driver during World War One. While awaiting his military orders, Cummings spent five weeks exploring Paris as a 23-year-old young man. He fell in love with the city and would return to it often throughout his life. After five months as an ambulance driver, Cummings was arrested and imprisoned for 14 weeks by the French military for openly expressing anti-war sentiments and his lack of hatred for the German people. His father had to write to United States President Woodrow Wilson to obtain his son's release and Cummings returned to America in 1918. Paris was always on his mind, however, and he returned to the city in 1921.



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Cummings's visits to France provided the artistic and cultural support for his approach to poetry. **Dadaism** (the forerunner of surrealism) had taken shape in France in 1915 and had become popular in Paris by the 1920s. Intellectuals like Gertrude Stein were dominant in the Parisian Dadaism scene — a movement that is often associated with Modernism as both focus on questioning established cultural and rational norms. It proved to be a fertile intellectual and artistic setting for Cummings, who would come to be associated with Modernism himself in his native United States.

Cummings was married twice, but neither union lasted more than a few months. His third relationship, however, with model and photographer Marion Morehouse (*pictured*), continued from their meeting in 1932 until his death in 1962.

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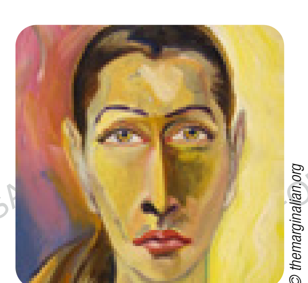

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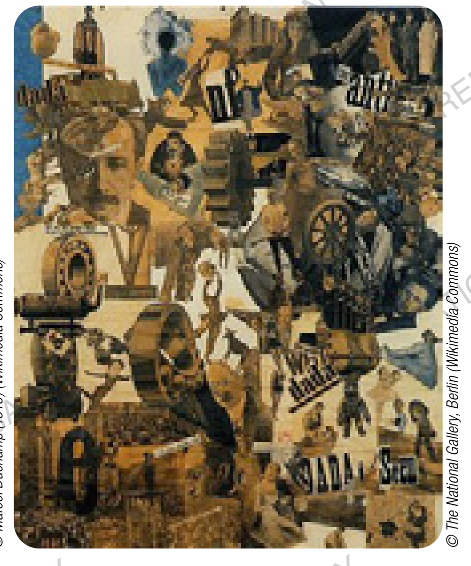
Dadaism is an artistic movement in modern art that started during World War One. It favoured reacting against the standards of society and Dadaists considered their purpose to be to ridicule the absurdity of existence and the meaninglessness of the modern world. Dadaism was relatively short-lived; it peaked between 1916 and 1922, but it heavily influenced the artistic movements that followed, including Surrealism, Pop art and Punk rock.

© Marcel Duchamp (1919) (Wikimedia Commons)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Famous examples of Dadaist art include Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* (a pencilled moustache on a postcard of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*) (*above left*) and Hannah Höch's collage *Cut with a Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (*above right*).

One of the founders of the movement was Tristan Tzara, a Romanian poet. In 1917, he wrote the *Dada Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love*, a document that sets out the aims and beliefs of the movement. In Section Eight of the manifesto, Tzara outlines his instructions for people to produce their own Dadaist poems, which are as follows:

- Take a newspaper.
- Take a pair of scissors.
- Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem.
- Cut out the article.
- Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag.
- Shake it gently.
- Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag.
- Copy conscientiously.
- The poem will be like you.
- And here are you, a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.

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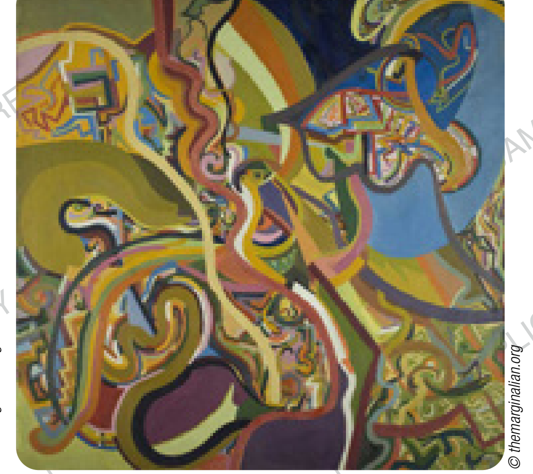
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noisenumber-13 (above left) *and* sound-no-5 (above right) *by E. E. Cummings (1925).*

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

SAMPLE COPY NOT FOR REPLICATION

REDISCOVERING THE ENERGIES OF WORDS

Cummings experimented with language, often inventing words or using a word as a different Part of Speech from standard practice. Nevertheless, his poetry became very popular, prompting American poet and critic Randall Jarrell to note that '[n]o one else has ever made avant-garde, experimental poems so attractive to the general and the special reader'. M.L. Rosenthal, editor and poet, observed that, '[t]he chief effect of Cummings's jugglery with syntax, grammar, and diction was to blow open otherwise trite and bathetic motifs through a dynamic rediscovery of the energies sealed up in conventional usage'. Cummings wrote twelve volumes of verse in total.

"WHO ARE YOU, LITTLE I?"

who are you,little i

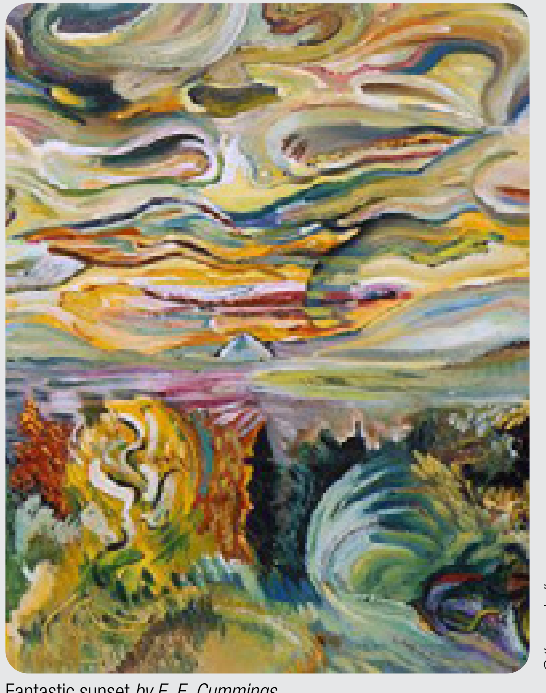
(five or six years old)
peering from some high

window;at the gold

of november sunset

(and feeling:that if day
has to become night

this is a beautiful way)



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Fantastic sunset *by E. E. Cummings.*

"PERHAPS IT IS TO FEEL STRIKE"

perhaps it is to feel strike
the silver fish of her nakedness
with fins sharply pleasant,my

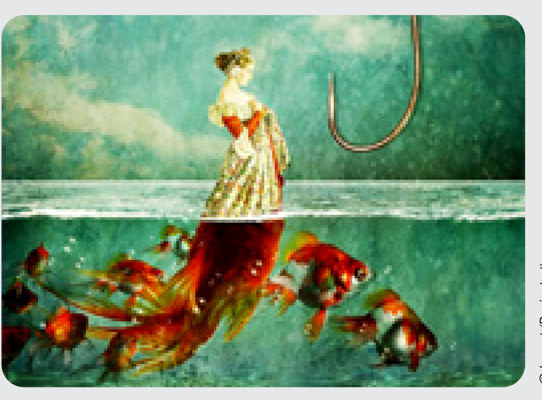
youth has travelled toward her these years

or to snare the timid like
of her mind to my mind that i

am come by little countries to the yes

of her youth.
And if somebody hears
what i say—let him be pitiful:
because I've travelled all alone
through the forest of wonderful,
and that my feet have surely known
the furious ways and the peaceful,

and because she is beautiful



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"NOBODY LOSES ALL THE TIME"

nobody loses all the time **1**

i had an uncle named
Sol who was a born failure and
nearly everybody said he should have gone
into vaudeville perhaps because my Uncle Sol could **5**
sing McCann He Was A Diver on Xmas Eve like Hell Itself which
may or may not account for the fact that my Uncle

Sol indulged in that possibly most inexcusable
of all to use a highfalootin phrase
luxuries that is or to **10**
wit farming and be
it needlessly
added

my Uncle Sol's farm
failed because the chickens **15**
ate the vegetables so
my Uncle Sol had a
chicken farm till the
skunks ate the chickens when

my Uncle Sol **20**
had a skunk farm but
the skunks caught cold and
died and so
my Uncle Sol imitated the
skunks in a subtle manner **25**

or by drowning himself in the watertank
but somebody who'd given my Uncle Sol a Victor
Victrola and records while he lived presented to
him upon the auspicious occasion of his decease a
scrumptious not to mention splendiferous funeral with **30**

GLOSSARY

vaudeville (line 5): a type of entertainment popular chiefly in the US in the early 20th century, featuring a mixture of speciality acts, such as burlesque comedy and song and dance.

inexcusable (line 8): unforgivable, indefensible

highfalootin (line 9): highfalutin, i.e. pompous or pretentious

Victor Victrola (lines 27-28): an old record player

auspicious (line 29): favourable, promising

splendiferous (line 30): wonderful, marvellous

Missouri (line 32): a large river in the United States of America

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

SAMPLE COPY NOT FOR REPLICATION

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

tall boys in black gloves and flowers and everything and
i remember we all cried like the Missouri
when my Uncle Sol's coffin lurched because
somebody pressed a button
(and down went **35**
my Uncle
Sol
and started a worm farm)

ANALYSIS

As its title suggests, "nobody loses all the time" appears to be a poem about the importance of perseverance and how today's failure can ultimately lead to tomorrow's success. The speaker in the poem describes the life of his uncle, Sol, who was a 'born failure' (line 3) and who should have been an entertainer but tried his hand at farming with darkly comedic results. The speaker explains how each type of farming at which Sol tried his hand was an unfortunate failure but concludes his humorous tale of misadventures with a sympathetic description of Sol's 'splendiferous' (line 30) funeral and how sad the congregation was, before closing with a macabre punchline about how Sol was finally a success — at 'farming' the worms that would feed off his corpse.

