"We don’t read and write poetry because it’s cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."
Prescribed Poems

**FIRST TERM**

REMEMBER – CHRISTINA ROSETTI
FIRST DAY AFTER THE WAR – MAZISI KUNENE
THE ZULU GIRL – ROY CAMPBELL
MOTHO KE MOHTO KA – JEREMY CRONIN

**SECOND TERM**

FUNERAL BLUES – WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN
A HARD FROST – CECIL DAY- LEWIS
AN AFRICA THUNDERSTORM – DAVID RUBADIRI
AN AFRICAN ELEGY – BEN OKRI

**THIRD TERM**

SOMEWHERE I HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED – E. E. CUMMINGS
THE GARDEN OF LOVE – WILLIAM BLAKE
FELIX RANALD – GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
VULTURES – CHINUA ACHEBE
Remember
Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)
Victorian Poet

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

It's a command/order. Summarizes the poems major theme—remembrance. Woman is thinking about her death + doesn't want her beloved to forget her. This poem starts off depressing with sad content but then becomes a poem that celebrates life. Remembrance—a way of keeping someone metaphorically alive.

Theme: Death, remembrance, relinquishment, forgiveness.

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject) Mournful then Cheerful

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text) Sad then peaceful

FORM
Petrarchan/Italian Sonnet (14 lines)
Rhyme Scheme: ABBA / ABBA / CDD / ECE

Sound Devices
Long syllables force a slow, mournful reading of the sonnet.
Contrasted by the pace of L 9 & 13 which is more upbeat + positive.

Vestige — remnant

Anaphora: 'remember'
Euphemisms/Metaphor: 'gone away' death 'silent land' afterlife
Physical presence + life Death eliminates Not forever so death seems less permanent

Leftover Life/defies death

Juxtaposed

Focuses on memories of moments spent together

Sickness

Permission to let go; memories and sorrow results in a smile which shows the speaker lives positively after the passing

Tone shift L 9
Finds a way to move forward

Metaphor for death

Elegiac

Octave: Looks back and clings to memories (memories + remembering)

Sestet: seeks to find a way forward (forgetting + moving forward)

Ambiguity

Grammar

You tell me of our future that you plann'd:

She deals with being forgotten as her lover will remain happy. Change of heart symbolizes speaker's love. She sacrifices her memory—metaphorically kills herself.

'you' + 'our' - addressing a loved one—letter written after their death

'you' + 'our' - addressing a loved one—letter written after their death

Tone shift L 9 Finds a way to move forward

Sicknes

Sickness

Permission to let go; memories and sorrow results in a smile which shows the speaker lives positively after the passing
Remember – Christina Rossetti

1) Provide a different euphemism that Rossetti could have used in place of ‘gone away’ (line 1).

2) Think of a euphemism that is commonly used in modern life to substitute for Rossetti’s ‘silent land’ (line 2). Explore the connotation of the expression.

3) Line 4 seems to suggest that the speaker is unable to make up her mind. What underlying emotion might cause her to behave this way?

4) Consider the poet’s choice of word ‘corruption’ in line 11. What meaning do you think is intended in this context.

5) Which line of the poem shows that the couple expected to share many years of life together?

6) What does ‘to counsel’ (line 8) mean in the context of the poem?

7) What can you infer about the character of the speaker’s beloved? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

8) How does the form of the poem contribute to its content?

9) Which of the following descriptions fits the speaker ‘egocentric’, ‘self-sacrificing’ or ‘thoughtful’? Use evidence from the poem to motivate your choice.
First Day After the War
Mazisi Kunene (1930–2006)
Political/Activist/Protest

Mazisi Kunene wrote much of his poetry in South Africa, in the time of apartheid, a period in which black people were discriminated against and oppressed. His poem describes the joy that people felt at the ending of this system of government. The poem lists a number of ways in which the people celebrate the news. Notice the variety of the actions and the jubilation this shows. The news is so wonderful that we see how people of all types celebrate together.

We heard the songs of a wedding party.
We saw a soft light
Coiling round the young blades of grass
At first we hesitated, then we saw her footprints,
Her face emerged, then her eyes of freedom!
She woke us up with a smile saying,
'What day is this that comes so suddenly?'
We said, 'It is the first day after the war.'
Then without waiting we ran to the open space
Ululating to the mountains and the pathways
Calling people from all the circles of the earth.
We shook up the old man demanding a festival.
We asked for all the first fruits of the season
We held hands with a stranger
We shouted across the waterfalls
People came from all lands
It was the first day of peace.
We saw our Ancestors travelling tall on the horizon.

