

The Color of Beauty in the Darkness – Using Poetry and Art to Create a Visual Picture of Your World

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Rationale

Students live in a world with beauty and color, yet it can be distorted by visions of sorrow and hurt. Young writers should be given an outlet to discuss the darkness or unpleasantness in their world. Writing can be an effective outlet to show creativity when young students are trying to describe things they see in darkness, their own world that no one sees or understands, and the beauty or happiness in that same world. If students are able to create their own writing that relates to their adversities, then it is a creation that is personal. It is something a child can be proud of. With this unit students will be able to see how past poets have written compelling works that give a poetic insight into their personal worlds, the world as they see it. In turn, students will be able to do the same rather in their own unique way. The idea is that students will learn about poetry that uses imagery relating to nature and self-awareness and the presence of form. Students will then create poetry and present variations of it based on an environment they have a connection with and an environment other students can relate to.

We all come from diverse backgrounds and in my teaching experience I have learned that children often shelter their feelings and their emotions. Over the years I have made it a goal to help children bring to light their situations through writing and sharing. Initially it is not easy for them. Over time, most students become open about their personal experiences, living situations, parents and issues they have socially. The next problem I see in young children is that they grow up in an environment they don't completely understand. They see it as just the world they live in. I want to encourage students to take notice of their everyday environments and see the beauty that surrounds them. The big question is: How can students discuss the various situations they encounter at home, school, with friends or in the community (good and bad) and use art and creative writing to express the darkness and beauty that surrounds them? I want to call this "The Color of Beauty in the Darkness".

By reading poems by well-known poets such as William Carlos Williams,

Langston Hughes, Ezra Pound, Walt Whitman, H.D., Gwendolyn Brooks, Emily Dickinson and others, students will be able to understand how famous poets express themselves through writing figuratively. They will visualize the images in the poetry and will be able to relate this style to their own writings, drawings and creations. We will be able to see the students' perception of life as it *is* creating something that is very tangible. These authors aforementioned exemplify the use of imagery in their writings. This unit focuses on two types of poems: poems about images in nature and images of self-awareness. I choose these two types of poetry because there is beauty in nature and there is an equal amount of beauty in the realization and discovery of self. If one cannot see beauty in themselves, they cannot fully appreciate the beauty surrounding them.

In the middle-school English classroom, students will enjoy reading these poems, as well as other stories, which they can relate to and that they can visualize. Reading the poems of Williams and H.D., students will see how these poets use images of nature juxtaposed with a color contrast. When reading the poems by Hughes and Brooks, students will see how these poets use images and figurative language to create poems of self-awareness or lack thereof. By using the readings of Whitman and Pound, students will be able to see how poems use images that are tangible. They will be able to compare the two poets: while Whitman's poems are lengthy, Pound's poems are short and get quickly to the point.

Children have a lot to say. My students are at the age where they are not only trying to figure out what kind of person they are, but also what they see around them. They want to understand the dichotomy of what they should and should not expect, between what's right and wrong and between what they should and should not feel towards others and their existence. They are rationalizing their relationships, ending old ones, and creating new ones. It is not easy starting at a new school, being in middle school, or being a sixth-grade student. Once students have become acclimated to this new situation (usually toward mid-year) they will be able to use what they have learned throughout the year to apply it to personal experiences. This helps students get a better understanding of themselves and for them to have an appreciation for the environment that surrounds them. They can learn to become more in tune with the environment and having an appreciation for the things they cannot change. This appreciation should not be confused with accepting things; all children should understand they have the power to change their situations in their own future.

Many of the students I teach are reluctant readers and writers; therefore, their skills in these areas are deficient and oftentimes reading and writing is unexciting to them. This unit is designed to help these students become more engaged in reading and writing. Students can begin to take these images they see and personal feelings they feel and turn them into something carefully crafted to share with others.

