

English 10

Poetry Explication

Poem chosen: Tuesday, Jan. 30

Draft due: Wednesday, February 7 by midnight, uploaded as a PDF to Jupiter

That's soon, but there will be at least one workday in class, and you can see that the paper goes section by section

Final paper due: Tuesday, February 20, by midnight, uploaded as a PDF to Jupiter

Begin by choosing a poem from *Sound and Sense* that you would not mind using for an extended exploration. Rather than choosing something you feel you can master right away, choose a poem you genuinely like. Greater ambition will lead to a better paper because there will be a greater authenticity to your working out answers to the various questions and problems.

The paper you will write will consist of five sections, with a thesis above the first section and a conclusion after the fifth section.

Above the first section give a thesis that will link what you discuss to an overall emotional effect.

I. Speaker, occasion. Include anyone apostrophized, characters in the poem. What are the effects of the poet's choices?

II. Theme. Here you discuss the meaning of the poem as it unfolds over the poem's gestural structure. How does the meaning build as you travel through the poem?

III. Form, including any fixed form (sonnet, villanelle...) as well as meter and rhyme. Include line length also in this section. What are the effects (both emotional and thematic) of the poem's formal choices? What do changes in meter or near-misses in rhyme add to the poem?

IV. Image. Include in this section the images the poem provides, as well as any metaphors or symbols, personification or metonymy. What are the effects of the images? As you write about effect, don't just say that the images make the poem more vivid—push the effect further.

V. Sound tropes and their effects on pace, emphasis, and meaning. Consider alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia and the relationship of those sounds to the poem's meaning.

Write a one-paragraph conclusion in which you discuss the confluence of the five sections.

In all sections, you should include quotations from the poem carefully blended with your own writing. You should cite by giving line number (l. 3) or (ll. 3-4). If you are quoting over a line break, indicate the line break with a slash (/). If you quote 4+ lines, you are quoting too much in one chunk without commentary.

You may include the poem, if it's short, at the top of the first page for easy reference, but you must still use short, frequent quotations to support ideas.

You should not go looking for interpretations of your poem on the web; this explication should be original work. Any source you are using closely enough to summarize, paraphrase, or quote directly should be cited, though, so please don't use a source that would not be considered acceptable by an academic audience. Commercial summaries or blogs are not acceptable. I would much rather read a paper completed thoughtfully as a product of your own reading and re-reading the poem than a more sophisticated paper that relies on information from outside of class.

The day after your draft is due hand in during class your marked-up copies of your poem and any draftwork, on loose-leaf paper or typed.

Your paper must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1" margins). We'll talk about how to upload documents to Jupiter; this upload will be the only way I can accept your work.

Once your paper is finished, you will share your findings with the class in a 5–8-minute presentation. This presentation will feature you talking about your poem, projected on the wall. You will certainly not read from your paper, as that would be dull. You'll need to practice your presentation a couple of times in order to be able to give it in the time allotted.