Glossary
Coiling — form spirals
Ululating — wailing/howling

Tone: (Author’s attitude or feelings about the subject)
Energetic

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Joyful

Theme:
Triumphs over oppression

Form:
Free verse
Repetitive form of the line structure (l12-15)
Implying the overwhelming joy prompted an unrestrained physical response and people responded impulsively

Poetic Devices
Simple/effective diction to capture the scene adds spontaneous nature of excitement displayed—actions speak for themselves

Begins with reference to songs

creates an image of contained optimism + hope. Viewers aren't sure to believe what the light may indicate.

This uncertainty in L4 shows hesitation until the truth emerges in L5 + the realisation sets in.

Onomatopoeia

Anaphora: Poem lists no. of ways people celebrate the end of apartheid. Variety of actions & jubilation L12-15

people’s enthusiasm competing with nature’s music

Alliteration: alerts the reader to the significant moment while this device in the final line lends the ancestors renewed stature as they are ‘traveling tall’ in response to the event.
First Day After the War - Mazisi Kunene

1) Which senses does Kunene use in this poem?
2) Think about the connotations of the word ‘coiling’ (line 3). Do you think it is intended to be understood as a positive image in this context?
3) Consider the pronoun ‘her’ in line 4. How could this be interpreted in an abstract way?
4) How does Kunene convey the joy of the time?
5) What clues suggest the rural setting of the poem? Quote from the poem to support your answer.
6) Why do you think the people ‘ran to the open space’ (line 9)?
7) Discuss the possible literal and figurative meanings of the ‘footprints’ (line 4) and the ‘young blades’ (line 3).
8) What does the expression ‘shook up’ (line 12) mean?
9) How do you interpret it in this context?
10) Who might the ‘old man’ (line 12) be?
11) Critically comment on the effectiveness of the final line of Kunene’s poem.
The Zulu Girl
Roy Campbell (1901–1957)
Modern/South African Poet

Setting: Description of a hot landscape where labourers work. Simply an observation of a Zulu woman feeding her child. Closer it becomes clear it’s about oppression of women.

Form:
Regulated form
5 stanzas with 4 lines with same rhyme pattern = 5 quatrains
Stanzas relate because of pattern
Rhyme scheme: ABAB / CDCD / EFDE / GHGH / IJI

Tone: (Author’s attitude or feelings about the subject)
Serious

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Foreboding

Theme: Triumph over exploitation,pathetic recreation of hardship of endurance of SA people

Glossary
Acres—remnant
Smoulder—burn slowly w/o flames
Hoe—remnant
Prowl—remnant
Languor’s—tenderness
Imbibes—absorb/soak up
Unquenched—unsatisfied
Unsmotherable—inextinguishable/cant put out
Ferocity—fierceness
Looms—rises before

Example:
1. When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder
2. Down where the sweating gang its labour plies
3. A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder
4. Unslings her child tormented by flies
5. She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled
6. By the thorn-tree: purpled with the blood of ticks,
7. While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled
8. Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks
9. His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,
10. Tugs like a puppy, groaning as he feels;
11. Through his frail nerves her own deep languor’s ripple
12. Like a broad river sighing through the reeds.
13. Yet in that drowsy stream his flesh imbibes
14. And old unquenched, unsmotherable heat
15. The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,
16. The sullen dignity of their defeat.
17. Her body looms above him like a hill
18. Within whose shade a village lies at rest,
19. Or the first cloud so tembly and still
20. That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

Words relating to heat:
→ Sun
→ Hot
→ Red
→ Smoulder
→ Sweating
→ Unquenched

Land is almost to hot to bear + could burst into flames.

Men = Culture
Women = Nature
The Zulu Girl – Roy Campbell

1) Where is the setting of the poem?

2) What is the job that the girl is doing?

3) What does the word ‘flings’ (line 3) suggest about her attitude?

4) What are the connotations of ‘prowl’ (line 8)?

5) Identify the comparisons used in the third stanza.

6) What is being compared to what?

7) Are these comparisons effective?

8) Which word in the fourth stanza alerts the reader to a change in mood?

9) What does the inclusion of the colour ‘red’ in line 1 tell us about the scene?

10) List all the words in the poem that suggest heat, and provide short definition of each of them.

11) What is your understanding of ‘curbed ferocity’, and who are the ‘beaten tribes’ (line 15)?

12) Explain what the child ‘imbibes’ (line 13) on both a literal and figurative level.