STRUCTURE

In "nobody loses all the time", Cummings uses the free verse associated with Modernism, which means he keeps to no set rhyme scheme or rhythm. The structure of the poem has some notable features, nonetheless. After the opening line, which repeats the title, there are four sestets (stanzas composed of six lines).

© Leah Saulnier

The typography of the poem is also noteworthy. The lines in the first sestet progressively extend in length and the lines in the second sestet progressively decrease in length. This lends a flow and ebb to the verse. The third and fourth sestets contrast this with short lines of verse of no more than five words in length. This arrangement lends these two stanzas a staccato (short, sharp), fast-paced quality. The final stanza of the poem comprises 13 lines that both flows and ebbs as the funeral service builds and then ends with the lowering of the coffin. Perhaps fittingly, the poem retreats to the single word, 'Sol' (line 37), before delivering its final punchline.

Cummings also alters the usual English syntax, most obviously in removing capital letters, and in his unorthodox use of punctuation, word order, spelling (he often spells words phonetically), and even words themselves (often inventing neologisms).

The overall effect of these structural and linguistic choices is quite distinctive. The use of enjambment, typography and unconventional orthography (conventions or norms of spelling, capitalisation etc.) creates a fast-paced poem that reads quickly (rushes along) and perhaps mimics the fast-talk of someone enthusiastically recounting a funny tale. It also perhaps imitates the pace and pattern of an informal, colloquial conversation.

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UNLUCKY UNCLE SOL

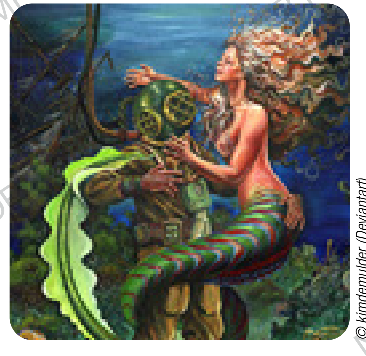
The poem tells the story of the speaker's uncle, **Sol**. He is described as a 'born failure' (line 3), which suggests he was inherently unlucky. Also, 'nearly everybody said' (line 4) Sol should have gone into vaudeville (show business) due to his ability in **singing**; however, we are told that Sol may have been misled by his vocal talents to think he could succeed in other 'luxuries' (line 10), such as farming, which is an ironic description because farming is usually considered a necessity and not a luxury.

The phrase 'be / it needlessly / added' (lines 11-13) is a colloquial formation of the idiom 'needless to say', which suggests that the outcome of Sol's venture into **farming** could be predicted — since he was a 'born failure' (line 3) — nonetheless, the speaker explains how the inevitable series of farming failures occurred in the next two stanzas.

Sol is a rather cheery name that means 'sun' in Latin and Spanish. It is often used as a nickname for someone with a 'sunny' or happy disposition in Spain and Portugal. In World War One slang, the acronym SOL meant 'Soldier Out of Luck' or 'S**t Out of Luck' and was used to describe soldiers who were being punished or confined to their posts/had their leave passes revoked for breaking the rules.

The song Uncle Sol apparently liked **singing** was an Irish-American drinking shanty called "McCann He Was A Diver" that was popular in the early 1900s. The song tells the story of how McCann receives a marriage proposal from a mermaid while he is submerged. He finds the mermaid attractive, but panics and asks his friend, O'Reilly, to pull him up to the safety of 'dry' land because she has a 'fishy eye' and 'no feet' (i.e. a fish's tail). Commentators suggest that the song is a playful, albeit rather chauvinistic reminder of the belief that drinking too much alcohol can make a woman appear more attractive than she actually is.

Scan this QR code to hear "McCann He Was A Diver" being sung by JD Robb.



© kimdemulder (Deviantart)

In art, **farming** is often considered a useful metaphor for our relationship with the natural world; for example, artists use farming practices to illustrate whether we are living in harmony with our environment, to question whether we are living in a healthy or sustainable manner, and to explore how we are choosing to nourish our bodies and minds. Farming is also a common symbol for the way in which our present actions determine our future outcomes and how we 'reap what we sow' (like farmers harvesting what they plant). In its broadest terms, farming is symbolic of the circle of life (and death).

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VEGETABLES, CHICKENS AND SKUNKS

The speaker explains that 'Uncle Sol' (line 14) started growing vegetables, but the 'farm / failed' (lines 14-15) because his 'chickens / ate the vegetables' (lines 15-16), which Sol failed to foresee would happen. As a result, Sol now 'had a / chicken farm' (lines 17-18). Although the chicken farm lasted only until the '**skunks** ate the chickens' (line 19), which Sol failed to prevent from happening. Consequently — and somewhat improbably and comically — Sol had a 'skunk

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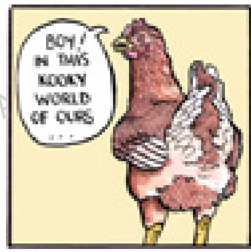
farm' (line 21), but that too failed. The skunks all died from catching 'cold[s]' (line 22), which is a common and usually non-fatal disease that perhaps Sol should have prevented. It is an unfortunate event that, rather ominously, we are told Sol 'imitated' (line 24) in a 'subtle manner' (line 25).

LURCHING COFFINS AND FEEDING WORMS

The final stanza of the poem opens with the consequence of Sol's calamities — signalled by 'and so' (line 23) in the previous stanza — and we are told he 'drown[ed] himself in the watertank' (line 26) in the opening line. It brings the descriptions of Sol's misadventures to a rather blunt end. This news seems to be delivered rather dispassionately by the speaker, considering that it is a close relative of his that has died. Perhaps it reflects the speaker's enthusiasm to describe the funeral and get to the punchline of his story? Or had Sol become little more than a figure of fun and ridicule for his family? On the other hand, maybe such bluntness is in keeping with the character of the speaker?

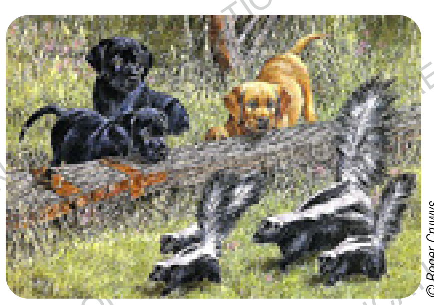
At this point, we learn, rather ironically, that while Sol had lived an unsuccessful life, he had a successful funeral. The speaker describes the 'auspicious occasion of his decease' (line 29) as 'scrumptious' (line 30) and 'splendiferous' (line 30). An acquaintance of Sol's, who had given him a 'Victor / **Victrola**' (lines 27-28) previously, arranged for a service with 'tall boys in black gloves' (line 31), presumably as undertakers, and 'flowers and everything' (line 31). The speaker's tone suggests it was quite a spectacle and a rather surprisingly solemn event.

The speaker recalls how the congregation 'all cried like the Missouri' (line 32) and a crowd of weeping mourners would appear to be a fitting description for a funeral, but the scene is made deliciously ambiguous by the next line, which notes that the crying started when Sol's **coffin** 'lurched' (line 33) or made an abrupt, unsteady movement. Did the coffin's sudden lurch startle the crowd and they burst into tears of laughter to relieve the stress of the situation?



© Joshua Barkman

They may look harmless and cute, but **skunks** are best avoided. Skunks are usually considered a nuisance because of the unpleasant, acrid spray they excrete when threatened (a smell reminiscent of rotten eggs), which permeates everything and can take two weeks to disappear. Their sulphuric spray has a range of up to three metres and the odour can be detected from more than two kilometres away. Skunks eat wasps and honeybees and will often attack beehives. Immune to snake venom, skunks are known to eat poisonous snakes like rattlesnakes. The collective noun for a group of skunks is a surfeit.



© Roger Cruwys

In any event, at the push of a button, Sol's coffin sinks into the grave and Sol inadvertently 'start[s] a worm farm' (line 38). After all his failures at farming, Sol at last succeeds without even trying, by starting a 'farm' for worms that feed off his body. This turnabout is made comic also by the irony that Sol had to die to succeed, which is perhaps the greatest failure of all.

Victrolas were a popular line of phonographs (record players or turntables) made by the Victor Talking Machine Company from 1906 to 1929. Pictured is *His Master's Voice*, the famous painting of a dog called Nipper listening to an early Victrola, which the Victor company used as its trademark or symbol.

