

### Five O'Clock Shadow

*Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984)*

This is the time of day when we in the Men's ward  
Think "one more surge of the pain and I give up the fight."  
When he who struggles for breath can struggle less strongly:  
This is the time of day which is worse than night.

5      A haze of thunder hangs on the hospital rose-beds,  
A doctors' foursome out of the links is played,  
Safe in her sitting-room Sister is putting her feet up:  
This is the time of day when we feel betrayed.

Below the windows, loads of loving relations  
10      Rev in the car park, changing gear at the bend,  
Making for home and a nice big tea and the telly:  
"Well, we've done what we can. It can't be long till the end."

This is the time of day when the weight of bedclothes  
Is harder to bear than a sharp incision of steel.  
15      The endless anonymous croak of a cheap transistor  
Intensifies the lonely terror I feel.

#### Understanding the Poem:

You don't have to answer these questions in writing; their purpose is to guide your reading/interpretation of the poem.

1. What do we learn from the title and the first line about the speaker and the setting of this poem? Is it morning or evening? How do we know? (Hint: Consider the pun in the title.) Is *shadow* literal only or also figurative? What tone does this word announce?
2. Considering the context, what is the double significance of *can* in line 3?
3. What is the purpose of the literal details about revving car engines and "changing gear" mentioned in line 10? What figurative meaning do these details suggest?
4. What is the effect of the comparisons in line 4 and lines 13-14?

#### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a complex tone of [Choose at least 2 words from your tonal chart.], revealing [What observation about human nature is the poet making?]

## The Sound of Night

Maxine Kumin (b. 1925)

- And now the dark come on, all full of chitter noise.  
Birds huggermugger crowd the trees,  
the air thick with their vesper cries,  
and bats, snub seven-pointed kites,  
5 skitter across the lake, swing out,  
squeak, chirp, dip, and skim in skates  
of air, and the fat frogs wake and prink  
wide-lipped, noisy as ducks, drunk  
on boozy black, gloating chink-chunk.
- 10 And now on the narrow beach we defend ourselves from dark.  
The cooking done, we build our firework  
bright and hot and less for outlook  
than for magic, and lie in our blankets  
while night nickers around us. Crickets  
15 chorus hallelujahs; paws, quiet  
and quick as raindrops, play on the stones  
expertly soft, run past and are gone;  
fish pulse in the lake; the frogs hoarsen.
- 20 Now every voice of the hour—the known, the supposed, the strange,  
the mindless, the witted, the never seen--  
sing, thrum, impinge, and rearrange  
endlessly; and debarred from sleep we wait  
for the birds, importantly silent,  
for the crease of first eye-licking light,  
25 By the lake, locked black away and tight,  
we lie, day creatures, overhearing night.

### Understanding the Poem

1. Consider the poet's use of unusual words in this poem. What part of speech is *chitter* according to the dictionary, and how is it used in line 1? What do you notice about the placement and meaning of the word *huggermugger* in line 2? Finally, how does the use of *vesper* as an adjective in line 3 continue the mood created by the other images in the first stanza?
2. Air cannot be literally "thick" with sounds. How does the figurative device of synesthesia work in line 3?
3. What do alliteration, assonance, and consonance add to the mood of the poem?
4. The bats are the subject of a metaphor in line 4. What do the bats have in common with the kites? ?
5. Consider the poet's description of the frogs in lines 7-9. What is unusual about the word choice, and what is the effect of these choices? What is added by the sounds of the words?
6. Consider the verbs used in lines 5-6. What is the overall impression produced by this string of verbs?
7. Analyze the metaphors in lines 14-16. What connects these comparisons?
8. In line 23, what does the poet mean when she says that the birds are "importantly" silent? What two meanings of this adverb fit the poem?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] accentuate the experience and emotions of those who spend the night beside a lake, revealing [What observation about human nature is the poet making?].

## **Mosquito**

*John Updike (1932-2009)*

On the fine wire of his whine he walked,  
Unseen in the ominous bedroom dark.  
A traitor to his camouflage, he talked  
A thirsty blue streak distinct as a spark.

5 I was to him a fragrant lake of blood  
From which he had to sip a drop or die,  
A reservoir, a lavish field of food,  
I lay awake, unconscious of my size.