13) Explore how the poet uses tone in the poem. Note how and where it changes over the course of the poem, and quote from the poem to give substance to your response.
Motho ke Motho ka Batho Babang (A Person is a Person Because of Other People)  
Jeremy Cronin (1949-)

Political/Activist/Protest

Poem captures scene of one prisoner communicating with another discreetly under watchful eye of a warder. Cleverness shown maintaining human contact communicating with sign language in defiance of the deprivation of imprisonment. Illustrates truth about the human condition. Cruelty of isolation as a form of punishment and favoured treatment of political prisoners.

1. By holding my mirror out of the window I see
2. Clear to the end of the passage.
3. There's a person down there.
4. A prisoner polishing a doorhandle.
5. In the mirror I see him see
6. My face in the mirror,
7. I see the fingertips of his free hand
8. Bunch together, as if to make
9. An object the size of a badge
10. Which travels up to his forehead
11. The place of an imaginary cap.
12. (This means: A warder.)
13. Two fingers are extended in a vee
14. And wiggle like two antennae.
15. (He's being watched.)
16. A finger of his free hand makes a watch-hand's arc
17. On the wrist of his polishing arm without
18. Disrupting the slow-slow rhythm of his work.
19. (Later. Maybe, later we can speak.)

Translation in brackets
Format of this translation/explanation is varied as the poem progresses
1st insertion announces itself as an explanation
2nd L15
3rd L19 give explanations directly

Poetic Devices:
Punctuation + typography (the way it's printed/set-out) to convey the poet's message
Use of italics for different purposes as well as the use of dashes. The use of italics in line 20 + 22 indicate direct speech.
Use of present tense - content feels immediate
Last stages - feels as if we're sharing the cell + watching signals with the speaker.

Sound Devices:
Ironic - w/o any formal/sound devices centred on sound + lack of it.

Time-wasting chores
Link to guard

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Thoughtful

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
Intimate

Theme: Resistance Communication

Form: Visual layout — narrative presented on the left
Translation in brackets

Last insertions lose the brackets as if the reader has now learned the poem's language + no longer needs them

1. Hey! Wat maak jy daar?
2. -a voice from around the corner.
4. He turns his back to me, now watch
5. His free hand, the talkative one,
6. Slips quietly behind
7. -Strength brother, it says.
8. In my mirror,
9. A black fist.

Glossary
Wat maak hy daar? — what is he doing there?
Baas — boss
Ubuntu — humanity towards others/showing compassion towards people
1) How many languages are used in this poem? Name them.
2) What is the term given to the African philosophy of the title?
3) Replicate the hand-signals described in the poem.
4) Notice Cronin’s use of brackets, italics and line arrangement to describe the incident. How does this help the reader to understand the poem?
5) Provide an explanation for the prisoners’ use of the mirror.
6) Find evidence in the poem that the prisoners are kept occupied with time-wasting chores.
7) Explain the link between an ‘imaginary cap’ (line 11) and a guard
8) Discuss Cronin’s use of different languages in the poem.
9) The poem is written in an informal style. How does the style contribute to the meaning of the poem?
10) This poem illustrates truths about the human condition. Explore how the poem shows the cruelty of isolation as a form of punishment, and why it was a favoured treatment of political prisoners.
11) Assess whether the poem is an appropriate demonstration of the concept Ubuntu.
Funeral Blues

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907–1973)

Modern/Political Poet

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

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

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

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

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
Harsh/Serious

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Sadness/empathy

Theme: Death + grief
Speaker wants the world to come to an end

Form:
Elegiac: resembling an elegy (expressing sorrow)
4 quatrains (4 stanzas of 4 lines)
Rhyme scheme: AABB/CCDD/EEFF/GGHH
Iambic pentameter

Expression of grief and heartache.
He describes his pain and links his overwhelming emotion of despair to world around him.

Reference to 'clocks'; 'telephone'; 'dog' 'piano's' examines the mourner's reaction to his immediate domestic surroundings; the lens of loss.

Poem then expands the surroundings to the public arena with 'aeroplane' 'doves' 'traffic policemen'

L8 finally ends in the universal sphere of 'stars' 'moon' 'sun' 'ocean' 'wood'

3rd stanza describes their relationship + gives a personal account of what the dead man meant to the speaker

Hyperbole: exaggeration

Harsh comments
Speaker is forceful + angry
Time + communication stopped
Mourners walking carrying the coffin
No problem—extends it to pianos
Not opposed to the drum—blues music—solemn—relates to the title

More demands: wants pigeons to be dressed well—acknowledgement of passing

This person gave the speaker direction, filled his day and it was a joy conversing with him.

