



LPS Year 8: How does a poet's style influence meaning?

William Blake (1757-1827)

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

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UNIT OVERVIEW: How does a poet's style influence meaning?

Unit intention: To analyse the relationship between poetic style and meaning		
Success criteria	✓	X
1) To understand the different ways poets use language to create meaning 2) To appreciate the poetic contributions of a) William Blake b) Walt Whitman c) W.B. Yeats d) Emily Dickinson 3) To develop personal response to poetry through annotation and journal writing 4) To comment on and respond to style 5) To replicate style through creative writing 6) To refine and edit work for resubmission 7) To apply skills to Unseen Texts		
Unit summative and formative assessment details: Submission of anthology of poetry and journal responses Application of Skills		
Home Learning (What and how often): Vocabulary		
Student Activities Log	✓	X
Annotation Journal Writing Recitation and discussion Creative Writing Analytic Writing		

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PRE-ASSESSMENT EVALUATION

Success criteria – Have you met them? Show your evidence in preparation for your assessment.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

How will you improve your work?

Year 8:

- Responding to an unseen Poem
- Talking
- Journal Writing
- Creative Writing
- Analytic Writing

1	Blake	1 Lamb, Tiger	2 Sunflower Rose Poison Tree
2	Blake	3 Chimney Sweeper (I)	4 Holy Thursday (I)
3	Whitman	5 Opening Marriage Runaway Slave Sounds	6 Places Ending
4	Yeats	7 Song of Wandering Angus When you Are Old She wishes for the Clothes of Heaven	8 Leda and the Swan Second Coming
5	Dickinson	9 We Like March Bee, I'm Expecting you I heard a fly buzz	10 The Wind Took Up Northern Things A Bird Came Down the Walk
6	Dickinson	11 My life a loaded Gun Because I could not stop	12 Last Night She Lived
7		Assessment: Anthology of best creative writing & Journal Entries	Quiz Unseen Poem

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Approaching an Unseen Poem is a Process of Steps

Don't worry if you 'understand' poetry.

Read-Read-Read and Annotate-Annotate-Annotate

- ❖ Silently to yourself
- ❖ Listen to the teacher
- ❖ Read as a class
- ❖ Read in pairs
- ❖ Read to emphasise emotions and words
- ❖ Write your ideas on the poem
- ❖ Underline, circle, *, ? and other notation on the poem
- ❖ *Record your own ideas and responses*

Talk

- ❖ I like...
- ❖ I think...
- ❖ I wonder...
- ❖ This reminds me of...
- ❖ Ask questions...
- ❖ Keep the conversation going

Journal Writing

- ❖ Write to help make your *thinking visible*
- ❖ Respond in writing
- ❖ Make a record of your thinking, your feelings
- ❖ You could start to extract evidence

Creative Writing

- ❖ Respond to the poem by writing your own poem
- ❖ Mimic the style of the poet

Analytic

- ❖ Find the structural shifts in a poem
- ❖ Pick relevant evidence from each section
- ❖ From the evidence, create a Topic Sentence or interpretation
- ❖ Explain how the quotations back up my idea
- ❖ Analyse language and devices to further detail my ideas
- ❖ Link to more evidence, extend my thinking
- ❖ Find and make links to your life
- ❖ Extend your argument to go *below the surface* of the poem's meaning

Reading a poem

1. Just read through the poem on your own. Read it quickly. Read it slowly. Don't worry about understanding the poem.

While you are reading: always annotate: mark up your poem

- ❖ Underline or circle: a word you like
- ❖ A word, image, sound that surprises you
- ❖ Something you think might be important

2. Read it again: Teacher or Student Reading:
When someone else is reading the poem out loud, notice how the poem sounds.

When Annotating, please note

- ❖ Pauses and breaks: you should be reading all the way through to a punctuation mark.
- ❖ Listen for rhyme, rhythm
- ❖ Any other clues of meaning

3. Read it again: Whole Class reading. You can read as one whole class or punctuation mark to punctuation mark.

When reading as a class what different words pop out as

- ❖ Difficult
- ❖ Interesting
- ❖ Funny
- ❖ Disturbing

4. Read it again: Paired Reading

- ❖ Pick an emotion: happiness, fear, joy, wonder, confusion
- ❖ Read the poem to your partner over-emphasizing that emotion
- ❖ The more you over do it, the better
- ❖ What words do you notice, what comes out?
- ❖ *Annotate your thinking on the poem itself*

5. Read it again. Break the poem into 3 (or more) distinct sections. That is the Structure of the Poem. Pick 4-5 of the lines that you like or that strike you as important. What words are important? What do the words or images make you think of or see or feel?