© Victor Talking Machine Company (Wikimedia Commons)

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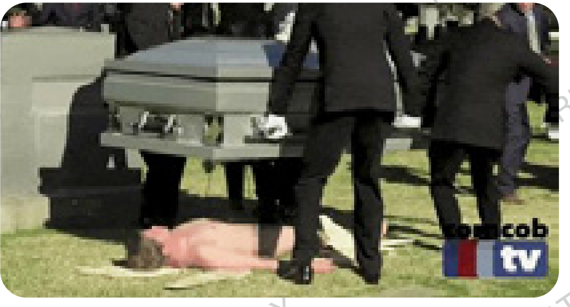
One of the most popular sketches in the satirical show *I Think You Should Leave* is a darkly comedic segment about a fictional cable TV show called *Coffin Flop*. The 'show' is just hours of real-life footage of corpses falling out of **coffins**, as mourners gasp, scream, cry or laugh in shock. In the comedy sketch, the 'hit' show is about to be cancelled for being in poor taste, obviously rigged and for showing naked bodies. A representative of the show becomes increasingly agitated while addressing these complaints. The popularity of the sketch is perhaps based on a recognition of the increasing depravity of reality television and the desensitised, morbid curiosity of modern audiences.



Scan this QR code to watch the sketch. Please note that it includes profanity.

WHAT MIGHT IT MEAN?

"nobody loses all the time" is fast-paced, darkly comedic and ironic. It is an entertaining romp through a series of unfortunate accidents that culminates in a morbid punchline. At first glance, the tale of Uncle Sol appears to be a poem about the importance of tenacity and perseverance and how today's failure can ultimately lead to tomorrow's success. The poem suggests that not even a 'born failure' (line 3) like Sol 'loses all the time' (line 1) and that everyone will have good luck or success at some point in their lives — even if it is literally the last thing they do. It is perhaps appropriate that Cummings chose to use the word 'nobody' rather than 'no one' in the title and first line of the poem as it is Sol's body that finally makes him a success.

Yet is that all there is to the poem? Is it simply a funny story about the mishaps and calamities of life and the sardonic observation that 'we all end up as food for worms' in the end? Cummings has clearly carefully constructed the diction and perceptions of his speaker to represent a rural inhabitant of the Southern United States; for example, the word 'highfalootin' (line 9), usually spelt 'highfalutin', indicates a Southern dialect is being spoken, and the speaker references the 'Missouri' (line 32), a long river which flows south and joins the Mississippi River. Cummings also lampoons his speaker, who uses pretentious words inappropriately; for example, describing the funeral as 'auspicious' (line 29), 'scrumptious' (line 30) and 'splendiferous' (line 30). It is a trait that is associated with people who are attempting to impress their audience and look intelligent but who end up appearing less intelligent instead. Is Cummings using the speaker to parody the typical or clichéd view of rural 'Southerners' as unintelligent and resisting cultural and intellectual advances?

Considered from another perspective, Sol's farming was a success. He successfully grew vegetables and farmed chickens and even skunks. Ultimately, of course, he 'farm[s]' (line 38) worms, which

THE PARABLE OF THE FARMER

A farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away, and their neighbours exclaimed, 'Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!'

'Maybe,' said the farmer.

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a wild mare back to the farm as well. The neighbours shouted out, 'Your horse has returned, and brought another one home with him. What great luck!'

'Maybe,' said the farmer.

Later that week, the farmer's son was trying to break in the new horse, and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, 'Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!'

'Maybe,' said the farmer.

A few weeks later, soldiers marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys to fight in a war. The soldiers ignored the farmer's son as he was still recovering from his broken leg. His friends shouted, 'Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!'

'Maybe,' said the farmer.

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will in turn fertilise and prepare the soil for the next crop of vegetables. Is Cummings commenting on the cyclical interdependence of life? Is he alluding to the famous Chinese **Parable of the Farmer** and how no event can be judged as good or bad, fortunate or unfortunate in isolation?

Did Uncle Sol consider himself a failure and commit suicide? It is implied that this is the case, but not stated explicitly. He may simply have had another calamitous accident that was fatal. If he did commit suicide, did he do so because he was aware that he was being judged and mocked by his family and the community? Is Cummings commenting on the casual insensitivity and cruelty of people: how a person can still be the subject of a joke even after they have taken their own life?

Or is the message of the poem simply that the world is a strange place that delights in ironies? Perhaps Cummings is using the tale of Uncle Sol to remind us that life is bizarre, funny, short and bittersweet, and that we should not take the experience so seriously? Indeed, perhaps Sol 'should have gone / into **vaudeville**' (lines 4-5) as he appears to have lived a colourful, vibrant, entertaining life right up until the end.

In the United States, **vaudeville** acts were variety shows consisting of around 10 different acts or 'turns'. Performers would act, sing, tell jokes, dance, perform magic tricks and acrobatics and even use trained animals. Vaudeville's attraction lay in more than being a series of entertaining sketches. It was symbolic of the cultural diversity of early 20th century America. It was a fusion of centuries-old cultural traditions, including the English Music Hall, the minstrel shows of antebellum America, and Yiddish theatre. As well as playing a unifying role in American culture, vaudeville shows acted as vehicles for social progress and educated audiences about what behaviour was acceptable in society.

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QUESTIONS

1. Why might the title of the poem be perceived as being ironic in the context of the poem? (2)

2. Describe the tone of the poem, drawing on evidence from the text to substantiate your response. (3)

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3. What does the use of the word 'highfalootin' (line 9) suggest about the speaker? (2)

4. Comment on the effect of the lack of punctuation throughout the poem. (2)

5. Could this poem be considered a parody? Substantiate your response. (2)

6. Comment on the effect of using the word 'subtle' (line 25) in this context. (2)

CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

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7. Examine the phrase the 'auspicious occasion of his decease' (line 29), and comment on the use of humour in this context. (2)

8. What are the connotations of 'and everything' (line 31) in this context? (2)

9. Provide a synonym for the word 'lurched' (line 33). (1)

10. What are the implications of Sol only succeeding as a farmer after he had died? (1)

11. The turnabout technique is used to reverse an expectation suddenly at the end of a poem. In a close analysis of "nobody loses all the time" and the following poem by Cummings entitled "Humanity i love you", examine how the poet uses this poetic technique and the effect it has on the reader. (6)

"HUMANITY I LOVE YOU"

Humanity i love you **1**
because you would rather black the boots of
success than enquire whose soul dangles from his
watch-chain which would be embarrassing for both
parties and because you **5**
unflinchingly applaud all

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songs containing the words country home and
mother when sung at the old howard
Humanity i love you because
when you're hard up you pawn your **10**
intelligence to buy a drink and when
you're flush pride keeps
you from the pawn shops and
because you are continually committing
nuisances but more **15**
especially in your own house
Humanity i love you because you
are perpetually putting the secret of
life in your pants and forgetting
it's there and sitting down **20**

on it

and because you are
forever making poems in the lap
of death Humanity
i hate you **25**

[25]

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AFRICAN POETRY

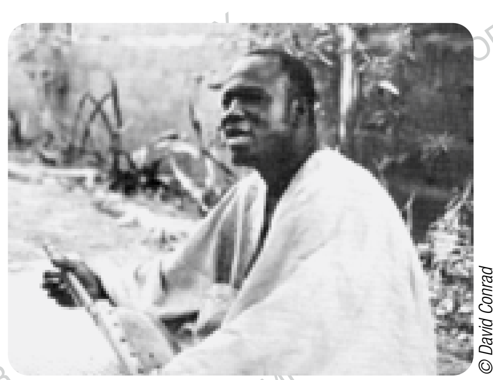
INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN POETRY

African poetry is verse written by people born in Africa. Obviously, the size of the African continent and the wide diversity of peoples, cultures and languages spread across its 55 countries means that this grouping is more disparate, less interrelated and less unified than other artistic groupings. Moreover, what constitutes poetry in Africa and how best to categorise the different poetic traditions and time periods continues to be debated academically. Nonetheless, to quote G E De Villiers, the poems in this section are 'firmly rooted in African soil' in one way or another. The styles, themes and subjects of these poems are wide-ranging and often universal, but the voices of the poets and the insights they offer emerge from an unmistakably African context.

© Marsha Hatcher

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN POETRY

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, poetry flourished in the royal courts of the traditional kingdoms of Africa. It was oral and largely focused on praising a ruler or event publicly, for example, the elaborate praise poems of the **Zulu** or Sotho in southern Africa, the poems of the official singers of the ruler of the Bornu Empire in Nigeria, the royal praises of the Hausa Emirs in Chad and Ghana, and the eulogies addressed to rulers in the various kingdoms of the Congo. Epic oral poems that lasted hours were also commonly performed to both entertain and communicate important historical and cultural narratives, not just at court but also by wandering or freelance poets who travelled from village to village, patron to patron.



© David Conrad

Tayiru Banbera, a freelance West African bard performing his version of the "Epic of Bambara Segu". Composed by the Bambara people in the 19th century, the epic poem reflects on political and military events that occurred during the reigns of three rulers of the second dynasty of the Segu Bambara State.

© Kathleen Atkins Wilson

Unfortunately, pre-colonial African poetry does not have an extensive written history because it was transmitted orally from generation to generation and these links were disrupted or broken by the Atlantic Slave Trade and during the colonial period. Even the poetry that was recorded from these traditions has lost much of its richness, subtlety of expression, humour and cultural significance through being translated into English and other Westernised languages and through being separated from the social setting in which it was performed. Moreover, as early European philologists and collectors of African poetry discovered, the nature of oral poetry lends itself to improvisation, customisation and adaptation, as opposed to performing poems in a consistent or standardised manner each time.