Elegy—usually has some hope for the future/small moment of optimism
Not with this poem, there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

Glossary
Muffled—wrapped to deaden the sound
Crepe—light crinkled fabric
Dismantle—take apart
Blues—American word for a sad song
Lament—to express grief/mourn

Stanzas Contrasting Themes
Public vs. private (Stanza 1+2)
Intimate vs. Distant (Stanza 3+4)

Most of his poems focus on social ills + concern with the working of the mind.
Funeral Blues – Wystan Hugh Auden

1) Notice the plea for certain actions to take place in the first stanza.
2) Why would someone want to 'stop all the clocks' (line 1)?
3) Identify all the references to sound.
4) Why would the speaker want these sounds to stop?
5) Why do you think capital letters have been used in 'He is Dead' (line 6)?
6) Consider the implications of the description 'He was my North, my South, my East and West' (line 9).
7) Link the verbs in the final stanza to their objects: 'out out' (line 13), 'pack up', 'dismantle' (line 14), 'Pour away' and 'sweep' (line 15). In what way are all these verbs appropriate?
8) State the possible meanings of the word 'Blues' in the title, and relate this to the poem itself.
9) Identify the color contrast found in the second stanza, and show how this reflects the speaker's mood.
10) Discuss the nature of the relationship described in the third stanza, and comment on how this information is conveyed.
11) Critically evaluate the impact of this poem as an expression of loss and grief. Support your response with evidence from the poem.
A Hard Frost

Cecil Day-Lewis (1904 – 1972)

Romantic/Modern

Describes the appearance of a hard frost that formed overnight. Patterns of frost form on glass + how it sparkles in morning sunlight.

Tone: (Author’s attitude or feelings about the subject)
Whimsical

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Meant to

Glossary
Changeling — something exchanged secretly
Precocious — developed earlier than usual
Catkin — spiky flower
Maydrift — remnant
Elms — remnant
Amorphous — w/o a form
Mockery — absurd imitation
Disconsolate — w/o comfort/ unhappily
Aconite — flower similar to buttercup
Snowdrop — drooping white flower
Flounce — impatient movement
Filigree — ornamental + delicate
Clods — lumps of earth
Unclenches — loosens

Theme:
Focuses on the tension between appearance + reality

Form:
2 stanzas — similar length
No traditional rhyme scheme + lines + stanza arrangement set up to support content

Sound Devices
No overt reference to sound.

A frost came in the night and stole my world
And left this changeling for it - a precocious image of spring, too brilliant to be true:
White lilac on the window-pane, each grass-blade furred like a catkin, maydrift loading the hedge.
The elms behind the house are elms no longer
But blossoms in crystal, stems of the mist
That hangs yet in the valley below, amorphous
As the blind tissue whence creation formed.
The sun looks out and the fields blaze with diamonds
Mockery spring, to lend this bridal gear
For a few hours to a raw country maid;
Then leave her all disconsolate with old fairings
Of aconite and snowdrop! No, not here
Amid this flounce and filigree of death
Is the real transformation scene in progress,
But deep below where frost
Worrying the stiff clods unclenches their grip on the seed and lets
the future breathe.

Speaker comments on how the world’s appearance has been altered by a layer of frost — so sudden it almost seems spring-like (opposite in fact)
Glitter + sparkle of reflected frost creates a bright image but the speaker admits this is too ‘brilliant to be true’.
Extended metaphor: compare the image of frost on a window to different features of spring.
Imagery suggests spring flowers + freshness of new growth ‘maydrift’.
Upheld despite the glittering beauty the appearance is deceiving. Accuses the frost of theft — stolen away expected scene + replace it with fake frost-given magical mystical powers in its ability to accomplish this transformation.
Oppose to this fake appearance of spring the ‘real’ spring is beginning to make itself felt unnoticeably underground
The heavy coating of frost would blanket the world in sharp silence + the brittle crispiness of this is implied in the mention of ‘crystal’ diamonds L7+10
Metaphor: comparing the white frost blanket to a wedding dress, contains quite a disapproving tone.
The wedding dress is being lent to a country maid for a few hours but she will be left terribly sad when she has to return it + resume her usual boring appearance.
Alliteration: suggests the disapproving tone of the speaker.
Personification: image of a contest of strength taking place beneath the ground where the earth is surrendering its frozen hold to the power of spring. This allows the seeds the chance to sprout and break out of the soil to promise future life to go.
A Hard Frost – Cecil Day-Lewis