Talking About a Poem

Practice talking in a specific way about what you are reading. What you predict, feel and think about the poem is what you are trying to figure out. Using your talking partner as a resource for discussion is the best way to improve your learning and make yourself more independent.

If you are stuck for what to talk about, use the sentence starters below:

- ❖ This poem makes me think about....
- ❖ I think this poem is about....
- ❖ I like this word/image/idea... it reminds me of something in my life
- ❖ This poem makes me feel ...
- ❖ What do you think about the word...?
- ❖ What is a word image or idea that you find hard about the poem?
- ❖ We think this poem is about... we think this because...
- ❖ We keep wondering... why What... where
- ❖ If I was writing a poem or a song about this theme, I would change...

Remember it is important to

- ✓ Stay on topic
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Listen actively
- ✓ Never quit
- ✓ Support, Extend and Challenge each other's thinking

When you are done talking, you should write down some of your ideas. Remember there are a lot of different ways to write

-point form notes

-mind map

-more annotations of the poem

-a drawing

Journal Writing

There are lots of different ways of reading, speaking and writing. One important way that we write is PEWEE for analytic, argumentative and persuasive writing.

However, another reason we write is to reflect and figure out what we are thinking and feeling.

What do I write about? How do I reflect on my feelings or my own ideas?

- ❖ asking ourselves questions and then answering them
- ❖ exploring our ideas, however crazy, illogical or strange
- ❖ using other people's ideas to extend and improve my thinking
- ❖ picking key parts of the poem, extracting evidence
- ❖ thinking about what the poem might mean for *me personally*
- ❖ *how does this poem link to things in your own life*
- ❖ thinking about the process of reading—what do I find hard about reading a poem?

In America, we do a lot of journal writing. After reading and talking, you will sit in silence for 7-10 minutes and reflect on the poem.

The only rule is that you cannot stop writing.

Creative Writing/Creative Reading

A very important way to become a better reader is to draw and pull the poem, its language and its imagery into your imagination.

It is not natural to write an essay after reading a poem.

If a poem moves you or makes you think or feel something, you should try to write a poem.

Students feel poems should rhyme. They don't need to.

Students feel poems should be positive or should look a certain way. They don't need to.

When you read the poem look at

The author's style—what are the ways the poet creates meaning

Do they use old, dusty words

Odd line breaks

Humorous, violent or natural Imagery

What Keywords and Vocabulary are particular to the poet

You could also consider things like

The line lengths

Stanzas

Don't panic. Don't think you need to be perfect. Poets aren't perfect. Nobody's perfect. If you try to write a poem in the style of what you have just read, you will learn a great deal about style.

We are writing poetry to understand what the poet is doing.

If you have fun writing a poem then it is a sure sign you will read and learn more.

Analytic Writing

This is not the most important step. But this is the step that we do the most of in GCSE English Literature. The skill here is to make our thinking more formal, extended and precise.

PEWEE	<i>Process of Reading</i>
Point	1) Theme
Ev	2) Relevant Evidence (more than one is even better)
Word Analysis	3) Keyword and Device analysis
Explain Extend and Effects	4) Discuss possible meanings and effects on the reader
RTQ: Point	5) Link analysis to theme

The best way to write an essay is about something that you've discovered and that is important to you from your

- ❖ Reading and re-reading and re-reading
- ❖ Discussion
- ❖ Journal Writing

The next important step is finding the important and relevant evidence

- ❖ Does my evidence back my point up?
- ❖ Is there a better quotation?
- ❖ Can I find linked quotations?

More important than 'getting it right' is to learn to trust your own emotions, thoughts and instincts.

Practice

- ❖ When you journal write, practice working through your ideas.
- ❖ When you are reading and annotating, practice getting your thoughts down on the poem.
- ❖ When you are talking to your partner, practice pushing your thoughts and ideas further.

There are many different types of reading and writing.

It is not something that comes automatically

Analytic reading and writing are skills that require practice.

To be great readers, you need to go through a process

William Blake (1757-1827)

William Blake's poetry is deceptively simple. The vocabulary is almost entirely that from a child's mouth. Words are repeated and rhymed to echo nursery rhymes or songs. Indeed his collection of were of a collection of songs: *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789). However seemingly simple, however, Blake's poems deceptively conceal layers of complexity, meaning and ideas. His genius is that his poems can be studied and understood by an eight year old while also studied and analysed by elderly scholars.