10 We seemed fair-matched opponents. Soft he dropped  
Down like an anchor on his thread of song.  
His nose sank thankfully in; then I slapped  
At the sting on my arm, cunning and strong.

15 A cunning and strong Gargantua, I struck  
This lover pinned in the feast of my flesh  
Lulled by my blood, relaxed, half-sated, stuck,  
Engrossed in the gross rivers of myself.

Success! Without a cry the creature died,  
Became a fleck of fluff upon the sheet.  
The small welt of remorse subsides as side  
20 By side we, murderer and murdered, sleep.

### Understanding the Poem

1. Explain what the details in the poem reveal about the speaker, setting, occasion, conflict, and purpose of the poem.
2. What can we discover about the protagonist through both direct and indirect characterization? What motivates his actions and feelings?
3. Analyze any three of the similes and metaphors in the poem. Is there a pattern in the vehicles used? Are they appropriate to the purposes of the poem? How are the protagonist's feelings displayed through the choice of figurative language?
4. What tone is produced by the sound devices in the poem? Consider the uses and effect of rhyme, meter, metrical substitutions, enjambment, caesura, alliteration, assonance, and consonance, and choose one example of each to comment on. What is the overall effect of sound in the poem in relation to its meaning: is the sound primarily euphonious or cacophonous?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] creates a [Choose a word from your tonal chart.] tone by [What is the purpose of a mock epic poem?].

### Question

*May Swenson (1913-1989)*

Body my house  
my horse my hound  
what will I do  
when you are fallen

5      Where will I sleep  
How will I ride  
What will I hunt

10     Where can I go  
without my mount  
all eager and quick  
How will I know  
In thicket ahead  
is danger or treasure  
when Body my good  
15     bright dog is dead

How will it be  
to lie in the sky  
without roof or door  
and wind for an eye

20     With cloud for shift  
how will I hide?

### Understanding the Poem

1. Describe the prosody of the poem and comment on the effect of the initial substitutions of meter.
2. Describe the structure and rhetorical devices of the poem, especially anaphora and parallelism.
3. Analyze the three metaphors in the poem: in each case, what is the speaker's body being compared to? What will be lost when the body is gone?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] embody the meaning of the poem, [What do the metaphors suggest about the physical body?]

## **Dolor**

*Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)*

- I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,  
Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper weight,  
All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage,  
Desolation in immaculate public places,  
5 Lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard,  
The unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher,  
Ritual of multigraph, paper-clip, comma,  
Endless duplication of lives and objects.  
And I have seen dust from the walls of institutions,  
Finer than flour, alive, more dangerous than silica,  
10 Sift, almost invisible, through long afternoons of tedium,  
Dropping a fine film on nails and delicate eyebrows,  
Glazing the pale hair, the duplicate grey standard faces.

### Understanding the Poem:

1. How would you characterize the speaker in this poem?
2. What is the setting of the poem, and how does it encapsulate modern life?
3. How is the poem structured? Consider its two grammatical parts along with its rhetorical patterns of repetition and parallelism. What is the effect of this structure? How does line 8 give point and focus to the catalog that precedes it?
4. The mood of the poem is largely created by its diction. Examine the concrete nouns in the first seven lines: which are modified with adjectives? What mood do the modifiers create?
5. List the abstract nouns and the adjectives that modify them in the first eight lines, and consider their effect. How are they related to the concrete nouns? What mood is created?
6. In lines 9-13, consider the literal and figurative meanings of the dust. To what does the speaker compare it? How do verbs and adjectives suggest the relationship between the dust and those upon whom it settles?
7. How does the poem's final line reinforce the meaning of the whole? What does the speaker suggest about people he has observed?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] contribute to the development of the poem's meaning, [What point about life is the speaker making?]

**Promises Like Pie-Crust**  
*Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)*

Promise me no promises,  
    So will I not promise you;  
Keep we both our liberties,  
    Never false and never true:  
5     Let us hold the die uncast,  
        Free to come as free to go;  
For I cannot know your past,  
    And of mine what can you know?

You, so warm, may once have been  
10     Warmer towards another one;  
I, so cold, may once have seen  
    Sunlight, once have felt the sun:  
Who shall show us if it was  
    Thus indeed in time of old?  
15     Fades the image from the glass  
        And the fortune is not told.

