# ■ Contents

Ack	nowledgements	ix
Pref	ace	x
	PART I APPROACHES TO POETRY	
1	Introduction Reading a poem. The approach of the book. The organisation of the book	2
2	What is poetry A starting point. Activity 2.1 Your thoughts about poetry. What the writers say. Activity 2.2 Poets on poetry. Poetry versus prose. What makes a poem? Activity 2.3 'How Do I Love thee?', Barrett Browning; 'The Eagle', Tennyson.	
3	Distinctive features of poetry End-stopped lines. Activity 3.1 'A Satirical Elegy on the Death of the Late Famous General', Swift. Run-on lines. Activity 3.2 'Morning Work', D.H. Lawrence. Metre: Stressed and unstressed syllables. Metrical feet. Caesura. Activity 3.3 'Binnorie', Anon; 'The Lost Leader', Robert Browning.	13
4	Poetic form End rhyme. Blank verse. Free verse. Activity 4.1 'Ulysses', Tennyson; 'A Man Said to the Universe', Stephen Crane; 'We'll Go No More A-Roving', Byron. Form: The sonnet. Activity 4.2 'Amoretti LXXIX', Spenser; 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer', Keats. The villanelle. Activity 4.3 'One Art', Elizabeth Bishop. Haiku. Elegy. Lyric. Ode. Pastoral. Narrative. Activity 4.4 'Spellbound', Emily Brontë; 'Break, Break, Break', Tennyson; 'The Twa Corbies', Anon; 'To Autumn', Keats; 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love', Marlowe.	23
5	Style Diction: Tone. Activity 5.1 'If I Shouldn't Be Alive', Emily Dickinson. The connotations of words. Word classes. Activity 5.2 'Song Making', Sara Teasdale. Unusual words. Activity 5.3	48

An extract from 'Ghostie Men', Tom Leonard. Grammar: Phrases. Activity 5.4 'Country Life', Elma Mitchell. Sentence types. Activity 5.5 'Work', D.H. Lawrence; 'It's Coming', Emily Dickinson. Word
order. Activity 5.6 'A Kill', Ted Hughes.
Literary and rhetorical devices

6 Literary and rhetorical devices
Sound patterning. Activity 6.1 'God's Grandeur', Gerard Manley
Hopkins. Imagery: Literal images. Activity 6.2 An extract from
'London Snow', Robert Bridges. Figurative language. Activity 6.3
'A Red, Red Rose', Robert Burns. Activity 6.4 'You Open Your Hands
to Me', Paula Meehan. Rhetorical devices: Repetition, tripling and
parallelism. Activity 6.5 'Forgetfulness', Hart Crane; 'Epilogue', Grace
Nichols; 'A Birthday', Christina Rossetti. Listing, climax and anticlimax,
antithesis. Activity 6.6 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge',
Wordsworth

7 How to read a poem
A guide to analysis. Getting started.

69

88

113

133

8 The beginnings of the English poetic tradition
96
The literary context. Religious verse: Activity 8.1 Extracts from
The Vision of Piers Plowman', William Langland. Old English heroic verse and medieval romance: Activity 8.2 Extracts from a modern verse translation of Beowulf. Activity 8.3 Extracts from Gawain and the Green Knight. The beginnings of the English poetic tradition.

PART II KEY POETS

9 Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1343–1400)
Chaucer's world. The literary context. Chaucer's work. The
Canterbury Tales: The General Prologue. Activity 9.1 The opening
of 'The General Prologue'. Activity 9.2 Extracts from 'The General
Prologue': the Franklin and the Miller. The tales. Studying a tale.
Activity 9.3 An extract from 'The Miller's Tale'. Chaucer and the
English poetic tradition.