In his two most famous poems, 'The Lamb' and 'The Tiger', a child asks a series of questions to two different animals. The lamb is innocent and soft and doesn't know or understand that he is part of the symbolism of Christianity. However, the Tiger, with its ferocity and its fear, somehow is also made by God. The questions in the second poem articulate the speaker's confusion over how this could be. How could the same God create both a Tiger and a Lamb? What does this say about the creator?

Blake's poems often have speakers talking to nature. But when Blake talks to nature, he brings a kind of feeling of mysticism, secrets and magic. 'The Sick Rose' seems to have been invaded, violated and harmed to the point of destruction. The Sunflower, in following the face of the sun, seems to also follow the face of time—following both a life of desire and virginity. The poem suggests life and death in its final lines as a kind of continuous process. Finally, the Poison Tree is a poem about jealousy. It uses the image of the growing power and dark pleasure that hatred can breed.

Blake was also a political poet. In his poems of *Experience*, he further explored the injustice in society. However, in the *Innocence* he also looked at injustice, but from the perspective of the innocent, often children. In 'The Chimney Sweeper,' (*Innocence*), Blake explores the way

children who work in dangerous and dirty work dream of a heaven and a God that might care for them and clean them if they are good and do their duty. The tone seems innocent enough until we think about the way the imagery shows a world of horror. God is a lie and a dream that seems to justify a child's pain.

In 'Holy Thursday,' similarly, an innocent scene conceals another set of meanings. Blake condemns a society that allows the rich priests to guard the poor. The imagery seems innocent enough and sweet enough, but are these lambs being led to slaughter?

If you don't pay attention, you might think the poem praises charity, but look again.

- **What does Blake do to create such complexity and symbolism through such simple poems?**
- **What kind of imagery does he use?**
- **Does the rhyme help or hinder his sense of darkness?**

THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee!

Little lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

THE TIGER

Tiger, tiger, 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 and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and 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 watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

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

William Blake

THE SICK ROSE

O rose, thou art sick!
 The invisible worm,
 That flies in the night,
 In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
 Of crimson joy,
 And his dark secret love
 Does thy life destroy.

William Blake

AH, SUNFLOWER

Ah, sunflower, weary of time,
 Who countest the steps of the sun;
 Seeking after that sweet golden clime
 Where the traveller's journey is done;

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
 And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
 Arise from their graves, and aspire
 Where my Sunflower wishes to go!

William Blake

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend:
 I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
 I was angry with my foe:
 I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears
 Night and morning with my tears,
 And I sunnèd it with smiles
 And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
 Till it bore an apple bright,
 And my foe beheld it shine,
 And he knew that it was mine,—

And into my garden stole
 When the night had veiled the pole;
 In the morning, glad, I see
 My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

William Blake

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER (*Innocence*)

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry ‘Weep! weep! weep! weep!’
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb’s back, was shaved; so I said,
‘Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.’

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins, and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind:
And the angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,
He’d have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

William Blake

HOLY THURSDAY (*Innocence*)

'Twas on a holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two, in red, and blue, and green:
Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames waters flow.

O what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among:
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor.
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

William Blake

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Walt Whitman is America's first and foremost poet. His poem, he said, was America—it had all of America inside of it. It had multiple voices, multiple locations and perspectives—his poem was democracy itself. *Leaves of Grass* (1844) still reads like no other poem written before or since. What makes it so unique?

Whitman didn't use traditional poetic methods: instead of flowery descriptive language, he used the language that people spoke. Instead of rhyme, he used repetition. He used varying line lengths to adapt his rhythms. He used ellipses to show his mind wandering from topic to topic. He enjoys switching topics, locations, perspective and even time. It can make reading his poetry really exciting. It can, sometimes, feel a bit intimidating.

In the opening of his 'Song of Myself,' the bold and proud voice of Whitman 'celebrates' who he is and his connection to you, the reader. He is alone and in nature, noticing the grass. He goes and hunts, he rests in the afternoon, cooks at night and then sleeps. Time moves gently and effortlessly. He hears some men call, he joins them. He tells the reader that he wishes we were with him.

In another part of the poem, he recounts stories of what he has seen and what he has experienced. He saw the marriage of hunter and a Native American woman. He describes their clothing and the atmosphere. He is amazed by her beauty and he paints the scene simply. His enthusiasm is shown in his long line enjambling and flowing into the next line. He switches topics to describe meeting and caring for a runaway slave. At this time in America, there was still slavery. Whitman bravely shows physical and emotional care for the slave. Unlike Blake, Whitman doesn't show anger. He seems to show a need to change the world through love.

