

CONTENTS

Preface xv

ONE • SENSE 1

Concept 1

Selection and arrangement of the poet's material.

Applications 1

Analysis of an anecdote; Goldsmith's "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog"; a miscellany of limericks; two poems on the quality of human experience—"Sic Vita" by Henry King, and "Vita Summa Brevis" by Ernest Dowson.

Games 6

Challenges involving joke-telling; scrambled famous sayings; proverbial statements; proverbs reflecting the male orientation of our past.

Poems 9

The Scottish ballad "Sir Patrick Spence"; "Sailor" by Langston Hughes; "Eel Grass" by Edna St. Vincent Millay; two contrasting Elizabethan sonnets—Spenser's "Ye Tradeful Merchants" and Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130"; "Abou Ben Adhem" by Leigh Hunt.

For a complete listing of poems and poem fragments, see the Index on page 187.

TWO • DICTION

15

Concept 15

Three fundamentals of effectively selected diction—precision of meaning, connotation, and decorum; the profusion of possibilities illustrated in "To a Thesaurus" by Franklin P. Adams.

Applications 17

Examination of diction in action as seen in a portion of "The Dong with the Luminous Nose" by Edward Lear; three versions of the psalm "The Lord is my shepherd"; Poe's "To Helen."

Games 23

Selecting a word with the desired connotations; I-You-They words; Mother Goose rhymes altered; differences in letter-writing; euphemisms; lines from poems with optional diction; well-known aphorisms curiously changed; Keats' alterations of diction in some of his poems.

Poems 29

Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"; four love poems—"A Birthday" by Christina Rossetti, "If thou must love me" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Rondel" by William Ernest Henley, and "Upon Julia's Clothes" by Robert Herrick; five poems on death—Shakespeare's "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," "On My First Son" by Ben Jonson, "Rose Aylmer" by Walter Savage Landor, "A Cemetery" by Emily Dickinson, and "Sometime During Eternity" by Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

THREE • METERS

37

Concept 37

Stresses and slacks, their number and arrangement into kinds of foot—the iamb, trochee, anapest, and dactyl; the arrangement of feet into kinds of lines—the monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, and pentameter; the difference between meter and rhythm; free verse; some additional terms—the spondee, rising and falling rhythms, feminine and masculine endings; a mnemonic verse from Coleridge's "Lesson for a Boy."

Applications 43

An old story, "Black Jack Davy," first in prose, then in folk ballad form; examination of the metrical character of three poems—"A Reasonable Affliction" by Matthew Prior, Wordsworth's "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," and Whitman's "When I heard the learn'd astronomer."

Games 48

The metrical character of names; combining metrical building blocks into lines of various lengths; altering the metrical character of some nursery rhymes; writing directions in meters.

Poems 51

Tennyson's "As thro' the land at eve we went" and "Flower in the crannied wall"; Hardy's "The Ruined Maid"; Psalm 95; Whitman's "I think I could turn and live with animals"; Yeats' "Leda and the Swan."

FOUR • RHYMES

57

Concept 57

Echoing of the vowels (assonance) and of the consonants (consonance), including initial echo (alliteration) and bracket rhyme; a caution against the tyranny of the eye.

Applications 59

Analysis of four poems on the theme of human mortality—Longfellow's "In the Churchyard at Cambridge," Swinburne's "Before Sunset," "Spring and Fall" by Gerard Manly Hopkins, and Dickinson's "I reason, earth is short."

Games 65

Closing the sound gap between words; ink-pink, inky-pinky, and inkety-pinkety; finding rhyme links in advertising slogans; changing words in slogans and in aphorisms from rhyming to nonrhyming; respelling words; hidden sound links in a nonsense poem.

Poems 69

"The Planting of the Apple Tree" by William Cullen Bryant; Poe's "Annabel Lee"; "Fable" by Ralph Waldo Emerson; "Love Me But Leave My Dog Alone" by Ogden Nash; "Plum" by Helen Chasin; two love poems—"Song" by Thomas Lovell Beddoes, and "How do I love thee" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

FIVE • TRADITIONAL FORMS

77

Concept 77

A case for traditional forms, as in Wordsworth's "Nuns fret not at the convent's narrow room."

Applications 78

The ballad form, illustrated by Millay's "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver"; the sonnet form—the "Italian" arrangement in Christina Rossetti's "Remember," the "English" arrangement in Drayton's "Since there's no help," and a combination of the two arrangements in Spenser's "One day I wrote her name"; the closed couplet—for witty purposes, and for serious; blank verse in Bryant's "Thanatopsis"; the limerick with three examples; the haiku with illustrations; some rarer forms illustrated—the terza-rima, the rondeau ("In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae, and "Jenny Kissed Me" by Leigh Hunt), the triolet ("To a Fat Lady Seen from the Train" by Frances Cornford), and the villanelle ("The House on the Hill" by Edwin Arlington Robinson).

Games 97

Invitations—to rearrange nonliterary prose into “found poetry,” to compose in ballad form, haiku form, in the form of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in limericks, in closed couplets, in blank verse, in the sonnet, and in a form determined by chance; a challenge to change the form of some old favorites.

