

Poetry



Name: _____

Poetry

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Fog

Carl Sandburg, 1878 – 1967

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Adelaide Crapsey, 1878 – 1914

Listen. . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

Dreams

Langston Hughes, 1902 - 1967

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Sally

Phoebe Hesketh, 1909 – 2005

She was a dog-rose kind of girl:
Elusive, scattery as petals;
Scratchy sometimes, tripping you like briars.
She teased the boys
Turning this way and that, not to be tamed
Or taught any more than the wind.
Even in school the word 'ought' had no meaning
For Sally. On dull days
She'd sit quiet as a mole at her desk
Delving in thought.
But when the sun called
She was gone, running the blue day down
Till the warm hedgerows prickled the dusk
And moths flickered out.

Her mother scolded; Dad
Gave her the hazel switch,
Said her head was stuffed with feathers
And a starling tongue.
But they couldn't take the shine out of her,
Even when it rained
You felt the sun saved under her skin.
She'd a way of escape
Laughing at you from the bright end of a tunnel,
Leaving you in the dark.

Frogs

Norman MacCaig, 1910 – 1996

Frogs sit more solid
than anything sits. In mid-leap they are
parachutists falling
in a free fall. They die on roads
with arms across their chests and
heads high.

I love frogs that sit
like Buddha, that fall without
parachutes, that die
like Italian tenors.

Above all, I love them because,
pursued in water, they never
panic so much that they fail
to make stylish triangles
with their ballet dancer's
legs.

Pigeons

Richard Kell, 1927 –

They paddle with staccato feet
In powder-pools of sunlight,
Small blue busybodies
Strutting like fat gentlemen
With hands clasped
Under their swallowtail coats;
And, as they stump about
Their heads like tiny hammers
Tap at imaginary nails
In non-existent walls.
Elusive ghosts of sunshine
Slither down the green gloss
Of their necks an instant, and are gone.

Summer hangs drugged from sky to earth
In limpid fathoms of silence:
Only warm dark dimples of sound
Slide like slow bubbles
From the contented throats.

Raise a casual hand –
With one quick gust
They fountain into air.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1809 – 1892

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

The Tyger

William Blake, 1757 – 1827

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

A Case of Murder

Vernon Scannell, 1922 – 2007

They should not have left him there alone,
Alone that is except for the cat.
He was only nine, not old enough
To be left alone in a basement flat,
Alone, that is, except for the cat.
A dog would have been a different thing,
A big gruff dog with slashing jaws,
But a cat with round eyes mad as gold,
Plump as a cushion with tucked-in paws---
Better have left him with a fair-sized rat!
But what they did was leave him with a cat.
He hated that cat; he watched it sit,
A buzzing machine of soft black stuff,
He sat and watched and he hated it,
Snug in its fur, hot blood in a muff,
And its mad gold stare and the way it sat
Crooning dark warmth: he loathed all that.
So he took Daddy's stick and he hit the cat.
Then quick as a sudden crack in glass
It hissed, black flash, to a hiding place
In the dust and dark beneath the couch,
And he followed the grin on his new-made face,
A wide-eyed, frightened snarl of a grin,
And he took the stick and he thrust it in,
Hard and quick in the furry dark.
The black fur squealed and he felt his skin
Prickle with sparks of dry delight.
Then the cat again came into sight,
Shot for the door that wasn't quite shut,
But the boy, quick too, slammed fast the door:
The cat, half-through, was cracked like a nut
And the soft black thud was dumped on the floor.
Then the boy was suddenly terrified
And he bit his knuckles and cried and cried;
But he had to do something with the dead thing there.
His eyes squeezed beads of salty prayer
But the wound of fear gaped wide and raw;
He dared not touch the thing with his hands
So he fetched a spade and shovelled it
And dumped the load of heavy fur
In the spidery cupboard under the stair
Where it's been for years, and though it died
It's grown in that cupboard and its hot low purr
Grows slowly louder year by year:
There'll not be a corner for the boy to hide
When the cupboard swells and all sides split
And the huge black cat pads out of it.

2 – Metaphorical or literal

	Sentence	Is it literal or metaphorical?	If it is metaphorical, does the metaphor come before or after the main thing being described?	Extension: If it is metaphorical, what is the effect of the metaphor?
	1. I wandered lonely as a cloud .			
	2. Sweat dripped from his tense face.			
	3. As snug as a gun, the pen rests between my finger and my thumb.			
	4. I could show you wonderful things.			
	5. The panther paces over and over, like a ritual dance around a centre.			
	6. Remembering my love, tears fall from my eyes.			
	7. My love is like a red, red rose that's newly sprung in June.			