The literary context. Elizabethan verse: Edmund Spenser (c.1552–99). Activity 10.1 Extracts from The Faerie Queene. Shakespeare's sonnets. The Metaphysical poets: John Donne (1572–1631). Activity 10.2 'Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward'. George Herbert (1593–1633) and Henry Vaughan (1621–95). The Metaphysicals and the English poetic tradition. John Milton (1608–74): Paradise Lost. Samson Agonistes. Milton and the English poetic tradition. Activity 10.3 An extract from Paradise Lost. Restoration poetry: John Dryden (1631–1700). The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the English poetic tradition.

### 11 Poetry of the eighteenth century

The literary context. The Augustans. Alexander Pope (1688–1744). *Activity 11.1 An extract from* The Rape of the Lock. The reflective tradition. The Augustans and the English poetic tradition.

### 12 Poetry of the nineteenth century

The literary context. The Romantics: William Blake (1757–1827). Activity 12.1 'The Nurse's Song'. Wordsworth, Coleridge and the principles of Romanticism. William Wordsworth (1770–1850). Activity 12.2 An extract from The Prelude. Lord George Byron (1788–1824) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822). John Keats (1795–1821). Activity 12.3 'Ode to a Nightingale'. The Romantic poets and the English poetic tradition. The Victorians: Poetry and the role of the poet. The content. The poetry of escape and the 'individual moment'. The dramatic monologue. Style. The Victorians and the English poetic tradition. Activity 12.4 'Dover Beach', Matthew Arnold. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889): Influences. Attitudes to poetry. Language and structure. The

Hopkins and the English poetic tradition. Activity 12.5

# 13 Poetry of the twentieth century

content.

'The Windhover'.

The literary context. Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). The literary context. The content. Language, structure and style. Thomas Hardy and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.1 'The Voice'. The War poets: Rupert Brooke (1887–1915). Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967). Wilfred Owen (1893–1918). The War poets and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.2 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', Wilfred Owen. W.B. Yeats (1865-1939): The literary context. The development of Yeats's work. Yeats's approach to writing. Yeats's beliefs. Content and themes. Style. Imagery and symbolism. Structure. Yeats and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.3 'Meru'. T.S. Eliot (1888–1965): The literary context. The development of Eliot's verse. Eliot's approach to poetry. Content and themes. Style. Imagery and symbolism. Poetic form. and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.4 An extract from The Waste Land. Dylan Thomas (1914-53): The literary context. Thomas's approach to poetry. Content and themes. Images and symbols. Poetic form. Style. Dylan Thomas and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.5 'Fern Hill'. Neo-Romanticism and its alternatives: The New Apocalypse. Alternatives to Neo-Romanticism. Activity 13.6 'Invocation', Kathleen Raine. Philip Larkin (1922-85): The literary context. The development of Larkin's work. Attitudes to poetry. Content and themes. Poetic voice and style. Imagery. Poetic form. Larkin and the English poetic tradition. Activity 13.7 'Here'. Ted Hughes (1930–98): The literary context. The development of Hughes's work verse.

172

183

241

Hughes's approach to poetry. Hughes, nature and the inner life. Content and themes. Images and symbols. Poetic form. Style. Ted Hughes and the English poetic tradition. *Activity 13.8 'Red'*. Women poets 1960–90: The emergence of a strong women's tradition. Single-gender anthologies. The groundbreakers. Sylvia Plath (1932–63). Women poets of the 1970s and 1980s. The search for an appropriate voice. The dramatic monologue. Content and themes. Language, style and tone. Women poets and the English poetic tradition. *Activity 13.9 'Because She Has Come'*. *Grace Nichols*.

# 14 Into the twenty-first century

386

Poems written to mark a public event: Activity 14.1 'Everyday Eclipses', Roger McGough; 'R.S.', Gillian Clarke; 'Regime Change', Andrew Motion. Poems written to mark a private experience: Activity 14.2 'Seeing the Sick', Seamus Heaney; 'White Writing', Carol Ann Duffy; 'Ultrasound', Kathleen Jamie. Where next?

Glossary	405
Wider reading	425
Index	429