

Literature II – 6

Unit 3: Poetry—A Cadence for Expressing Truth

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This LightUnit goes with
pages 255-275 of
Perspectives of Truth in Literature.

The crown of literature is poetry
The writer of prose can only step aside when the poet passes.
 —W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

In this LightUnit, you will continue your study of poetry. You will memorize and recite a poem, as you did in the last LightUnit. In Lesson 9, you will read a poem to an audience, also something you have done before. Smaller poetry writing assignments throughout this LightUnit will help prepare you to write your own poem in Lesson 14.

When you study poetry, you will quickly notice that most enduring poems are written about ordinary things that everyone can relate to. What makes a poem extraordinary is the poet's vision, the way he sees meaning and depth where others do not. Notice greatness in the common things of life, starting today!

Poetry is the art of substantiating shadows.
 —Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

Section 1

Lesson 1

“To a Waterfowl”

 Read “To a Waterfowl” (pp. 255-256).

 Write the author of the poem “To a Waterfowl.”

1. The author of this poem is _____, who was born in Massachusetts, and became known for his poem “Thanatopsis,” which he wrote in his teens, and according to some sources, revised 99 times.

 Follow the directions.

2. From the seventh stanza of the poem, write the two words that are examples of both feminine rhyme and imperfect rhyme: _____
3. Write the rhyme scheme of Stanza 7: _____ Stanza 8: _____

Lesson 1



Answer the following questions about the setting of “To a Waterfowl.”

4. At what time of day did the poet make his observations? _____
5. What was the poet watching? _____
6. To whom or what is the poet talking? _____
7. What the poem does not tell you is that when Bryant wrote this poem, he was in a season of depression. He was at a point of indecision about where he should locate a business. He was not sure what the future would hold for him. How could this experience of watching the bird give him courage for those uncertainties? _____



Bryant had an extensive grasp of the English language. From the poem, write the word that he used instead of the underlined words given in the following lines from the poem.

8. _____ Dost thou pursue thy lonely way?
9. _____ Vainly the bird hunter's eye might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong . . .
10. _____ Seek'st thou the marshy brink of weedy lake...
11. _____ Or margin of river wide . . .
12. _____ Or where the rocking billows rise and sink on the eroded ocean's side?
13. _____ The desert and endless air—
14. _____ Thou'rt gone; the immeasurable space of heaven hath swallowed up thy form . . .



Match these poetic expressions with their literal meaning.

15. _____ “midst falling dew”
16. _____ “the last steps of day”
17. _____ “the rosy depth”
18. _____ “to do thee wrong”
19. _____ “the pathless coast”
20. _____ “thy wings have fanned”
21. _____ “the abyss of heaven hath swallowed up thy form”

- a. as the temperature cools
- b. the bird is too far away to be seen
- c. flying motions of the bird
- d. just as the sun is setting
- e. kill or capture the bird
- f. no visible markers to show the way
- g. reddened sky of sunset

**Answer these questions.**

- ☐ 22. Do you agree with the poet that we must tread our way “alone”?

- ☐ 23. If it is true that God will guide our steps “aright,” why are many people not going in the right way? _____

Presenting Poetry

As mentioned at the beginning of this LightUnit, you will be asked to choose a poem to memorize and recite at the end of the LightUnit. Since you will be doing other writing projects, you will not be asked to write this poem from memory, except for parts of it on the quizzes. You will have to discipline yourself to make sure you have it memorized by Lesson 14. Choose from this list of poems:

“To a Waterfowl” by William Cullen Bryant

“The Lamb” by William Blake

“Lines Written in Early Spring” by William Wordsworth

“I Saw God Wash the World” by William L. Stidger

“The Tuft of Flowers” by Robert Frost

“Evening Star” by Chr. Richardt

**Write the title of your choice.**

- ☐ 24. _____

**Follow the instructions.**

25. Write Edmund Burke’s quote about poetry from the LightUnit introduction.

26. Give a definition of *substantiate* that fits Burke’s usage of the word.

“The Lamb”



Read “The Lamb” (p. 258).



Write the author’s name.

1. The author, _____, was born in London, England. He was both an artist and a poet, though he never went to the traditional elementary schools of his day. He married a woman who could not read, but he taught her how.



Follow the directions.

2. Using a dictionary, define *mead*, the last word in line 4. The word is no longer commonly used, but your dictionary should give its archaic meaning. _____
3. Blake emphasizes God’s ample provisions by listing the things He has given the lamb. List four things from the first stanza that the lamb receives from its Creator. (The second one is started for you, since it is worded differently.)
 - a. _____
 - b. bid _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
4. In a few words, write the idea from each verse that Blake also included in his poem.
 - a. John 1:3 _____
 - b. Isaiah 9:6 _____
 - c. 1 Peter 2:23 _____



Match the definitions and examples. Use each letter twice.

5. _____ repetition of initial consonant sounds in adjacent words
6. _____ repetition of vowel sounds in adjacent words
7. _____ words that sound like the sound they describe
8. _____ the crack of breaking ice
9. _____ faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free
10. _____ bid thee feed / By the stream and o’er the mead;

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. alliterationb. assonancec. onomatopoeia |
|--|



Do these exercises to help you consider Blake’s technique.

11. This poem appeals to children because of its subject (a baby animal) and because of its lovely sounds and easy rhyme. The poem also appeals to adults because of its deeper meaning—Christ as Creator and Christ as a lamb. The poem appeals to both audiences because of its relaxing, pleasant mood. Write three words from the poem that contribute to the mood. (There are more than three.)
- _____
12. The rhythm of the poem suits its subject.
- a. Is the rhythm iambic or trochaic? _____
- b. What kind of mood does this type of poetic foot usually accompany? (Refer to pages 230 and 231 if you need to. _____)

Creative Writing



Write a one-stanza poem, copying the style of “The Lamb.” Choose a different subject, but imitate the style of “The Lamb,” using the same rhyme and rhythm patterns.

Look at this example:

Spreading elm, we like you.
 Do you know we like you?
 Like your branches, reaching high;
 Like your leaves that brush the sky;
 Like your porches for the jays
 And the way your cool shade lays
 How we wish you’d always be,
 Standing tall, our favorite tree.
 Spreading elm, we like you.
 All on earth, they like you.

- 13. Give your poem to your teacher.

LOOKING BACK . . .



Write Edmund Burke’s quote about poetry.

14. _____