If you promised, you might grieve  
    For lost liberty again;  
If I promised, I believe  
20     I should fret to break the chain:  
Let us be the friends we were,  
    Nothing more but nothing less;  
Many thrive on frugal fare  
    Who would perish of excess.

Understanding the Poem

1. Describe the form and structure of the poem. What is the occasion of the poem? What two reasons does the speaker give for refusing to promise a committed love? What compromise does she suggest at the end?
2. Analyze the effect on meaning of such devices as syntax, repetition, parallelism, and paradox.
3. Analyze the effect on meaning of the imagery and figurative language.

Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] persuade the reader that [What is the speaker saying?]

## Eve

Ralph Hodgson (1871-1962)

Eve, with her basket, was  
Deep in the bells and grass,  
Wading in bells and grass  
Up to her knees.  
5 Picking a dish of sweet  
Berries and plums to eat,  
Down in the bells and grass  
Under the trees.  
  
Mute as a mouse in a  
10 Corner the cobra lay,  
Curled round a bough of the  
Cinnamon tall....  
Now to get even and  
Humble proud heaven and  
15 Now was the moment or  
Never at all.  
  
"Eva!" Each syllable  
Light as a flower fell,  
"Eva!" he whispered the  
20 Wondering maid,  
Soft as a bubble sung  
Out of a linnet's lung,  
Soft and most silverly  
"Eva!" he said.  
  
25 Picture that orchard sprite;  
Eve, with her body white,  
Supple and smooth to her  
Slim finger tips;  
Wondering, listening,  
30 Listening, wondering,  
Eve with a berry  
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve  
Seen through the make believe!  
35 Had she but known the  
Pretender he was!  
Out of the boughs he came,  
Whispering still her name,  
Tumbling in twenty rings  
40 Into the grass.  
  
Here was the strangest pair  
In the world anywhere,  
Eve in the bells and grass  
Kneeling, and he  
45 Telling his story low....  
Singing birds saw them go  
Down the dark path to  
The Blasphemous Tree.  
  
Oh, what a clatter when  
50 Titmouse and Jenny Wren  
Saw him successful and  
Taking his leave!  
How the birds rated him,  
How they all hated him!  
55 How they all pitied  
Poor motherless Eve!  
  
Picture her crying  
Outside in the lane,  
Eve, with no dish of sweet  
60 Berries and plums to eat,  
Haunting the gate of the  
Orchard in vain....  
Picture the lewd delight  
Under the hill to-night—  
65 "Eva!" the toast goes round,  
"Eva!" again.

### Understanding the Poem

1. Contemplate the subtle changes in setting and analyze how these shifts reveal Eve's fall from grace.
2. How does the poem's diction contribute to tone and meaning? Consider the use of adjectives, verbs, and participles. Look for patterns, contrasts, and surprising juxtapositions of words.
3. Consider the poet's use of figurative language. How does the choice of comparisons influence tone and meaning?
4. Describe the meter and line length. What does the rhythm contribute to the mood of the poem?
5. Describe the use of repetition and rhyme. Look for patterns. What does the repetition contribute to the mood of the poem?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a contrast between the [Choose a word from your tonal chart.] tone of the poem and the age-old theme, [What is the message of the poem?]

## **Death, be not proud**

*John Donne* (1572-1631)

- Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
- 5 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
- Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
10 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,  
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

### Understanding "Death, be not proud"

1. In what ways does "Death, be not proud" conform to a common sonnet form? What variations are notable, and what is their effect?
2. Describe Donne's use of apostrophe and personification. How do these devices enhance our experience of the poem?
3. Paraphrase each of the sonnet's three quatrains, preserving the clauses but simplifying the syntax. Do the same for the paradoxical couplet. Retain the apostrophe and personification.

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a tone of [Choose a word from your tonal chart.], , revealing [What observation about human nature does the poem suggest?]



