

Looking at how a poem is written

### **VOICE • register • tone**

- How would I read this poem aloud? Is there anything about the poem which makes it difficult for me to read it aloud?
- Does the voice in this poem sound as if it's coming from a particular time or place?
- Who seems to be speaking in this poem? Who is the poem speaking to?
- Does the poem's tone of voice suggest a particular attitude towards the reader?
- Is the poem characterised by a particular kind of vocabulary, or style of sentence?
- Does the tone of voice suggest a particular attitude towards the subject matter of the poem?
- Is there more than one kind of voice in the poem? If so, what's the relationship between the two?

### **FORM • pattern • typography**

- Is there a formal structure to this poem? Does it have a regular metrical pattern? Is there a rhyme scheme? Could someone sing this poem?
- Are there other ways in which this poem is patterned? What elements of repetition are there?
- Is this form associated with a particular type of poem, or particular period?
- What typographic conventions does the poem use, or not use? How does that contribute to the style or voice of the poem?
- Do any of these things help me in understanding what kind of poem this is?
- Does the form of the poem emphasise any aspect of its meaning?

### **IMAGERY • metaphor • representation**

- Which image first caught my attention? Which image is most central to what the poem has to say? Did any of the images surprise me?
- Are some of these images metaphorical? What things are being superimposed here? How does this add to my understanding?
- Do some of the images suggest strong positive or negative connotations?
- Do certain images connect with each other, to create a particular mood or attitude or impression?
- Are there contrasting images in the poem? How does these contribute to meaning? Does it relate to shifts in the narrative or argument?

### **NARRATIVE • argument • viewpoint**

- Is the poem divided into sections? Do these correspond to shifts in the narrative or argument?
- What tenses are used here? Is there a dominant tense, or a mixture? What does this tell me about the poem?
- Which pronouns are used? Is this broadly a first, second, third person text? A mixture?
- From what viewpoint is the story told? Where would the camera be if the poem were filmed? Does the viewpoint change?
- Is it clear what kind of sequence this is - narration, argument, description?
- Which are the key connectives? What do they tell me about the way the poem develops?
- What questions does the poet ask? What questions are left for the reader to ask?