In another part of the poem, Whitman just stops and listens. He starts by hearing the sounds of birds around him, but his ears and his listening stretch much further, he can hear everyone in America! He starts listing their different sounds and activities. To write like Whitman you need to imagine you too can be a hundred feet tall or can hear a penny dropping in Newcastle. Imagining this power, you can start to describe and list and collect all the sensations and ideas in lines of simple poetry. In this way, your writing can show how much you care about and are interested and connected in the world.

At the end of the poem, he admits that he might contradict himself, but he doesn't care—he contains many things, many ideas, many feelings. He contains everything.

- **How does Whitman use his long line, repetition and ellipses to show all the voices of America?**
- **How does he use imagery and description to show his love for people, nature and the reader themselves?**

Leaves of Grass (Opening)

I CELEBRATE myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease . . . observing a spear of summer grass.

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,
Kindling a fire and broiling the freshkilled game,
Soundly falling asleep on the gathered leaves, my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her three skysails . . . she cuts the sparkle and scud,
My eyes settle the land . . . I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clamdiggers arose early and stopped for me,
I tucked my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time,
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass (10)

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far-west the bride was
 a red girl,
 Her father and his friends sat near by crosslegged and dumbly smoking they
 had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders;
 On a bank lounged the trapper he was dressed mostly in skins his
 luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck,
 One hand rested on his rifle the other hand held firmly the wrist of the red
 girl,
 She had long eyelashes her head was bare her coarse straight locks
 descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reached to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopped outside,
 I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
 Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsey and weak,
 And went where he sat on a log, and led him in and assured him,
 And brought water and filled a tub for his sweated body and bruised feet,
 And gave him a room that entered from my own, and gave him some coarse clean
 clothes,
 And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,
 And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
 He stayed with me a week before he was recuperated and passed north,
 I had him sit next me at table my firelock leaned in the corner.

Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass (26)

I think I will do nothing for a long time but listen,
And accrue what I hear into myself and let sounds contribute toward me.

I hear the bravuras of birds the bustle of growing wheat gossip of flames
. . . . clack of sticks cooking my meals.

I hear the sound of the human voice a sound I love,
I hear all sounds as they are tuned to their uses sounds of the city and sounds
out of the city sounds of the day and night;
Talkative young ones to those that like them the recitative of fish-pedlars and
fruit-pedlars the loud laugh of workpeople at their meals,
The angry base of disjointed friendship the faint tones of the sick,
The judge with hands tight to the desk, his shaky lips pronouncing a death-
sentence,
The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves the refrain of the
anchor-lifters;
The ring of alarm-bells the cry of fire the whirr of swift-streaking engines
and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and colored lights,
The steam-whistle the solid roll of the train of approaching cars;
The slow-march played at night at the head of the association,
They go to guard some corpse the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.

I hear the violincello or man's heart's complaint,
And hear the keyed cornet or else the echo of sunset.

I hear the chorus it is a grand-opera this indeed is music!

Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass (33)

Swift wind! Space! My Soul! Now I know it is true what I guessed at;
 What I guessed when I loafed on the grass,
 What I guessed while I lay alone in my bed and again as I walked the beach
 under
 the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me I travel I sail my elbows rest in the
 sea-gaps,
 I skirt the sierras my palms cover continents,
 I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses in log-huts, or camping with lumbermen,
 Along the ruts of the turnpike along the dry gulch and rivulet bed,
 Hoeing my onion-patch, and rows of carrots and parsnips crossing
 savannas . . .
 trailing in forests,
 Prospecting gold-digging girdling the trees of a new purchase,
 Scorched ankle-deep by the hot sand hauling my boat down the shallow river;
 Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead where the buck turns
 furiously at the hunter,
 Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock where the otter is
 feeding on fish,
 Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,
 Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey where the beaver pats
 the mud with his paddle-tail . . .
 Scaling mountains pulling myself cautiously up holding on by low
 scragged limbs,
 Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush;
 Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheatlot,
 Where the bat flies in the July eve where the great goldbug drops through the
 dark;
 Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance;
 Upon a door-step upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,
 Upon the race-course, or enjoying pic-nics or jigs or a good game of base-ball,
 At he-festivals with blackguard jibes and ironical license and bull-dances and
 drinking and
 laughter,
 At the cider-mill, tasting the sweet of the brown squash sucking the juice
 through a straw,
 At apple-pealings, wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find,
 At musters and beach-parties and friendly bees and huskings and house-raisings;
 Where the mockingbird sounds his delicious gurgles, and cackles and screams and
 weeps . . .

Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass (Ending)

The past and present wilt . . . I have filled them and emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! Here you . . . what have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,
Talk honestly, for no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then . . . I contradict myself;
I am large . . . I contain multitudes.

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me . . . he complains of my gab and my
loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed . . . I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadowed wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air . . . I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop some where waiting for you

Walt Whitman

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Yeats loved the poetry of William Blake and celebrated Blake's genius and mystic powers of prophesy and poetic insight. Yeats believed in the power of poetry as a music that united us to ancient ideas and feelings. Feelings and ideas that we have forgotten or repressed or lost. His poems are soaked in mythology—ancient Greek and Celtic mythology from his home of Ireland.

In 'Song of Wandering Angus,' the speaker imagines going on a fishing journey only to capture a magical being. She suddenly escapes and now we realise the speaker is an old man lost in memories of this magical moment. To summarise this poem does it no justice. It is so simple, but the language is magical and symbolic without being opaque or complex. It creates an atmosphere of magic and wonder.

The theme of love and rejection, in fact, continues in Yeats' poems. 'When You Are Old' invites a woman, now old, to find a book of his poems to find out how he felt about her. In the wondrous final lines, Love, now personified, runs in the mountains and hides his face—perhaps out of shame, perhaps out of fear. In 'She Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven,' Yeats amplifies the descriptive power of language to paint the sky as series of woven carpets; he switches the image to suggest that he cannot afford these clothes, so his lover has been walking on his dreams. He tells her to please walk softly.

It isn't only romantic tones that dominate Yeats. In 'Leda and the Swan,' Yeats retells the famous story of Zeus raping a woman. The rape led to the birth of Helen, the woman whose theft caused the Trojan War. Yeats doesn't show a charming Zeus seducing a woman with lies and promises. He imagines the moment of sheer and brutal violence. He imagines the moment of brutality as one that accelerates time and brings about so much death and destruction.

Here, Yeats can use mythology to suggest larger patterns of violence.

This imagery of death and destruction and 'things falling apart' emerges from 'The Second Coming.' It is the end of the world and everything comes apart. Yeats slowly accumulates the details of a world come undone; one where Christian imagery coincides with the imagery of mythology. The poem ends with a monstrous Sphinx comes to life and is ready to bring the world to its end. The imagery is haunting and fantastic. Yeats can manage to create romance and beauty or horror and violence in poetry of multiple layers and meaning.

- **How does Yeats make use of Celtic, Ancient Greek, Egyptian and Christian religion and mythology to explore multiple meanings?**
- **How does Yeats use imagery to suggest his feelings of longing, desire, love and loss?**

Song of Wandering Angus

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire a-flame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done,
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

William Butler Yeats

When You Are Old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
 And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
 And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
 Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
 And loved your beauty with love false or true,
 But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
 And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
 Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
 And paced upon the mountains overhead
 And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

William Butler Yeats

She Wishes For The Clothes Of Heaven

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
 Enwrought with golden and silver light,
 The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
 Of night and light and the half light,
 I would spread the cloths under your feet:
 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

Leda and the Swan

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

 Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

William Butler Yeats

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

William Butler Yeats

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

By all accounts, Emily Dickinson was a quiet, reserved and private person. She was not part of a larger poetic world, like, say Yeats or Blake was. While she had some of her poems printed, many of the ones we have are from her private books, diaries and even transcribed from the envelopes and scrapes of paper. Her poems are small, unusual, original, exciting and unexpected.

In 'We Like March,' she personifies the Month and dresses him in 'purple shoes' and dries up the mud. In 'Bee! I'm expecting you!' she imagines a Fly writing a Bee; he misses her and wants her to come back. These silly fragments are simple, exciting and fresh. They have a child's creativity and energy. But there is darkness and death in Dickinson too. For every fly, there is a frog lurking. Pay attention and you will find this hidden meanings.

In 'I heard a Fly Buzz,' we get a sense of her innovative and exciting use of the dash ('—'). She litters them in her poems and they act as a brake, a stop, a disruption to the thought process. Here she hears a fly—when she was dead. This impossibility facilitates the speaker to imagine her death and being distracted from it by a fly. In thinking about death and thinking about simple, impossible things, Dickinson finds a new way of thinking about and experiencing the world.