## To Death

Anne Finch (1661-1720)

- O King of terrors, whose unbounded sway  
All that have life must certainly obey;  
The King, the Priest, the Prophet, all are thine,  
Nor would ev'n God (in flesh) thy stroke decline.
- 5     My name is on thy roll, and sure I must  
Increase thy gloomy kingdom in the dust.  
My soul at this no apprehension feels,  
But trembles at thy swords, thy racks, thy wheels;  
Thy scorching fevers, which distract the sense,
- 10    And snatch us raving, unprepared, from hence;  
At thy contagious darts, that wound the heads  
Of weeping friends, who wait at dying beds.  
Spare these, and let thy time be when it will;  
My bus'ness is to die, and thine to kill.
- 15    Gently thy fatal scepter on me lay,  
And take to thy cold arms, insensibly, thy prey.

### Understanding "To Death"

1. Describe the form and structure of the poem
2. Which details personify death? What is their effect? With what attitude does the speaker apostrophize death? What does she request of him?
3. Paraphrase each of the three sections of the poem. [Hmmm, what are the three sections of the poem?] Use one sentence for each couplet. Change all of the figurative language to literal.

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a tone of [Choose a word from your tonal chart.], , revealing [What observation about human nature does the poem suggest?]

## The Story We Know

Martha Collins (b. 1940)

The way to begin is always the same. Hello,  
Hello. Your hand, your name. So glad, just fine,  
and Good bye at the end. That's every story we know,

5 and why pretend? But lunch tomorrow? No?  
Yes? An omelette, salad, chilled white wine?  
The way to begin is simple, sane, Hello,

and then it's Sunday, coffee, the Times, a slow  
day by the fire, dinner at eight or nine  
and Good bye. In the end, this is a story we know

10 so well we don't turn the page, or look below  
the picture, or follow the words to the next line:  
The way to begin is always the same Hello.

But one night, through the latticed window, snow  
begins to whiten the air, and the tall white pine.  
15 Good bye is the end of every story we know

that night, and when we dose the curtains, oh,  
we hold each other against that cold white sign  
of the way we all begin and end. Hello,  
Good bye is the only story. We know, we know.

### Understanding the Poem

1. Describe a villanelle by explicating the stanza pattern and the rhyme scheme of this poem. How many different end rhymes are in the poem? How many times is each sound repeated? Which words are repeated exactly at the ends of lines, in what pattern? How does the last stanza use the rhyming words? Why is this appropriate at the end of the poem?
2. Isolating the *b* rhymes (middle line of each tercet) gives us this list: fine, wine, nine, line, pine, sign. What is the significance of each of these words to the whole poem?
3. Incremental repetition tends to augment meaning and accumulate significance. What variations in meaning are present in the following groups of repetitions and what is their effect?

line 1: same. Hello,  
line 6: same, Hello,  
line 12: same Hello.  
line 18: end. Hello,

line 3: Good-bye at the end.  
line 9: Good-bye. In the end  
line 15: Good-bye is the end  
line 19: Good-bye is the only

line 3: every story we know  
line 9: this is a story we know  
line 15: every story we know  
line 19: We know, we know.

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], the villanelle's incremental repetition and circular movement contribute to the [Choose a word from your tonal chart.] tone of the poem, revealing [What observation about human nature is the poet making?]

### **Sonnet 73**

*William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
5 In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

### Understanding the Poem

1. What is the contribution of rhetorical devices such as repetition and parallelism?
2. Analyze the figurative language in each of the quatrains. What does the speaker have in common with each of the things to which he compares himself? What progression is implied by each metaphor and its order in the poem?

### Thesis Blueprint

In **[poet]**'s poem **[title of poem—in quotation marks]**, **[literary devices]** in the first three quatrains create a tone of **[choose a word from your tonal chart]** in describing the speaker's old age; the concluding couplet, however, creates complexity by **[Does the couplet reinforce the three quatrains or suggest a turn?]**

## Well, I Have Lost You

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)*

- Well, I have lost you; and I lost you fairly;  
In my own way, and with my full consent.  
Say what you will, kings in a tumbrel rarely  
Went to their deaths more proud than this one went.
- 5      Some nights of apprehension and hot weeping  
I will confess; but that's permitted me;  
Day dried my eyes; I was not one for keeping  
Rubbed in a cage a wing that would be free.  
If I had loved you less or played you slyly
- 10     I might have held you for a summer more,  
But at the cost of words I value highly,  
And no such summer as the one before.  
Should I outlive this anguish—and men do—  
I shall have only good to say of you.