In reading literature they can relate to and visualize, students will not only be able to connect with the poems; they will also be able to utilize valuable reading strategies while

doing so. Students can develop an appreciation of literature instead of dismissing most things that come their way because they will apply it to their own lives and experiences.

This unit is designed for students of varying reading levels and is inherently differentiated through the activities that supplement each reading. A brief description of the poems to be used follows:

The Rose That Grew From Concrete is a poem written by Tupac Shakur. It is an autobiographical poem that he wrote about himself being able to grow and become successful despite his obstacles.

Sea Rose is a poem written by H.D. This poem focuses on a rose that some would consider less desirable because of it looks and smells, very much in contrast from what most would consider beautiful. The roses attributes make it an object of beauty even though it was just tossed in the sand.

Truth is a poem written by Gwendolyn Brooks. This poem uses the sun as a metaphor for the truth and the shade and shelter and the unawareness or the ignorance that people have about the truth. In this poem, the speaker is saying how the truth can hurt and how people continue to run and hide from the truth. The sun is the light (truth) for a dark world (ignorance).

Hope is the Thing With Feathers is a poem written by Emily Dickinson. This poem is one of my favorites that I do believe my students will love and relate to. In this poem, the speaker metaphorically calls “hope” a “bird” – “the thing with feathers”. Hope is taken on a journey and doesn’t ask a lot, just that you believe in “hope”.

April Rain Song, As I Grew Older, In Time of Silver Rain, and ***Helen Keller*** are poems written by Langston Hughes.

- ***April Rain Song*** is a poem about how the rain is a softness that can give a pleasurable feeling. Rain is something we take for granted and, oftentimes, can be considered a nuisance; but let’s not take it for granted and we should see it and use it for its beauty.
- ***As I Grew Older*** is a poem where the speaker is talking about how he used to dream and how he had dreams until a darkness (a wall that rose to the sky) took over his light (his dreams).
- ***In Time of Silver Rain*** is, yet again, a poem about nature and how the rain brings life, light and beauty to our world.
- ***Helen Keller*** is a poem where the speaker refers to an inner light that Helen Keller found in a dark world because of her deafblindness.

The Red Wheelbarrow, Between Walls, Blizzard, Daisy, Dawn, Waiting, and ***The Great Figure*** are poems written by William Carlos Williams.

- ***The Red Wheelbarrow*** is a simple, yet wonderfully written poem that is not about darkness and light, but more about dependability and even hope. This poem uses the contrast in color between the red wheelbarrow and white chickens, both things

- has its usefulness in society.
- ***Between Walls*** is a poem where the speaker talks about an old wing of a hospital where nothing grows (darkness, desolate, dead). He factors in broken green bottles (more than likely beer or alcohol- which is self-destructive) as a color of beauty. This type of beauty is overlooked by most, yet the speaker calls attention to it.
 - ***Blizzard*** is a poem where the speaker uses the snow as just snow or as a metaphor for the Depression. Then one day the Sun appears which signifies hope, light, and/or growth.
 - ***Daisy*** is a poem where the speaker metaphorically calls a daisy the sun and how this beautiful flower grows even amongst weeds and crabgrass. The speaker refers to its underside as less desirable, but even with that, the flower is still beautiful.
 - ***Dawn*** is a poem where the speaker speaks of the images he sees when a bird takes flight as the sun rises onto the horizon. The speaker personifies the sun by saying what it does, which is a thing of beauty.
 - ***Waiting*** is a poem where color is juxtaposed in the speakers world as happiness, yet seeing his children gives him sorrow in the fact that he is growing old.
 - ***The Great Figure*** is a poem where the color red from a fire truck is juxtaposed in a dark city.

Finally, these poems will be used to differentiated instruction on multiple levels and the different learning styles of students. The lessons will align with The School District of Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania Common Core of Reading and Writing.