Poems 102

Two ballads—the folk ballad “Lord Randall” and a literary ballad, “The Ballad of the Oysterman” by Oliver Wendell Holmes; two sonnets—“The Soldier” by Rupert Brooke, and Millay’s “Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!”; “The Man with the Hoe” by Edwin Markham; a collection of closed couplets; one more limerick; some haiku; two rondeaux—“In After Days” by Austin Dobson, and “I did not know she’d take it so” by Countée Cullen.

SIX • CULTURAL ALLUSIONS

109

Concept 109

Allusions defined and illustrated; their chief values to the poet.

Applications 111

The effect of cultural allusions in Yeats’ “Leda and the Swan” and “The Second Coming,” in T. S. Eliot’s “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” and “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” and in two poems related to the child’s world—“Counting the Mad” by Donald Justice, and “chanson innocente” by E. E. Cummings.

Games 115

Nicknames alluding to our past; statements which have entered the stockpile of cultural allusions; items in common speech alluding to the ancient world and the modern world; literary uses of allusions to the ancient world; persons and events hidden in words; pairs of statements, with and without allusion.

Poems 122

Two poems employing allusions to the classical world—Landon’s “Ilanthe” and Spenser’s “Penelope, for her Ulysses’ sake”; two poems employing allusion to the Hebraic world—“Parable of the Old Men and the Young” by Wilfred Owen, and “The Latest Decalogue” by Arthur Hugh Clough”; three poems drawing upon Christian culture—Milton’s “When I consider how my light is spent,” “The Carpenter’s Son” by A. E. Housman, and Dickinson’s “The Mushroom”; allusion to medieval legend in “Mr. Flood’s Party” by E. A. Robinson.

SEVEN • IMAGES

131

Concept 131

The basic elements of the literary image—subject and analogue; their relations, and their value to writers; similes and metaphors; hidden images in Dickinson’s “I like to see it lap the miles”; dead metaphors.

Applications 135

Images of three "imagist" poems analyzed—"A Decade" by Amy Lowell, "Changing Love" by John Gould Fletcher, and "Evening" by Richard Aldington; images by which poets have described love and lovers; the sustained or extended image in Shakespeare ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?") and in Homer; the partially hidden image in Cummings' "Cambridge ladies"; the dead image in "A New Song of New Similes" by John Gay; special attention to three poems by a master of imagery, Emily Dickinson—"The Bustle in a House," "A Route of Evanescence," and "I'll tell you how the Sun rose."

Games 146

Finding images in common expressions; analogues from nature to match subjects of human experience; analogues from the body; analogues from minerals, fruits, and flowers; composing fresh analogues to replace hackneyed ones.

Poems 151

A gathering of seven imagist poems—"Evening Sky" by John Gould Fletcher, "Brooding Grief" by D. H. Lawrence, H. D.'s "Oread," Lowell's "A Lady," "Wind and Silver," and "Night Clouds," and H. D.'s "Heat"; three famous poems relying strongly on imagery—"The glories of our blood and state" by James Shirley, Jonson's "It is not growing like a tree," and "To Lucasta" by Richard Lovelace; four modern poems—Dickinson's "Hope is the thing with feathers," Frost's "There's a patch of old snow," Hughes' "Dream Deferred," and "Metaphors" by Sylvia Plath.

EIGHT • SYMBOLS

157

Concept 157

The symbol as a development of the literary image whose analogue comes to substitute for the subject; different stages along this route defined and illustrated—the pathetic fallacy, personification in Longfellow's "Nature," parallel in Brooke's "Heaven" and in "All But Blind" by Walter de la Mare, parable in the New Testament's "Parable of the Good Samaritan," and allegory.

Applications 164

The explicit and simple symbolism of Longfellow's "The Rainy Day" and Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar"; symbolism in Thoreau's prose; developing symbol in Whitman's "A child said What is the grass?"; complex symbolism in Blake's "I asked a thief" and "Never seek to tell thy love"; five symbolic birds—in the children's song "Billy McGee McGaw," in folk ballads "The Three Ravens" and "The Two Corbies," in Poe's "The Raven," and in "The Dirty Word" by Karl Shapiro.

Games 175

Symbols by which we identify buildings, institutions, and groups; using parts of the human body as symbols; nature as a source of symbols; personifying by drawing a symbolic person; decoding symbolic statements; symbolic analogues of life; decoding symbols drawn from poems and from the New Testament book of Matthew; composing symbols for common experiences.

Poems 179

Two poems using symbol traditionally—Longfellow's "The Arrow and the Song" and Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider"; four parables by Stephen Crane—"I saw a man pursuing the horizon," "In the desert," "The Wayfarer," and "A man said to the universe"; three poems by a master symbolist, William Blake—"The Clod and the Pebble," "A Poison Tree," and "The Tyger"; two poems of this century—Hardy's "Midnight on the Great Western," and "The Heavy Bear Who Goes with Me" by Delmore Schwartz.

Author Index of Complete Poems and Quoted Fragments 187

Index of Complete Poems 191

Index of Topics 195