1) What does the use of ‘brilliant’ (line 3) mean in this context?
2) How has the windowpane (line 4) been transformed?
3) Describe the altered appearance of the elm trees in your own words.
4) In what way is this scene a ‘mockery’ (line 11)?
5) From the context, deduce what the word ‘fairings’ (line 13) probably means.
6) Explain the comparison of frost to thief, used in the first line of the poem.
7) Name the plants mentioned in the first stanza that are used to describe this ‘spring’ scene.
8) Comment on the effect of the figure of speech used in the lines 11-14.
9) Explore how the poet uses punctuation to convey emotion in the poem.
10) Critically evaluate the poetic technique of the extended metaphor, and how it is used in this poem. How effective is it?
11) What might be the potential risks of using this technique? Use evidence from the poem to formulate your response.
An Africa Thunderstorm
David Rubadiri (1930– )
Post-modern/colonial/African Poet

From the west
Clouds come hurrying with the wind
Tumming sharply
Here and there
Like a plague of locusts
Whirling
Tossing things up on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.

Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back,
Gathering to perch on hills

The wind, whirlies
And trees bend to let it pass.

In the village
Screams of delighted children,
Toss and turn
In the din of the whirling wind.

Women,
Babies clinging on their backs
Dart about
In and out
Madly;
The wind whirlies
Whilst trees bend to let it pass.

Clothes wave like tattered flags
Flying off
To expose dangling breasts
As jagged binding flashes
Rumble, tremble and crack
Amidst the smell of fired smoke
And the pelting march of the storm.

Glossary
Sinister—evil/menacing
Din—loud noise
Pelting—rain falling fast + hard

Theme:

Tone: (Author’s attitude or feelings about the subject)
Outraged/fierce

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Chaos/distressed

Form:
Two parts which divide the content into the general and the specific.

Wind builds up 4 times (4 interwoven stanzas) like a main act in a plot.

The irregular no. of words on a line, with many single-word lines, captures the unpredictable progress of the wind and the accompanying clouds. This technique is also evident in the second part of the poem, where the frantic movement of the village women as they ‘Dart about’ (lines 22–24) is physically demonstrated by the line divisions.

Sound Devices:
This poem utilizes sound effectively. Much use is made of onomatopoeia as the wind is ‘whirling’ (lines 7 and 19) and it ‘whistles’ (lines 14 and 25). The noise in the village has the screams of children competing with ‘the din of whirling wind’ (line 19). As the storm gets closer, its imminent arrival is heralded by the onomatopoeia of the ‘Rumble, tremble, and crack’ (line 31) of the thunder, and the impact of lightning striking the earth.

Repetition L 14-15 + 25-26 Almost exactly the same; ‘And’ has been replaced with ‘Whilst’.

The poem ends with the storm breaking, but stops before it actually hits. The progress of the ‘pelting march of the storm’ (line 33) tells the reader that this storm cannot be stopped and will be a mighty one.

The description of the clouds (lines 12–13) makes the clouds reminiscent of some bird of prey waiting for the opportune moment to strike.

The path of the storm has not been diminished by the trees. In fact, the trees give way to allow it to progress unhindered.

The 3rd stanza continues its depiction of noise and movement as villagers anticipate the storm’s arrival. We notice how the children react with ‘Screams’ (line 17) of delight, possibly because of the thrill of potential danger. The women humbly attempt to prepare for the storm, although it seems that their efforts may be pointless as the ‘Clothes wave like tattered flags’ (line 27), completely at the mercy of the wind.

Tone: (Author’s attitude or feelings about the subject)
Outraged/fierce

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Chaos/distressed

The setting is in Africa.

Origin of storm identified from the west

Underlining the appearance and potentially destructive nature of the storm.

Makes room for transition of clouds as a passenger on wings of wind

L9 comparing the wind to a monster thrashing its tail about, emphasises the unpredictable nature of the storm, which adds to its danger.

The description of the clouds (lines 12–13) makes the clouds reminiscent of some bird of prey waiting for the opportune moment to strike.

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The 3rd stanza continues its depiction of noise and movement as villagers anticipate the storm’s arrival. We notice how the children react with ‘Screams’ (line 17) of delight, possibly because of the thrill of potential danger. The women humbly attempt to prepare for the storm, although it seems that their efforts may be pointless as the ‘Clothes wave like tattered flags’ (line 27), completely at the mercy of the wind.

The poem ends with the storm breaking, but stops before it actually hits. The progress of the ‘pelting march of the storm’ (line 33) tells the reader that this storm cannot be stopped and will be a mighty one.