### Understanding the Poem

1. Paraphrase the first quatrain.
2. Paraphrase the second quatrain, explaining the metaphor in line 8.
3. Explain the syntactical structure of the third quatrain, which contains the speaker's proposition, and the paraphrase the quatrain.

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] the first three quatrains create a tone of [Choose a tone word from your tonal chart.], and the concluding couplet [supports or refutes?] the tone, revealing the idea that [What is the speaker explaining?].

## Auto Wreck

Karl Shapiro (1913-2000)

- Its quick soft silver bell beating, beating,  
And down the dark one ruby flare  
Pulsing out red light like an artery,  
The ambulance at top speed floating down  
5 Past beacons and illuminated clocks  
Wings in a heavy curve, dips down,  
And brakes speed, entering the crowd.  
The doors leap open, emptying light;  
Stretchers are laid out, the mangled lifted  
10 And stowed into the little hospital.  
Then the bell, breaking the hush, tolls once,  
And the ambulance with its terrible cargo  
Rocking, slightly rocking, moves away,  
As the doors, and afterthought, are closed.
- 15 We are deranged, walking among the cops  
Who sweep glass and are large and composed.  
One is still making notes under the light.  
One with a bucket douches ponds of blood  
Into the street and gutter.  
20 One hangs lanterns on the wrecks that cling,  
Empty husks of locusts, to iron poles.
- Our throats were tight as tourniquets,  
Our feet were bound with splints, but now,  
Like convalescents intimate and gauche,  
25 We speak through sickly smiles and warn  
With the stubborn saw of common sense,  
The grim joke and the banal resolution.  
The traffic moves around with care,  
But we remain, touching a wound  
30 That opens to our richest horror.  
Already old, the question Who shall die?  
Becomes unspoken Who is innocent?
- For death in war is done by hands;  
Suicide has cause and stillbirth, logic;  
35 And cancer, simple as a flower, blooms.
- But this invites the occult mind,  
Cancels our physics with a sneer,  
And spatters all we knew of denouement  
Across the expedient and wicked stones.

### Understanding the Poem

1. What imagery does Shapiro use in the first three lines to evoke sound and sight? How do these images become increasingly significant in the context of the entire poem?
2. On a literal level, what contextual significance do the following words and phrases have: *mangled* (line 9), “tolls once” (line 11), “terrible cargo” (line 12), *rocking, slightly rocking* (line 13), *deranged* and *composed* (lines 15 and 16)?
3. Analyze the metaphors in lines 3, 18, 22, and 29-30. What pattern do they create and why is it appropriate to the poem?
4. What is added to the theme of the poem by the metaphors in lines 20-21 and the simile in 24-27?

In [poet]’s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a tone of [Choose at least 2 words from your tonal chart.], ultimately revealing [What is the overall meaning of the poem?]

### Spring and Fall

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

- Márgarét, áre you gríeving  
Over Goldengrove unleaving?  
Leáves, líke the things of mán, you  
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?  
5 Áh! Ás the heart grows ólder  
It will come to such sights colder  
By and by, nor spare a sigh  
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;  
And yet you *will* weep and know why.  
10 Now no matter, child, the name:  
Sórrów's spríngs áre the sáme.  
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed  
What héart héárd of, ghóst guéssed:  
It is the blíght mán was bórn for,  
15 It is Margaret you mourn for.

### The Oven Bird

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

- There is a singer everyone has heard,  
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,  
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.  
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers  
5 Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.  
He says the early petal-fall is past  
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers  
On sunny days a moment overcast;  
And comes that other fall we name the fall.  
10 He says the highway dust is over all.  
The bird would cease and be as other birds  
But that he knows in singing not to sing.  
The question that he frames in all but words  
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

#### Understanding “Spring and Fall”

1. Hopkins’s short lyric shares some elements with the sonnet, but is a nonce form, invented for this poem only. Hopkins’s idiosyncratic meter, which he dubbed “sprung rhythm,” uses accent marks over certain syllables. What is the dominant meter and line length? What is the rhyme scheme? Describe the poem’s structure. (Hint: The anomaly in the rhyme scheme is the key.)
2. What is the effect of the frequent use of alliteration in the poem? Combined with assonance and consonance, what mood does this device create?
3. Comment on the effect created by such unusual diction as *Goldengrove* and *unleaving* (line 2) *fresh* (line 4), *wanwood* and *leafmeal* (line 8), *springs* (line 11), and *blight* (line 14). How do the connotations of these words create the poem’s mood?
4. Analyze the poet’s use of figurative language. How does it suggest the theme of the poem?