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In the **Zulu** and other Bantu kingdoms of southern Africa, a professional *imbongi* or praise poet held an official position at court. The *imbongi*'s profession was to record the praise names, the victories, and the glorious qualities of the chief and his ancestors, and to recite these in lengthy high-sounding verse on occasions which called for public adulation of the ruler and his people. The poet had two duties: to remember the appropriate eulogies and to express them with fitting emotional and dramatic force. The lofty strain and rhythmic energy of these Zulu eulogies and the impressiveness of their delivery can be imagined from the following few lines, translated from the praises of a Zulu king, which glorify the swiftness and completeness of his victory over the foe:

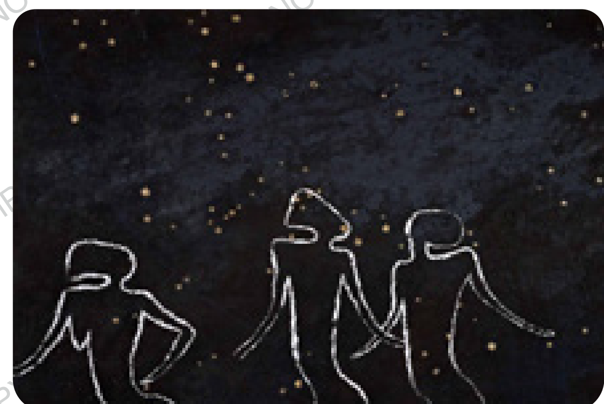
Faster-than-the-sun-before-it-has-risen!
When it rose the blood of men had already been shed.
The Bush, 'the Buck-catcher', caught the men of Sekwayo.
He made men swim who had forgotten how,
Yes! even in the pools!–
The tobacco fields rotted even to pulp!
The wrapping-mats were finished at Banganomo;
At (the kraal) of Kuvukuneni,
At that at Mdiweni, even Vimbemsheni,
At that at Bukledeni,
At that at Panyekweni

© Jeff Opland

Poet David Livingstone Phakamile Yali-Manisi (pictured) *was a Thembu imbongi, the most powerful exponent of the art of praise poetry in the Xhosa language until his death in 1999.*

The following poem, titled "Prayer to the Young Moon" from the book *Specimens of Bushman folklore* (1911), collected by W.H.I. Bleek and L.C. Lloyd, is an example of the oral poetry of the Khoe, Tuu, or Kx'a-speaking peoples (Khoisan) of Southern Africa. Among the oldest hunter-gatherer societies on earth, the Khoisan appear to have composed poetry that reflected their close ties to the natural world and its rhythms. This particular poem was sung to a new moon for good fortune the night before a day to be spent hunting. Even in translation, the repetition that features in the poem conveys some of the musical, hymn-like qualities of the original.

Young Moon!
Hail, Young Moon!
Hail, hail,
Young Moon!
Young Moon! speak to me!
Hail, hail,
Young Moon! Tell me of something.
Hail, hail!
When the sun rises,
Thou must speak to me,
That I may eat something.
Thou must speak to me about a little thing,
That I may eat.
Hail, hail,
Young Moon!



© Gavin Jantjes

Scan this QR code to watch a collaborative piece between the composer Franco Prinsloo, the South African Vox Chamber choir and visual artist Sonya Rademeyer that interprets the poem as a remembrance of a pre-colonial southern Africa and as a prayer for forgiveness for the intergenerational trauma caused by colonisation. It is narrated by South African poet Diana Ferrus.

"I AM AN AFRICAN"

Scan the QR code to watch Pretoria-based poet and writer Puno Selesho perform her poem "I am an African". The poem explores identity in the modern African context and, in particular, how the complex social and political legacies of South Africa have led to a diverse range of identities. Selesho challenges the idea that there are specific ways of being African and urges everyone to take pride in who they are.

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COLONIAL AFRICAN POETRY

For the purposes of this resource, the 'colonial' period includes poets born between the mid-1800s and the early-1900s, a time during which many African kingdoms were subjugated and absorbed into the colonies and protectorates of the imperialist European nations. It should be noted that the three poets classified as 'colonial' in this edition were all born in South Africa, which technically became independent in 1910, a few years after the poets were born. In spite of this, however, the British retained vestiges of colonial rule and wielded indirect colonial power in South Africa until the passing of the Status of the Union Act in 1934.

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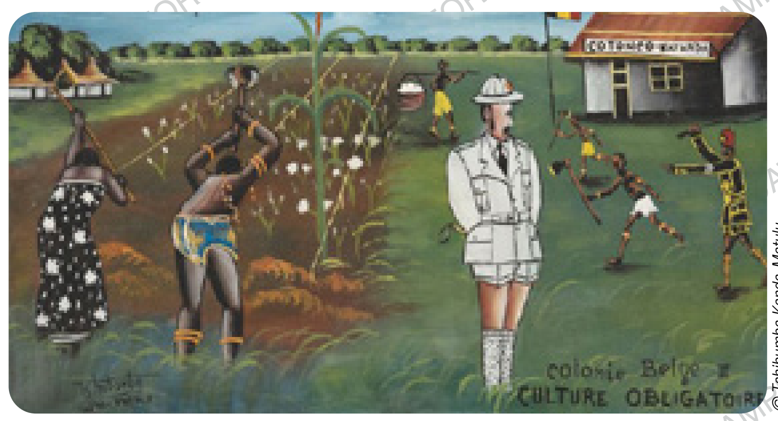
DISRUPTION AND DEVASTATION

Colonialism disrupted and devastated Africa and its peoples culturally and socially, as well as economically and politically. While European nations had been establishing ports and outposts in Africa since the Portuguese first arrived in the 1480s, these were almost exclusively coastal settlements focused on trade and diplomacy. This situation changed dramatically in the 1880s, when seven European nations began an aggressive period of invasion and annexation of the continent known as the 'Scramble for Africa'. From 1881 until 1914, the European nations raced against each other to conquer and claim large tracts of land for the natural resources these contained. During this violent 33-year period, the colonising powers showed little to no regard for the kingdoms and peoples inhabiting the continent, using whatever combination of force and manipulation they felt would be most expedient. The colonisers attacked and butchered Africans without restraint and sowed division and greed to destabilise communities where resistance was met, paying no heed to the human misery and traumatising effects of their brutal campaigns.

© Yinka Shonibare

In spite of the fact that the majority of these strange new 'African nations' managed to regroup and unite against the alien invaders to win back their freedom and sovereignty between 1914 and 1975, the effects of this cruel and ruthless period are still felt today, and the dark shadow of colonialism continues to shape the continent and its peoples. After plundering the plentiful natural resources of the continent and converting its peoples into cheap labour as slaves, the wealthy, developed nations of modern Europe can indeed be described as being 'what they are today because of what Africa is not'.



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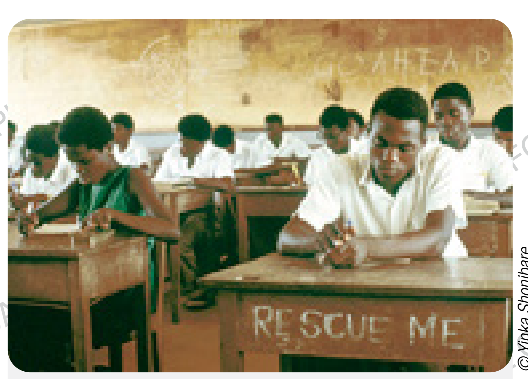
CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

SAMPLE COPY NOT FOR REPLICATION

A NEW LITERARY CANON

As well as being subjugated and displaced, the communities of Africa had their cultural practices repressed by the arrogant European invaders, who imposed their 'Western' cultures instead and assimilated the local inhabitants through processes of 're-education'. This process stripped the indigenous communities of their belief systems and identities and sense of belonging, replacing these with European languages, customs, belief systems and Eurocentric perspectives. As a result, African communities were psychologically displaced as well and made outsiders in their homelands and places of birth. The process was a culture shock to most Africans and created a crisis of identity that, in many respects, continues to reverberate today.



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'The night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard'. - Ngugı wa Thîong'o

In the aftermath of the devastation, a new **literary canon** — colonial literature — was formed as Africans began to adopt and express themselves using European languages and literary traditions and European settlers began to write about their colonial experiences. In South Africa during this period, for example, Tengo Jabavu launched the first African newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu (African Opinion)* in 1884, which published poetry and fiction by local writers in both Xhosa and English, as well as uncensored news. Some of the first poems written in English by black South Africans appeared in the newspaper in the 1890s and it became an important literary outlet for Africans, encouraging many writers to author works in indigenous languages as well as English.

A **literary canon** is a body of books, narratives and other texts considered to be the most important and influential of a particular time period or place. The term 'canon' is derived from the Greek word 'kanon', which was a cane or measuring rod used by architects to make straight lines. Over time, the term evolved to refer to 'setting the standard'. A literary canon is, essentially, an exclusive list of the most definitive or influential works — the 'classics's — of a particular people, time or place. In other words, texts that are of a high quality or highly representative of a time or place. Once a work is included in a particular literary canon, it becomes part of the standards by which all other works from a time or place are judged. A literary canon is meant to be the set of works you should read to appreciate and become familiar with the writers from a particular time period or place. Who gets to decide which works become part of a canon? Well, now, that is a good question.