The setting is in Africa.
An Africa Thunderstorm - David Rubadiri

1) How does the word ‘African’ in the title affect your expectations of the content of the poem?
2) Count the number of participles (words ending in ‘-ing’) used in line 1-9.
3) What effect does this have on the description of the scene.
4) What image does the line ‘Like a madman chasing nothing’ (line 9) produce?
5) Consider the connotations of the words ‘pregnant’ and ‘stately’ in the lines ‘Pregnant clouds/
   Ride stately on its back’ (lines 10-11).
6) Has the full ferocity of the storm arrived by the end of the poem? Explain your answer.
7) Compare the different reactions of the children and the adults in the village to the approaching storm.
8) Quote an image from the poem that suggests the danger and destructive qualities of the coming storm.
9) Contrast the different ways in which the wind and the clouds in the storm build up.
10) Does the speaker portray these elements as equally powerful?
11) Do their roles change as the storm approaches? Discuss fully, supporting your answer with evidence from the poem.
12) Comment on how the form of this poem enhances its content. Note the structure of the stanzas and lines, particularly.
13) Do you think the poem ends effectively? Should the speaker not have described the impact of the storm on the people and the village, or the storms aftermath? Evaluate the poet’s intentions in this poem, and say whether you believe they were effectively realized or not.
We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of Time.
We are precious.
And one day our suffering
Will turn into the wonders of the earth.

There are things that burn me now
Which turn golden when I am happy.
Do you see the mystery of our pain?
That we bear poverty
And are able to sing and dream sweet things.
And that we never curse the air when it is warm
Or the fruit when it tastes so good
Or the lights that bounce gently on the waters?

We bless things even in our pain.
We bless them in silence.
That is why our music is so sweet.
It makes the air remember.
There are secret miracles at work
That only Time will bring forth.
I too have heard the dead singing.

And they tell me that
This life is good
They tell me to live it gently
With fire and always with hope.
There is wonder here
And there is surprise
In everything the unseen moves.
The ocean is full of songs.
The sky is not an enemy.
Destiny is our friend.
An African Elegy – Ben Okri

1) What are your expectations of the poem after reading the title?
2) Pick out words that are positive in the first stanza, and then identify negative ones.
3) What is the overall effect, positive or negative?
4) What is the ‘mystery’ (line 8) referred to in the second stanza?
5) Why do you think ‘Time’ (lines 2 & 19) is written with a capital letter?
6) How can the ocean be full of songs (line 28)?
7) Make a list of all the positive things that Okri says about Africa and being African.
8) What do you think the speaker means by the line ‘We are precious’? (line 3)
9) Does the speaker respect the dead? What makes you say this?
10) How does the poet connect each negative aspect in the poem with something positive?
11) Explain how one can live life ‘gently/with fire’ (lines 23-24).
12) Do you think Okri is being overly idealistic, or do you agree with what he is saying about Africa and Africans? Motivate your answer.
somewhere i have never travelled

E. E. Cummings (1894 - 1962)

Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)
Soulful/Captivated

Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)
Hopeful/mysterious

Theme:
Travel/Man vs. natural world/love/power

Form:
No formal rhyme scheme
5 quatrains (5 stanzas of 4 lines)
Regular 4line stanzas + each deals with a new/separate point
Last stanza regular rhyme scheme: ABAB

Ideas are simple but the following makes the poem seem complicated:
Diserted syntax
Unusual punctuation
New words/slang

Poetic/Language Devices:
Idea of closing + opening occurs:
‘enclose’ (L3)
‘unclose’ (L5)
‘closed’ (L6)
‘open’ (L7)
‘close’ (L9)
‘shut’ (L10)
‘closes + opens’ (L17-18)

Uses run-on lines/enjambment. L7 skips over Content brackets to find its objects L8.

Imagery
Similes + vivid personification, capitalization ‘Spring’ L7 ‘Rain... small hands’ L20
→Man + nature in harmony
→Man as nature
→Women are usually associated with flowers
Natural world:
• Flowers
• Rain
• Seasons

Sound Devices:
Alliteration hard ‘c’ L15 power to words + draws readers attention
‘enclose’ L3 echoed by opposite ‘unclose’ L5 beloveds power—both actions are equally wondrous
Little rhyme used 1st 4 stanzas make use of rhyme in final stanza more noticeable

Never gave his poem titles so editors just used the first line.