#### Understanding “The Oven Bird”

1. Frost’s poem, like Hopkins’s, borrows from the sonnet form. What is its meter, rhyme scheme, and structure?
2. Paraphrase the three messages of the oven bird; then, analyze the meaning of the word *fall* as it encapsulates the theme of the poem.
  1. Paraphrase the last four lines of the poem. How does the oven bird symbolize the human condition?

#### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]’s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks] and [poet]’s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks] the tone of each speaker and the approach of each poet convey different ideas about the same subject: [What is the subject and how do the ideas differ?]

### Song

Edmund Waller (1606-1687)

Go lovely Rose,  
Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
That now she knows,  
When I resemble her to thee,  
5 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,  
And shuns to have her graces spied,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts where no men abide,  
10 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retir'd:  
Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
15 And not blush so to be admir'd.

Then die, that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
May read in thee,  
How small a part of time they share  
20 That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

### Virtue

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky,  
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;  
For thou must die.

5 Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:  
Thy root is ever in its grave,  
And thou must die.

10 Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
A box where sweets compacted lie,  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And all must die.

15 Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like season'd timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

### Understanding "Song"

1. What is the occasion of the poem? What literary device does the poet employ? Describe what you know of the speaker, the listener, and the "she" referred to in the poem.
2. Paraphrase each of the four stanzas.
3. Describe the prosody, including stanza form, rhyme, meter, and notable metrical substitutions, as well as the structure of the poem. How do these choices help to reinforce the poem's content?

### Understanding "Virtue"

1. Consider first Herbert's use of metaphor and personification. In each case, what two unlike things are being compared? What do they have in common?
2. How is the poem structured, and how does this structure support its meaning? Consider parallelism, order, and turn in the poem.
3. How does the prosody reinforce the poem's meaning?

### Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] develop the traditional theme of *carpe diem*; however, in [poet]'s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices], while seeming to develop the theme of *carpe diem*, lead to a reversal in thinking, suggesting [What does the poem assert?].

**Dear March—Come in—**  
*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

Dear March—Come in—  
How glad I am—  
I hoped for you before—  
Put down your Hat—  
5 You must have walked—  
How out of Breath you are—  
Dear March, how are you, and the Rest—  
Did you leave Nature well—  
Dear March, Come right up the stairs with me—  
10 I have so much to tell—

I got your Letter, and the Birds—  
The Maples never knew that you were coming—till I called  
I declare—how Red their Faces grew—  
But March, forgive me—and  
15 All those Hills you left for me to Hue—  
There was no Purple suitable—  
You took it all with you—

Who knocks? That April.  
Lock the Door—  
20 I will not be pursued—  
He stayed away a Year to call  
When I am occupied—  
But trifles look so trivial  
As soon as you have come

25 That Blame is just as dear as Praise  
And Praise as mere as Blame—

**Apparently with no surprise**  
*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

Apparently with no surprise  
To any happy Flower  
The Frost beheads it at its play—  
In accidental power—  
5 The blond Assassin passes on—  
The Sun proceeds unmoved  
To measure off another Day,  
For an Approving God.

Understanding “Dear March—Come in--”

1. Why are the short lines and long stanzas appropriate?
2. Describe the structure of the four stanzas.
3. What is the tone of this address to March, and how is it achieved?
4. What strikes you as unusual about the speaker’s marked preference for the first month of spring rather than the second?

Understanding “Apparently with no surprise”

1. Describe the structure, prosody, and anomalies of the poem.
2. Describe the personified characters in the poem, commenting on the effect of Dickinson’s use of diction to establish the tone of the poem.

Thesis Blueprint

In [poet]’s poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a tone of [choose a word from your tonal chart], while in her poem [title of poem—in quotation marks], [literary devices] create a tone of [choose a word from our tonal chart], revealing [What observation about human nature can you make based on these two poems?]