4 - Tenors and Vehicles

The **tenor** is the thing that is being described to the audience.

The **vehicle** is the imaginative idea that you compare the tenor to. It is the part that is not literal. It is the 'made up' bit.

Identify the **tenor** and the **vehicle** in each of these sentences.

Metaphorical sentence	Tenor	Vehicle	Extension: what do the tenor and the vehicle have in common?
Achilles fought like a lion.			
Your room is a pigsty.			
The room was like a furnace.			
Robert is like a bull in a china shop.			
The eagle is like a bolt of lightning.			
The room was as silent as a graveyard.			
She was volcanic with anger.			

6 - Poem: Frogs

<p>Tenor</p> <p>(the thing you are writing about) For this poem, the tenor will always be Frogs</p>	<p>Vehicle</p> <p>(the things you are comparing the tenor to)</p>	<p>Things the tenor and vehicle have in common</p>
<p>Frogs swimming</p>	<p>Scuba divers</p> 	<p>Belong in the water Glide through the water Large finned feet Big goggle eyes Slippery skin/wetsuit</p>
<p>Frogs</p>		
<p>Frogs</p>		
<p>Frogs</p>		

6 – ‘Frogs’: Norman MacCaig

Tenor	Vehicle	Ground
In this poem, Norman MacCaig is writing about frogs.	What does Norman MacCaig compare frogs to?	Things the tenor and vehicle have in common
Frogs		

7 – ‘Pigeons’

Write out the VEHICLE used to describe each TENOR in the poem.	Think of three different things that the TENOR and VEHICLE have in common (this is the GROUND).
Tenor: The movement of pigeons' feet Vehicle:	
Tenor: The sound pigeons' feet make when walking Vehicle:	
Tenor: The way pigeons walk Vehicle:	
Tenor: The movement of pigeons' heads Vehicle:	
Tenor: The way light looks on their feathers Vehicle:	
Tenor: The sound of pigeons cooing Vehicle:	
Tenor: The way pigeons fly into the air Vehicle:	

8 – Tenor, Vehicle, Ground

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;

clasps – grabs

Close to the sun in lonely lands,

Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

azure – deep blue

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;

He watches from his mountain walls,

And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Tenor	Vehicle	Ground
The eagle's claws		
The sea		
The sea		
A mountain		
The eagle		

9 – ‘The Tyger’

Look at these **grounds**. The **ground** is the feature that the **tenor** and the **vehicle** have in common.

Which of these examples of **ground** are successful? Which ones do not work?

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,

- This indicates that the tiger is on fire.
- This suggests that there are two tigers.
- This suggests that the tiger’s fur stands out brightly against the night.
- This indicates that the tiger can breathe fire.
- This tells us that the tiger is dangerous, just like fire.
- This tells the reader that the tiger is burning brightly.
- This tells us that the tiger is hard to control or to tame.
- This is comparing the tiger’s bright orange fur to a fire.



11 – ‘A Case of Murder’

Here are the first five sentences of the poem:

They should not have left him there alone,
Alone that is except for the cat.
He was only nine, not old enough
To be left alone in a basement flat,
Alone, that is, except for the cat.
A dog would have been a different thing,
A big gruff dog with slashing jaws,
But a cat with round eyes mad as gold,
Plump as a cushion with tucked-in paws---
Better have left him with a fair-sized rat!
But what they did was leave him with a cat.
He hated that cat; he watched it sit,
A buzzing machine of soft black stuff,
He sat and watched and he hated it,
Snug in its fur, hot blood in a muff,
And its mad gold stare and the way it sat
Crooning dark warmth: he loathed all that.

1. These statements summarise each of the first five sentences.

You need to put these statements into the correct order.

- A. **The boy was nine, and too young to be left alone at home.**
- B. **The boy hated the cat.**
- C. **A boy was left home alone with a cat.**
- D. **But the boy was left alone with a cat.**
- E. **It might have been better to leave the boy with a dog, or even a rat.**

2. Once you have done this, you need to summarise what happens in the rest of the poem. There are 11 sentences for you to summarise.