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At the same time, Olive Schreiner (*pictured left*), the daughter of missionary settlers from Europe, began writing poetry and prose about the country, including "The Cry of South Africa" in 1900, a lamentation about the lives lost during the Second Boer War, and *The Story of an African Farm* in 1883, which many consider to be the first 'South African' novel. A few years later, black South African writers like Sol Plaatje would begin to add to the canon with works like *Native Life in South Africa*, published in 1916, which is a powerful denunciation of the Native Land Act of 1913 and the policies that led to it, and his pioneering novel, *Mhudi*, which was written in 1920 and published in 1930. An epic work of historical fiction, *Mhudi* is lauded as the first full-length work of fiction written in English by a black South African. The expressive, experimental novel includes text written in the poetic form, such as the following extract:

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"SWEET MHUDI AND I" — SOL T PLAATJE

— extract from *Mhudi*

I long for the solitude of the woods, **1**
Far away from the quarrels of men,
Their intrigues and vicissitudes;
Away, where the air was clean,
And the morning dew **5**
Made all things new;
Where nobody was by
Save Mhudi and I.

To me speak not of the comforts of home,
Tell me but where the antelopes roam; **10**
Give me my hunting sticks and snares,
In the gloaming of the wilderness;
Give me the palmy days of our early felicity
Away from the hurly-burly of your city
And we'll be young again–Aye: **15**
Sweet Mhudi and I.

GLOSSARY

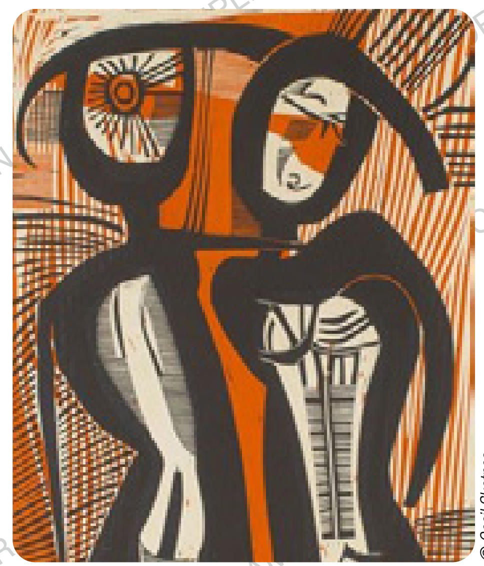
vicissitudes (line 3): unpredictability, fickleness

gloaming (line 12): twilight, dusk

palmy (line 13): happy, fortunate, glorious

felicity (line 13): rapture, bliss, euphoria, intense joy

hurly-burly (line 14): bustle, busyness, chaos, disorder



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WILLIAM PLOMER (1903 — 1973)

William Charles Franklin Plomer was a poet, novelist, dramatist and campaigner for racial equality. He was born in 1903 in Polokwane, Limpopo, and spent his youth between England and South Africa. Although he left South Africa when he was only 26-years-old, he had already shaken and enraged the white South African community by publishing *Turbott Wolfe*, a novel that exposed its cruel and complacent racism with subtle, yet piercing artistry. Although Plomer was a lyrical and meditative poet of distinction, he is best known for the incisive wit and technical virtuosity of his satirical verse. He was also a 'poet's poet' and celebrated by his peers. He was E. M. Forster's 'favourite contemporary poet', W. H. Auden extolled his 'first-class visual imagination', and Stephen Spender described some of his verse as being 'among the best English poems written in the present century'.

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FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO ENGLAND

Plomer's British father had arrived in South Africa as a young man in search of adventure in the 1890s and soon found it as a trooper in the failed Jameson Raid in 1895. It is likely that he then fought in the Second Boer War (or Anglo-Boer War) in 1899 and, afterwards, he started working for the colonial government as an 'Inspector of Native Affairs' in the town of Polokwane in Limpopo province. William was born there in 1903. He contracted malaria shortly after his birth and almost died. Taking the advice of the family doctor that William needed a 'better climate', his parents returned to England with him.

© National Portrait Gallery, London

The family's return to England set up a pattern of living between England and South Africa that continued throughout Plomer's youth. At the age of five, his parents left him to board at a school in England and he later recalled his feelings of alienation and isolation during that time and his sense of being a 'loner'. He was much happier when he returned to join his parents in South Africa in 1912 and attended St John's College in Johannesburg.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, the family went back to England and Plomer attended Rugby School in Warwickshire (*see page 86 for further information*). When the war ended in 1918, the family came back to South Africa and Plomer returned to St John's College to finish his studies, winning the Form V prizes for Latin and French in 1920. He later claimed he enjoyed the liberal environment at the school and the fact that he was left alone to pursue his interests, which, by this time, were changing; he had wanted to become a painter, but the influence of innovative writers like Marcel Proust was swaying him towards becoming a writer.

FROM THE EASTERN CAPE TO KWAZULU-NATAL

At the age of 17, Plomer turned down his father's offer of an Oxford University education and left Johannesburg to become an apprentice on a sheep farm in the remote Molteno district in the Eastern Cape. High up in the Stormberg Mountains, Molteno is known for its vast panoramic views of craggy peaks and high karoo plains. Some commentators suggest that it was during this time that Plomer developed the deep appreciation of the South African landscape that appears in his early works.

© Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

Plomer was certainly taken with the landscape of KwaZulu-Natal. His father wrote and asked Plomer to help him set up and run a trading store in Entumeni, just outside the Zulu capital of **Eshowe**, and Plomer recalled afterwards, 'Zululand! That was a word to quicken my interest and raising my eyes from [the letter from my father] to the bare and ochreous mountain over against the house at [Molteno], I seemed to see a softer, warmer landscape of sub-tropical verdure springing from a more generous soil than that of what **Pringle** had called 'Stormberg's rugged fells'.

'**Eshowe**, by the way, is a word of three syllables, with each 'e' as in 'end' and the accented 'o' as in 'show'. The name is onomatopoeic, to evoke the sound of a wind among leaves. A conspiracy of leaves, whispering, sighing, and muttering.'

— *The Autobiography of William Plomer* (1975)

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The Zululand landscape appears to have met the expectations of the teenage Plomer as he described how the place 'bewitched' his father and him when they took over the store: 'Open, fertile, and undulating, with clusters of dome-shaped African woven huts, with groves and thickets and streams and patches of cultivated land here and there, it was haunted by distinguished birds — toucans, hoopoes, hummingbirds — and by small mammals like the galago. From the very first we were pleased with the climate, which never ran to extremes. Almost perpetual sunshine one took for granted, but at the end of a hot summer's day, a dense, refreshing mist would sometimes rush upon us from the south and steep everything in an opaque and silvery silence'. Plomer also wrote about how much he enjoyed the physical beauty of the young Zulu men and women who visited the store, and the company of a dignified old Zulu man who addressed him as 'umtwana ka Kwini Victoli' (child of Queen Victoria).

Thomas **Pringle** is sometimes called 'the father of English South African poetry' as he was the first poet and author to describe the scenery, native peoples, and living conditions in the country in English. He arrived in the Cape in 1802, with a party of Scottish Settlers who had been granted land in the Baviaans River Valley. He was not a farmer, though, and so opened a school and two newspapers in Cape Town. All three endeavours were suppressed by the colonial government, however, because Pringle openly criticised the regime and was an abolitionist (anti-slavery). He returned to London and committed himself to the abolitionist movement, becoming Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1827. The efforts of Pringle and the Society came to fruition in 1834 when the British Parliament made slavery illegal, although he himself died a few weeks before the legislation was enacted.

TURBOTT WOLFE: A LITERARY SENSATION

Daily life in Entumeni was also the inspiration for Plomer's first novel, *Turbott Wolfe*, which he wrote in 1924, at the age of 21. The novel ignited a firestorm of controversy when it appeared in South Africa two years later in 1926. The protagonist of the novel, Turbott Wolfe, is a British trader who opens a general store in Lembuland. He befriends many of his black customers but has less luck ingratiating himself with the bigoted whites who have lived in the area for generations.

© David Goldblatt

Turbott Wolfe was considered scandalous for portraying, and challenging, the complacent superiority and racism of white South Africans at the time. African characters were shown as beautiful and dignified, while many of the Europeans characters were depicted as the vicious specimens of an 'obscene' civilisation. Moreover, through the exploits of Turbott and his friends, miscegenation and interracial relationships are presented as the key to the future of South Africa; for example, Turbott develops a deep bond with a young Zulu girl and an Afrikaner woman marries a Zulu man.

© Reggie Khumalo

As critic Robin Hallet has noted, what made it worse for white South Africans was that these ideas were 'presented not in crude propagandist terms but with precise and subtle artistry'. After reading it, one Durban newspaper editor was seen with 'his jaws chattering together with rage', while in the mild but damning reproof of another local paper, *Turbott Wolfe* was dismissed as 'not cricket'. In his autobiography, Plomer observed that the novel 'had rubbed the open wound of South African racialism'. South African poet, Roy Campbell, hailed Plomer in his poem *The Wayzgoose*:

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'Plomer, 'twas you, who though a boy in age,
Awoke a sleepy continent to rage,
Who dared alone to thrash a craven race
And hold a mirror to its dirty face.'

The success and notoriety of *Turbott Wolfe* made Plomer a literary celebrity and brought to an end his time in Entumeni.

© Rare Paper

VOORSLAG: A NOBLE ENDEAVOUR

Shortly after the publication of *Turbott Wolfe*, Plomer moved to the town of Sezela on the South Coast of Natal. He and Roy Campbell had become friends and decided to start a literary journal together. They called the publication *Voorslag* (*Whiplash*) as a symbolic reference to their intent to 'sting the mental hindquarters of the bovine citizenry of the Union' by promoting the work of local writers and the idea of a racially equal South Africa. It was the first modern small magazine in South Africa and was subtitled *A Magazine of South African Life and Art*. Another writer, Laurens van der Post, was invited to join them as the Afrikaans correspondent of the magazine.