Objectives

This unit will be intended for students in the 6th Grade at Wagner Middle School. I will have the pleasure of teaching three 6th Grade classes this lesson. The classes are 90-minute literature classes. Teaching the lesson through poetry, artwork, shared reading, modeled writing and artwork and power point presentations is how objectives will be presented.

The objectives of the unit will include the following:

- Listening to music and poetry related to the juxtaposition of color, beauty or happiness inside of a rather undesirable place.
- Reading (shared or independently) poetry that is related to the juxtaposition of color, beauty or happiness inside of a rather undesirable place.
- Determine the author's purpose for writing the poetry and how it is conveyed.
- Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language through reading poetry and creating poetry
- Understand the use of positive and negative images used in poetry.
- Understand how words and/or items can be juxtaposed in writing and art work for contrast as well as comparisons
- Describe the setting as it relates to the poem and how it affects the images in the poem.

- Determine the message of a piece of work by analyzing what the speaker wants us to know or understand about their work.
- Analyze environments by taking pictures and completing sensory detail charts that show and detail a vivid depiction of neighborhoods and/or living situations.
- Create poetry, art and tapestry that encompass the juxtaposition of images taken from the world around us.
- Creating a collage of works of art (3 forms) created in the classroom.

In achieving these objectives students will understand the use of figurative language, imagery, and sensory detail through the poems and their own creative writing. Students will understand the theme (the lesson learned about life) of these poems and will therefore have a theme for their own writings.

Strategies

This unit will incorporate several strategies to make sure students are comprehending the poems, are remaining engaged, and are conceptualizing the poets images to convey an idea. These strategies will be used to differentiate to the learning styles of students and to help them internalize the information they need for reading and writing skills outlined in the SDP Common Core.

Class will use a variety of poetry and artwork that the class will use as shared reading, independent reading and discussions. Class will have close readings to discuss poems initially. These close readings will be lead by me (the teacher). Poems will be taken line by line and each student will be given a part they are responsible for explaining. Students will be used to this method, as it has been used in the past. Later students will have close readings in separate groups rather than as an entire class. Students will use the poems they have and create a visual picture. They will be able to choose from a variety of poems that have been read in class and/or at home. Students will use the words to create that image. Once students have used other writings, they will begin to create original works of poetic/creative writing that is full of visual images and speaking figuratively. Students will then create a collage of their works of art. By the end of the lesson, students will have been introduced to a variety of poetic writing, create visual pictures and use the poems as inspiration to create their own poetic writing of what they see in the world that surrounds them; the beauty and colors they see.

Strategies that will be incorporated into each lesson component including the Do Now, Before Reading, Mini-lessons, During Reading, After Reading, and Differentiated Instruction. These strategies are important to maintain a norm that is used for instruction throughout the year. A description of each of these components is as follows:

Do Now: A Do Now is a brief assignment that should take between 5-10 minutes each. Students read, write or listen to literature that connects with the lesson objective. These activities should be relatable and engaging. The assignments in a Do Now are a review of the lesson objective from the day before or will preview the lesson

forthcoming.

Mini-lesson: Mini-lessons give students either an introduction to new material or a review of reading strategies that will be used during the lesson's reading to achieve the lesson objective. The mini-lessons will introduce the objectives that will be taught that particular day and students will be able to use what they are taught during group, independent or at home activities.

Before Reading: Before Reading strategies are "preview" strategies that encourage students to preview a text and make predictions about the poem based on components such as title, author, headings, and illustrations.

During Reading: The class will have a shared reading during this portion of the lesson. During a shared reading, every child has a copy of the literature being read that day. The shared reading lasts between 20-30 minutes during class-time. During the shared reading class will have close readings, students make personal connections between themselves and the text/poetry, make connections between texts/poems, answer comprehension questions, and use context clues to comprehend vocabulary words in texts/poems during this time.

During reading, students can also complete a variety of activities from the list below:

- Use graphic organizers to demonstrate comprehension and interpretation
- Respond to text and analyze literary elements
- Compare and contrast the colors used in the poems
- Answer constructed response questions as well as multiple-choice questions that will be summative and/or formal assessments.