'My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun' a metaphor gets carried away and we hear about the life of a Gun. She outlines her love and care, closeness and intimacy with the owner. But again, death is close by always. In 'Because I could not stop for Death,' the personified chauffeur picks the speaker up in his carriage to take her away. He is polite and formal and what seems like a simple journey also has the haunting image of horses' heads gesturing to 'Eternity.' Dickinson's fixation on death, her halting thought process, her energy and childish playful mind, make her a poet of unique power and complexity. However, like Blake, she seems simultaneously simple and complex.

- **How does Dickinson use the dash in similar or different ways to Whitman's use of the ellipses?**
- **Dickinson seems to have her own mythology so, unlike Yeats, she doesn't use older traditions. How does Dickinson get the reader to accept the worlds she creates?**
- **How does Dickinson maintain a playful energy and a fixation on death at the same time?**

We Like March

We like March, his shoes are purple,
 He is new and high;
 Makes he mud for dog and peddler,
 Makes he forest dry;
 Knows the adder's tongue his coming,
 And begets her spot.
 Stands the sun so close and mighty
 That our minds are hot.
 News is he of all the others;
 Bold it were to die
 With the blue-birds buccaneering
 On his British sky.

Emily Dickinson

Bee! I'm Expecting you!

Bee! I'm expecting you!
 Was saying Yesterday
 To Somebody you know
 That you were due—

The Frogs got Home last Week—
 Are settled, and at work—
 Birds, mostly back—
 The Clover warm and thick—

You'll get my Letter by
 The seventeenth; Reply
 Or better, be with me—
 Yours, Fly.

Emily Dickinson

I Heard a Fly Buzz

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset - when the King
Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable - and then it was
There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -
Between the light - and me -
And then the Windows failed - and then
I could not see to see -

Emily Dickinson

My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun

My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun -
 In Corners - till a Day
 The Owner passed - identified -
 And carried Me away -

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods -
 And now We hunt the Doe -
 And every time I speak for Him
 The Mountains straight reply -

And do I smile, such cordial light
 Upon the Valley glow -
 It is as a Vesuvian face
 Had let it's pleasure through -

And when at Night - Our good Day done -
 I guard My Master's Head -
 'Tis better than the Eider Duck's
 Deep Pillow - to have shared -

To foe of His - I'm deadly foe -
 None stir the second time -
 On whom I lay a Yellow Eye -
 Or an emphatic Thumb -

Though I than He - may longer live
 He longer must - than I -
 For I have but the power to kill,
 Without - the power to die -

Emily Dickinson

The Wind Took Up the Northern Things

The Wind took up the Northern Things
And piled them in the south -
Then gave the East unto the West
And opening his mouth

The four Divisions of the Earth
Did make as to devour
While everything to corners slunk
Behind the awful power -

The Wind - unto his Chambers went
And nature ventured out -
Her subjects scattered into place
Her systems ranged about

Again the smoke from Dwellings rose
The Day abroad was heard -
How intimate, a Tempest past
The Transport of the Bird -

Emily Dickinson

A Bird Came Down the Walk

A Bird, came down the Walk -
He did not know I saw -
He bit an Angle Worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass -
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass -

He glanced with rapid eyes,
That hurried all abroad -
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,
He stirred his Velvet Head. -

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers,
And rowed him softer Home -

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,
Leap, plashless as they swim.

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death –
 He kindly stopped for me –
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
 At Recess – in the Ring –
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
 We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –
 The Dews drew quivering and Chill –
 For only Gossamer, my Gown –
 My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed
 A Swelling of the Ground –
 The Roof was scarcely visible –
 The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
 Feels shorter than the Day
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads
 Were toward Eternity –

Emily Dickinson

The last Night that She lived

The last Night that She lived
 It was a Common Night
 Except the Dying—this to Us
 Made Nature different

We noticed smallest things—
 Things overlooked before
 By this great light upon our Minds
 Italicized—as 'twere.

As We went out and in
 Between Her final Room
 And Rooms where Those to be alive
 Tomorrow were, a Blame

That Others could exist
 While She must finish quite
 A Jealousy for Her arose
 So nearly infinite—

We waited while She passed—
 It was a narrow time—
 Too jostled were Our Souls to speak
 At length the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot—
 Then lightly as a Reed
 Bent to the Water, struggled scarce—
 Consented, and was dead—

And We—We placed the Hair—
 And drew the Head erect—
 And then an awful leisure was
 Belief to regulate—

Emily Dickinson