It was a period of intense creativity and intellectual activity for both Plomer and Campbell, but it was short-lived. The publication failed to secure a wide readership among a largely outraged white South African public and, by the third issue, the writers had fallen out with the financial sponsor and proprietor of *Voorslag,* Lewis Reynolds, who opposed criticism of the colonial system.

In addition to a number of book reviews, Plomer's two main original contributions to the magazine were a short story titled *Portraits in the Nude* and a satirical poem called "The Strandlopers". Described as frank, sensitive and humane, *Portraits in the Nude* presents a series of incidents in the life of an Afrikaner farming family, including the father appearing naked at *nagmaal* (communion) in a religious frenzy, the sons beating up a black servant, the wife having an affair, and the governess dancing naked in front of a mirror.

The following year, Plomer published a collection of short stories titled *I Speak of Africa*. It included the story *Ula Masondo*, a deeply empathic account of the impact a spell of life in Johannesburg has on a young Zulu migrant worker. The collection did nothing to sway opinion against Plomer among white South Africans and, in particular, Afrikaner critics and readers alike dismissed the sentiment of both his books as offensive.

After resigning from *Voorslag*, Plomer became a correspondent for the *Natal Witness* newspaper for a brief time, but he and Van der Post jumped at the invitation to board a vessel heading for Japan and set sail from Durban in September 1926.

© University of KwaZulu-Natal Press

'Self-assertion more often than not is vulgar, but a live and vulgar dog who keeps on barking is better than a dead lion, however dignified.'
- Selected Prose

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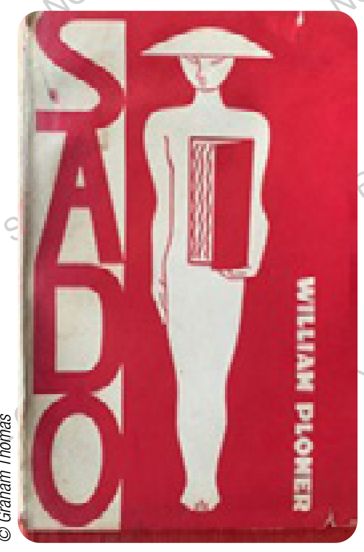
THIRTY YEARS LATER

Plomer never lived in South Africa again, but he visited once more when he was invited to address a conference at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1956. When the conference ended, he revisited Entumeni and found it 'greatly changed and improved' in the thirty years since he had left. 'It was a strange, disconcerting experience,' he wrote. 'I could not imagine how we ever went there or stayed as long as we did.' Generally, however, he was appalled and saddened by Apartheid South Africa, the stark contrast between the lives of its wealthy and poor inhabitants and the police violence he witnessed. As he had warned white South Africans in *Voorslag*, some years before, 'It will be necessary to learn to recognise every man's human qualities as a contribution to the building up of an indestructible future, to judge every man by the colour of his soul and not by the colour of his skin. Otherwise, the coloured races of the world will rise and take by force what is denied them now by a comparatively few muddleheaded money-grubbers'.

Soon after he had left South Africa in 1926, Plomer's poetry had ceased to refer to the country that had influenced him so deeply as a young man. Yet his visit in 1956 changed that and he wrote four poems in a burst of creativity, including "The Taste of the Fruit", which revealed how the beauty of the country had impressed him anew and stimulated his imagination. According to one of his biographers, he began describing himself as 'a returning exile', although what he called 'the dryness and the staring sun' made him long for English clouds again.

LITERARY AND PUBLISHING PROMINENCE



© Graham Thomas

After living in Japan until 1929 and then travelling through Korea, China, the Soviet Union, Poland, Germany, and Belgium, Plomer eventually settled back in England. Through his friendship with his publishers, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Plomer entered London literary circles and became friends with many of the Thirties poets (*see page 130 for further information*) and the 'Bloomsbury Group'. In 1940, he published a collection of verse titled *Selected Poems*, which included "Namaqualand after Rain", "Scorpion", "Ula Masondo's Dream", along with his poem criticising the wanton greed and 'free cruelty' of the gold rush in "Johannesburg".

Plomer rose to literary and publishing prominence in England in the 1930s. He published three novels, *Sado* in 1931, *The Case is Altered* in 1932 and *The Invaders* in 1934, along with four volumes of verse, *The Family Tree* in 1929, *The Fivefold Screen* in 1932, *Visiting the Caves* in 1936 and *Selected Poems* in 1940, and a collection of short stories, *The Child of Queen Victoria*, in 1933, as well as writing three biographies. He became a literary editor for Faber and Faber publishers and was a reader and literary adviser to Jonathan Cape publishers from 1937 to 1973.

When the Second World War broke out in 1940, Plomer enlisted in the Royal Navy Intelligence Division and served until the war ended in 1945. After the war, he returned to his position at Jonathan Cape publishers, where he recognised the potential of Ian Fleming's *James Bond* series. He edited the first novel, *Casino Royale*, as well as several others, and Fleming dedicated his third novel, *Goldfinger*, to Plomer.

© Robert McGinnis

His career brought him into contact with numerous writers and literary groups, including the Royal Society of Literature, to which he was elected as a fellow in 1951, the Society of Authors, and the Poetry Society, which he also served as president from 1968 to 1971. He was also the recipient of several honours, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Durham, the Queen's

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

Gold Medal for Poetry in 1963, and he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1968.

Plomer's last work, a collection of children's poems entitled *The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast*, won the prestigious 1973 Whitbread Award for its category of fiction. He died in England in September 1973 at the age of 69.

In 1976, South African writer Nadine Gordimer named a South African literary prize, the *Mofolo-Plomer Prize* in honour of Plomer and South African author Thomas Mofolo. Gordimer also wrote in her introduction to a 2003 edition of *Turbott Wolfe* that the work should be regarded as part of the 'canon of renegade colonialist literature'.

The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast *is loosely based on the poem with the same name, written by William Roscoe in 1802. Plomer's version still tells the story of a party for insects and other small animals, but greatly expands the original verse and provides a good deal more detail on the animals' preparations for the party. Pictured is a page from the first illustrated version, which was published in 1860.*

© Baldwin Library

"NAMAQUALAND AFTER RAIN"

Again the veld revives **1**
Imbued with lyric rains,
And sap re-sweetening dry stalks
Perfumes the quickening plains;

Small roots explode in strings of stars, **5**
Each bulb gives up its dream,
Honey drips from orchid throats,
Jewels each raceme;

The desert sighs at dawn–
As in another hemisphere **10**
The temple lotus breaks her buds
On the attentive air–

A frou-frou of new flowers,
Puff of unruffling petals,
While rods of sunlight strike pure streams **15**
From rocks beveined with metals;

Far in the gaunt karroo
The winter earth denudes,

GLOSSARY

veld (line 1): flat, rural land covered in grass and small trees (scrub)

imbued (line 2): saturated, impregnated, soaked

quickening (line 4): awakening, reviving, resuscitating

raceme (line 8): cluster of flowers arranged along a stem

frou-frou (line 13): showy or frilly ornamentation, rustling, especially of women's skirts

beveined (line 16): marked with veins

gaunt (line 17): lean, haggard, scrawny, thin, angular or bony

denudes (line 18): strips, deprives, lays bare, exposes

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Ironstone caves give back the burr
Of lambs in multitudes; 20

Grass waves again where drought
Bleached every upland kraal,
A peach-tree shoots along the wind
Pink volleys through a broken wall,

And willows growing round the dam 25
May now be seen
With all their traceries of twigs
Just hesitating to be green,

Soon to be hung with colonies
All swaying with the leaves 30
Of pendent wicker love-nests
The pretty loxia weaves.

GLOSSARY

burr (line 19): irregularly rounded mass, tiny plant seeds or fruits that stick or cling to passing hosts (i.e. to clothes, shoes or sheep's wool)

multitudes (line 20): large number of people, animals or things

kraal (line 22): enclosure for cattle or livestock within a village

traceries (line 27): delicate branching patterns, outlines

pendent (line 31): hanging, dangling, suspended

loxia (line 32): Black-headed Weaver (small bird with yellow and black colouring)

ANALYSIS

"Namaqualand after Rain" is a loving celebration of the beauty and rejuvenating powers of nature. In the poem, the dramatic annual transformation of the arid semi-desert of Namaqualand into a magnificent, vibrant carpet of wild flowers is used as a reminder that life finds a way to survive and renew itself, even in the harshest conditions. The verse also demonstrates Plomer's keen appreciation of the nature and wildlife of South Africa.

STRUCTURE

"Namaqualand after Rain" has a regular and predictable structure. It consists of eight stanzas, each of which is a quatrain or four lines long, and it features the rhyme scheme ABCB, DEFE. The rhymes in five of the eight stanzas are perfect or exact, for example, 'rains' (line 2) and 'plains' (line 4), with the rhymes in the other three stanzas being half rhymes, such as 'kraal' (line 22) and 'wall' (line 24).

The metrical pattern of the stanzas is known as hymn or hymnal since the lines of the poem generally alternate between iambic trimeter (three iambic units or six syllables) and iambic tetrameter (four iambic units or eight syllables). Apart from the notable exceptions, lines that feature either seven or four syllables, this meter lends the verse a melodic, buoyant rhythm that would seem appropriate for a poem celebrating the period of rebirth and renewal signified by the arrival of spring. Using a hymnal meter, which derives its name from compositions of praise and worship, would also seem a fitting choice to express wonder and joy at the rejuvenating powers of nature.