Unconventional love poem—tries to understand beloved’s power over him. Admits her appeal is intangible + difficult to pin-point. Images of nature + concept of travel to develop his ideas. The speaker isn’t infatuated nor overcome by thos of violent passion. He believes love is transcendent/a religious conversion/connections us to something bigger/infinite + ultimately unknowable.
somewhere i have never travelled – E. E. Cummings

1) List all the errors or deviations present in the poem. What does the poet make these errors?

2) Think of synonyms for the word ‘frail’ (line 3). Find other words from the poem with similar meaning.

3) What would be a more usual word to use in place of ‘unclose’ (line 5)?

4) What is the effect of the poet’s invented word?

5) Identify the irony contained in the phrase ‘the power of your intense fragility’ (line 14).

6) Consider the theme of travel in the poem. Do you think the poet is referring to a physical journey to a foreign country? If not, what sort of travelling is he talking about?

7) List the elements of nature that are referred to in the poem.

8) Quote the word that tells us that the snow is not willfully destructive.

9) Identify the figure of speech in ‘though I have closed myself as fingers’ (line 6).

10) Explain how ‘fragility’ can have ‘power’ (line 14).

11) Describe the extent and ability of this power.

12) Describe the atmosphere or mood of this poem.

13) How does the poet create this mood?

14) Explore the metaphor of travel as it is used in the poem, and evaluate its effectiveness.

15) Comment critically on Cummings’ unusual use of punctuation and sentence structure.
I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not, writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

The speaker describes revisiting a place he remembers from his childhood, only to find that it has been taken over by a chapel or church. He is prevented from entering, so he attempts to explore the surrounding garden instead. The place which used to be full of 'sweet flowers' (line 8) has been filled with graves and tombstones instead. Additionally, patrolling priests, in dark robes, prevent him from experiencing or reliving his 'joys & desires' (line 12). He rebels against the idea of original sin and believes that love can't be sanctioned by religion.

Various interpretations of the poem:
- The Ten Commandments
- Institutionalized religion destroyed the garden of love
- Use of punctuation to add emphasis to his content: L1 + 7; 3+5 are capitalised 'special place' 'small church' which underlines the importance of its position to the speaker.
- Tenses= L2 + L8 in the past suggests the passage of time.
- Figuratively—this experience amounts to a sudden realisation of what has been in front of the speaker for some time, but he was unable to 'see' the reality clearly before.

Contrasts:
- Green vs. Black
- Flowers vs. Graves/Tombstones
- Flowers vs. Thomy Briars
- Playing freely vs. priests doing rounds
- Nature vs. man-made objects
- Growth vs. lifelessness (death)
- Softness/tenderness vs. hardness
- Gentleness vs. pain
- Light vs. dark
- Freedom vs. Restriction

Diction = simple + straightforward , capturing natural expression of speakers experience. Innuedo is apparent as speaker doesn't express his anger, disappointment/outrage explicitly, but implies—L10-L12

Use of punctuation to add emphasis to his content: L1 + 7; 3+5 are capitalised 'special place' 'small church' which underlines the importance of its position to the speaker.

L 11 echoed — members of the church loom large in this place. Not a positive image/ speaker overtones black = threatening—act like guards/sentinels to keep out undesirables.
The Garden of Love — William Blake

1) Why do you think the ‘Garden of Love’ (line 1) is written with capital letters?
2) Why can the speaker not enter the ‘chapel’ (lines 3 + 5)?
3) How does the speaker feel about the presence of this chapel?
4) What has replaced the flowers in the ‘Garden of Love’ (lines 8-9)?
5) What do you understand by the expression ‘walking their rounds’ (line 11)?
6) How do we know that the speaker had positive memories of the place the poem describes?
7) What does the word ‘midst’ (line 3) mean in the context of the stanza?
8) The speaker seems to paint a negative picture of what the garden has become. Without changing the ‘facts’, discuss how a different impression could have been created.
9) Comment on the effectiveness of the description ‘binding with briars’ (line 12).
10) What view of organised religion could Blake be presenting in this poem? Find evidence in the poem to support your answer.
**Felix Randal**

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889)

**Victorian**

Ministering to Randall’s soul, developed a sense of compassion + connection with the dying man. Recalls him being a big fellow = too physically demanding job—shoeing large horses. Reflects on long illness + death of Felix Randal + comments on his own role (as priest) in caring for the dying man. More about Hopkins ministry. Ailments England 1885 cause of death

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**Theme:**
Religion & Nature

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**Form:**

Rhythm/Italian Sonnet

This sonnet consists of two a-b-a rhymed quatrains (the octave) followed by two rhymed c-c stanzas making up the sestet.