After Reading: After Reading strategies allow students to, first, discuss what they have read. Then, they complete independent and group activities, tiered activities, or choice board activities depending on the lesson objective. Students either work independently or cooperatively on these activities. They answer questions and then make greater connections to the literature through writing and other creative activities. Students will have homework every night based off of reading and activities performed in the class.

Additionally, after, students will complete journal writing or drawings that depict the poems they have read.

Classroom Activities/Sample Lesson Plans

Activities: During reading and art activities, students will:

- read and analyze modern and/or contemporary poetry that uses imagery through shared reading and close reading strategies mentioned above. This will be whole-class, then grouped activities.

- create small cooperative groups where students will extract the images from the poetry.
- use graphic organizers that allows students to chart out visual images and figurative language throughout the poetry.
- answer constructed response questions as well as multiple-choice questions that are relevant to the objectives covered in this unit..

After readings of poetry, students will have a choice board of how to analyze what they have just read by a variety of activities:

- use a poetry template to write their own poem using visual images and figurative language.
- creating poetry that depicts their personal environment or one that they see and find interesting.
- use the poem to create artwork that paints a visual picture of what can be seen in the poem (other writers and their own).
- creating tapestries that shows a 2 dimensional presentation of poetry and artwork. Putting all work together as a collage.

Materials Needed:

- A copy of every poem used in this unit
- Graphic Organizers for negative and positive images
- Graphic Organizers to chart sensory detailing
- Notebooks
- Class projector
- Computers
- Blank paper for several drawings
- Plain colored burlap, cut into 8 ½ x 8 ½ inches
- Different colored yarn
- Several needles big enough to fit yarn into

Day 1:

Do Now:

Students will each be handed a paper with a graphic organizer and the lyrics to the Sade song, “Pearls” (Appendix C). As they listen to the song, they will watch a video from youtube.com. In this video, it shows beautiful pictures of nature and the sky juxtaposed with sadness, famine and hurt in the dystopian country of Somalia. While students listen to the song and watch the video, they will write down on the graphic organizer:

- Three images we consider sad (negative images).
- Three images we consider beautiful (positive images).
- Three phrases from the song that could send a message to the listener.

Mini-Lesson:

Class will discuss what they discovered while listening to the song. They will have a lesson about why this song was written and the purpose of the vocabulary used in the song. (See appendix D for meaning).

Have students discuss what they consider to be positive and negative images in the video

and in their lives. They should discuss why it is considered positive or negative. Students will have a review of figurative language. Today will focus on metaphor, simile, personification and alliteration – all four are used in the poetry read today. After defining these four types of figurative language, students will write their own examples of each type of figurative language.

During Reading:

Students will be given a copy of the Tupac Shakur poem, “A Rose That Grew From Concrete” and the H.D. poem “Sea Rose” (see appendix D). The teacher will read the Tupac poem aloud. Class will have a close reading of the poem. Since the poem is short it should not take much time. Students will partner up as they are given different sections of the poem. They will discuss it amongst themselves and relay what they think the meaning is with the class. If the students do not come up with the correct or valid interpretation, classmates and teacher will help them out. We will repeat the same lesson with “Sea Rose”. Sea Rose has vocabulary students may not know. A vocabulary word bank should be included with this poem since it’s above a sixth grade English reading level.

After Reading:

Class will discuss how positive and negative images are juxtaposed in each poem. Class will discuss the metaphoric poem “The Rose That Grew From Concrete” and the use of alliteration. We will also discuss the use of similes and personification used in the poem “Sea Rose”.

Independent Activity:

Students will re-read each poem independently and answer comprehension questions that go along with the poems.

For homework, students will answer questions related to their own experiences of darkness and beauty. They will use the poems read today in class as an example. Students will also read William Carlos Williams’ poem “Between Walls” and Langston Hughes’ “April Rain Song” and they will complete comprehension questions that will encourage them to do their own close reading of the poetry.