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

Punctuation is used to support the imagery and pace of the verse throughout the poem. The dashes at the end of lines 9 and 12 in the third stanza break the steady rhythm created by the commas and semi-colons in the first two stanzas — a rhythm that resumes in the fourth and fifth stanzas before the use of enjambment requires different punctuation in the final stanzas and the poem bounds joyfully towards its conclusion.

The poet also uses a variety of sound devices to support the imagery and pace of the verse throughout the poem. The instances of consonance, for example, 'frou-frou' (line 13) and 'flowers' (line 13), and assonance, for example, '[p]uff' (line 14) and 'unruff' (line 14), and alliteration, for example, 'sunlight' (line 15), 'strike' (line 15) and 'streams' (line 15), capture and emphasise the movement and energy beginning to burst forth across the landscape.

TITLE

The title of the poem locates it in space and time. It confirms that it is set in southern Africa since **Namaqualand** is the name of the arid western coastal region that runs from the northern Cape Province to Namibia. The title also establishes the time as towards the end of winter as the rain typically falls there in July and August. The title also prepares the expectations of the reader as rain is symbolic of rebirth and the end of a period of drought, especially as this region is celebrated because the normally dry landscape is transformed into a magnificent, vibrant carpet of wild flowers after the winter rains.

© Michael Durst

Namaqualand is named after the Nama or Namaqua, a Khoikhoi people who were the first inhabitants of the region.

THE VELD REVIVES

The poem opens dramatically with the word '[a]gain' (line 1), emphasising that the event it is about to describe has happened before. The use of the word 'veld' (line 1) to describe the land confirms the expectation created by the title of the poem that it is describing events in southern Africa. The use of the word 'revives' (line 1) is significant because it emphasises that this event is a repetition and that the land is being brought back to life or consciousness.

In the second line of the poem, the arrival of the 'rains' (line 2) is confirmed. The rainfall is described as 'lyric' (line 2) and 'imbu[ing]' (line 2) the veld. It is a captivating description. The word 'lyric' (line 2) suggests something light, flowing and sweet, as well as melodic, and conjures images of clear, flowing water nurturing everything on which it gracefully falls. The word '[i]mbued' (line 2) means permeated, saturated and filled and so emphasises how the rain has permeated or soaked into the soil and suggests how it has taken over and changed the atmosphere.

© Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

The third and fourth lines of the poem highlight that it is a time of resuscitation and growth. '[S]ap' (line 3) is flowing through the 'stalks' (line 3) of the plants and the 'plains' (line 4) are 'quickening' (line 4). The imagery is exciting and suggestive of blood coursing in veins since 'sap' (line 3) is the fluid that circulates in the vascular system of a plant and the word 'quickening' (line 4) literally refers to the time

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when a pregnant woman starts to feel her baby moving in her womb. These lines suggest that the landscape feels alive and pregnant with possibility. It is also significant that the 'sap' (line 3) is 're-sweetening' (line 3) the stems of the plants because it transports dissolved glucose or sugar around the plants to be used to fuel their growth. In the final line of the first stanza, the smell of the sap is described as 'perfum[ing]' (line 4) the veld. The allusion is evocative, making the scene more vivid by engaging the reader's sense of smell and making it delightfully pleasant because it is filled with sweet perfume.

© Holly van Hart

A FRENZY OF GROWTH

In the second stanza, the perspective shifts from the wide panorama of the 'quickening plains' (line 4) to gaze at '[s]mall roots' (line 5) and individual 'bulb[s]' (line 6). Studied closely, the 'roots' (line 5) are 'explod[ing]' (line 5) and resemble 'strings of stars' (line 5). The verb 'explode' (line 5) captures the intensity of the burst of activity and the way the roots are spreading out in every direction. The delicate description 'strings of stars' (line 5) suggests that the roots are thin and possibly glistening with water droplets from the rain. It perhaps conjures up the image of strings of twinkling fairy lights, which are festive decorations and emblematic of times of joy and happiness. It may also be an allusion to the slender indigenous South African trailing plants, the 'String-of-hearts' (*Ceropegia woodii*) and the 'String-of-pearls' (*Curio rowleyanus*). At the same time, the 'bulb[s]' (line 6) are described as 'giving up' (line 6) their 'dream[s]' (line 6). It is a vulnerable image that suggests that the 'bulb[s]' (line 6) are flowering reluctantly or meekly since 'giving up' (line 6) implies that what is being revealed or shared is being done unwillingly or with a sense of surrender and defeat. Perhaps the image suggests the dormant bulbs in the ground have been asleep and 'dream[ing]' (line 6) contentedly and are resentful of having to awaken and rise. Or perhaps it alludes to how precious each bulb considers its flower by comparing the act of flowering to sharing its inner self with the world.

The imagery in lines 7 and 8 is sensual, opulent and almost decadent. '[O]rchid[s]' (line 7) are depicted as 'drip[ping]' (line 7) drops of '[h]oney' (line 7) that look like precious gems or '[j]ewels' (line 8) on to the 'raceme[s]' (line 8) or clusters of flowers below them. The image transforms the sticky, sugary sap, called honeydew, that leaks from the blossoming flowers and leaves of orchids into a blanket of glinting, glistening, honey-coloured, jewel-like droplets. As well as alluding to the abundance and wealth of nature in spring, the image has very suggestive, almost sexual connotations. Orchids are prized for their extraordinary, exotic beauty and fragrances and are associated with love, sexuality, fertility and sensual luxury. The sexually suggestive shape of the orchid flower led to them being used as aphrodisiacs and to enhance fertility in certain cultures. By referring to the labellum and petals of the flowers as 'throats' (line 7), the poem highlights this connection. It is perhaps fitting as spring is a time commonly associated with reproduction and birth, and flower nectar — used by bees to make honey — derives its name from the ancient Greek word for the drink of the gods, which was believed to rejuvenate and bestow immortality.

© Karin Johannesson

AWAKENING AND REBIRTH

At the start of the third stanza, the perspective of the poem zooms out to encompass the entire 'desert' (line 9), which is described as 'sigh[ing]' (line 9) at the arrival of 'dawn' (line 9). The personification of the 'desert' (line 9) exhaling and emitting a deep murmur creates a powerful image that reinforces the idea of the landscape being awake and alive. It is an ambiguous image, though, because a 'sigh' (line 9) can express relief or tiredness or sadness or a deep yearning for something unattainable or lost. In the context of the poem, it could make sense that the desert is sighing with relief that the rains have arrived. Or it could be saddened that the rains have arrived because they threaten its existence as a desert? Perhaps the desert is fatigued by the idea of having to absorb another day of hot sun. Yet, taking into consideration the celebratory theme of the poem thus far and the fact that 'dawn' (line 9) is a symbol of hope, rebirth, awakening and resurrection, it would appear to be a 'sigh' (line 9) of relief. It is also significant that the line does not end in a comma, but with a dash. Is the punctuation being used to emphasise the line itself, by indicating a pause or break in the poem, or to show that the following line adds additional information? In the case of the latter use, it would suggest that the arrival of spring feels like waking up on the opposite side of the world to the desert, which could also be a reference to the opposite seasons experienced in the northern and southern 'hemisphere[s]' (line 10).

© Tina Bluefield

Whether it is the 'desert' (line 9) or the 'temple lotus' (line 11) that feels transported to another 'hemisphere' (line 10), the lotus is described as 'break[ing]' (line 11) or opening her '**buds**' (line 11) and the morning air is depicted as 'attentive' (line 12). In a more literal sense, these lines present the graceful, delicate image of a lotus flower opening to greet the dawn. By referring to the flower as 'her' (line 11), its soft, delicate, feminine nature is accentuated. The adjective 'attentive' (line 12) creates a sense of alert expectancy as the 'air' (line 12) takes on the role of a considerate servant, hovering around the flower with watchful diligence. The 'temple' (line 11) reference, traditionally a place of silent sanctuary, lends the scene an atmosphere of calm serenity as well.

© Gabriela Valencia

There are many allusions to the sacred and spiritual in the stanza, which suggest that it is offering a figurative interpretation too. As noted previously, the 'dawn' (line 9) is a symbol of awakening and resurrection, and 'temple' (line 11) is a direct reference to a place of spiritual worship, of course. The lotus flower itself is also associated with the sacred and spiritual and is often planted in temple ponds. The flower is considered a symbol of rebirth and awakening or enlightenment because of its unusual life cycle. With its roots deep in the mud, it submerges into the water every night and then miraculously re-emerges and re-blooms the next morning, strikingly beautiful and sparklingly clean.

Budbreak occurs when new **buds** begin to open. Buds may open to become leaves, flowers or twigs, but timing is everything when it comes to budbreak. Open too soon and tender shoots freeze. Open too late and there is not enough time for flowers, fruit or other new growth to mature.

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EVERYTHING FEELS ALIVE

The fourth stanza further develops the sense of renewal and rebirth. The poem returns to exploring the now 'sunli[t]' (line 15) landscape and every aspect of it seems to be bursting with energy, activity and aliveness. The flowers are 'new' (line 13) and are swaying or rustling, making a 'frou-frou' (line 13) sound similar to that made by the skirts of a group of women as they walk gaily down the street. Other flowers are busily 'unruffling' (line 14) or smoothing out their 'petals' (line 14), preening themselves in a manner that is similar to the way women might adjust and smooth out their skirts and outfits when they first arrive. The feisty 'sunlight' (line 15) is 'strik[ing]' (line 15) or forcibly hitting the water with its 'rods' (line 15). The water itself is 'pure' (line 15) and probably new or freshly fallen rain and flowing along in 'streams' (line 15). Even the comparison of the streaks of 'metals' (line 16) in the 'rocks' (line 16) to 'veins' (line 16) brings the stones and boulders to life.

