

A Look at Poetic Terminology

Understanding Poetry

Defining Poetry

- Poetry is the language of the heart
- Poetry is the fragrance of a forgotten rose
- Poetry is the synonym for the soul

Reading a Poem

■ Structure

- Is there a pattern in stanzas?
- Use of punctuation?

■ Language

- Any words you need to define?
- Suggestive or interpretative meaning?

■ Theme

- What is poem about?

■ Meaning

- Put it all together to determine meaning

Let's Give It a Try...Shall We?

- Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (594)
 - Structure of an argument
 - Language used
 - Theme: carpe diem “Seize the opportunity for tomorrow may not come”
 - Meaning: An argument to consummate a relationship
- Pitbull, “Give Me Everything”
 - Structure: an argument
 - Theme: carpe diem “we might not get tomorrow”
 - Meaning: an argument to have sex

Ch. 17: Words, Words, Words

- Denotation: Literal meaning; dictionary; face value
 - E.g. house—a physical dwelling place
 - E.g. father—male parent
- Connotation: figurative meaning; suggestive meaning; interpretative; emotional response
 - E.g. home—a place of warmth, love, security
 - E.g. daddy—informal yet endearing term

Poems to Review

- “Red Wheelbarrow” (563)
- “Mexican is Not a Noun” (542)

Ch. 18: Imagery

- A representation of language through the senses
- Sensory language
- To be able “to see” “to hear” “to taste” “to touch” “to smell” through the language (words) used to describe person, place, object, feeling

Poems to Review

- “My Papa’s Waltz” (705)
- “Those Winter Sundays” (705)
- “To Autumn” (handout found on Supplemental Handout page)

Ch. 19: Metaphor vs. Simile

- Metaphor: An indirect comparison between two unlike objects.
 - Rachel was burning with anger
 - Green god=forest; death's second self=sleep
- Simile: A direct comparison between two unlike objects using "like" "as" "seems" "than"
 - Life is like a photograph; John is uglier than a pig

Personification

- Giving human qualities to inanimate objects
 - Time flies
 - Hell's open gaping mouth
 - Tears began to fall from the clouds

Poems for Review

- “A Red, Red Rose” (580)
- “Harlem” (577)
- “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” (586)

Ch. 22: Symbolism

- Something that represents something else
- Concrete to abstract meaning
 - Flag = liberty
 - Red rose = love
 - Skull with crossed bones = death

Allusion

- A historical, mythological, literary, or biblical reference that enhances meaning to the text
 - “Like Niobe, all tears”
 - Central apple tree in the wild garden
 - Aunt Ariadne; Tia Vashti;

Poems for Review

- “The Lamb” (739)
- “The Tyger” (740)
- “Birches” (715)

Irony

- Irony: the opposite occurs
 - Verbal irony: say the opposite of what you mean
 - Call someone shorty who is tall
 - Dramatic irony: the audience knows more than actors on stage
 - Hamlet thinks the king is praying while in the chapel so decides against killing him, but the audience knows that King Claudius is not praying.
 - Situational irony: the outcome is unexpected
 - man who takes a step aside in order to avoid getting sprinkled by a wet dog, and falls into a swimming pool.

Paradox

- A contradiction; an impossibility
- Upon further examination, it is possible
- “I must be cruel to be kind”
- “The Child is father of the man”
- “The father is a stranger in his own home”

Review poems

- “My Mistress Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun” (572)
- “Richard Cory” (783)
- “Old Maids” (found on Supplemental Handout page)