Day 2:

Do Now:

Students will use their homework from last night to complete today’s Do Now. Students will use the images they thought were beautiful and the places they considered darkness to write more examples of figurative language to describe it (simile, metaphor, personification, and/or alliteration).

Mini-Lesson:

Class will use poems from last night’s homework “Between Walls” and “April Rain Song” to create a chart that shows visual images and figurative language throughout the poems. The chart will be hand written on chart paper on the board. Class will review sensory detail while creating this chart (what they see, hear, taste, touch and smell). Not all of the sensory details will relate to the poetry we are reading.

During Reading:

Students will be given a copy of William Carlos Williams' poems, "Blizzard" and "Flowers By the Sea". The teacher will read both poems aloud. Class will have a close reading of the poems. Individual students will be told which line they will have in advanced. When their line comes up, in either poem, they will tell the rest of the class what the speaker is saying in the poem. If the speaker speaks figuratively, the students must say the type of figurative language used and the meaning of it. If the student does not come up with the correct interpretation, classmates and teacher will help them out. This will be completed for both poems. A vocabulary word bank should be included with these poems if it is required.

After Reading:

Class will discuss how images and color are juxtaposed in each poem. Class will discuss how the image of color appears after darkness and coldness in "Blizzard" and how the color red is juxtaposed with dreary rain and white in "The Red Wheelbarrow". We will also discuss the use of similes and personification used in the poem "Sea Rose". These discussions can always turn into how the students can relate to the poems; how light and color emerges from a dark era or a dark time in their lives. Those discussions should be open and inviting.

Independent Activity:

Students will use the place, beauty and figurative language they wrote earlier to do a rough draft of a poem about beauty in a dark or undesirable place. Students should try for 2 stanzas in class, but should eventually be at least 3 stanzas.

For homework students will go on a nature walk, in neighborhood or at home. They will complete a graphic organizer where they will write down what they see using their five senses (sensory detailing). Students will read the William Carlos Williams poem "The Great Figure" and Langston Hugh's poem "In The Time of Silver Rain." Students will complete the same sensory detail chart for each poem.

Day 3:

Do Now:

Students will view a picture that depicts the poem "The Red Wheelbarrow". Students will study the picture and write their opinion on the colors that are juxtaposed. They will write how the picture and the poem relate and explain what they think it means.

Mini-Lesson:

Students will have a mini-lesson on theme. This will relate to the poems because each one has a lesson that needs to be learned. Students will be given the definition of theme and they should be provided with small passages where the class will determine the theme.

During Reading:

Students will be given a copy of the William Carlos Williams poem, "Dawn" and Emily

Dickinson's poem "Hope is the Thing With Feathers". The teacher will read both poems aloud. Class will have a close reading of "Hope is the Thing With Feathers". Close reading should include the metaphor (hope compared to a bird) and analyzing the theme (the message the speaker is conveying). A vocabulary word bank should be included with these poems if it is required.

After Reading:

Class will discuss how the metaphor is used and why would the speaker compare hope to a bird. Students will relate the poem to their own definition of hope and if they agree with the way the speaker describes hope.

Independent Activity/Group Activity:

Students will work together in small groups to discuss the theme and the juxtaposition of color in the poem "Dawn". Students should discuss the images they see and what they feel when they read the poem. They will also discuss why the poem is entitled "Dawn" and come up with another title for the poem.

After group activity, students will continue working on their poems. They should have three stanzas today. Poem includes positive and negative images in the student's personal life. Examples can be seen in previously read poems.

For homework students will read the Gwendolyn Brooks poem "Truth" and Langston Hughes' poem "Helen Keller." Both of these poems speak of a world of darkness and hopelessness. In that darkness there is a ray of light representing strength and/or truth. They should answer comprehension questions about both poems. Students should complete poems they have been working on in class.