ABBA / ABBA / CDC / CDC

Each section has a particular function, allowing Hopkins to develop his theme.

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**Four fatal ailments:**

- Melancholy
- Phlegm
- Blood
- Bile

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**Sound Devices:**

Poem demands to be read aloud. The rhythm of pauses and flow is made clear by the punctuation and word order.

In the first line, three points are made, separated by the commas and the question mark. The use of alliteration in ‘hardy-handsome’ (line 2), ‘reason rambled’ (line 3) and ‘Fatal four’ (line 4) not only increases the impact of the words due to their sound, but also helps to carry the meaning of these words.

The final two lines of the poem create a strong rhythm as the short phrases ‘random grim forge’, ‘powerful amidst peers’ (line 13), ‘great grey drayhorse’ and ‘bright and battering sandal’ (line 14) balance each other and cumulatively build the image of strength.

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**Poetic Devices:**

A notable feature of this sonnet is the shift in tone. The opening line comes across as matter-of-fact, whereas the sestet provides a stark contrast as the raw feelings of the speaker become clear. The tone changes to one of loss and grief.

Hopkins uses his structure to establish some distinct contrasts. He shows us the strapping healthy Randals’ + unlikeable Death + boisterous Life—productive, lively Death—weak, cursing + unlikeable Hopkins own disenchantment with his vocation.
1) What does a farrier do?
2) Identify the tone of the first line. How is the speaker feeling?
3) What does it mean to ‘pine’? what is the effect of the repetition ‘pining, pining’ (line 3)?
4) What do you think caused the death of Felix Randal? What ailments were common in England in 1885?
5) Explain the reference to ‘Being anointed’ (line 6).
6) Pick out the words and phrases from lines 9-11 that show the speaker’s emotional reaction to the death of Felix Randal.
7) Quote the phrase from the poem that tells us of the speaker’s belief that Felix Randal’s soul had been saved.
8) Relate the physical decline of Felix Randal.
9) Discuss the connotations of the word ‘mould’ (line 2) and its application in this context.
10) Comment on the poet’s use of tone in the poem. Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
Vultures

Chinua Achebe (1930–2013)

African Poet/Author

The poem begins with a description of the vultures that makes them seem repulsive and gory. However, they are also portrayed as showing affection, which only makes their behaviour more revolting.

Vulture + Commandant comparison

The second section of the poem describes the Commandant of Belsen, which was a Nazi concentration camp where thousands of Jewish people were murdered and whose bodies burned during World War II. As with the vultures, the Commandant's love for his family makes his evil deeds in being responsible for thousands of deaths seem even worse.

The description of the vultures is in the past tense, while the Belsen Commandant is described in the present tense. This seems to suggest that evil is always present. The use of 'perpetuity' (line 50) reinforces this idea.

Of course there is a huge difference between the behaviour of the vultures and that of the Nazis. The vultures perform a vital ecological service, and act on instinct. The humans, who have the ability to make moral decisions, are where the real evil resides.

The shift to focus on human behaviour in the second section of the poem is even more disturbing. The jarring images of the Commandant, with 'fumes of human roast clinging' (line 38) which was a Nazi concentration camp where thousands of Jewish people were murdered and whose bodies burned during World War II, then buys a chocolate for his tender offspring (line 38) who is alarming and makes the reader feel uncomfortable.
Vultures—Chinua Achebe

1) What is your emotive response when you think of a vulture?
2) Why do you think you respond in this way?
3) What mood is established in the opening lines of the poem? How is this achieved?
4) Identify words and expressions in these lines that have a negative impact on the reader. Are there any words with positive connotations? List them.
5) How does the setting of the commentary lines 22-29 link to the vulture scene?
6) What is the effect of the ellipsis in line 30?
7) What does ‘Belsen’ (line 30) refer to?
8) The poet allows for two options in the final section of the poem (lines 41-51) what are they?
9) What does the words ‘nestled’ (line 7) mean?
10) Is the ‘bashed-in’ head (line 9) of the vulture meant to be understood literally/figuratively? Explain your answer.
11) The word ‘harbingers’ (line 3) is often used in the expression ‘harbingers doom’. How does the inversion of this expression link to the message of the poem?
12) The poet seems to be drawing a parallel between the vulture and the Commandant at Belsen. Do you think that this is an appropriate comparison? Discuss.
13) Critically discuss the concept of evil as explored by Achebe in this poem. Can an animal be considered evil? Do you agree with Achebe’s comment on human nature?