In four short lines, this compelling stanza uses vibrant imagery and sound devices such as consonance, assonance and alliteration, to create the impression of unspoiled nature and renewed, energetic life bursting forth everywhere you look.

THE DENUDED KAROO

Attention shifts to the 'karroo' (line 17) or semi-desert in the distance in the fifth stanza. The contrast between it and the landscape in the previous stanza is striking. The semi-desert is 'gaunt' (line 17) and 'denude[d]' (line 18) or stripped bare. The 'earth' (line 18) there is still in 'winter' (line 18). The adjective 'gaunt' (line 17) is particularly evocative as it evokes the image of a haggard, exhausted person as well as emphasising how barren and desolate the land is. It suggests that surviving the winter months has been similar to taking an arduous, exhausting journey.

The description of the 'karroo' (line 17) is followed by an intriguing two lines in which the '[i]ronstone' (line 19) or dark grey-blue '**caves**' (line 19) in the semi-desert are described as returning or shedding 'multitudes' (line 20) or masses of the '**burr**' (line 19) of 'lambs' (line 20). The meaning of these lines could be literal and a description of how thousands of the fern-like shrubs called *Sheep's Burr* are sprouting around the edges of the caves. This interpretation would fit with the theme of renewal and rebirth and the lines would be emphasising that new life is growing even in the semi-desert at the edges of the landscape. Yet the image of 'multitudes' (line 20) of

Dark grey-blue ironstone **caves** are an iconic feature of the karoo and surrounding areas, known for their glinting iron ore walls, spectacular formations and incredible 30 000-year-old rock art. South Africa is home to hundreds of cave systems, from kilometre-long tunnels within Table Mountain to the sacred pilgrimage site of the Motouleng Caves near Clarens. Archaeological evidence shows that our ancestors were living in the 140-metre Wonderwerk Cave near Kuruman in the northern Cape more than 2 million years ago. The largest and perhaps most famous caves in South Africa are the four-kilometre limestone Cango Caves (*pictured*) near the karoo town of Oudtshoorn.

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A **burr** is a spiky seed or fruit that latches or hooks on to passing creatures. Many plants produce burrs to propagate and spread their seeds, using the passing animals as 'lifts' or transport to another location. The thick wool worn by sheep makes an ideal material for burrs and some of the plants that produce burrs are known simply as Sheep's Burrs. Burrs also function as symbols of reproduction and new life.

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'lambs' (line 20) is also interesting. It is worth noting that an arid or semi-desert climate suits sheep farming and, indeed, there are hundreds of sheep farms in the karoo area. There is also archaeological evidence that the Khoi herded flocks of sheep into the karoo caves at night. Nonetheless, the lamb is a powerful symbol in itself. Customarily born in spring, lambs are symbols of fertility, birth and new life. As young animals with a meek temperament, lambs are also associated with virtue and innocence. Lambs were also used as sacrifices in the ancient world because they were highly valuable and deemed innocent or pure enough to satisfy the gods. Hence the use of the term 'sacrificial lamb' to describe someone metaphorically 'slain' for the common good, and the adoption by Christians of the lamb as a symbol of Jesus's purity and the way he was sacrificed on behalf of humanity.

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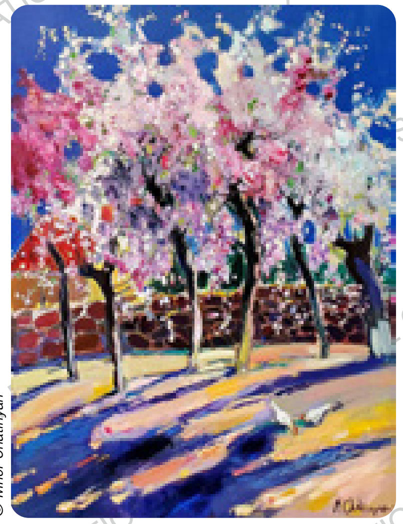
THE BLEACHED KRAALS

The poem returns to the activity of the reviving 'veld' (line 1), where the '[g]rass' (line 21) is 'wav[ing]' (line 21) and bringing back life and colour to the '[b]leached' (line 22) kraals or livestock farms. The verb 'wav[ing]' (line 21) alludes to the way the ripples created by the wind moving through the pastures look like waves on an ocean and even suggests the grass is gesturing or signalling a happy greeting. It was 'drought' (line 21) that '[b]leached' (line 22) or removed the colour from the kraals in the 'upland' (line 22) or among the hills.



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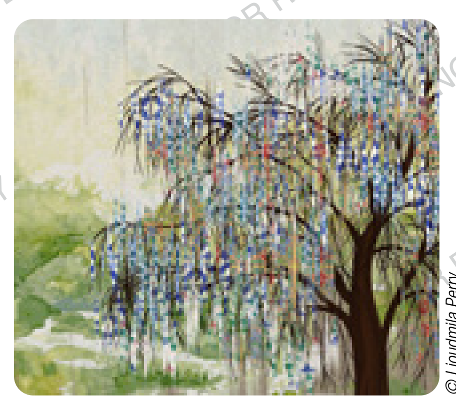
The focus shifts to the 'kraals' (line 22) and a peach tree is described as 'shoot[ing]' (line 23) or pushing its '[p]ink' (line 24) blossoms through a 'broken' (line 24) wall. The wind that was blowing through the grass is also gusting through the kraals and helping the tree 'volley' (line 24) or project a large number of its blossoms through the crack in the wall. The forceful, martial verbs 'shoot' (line 23) and 'volley' (line 24) conjure images of the blossoms flying through the air like pink missiles or bullets, and then cascading to the ground like coral-coloured rounds of artillery. Peach trees blossom early in the spring and so are considered symbols of rebirth and fertility as well, especially in China and Japan. The imagery in this stanza seems to attest to nature's powers of regeneration and the certainty of new life, which will return even after a '[b]leach[ing]' (line 22) drought and in places where man has built.

WILLOWS AND WEAVERBIRDS

The poem switches its attention to the 'dam' (line 25) at the kraal and its 'hesitating' (line 28) weeping 'willow' (line 25) trees. The branches of the trees are described as wearing 'traceries' (line 27) or delicate patterns of 'twigs' (line 27) that are briefly 'hesitating' (line 28) or pausing before becoming 'green' (line 28) with leaves. It appears significant that the willows are described as 'hesitating' (line 28) when everything around them is teeming with activity, especially since they are also among the first trees to grow leaves in the spring. Are the trees pausing to gather their strength or being indecisive or even expressing a reluctance to break open their buds and sprout leaves?



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The poem concludes by looking forward to the near future, when 'swaying' (line 30) bird nests will '[s]oon' (line 29) adorn the branches of the willow trees. The birds are identified as 'loxia' (line 32), also known as Black-headed Weavers, and described as 'pretty' (line 32), a reference to their striking yellow and black plumage. The nests they weave look like 'wicker' (line 31) lodgings and are described as 'colonies' (line 29) of 'love-nests' (line 31), which alludes to their purpose as places where the birds will breed and multiply their population. By focusing on 'love' (line 31) and reproduction and the birth of new birdlife, the optimistic imagery in the final stanza combines to reinforce the hopeful message of the poem that life is a cycle of birth and death and natural regeneration. As the spectacular display of wild flowers in Namaqualand demonstrates, nature will burst forth with joyous new life — no matter how arid or dry and 'denud[ing]' (line 18) the winter has been.

? QUESTIONS

1. What effect is created by beginning the poem with the word '[a]gain' (line 1)? (2)

2. What does the description 'lyric' (line 2) suggest about the rains? (1)

3. What image does the description of the roots as 'strings of stars' (line 5) create? (1)

4. Identify and interpret the two Figures of Speech present in line 6. (4)

5. What part of speech is '[j]ewels' (line 8) in the context of this poem? Draw on the text to substantiate your response. (2)

6. What are the implications of the line '[a]s in another hemisphere' (line 10)? (1)

7. Identify the figure of speech in lines 13 and 14 and comment on its effectiveness in the context of the poem. (2)

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8. Choose a word from the poem that means:
   a) dutiful
   b) untainted (2)

9. How does the description of 'traceries of twigs' (line 27) support the image of the willow trees as 'hesitating' (line 28)? (2)

10. What are the implications of describing the birds' nests as 'love-nests' (line 31)? (2)

11. Consider the following poem "To Daffodils" by Robert Herrick. Both "Namaqualand after Rain" and "To Daffodils" explore the symbolism of flowers. In a well-structured paragraph, compare and contrast how each poem uses imagery and diction to convey its respective themes. Provide evidence in the form of quotations from both poems to support your answer. (6)

"TO DAFFODILS" — ROBERT HERRICK

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see **1**
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay, **5**
Until the hasting day
Has run

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CONTENTS
FOREWORD
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
THE RENAISSANCE
THE ROMANTICS
THE VICTORIANS
MODERNISM
AFRICAN POETRY
UNSEEN POETRY
ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along. **10**

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die **15**
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again. **20**

GLOSSARY

even-song (line 8): church service held at sunset, focused on singing psalms

[25]

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