Day 4:

Do Now:

Student will view a picture on the classroom projector. The picture can be a colorful bird flying in a dark sky or any other picture where there is a juxtaposition of color. Students will use that picture to come up with a short, four-stanza poem about the picture. Students may also write a haiku if they choose. If haikus are used, they should have been previously taught.

Mini-Lesson:

Class will learn how artist use poetry to create pictures and how poets use art to create poetry. They will look at several examples of each. Class will discuss what they see and how the two go hand in hand. This is what the students will be doing today with the shared reading and their own poems.

During Reading:

Students will be given a copy of William Carlos Williams' poem, "Daisy". The teacher will read the poem aloud. Students will pair up and discuss the meaning of the lines they are given. A vocabulary word bank should be included with these poems if it is required. Students will share out their opinions and its relevance.

After Reading:

Pairs of students will work together to draw one picture for the poem “Daisy”. Students will share their pictures with the class.

Independent Activity:

Students will take their poems they have been working on this week and begin to draw a picture. Pictures should depict the darkness that students have written about along with that color or lightness they see or feel. Drawings will begin as a sketch today and will continue the next day in class.

For homework students will use one of their favorite poems we have read this week to create a drawing. They will try to capture the beauty of color or light juxtaposed with the darkness or hopelessness in the poem. They will draw a picture for the speaker.

Day 5:

Do Now:

Students will read the first six lines of the Langston Hughes poem, “As I Grew Older” and write what they think the speaker is saying in those lines. Students will share their thoughts on those six lines.

During Reading:

The whole class will finish the rest of the poem. Class will do a shared reading using the same strategies as the days before.

After Reading:

Class will discuss the issue of skin color and how the speaker uses his skin color to state a message. Students discuss race, racial issues and discrimination in this country. Students should have background knowledge of racial issues in America through lessons previously taught – this will be important.

Independent Activity:

Students will continue drawing pictures. Once they have finished drawing pictures, they will be allowed to paint pictures. Paint should be used over crayons and markers because of the amplified richness of color.

Extension Activity

Next part of the lesson, I would have students make sure they have a drawing of one of their poems and have them create a tapestry using burlap and yarn. Students may have written more than one poem and should be encouraged to do so.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Sensory Detail Chart

Sensory Detail Chart

Title of Literature: _____

See	
Touch (Feeling and Texture)	
Smell	
Taste	
Hear	

Elements of Literature Chart

Title of Literature _____

Poem	
Setting: time, time of day, season, place	
Conflict Internal (conflict in characters head) External (conflict with an opposing force)	
Theme: the lesson learned by the character	

Appendix B – Sample Lesson with Comprehension Questions

Name _____ Grade _____ Section _____

Do Now: Listen the song “Pearls” by Sade’. As you watch the video:

1. Write down 3 things that we consider as sadness in the world (negative images).
2. Write down 3 things that we consider beautiful in the world (positive images).
3. Write three phrases from the song that sends a message or that a person could relate to.

3 Negative/Sad Visual Images	3 Positive Visual Images	3 phrases from the song that feel send a message

"Pearls"

There is a woman in somalia
 Scraping for pearls on the roadside
 There's a force stronger than nature
 Keeps her will alive
 That's how she's dying
 She's dying to survive
 Don't know what she's made of
 I would like to be that brave
 She cries to the heaven above
 There is a stone in my heart
 She lives a life she didn't choose
 And it hurts like brand-new shoes

Hurts like brand-new shoes

There is a woman in somalia
 The sun gives her no mercy
 The same sky we lay under
 Burns her to the bone
 Long as afternoon shadows
 It's gonna take her to get home
 Each grain carefully wrapped up
 Pearls for her little girl

Hallelujah
 Hallelujah

She cries to the heaven above
 There is a stone in my heart
 She lives a life she didn't choose
 And it hurts like brand-new shoes

The song “Pearls” is actually using the word pearls as a metaphor for food in the song. Somalia is a country in East Africa. This country is has Civil War, Civil unrest and starvation. This song uses a comparison of poverty to painful shoes. The songs shows how a woman surrenders her life to the heavens above all for her little girl (or her children). It is a song about the harshness of life and how we cannot choose our fate and family. How people have had to scrape for pearls in their lifetime to survive and for the survival of a child. Pearls can also be interpreted as pearls of wisdom, money, food -- something for survival.

Appendix C – Sample Lesson with Comprehension Questions

The Rose that Grew from Concrete

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature's law is wrong it learned to walk with out having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping it's dreams it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.

Tupac Shakur

Sea Rose

BY H. D.

Rose, harsh rose,
marred and with stint of petals,
meagre flower, thin,
sparse of leaf,

more precious
than a wet rose
single on a stem—
you are caught in the drift.

Stunted, with small leaf,
you are flung on the sand,
you are lifted
in the crisp sand
that drives in the wind.

Can the spice-rose
drip such acrid fragrance
hardened in a leaf?

Vocabulary

marred: disfigured, not perfect
stint: inadequate, not enough
meagre: small, having little
stunted: small, undersized, little
acrid: unpleasant smell or taste

The Rose that Grew from Concrete

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature's law is wrong it learned to walk with out having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping it's dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air.

spice-rose: a rose that has a spiced fragrance (pleasant)

- When you think of a rose, what images come to mind?

1. Why do people consider roses beautiful?

1. The use of the rose is a metaphor, what is the rose being compared to?

1. What is the theme (lesson) learned from the first poem?

1. In your own words, how does H.D. describe this rose in the first stanza?

1. Write one word that describes the rose in the second stanza?

1. What is the theme in the second poem?

8. Where can you find the rose in each poem?

Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.

Tupac Shakur

"Hope" is the thing with feathers

254 "Hope" is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—
at all—
And sweetest—
in the Gale—
is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—
I've heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—
of Me.

Emily Dickinson

Between Walls

the back wings
of the
hospital where
nothing
will grow lie
cinders
in which shine
the broken
pieces of a green
bottle

William Carlos Williams

Blizzard

Snow falls:
years of anger following
hours that float idly down --
the blizzard
drifts its weight
deeper and deeper for three days
or sixty years, eh? Then
the sun! a clutter of
yellow and blue flakes --
Hairy looking trees stand out
in long alleys
over a wild solitude.
The man turns and there --
his solitary track stretched out

upon the world.

William Carlos Williams

Daisy

The dayseye hugging the earth
in August, ha! Spring is
gone down in purple,
weeds stand high in the corn,
the rainbeaten furrow
is clotted with sorrel
and crabgrass, the
branch is black under
the heavy mass of the leaves--
The sun is upon a
slender green stem
ribbed lengthwise.
He lies on his back--
it is a woman also--
he regards his former
majesty and
round the yellow center,
split and creviced and done into
minute flowerheads, he sends out
his twenty rays-- a little
and the wind is among them
to grow cool there!

One turns the thing over
in his hand and looks
at it from the rear: brownedged,
green and pointed scales
armor his yellow.

But turn and turn,
the crisp petals remain
brief, translucent, greenfastened,
barely touching at the edges:
blades of limpid seashell.

William Carlos Williams

Dawn

Ecstatic bird songs pound
the hollow vastness of the sky
with metallic clinkings--
beating color up into it
at a far edge,--beating it, beating it
with rising, triumphant ardor,--
stirring it into warmth,

quickeninɡ in it a spreadinɡ change,-- burstinɡ
wildly against it as
dividinɡ the horizon, a heavy sun
lifts himself--is lifted--
bit by bit above the edge
of things,--runs free at last
out into the open--!lumberinɡ
glorified in full release upward--
songs cease.

William Carlos Williams

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

William Carlos Williams

The Great Figure

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

William Carlos Williams

Waiting

When I am alone I am happy.
The air is cool. The sky is
flecked and splashed and wound
with color. The crimson phallos
of the sassafras leaves

hang crowded before me
in shoals on the heavy branches.
When I reach my doorstep
I am greeted by
the happy shrieks of my children
and my heart sinks.
I am crushed.

Are not my children as dear to me
as falling leaves or
must one become stupid
to grow older?
It seems much as if Sorrow
had tripped up my heels.
Let us see, let us see!
What did I plan to say to her
when it should happen to me
as it has happened now?

William Carlos Williams

April Rain Song

Let the rain kiss you
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver
liquid drops
Let the rain sing you a lullaby
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk
The rain makes running pools in the gutter
The rain plays a little sleep song on our roof at
night
And I love the rain.

Langston Hughes

As I Grew Older

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my dream.
But it was there then,
in front of me,
Bright like a sun,
My dream.
And then the wall rose
Rose slowly
Slowly
Between me and my dream.
Rose until it touched the sky
The wall
Shadow

I am black,
I lie down in the shadow,
No longer the light of my dream before me,
Above me,
Only the thick wall,
Only the shadow,
My hands!
My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams
Of sun!

Langston Hughes

In Time Of Silver Rain

In time of silver rain
The earth puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads

Of Life,
Of Life,
Of life!

In time of silver rain
The butterflies lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry
And trees put forth new leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing, too,

In time of silver rain When spring
And life
Are new.

Langston Hughes

Helen Keller

She
In the dark,
Found light
Brighter than many ever see.

She
Within herself,
Found loveliness
Through the soul's own mastery
And now the world receives
From her dower:
The message of the strength
Of inner power.

Langston Hughes

truth

And if sun comes
How shall we greet him?
Shall we not dread him,
Shall we not fear him,
After so lengthy a
Session with shade?

Though we have wept for him,
Though we have prayed,
All through the night-years—
What if we wake one shimmering morning to
Hear the fierce hammering
Of his firm knuckles
Hard on the door?

Shall we not shudder?
Shall we not flee
Into the shelter, the dear thick shelter
Of the familiar
Propitious haze?

Sweet is it, sweet is it
To sleep in the coolness
Of snug unawareness

The dark hangs heavily
Over the eyes.

Gwendolyn Brooks

Rubric

Meaning and Originality	Exceeding Standards Poem is creative and original. It is evident that the poet put thought into their words using figurative language.	Meeting Standards Poem is thoughtful and creative. A couple of phrases or ideas may be revisited and uses some figurative language.	Approaching Standards Most of the poem is creative, but appears to be rushed. No figurative language used.	Below Standards Poems appear to be thoughtless or rushed. Work is very repetitive, and ideas are unoriginal.
Sensory Details	Exceeding Standards Vivid, detailed images and intensely felt emotion make the poem come alive.	Meeting Standards Clear sensory images are used to portray ideas or emotions	Approaching Standards Some use of image, idea, or emotion	Below Standards Difficult to visualize image or emotion
Form	Exceeding Standards The poem is complete and follows its intended form of at least three stanzas	Meeting Standards The poem is written in its proper forms with a few mistakes.	Approaching Standards The poem is somewhat written in its proper form.	Below Standards The poem is not written in its proper form.
Grammar	Exceeding Standards Proper use of English spelling and grammar is used consistently throughout each poem.	Meeting Standards A couple of spelling or grammar mistakes are evident, but do not diminish the meaning of the poem.	Approaching Standards The poet's intended meaning is confusing by several spelling or grammar errors.	Below Standards There are numerous spelling or grammar errors, making the poems difficult to understand.

Standards

Common Core Standards: This unit will be aligned with the State of Pennsylvania's Academic Common Core Standards in reading and writing. These standards will include, but are not limited to:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.10 Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2b Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2e Establish and maintain a formal style.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

