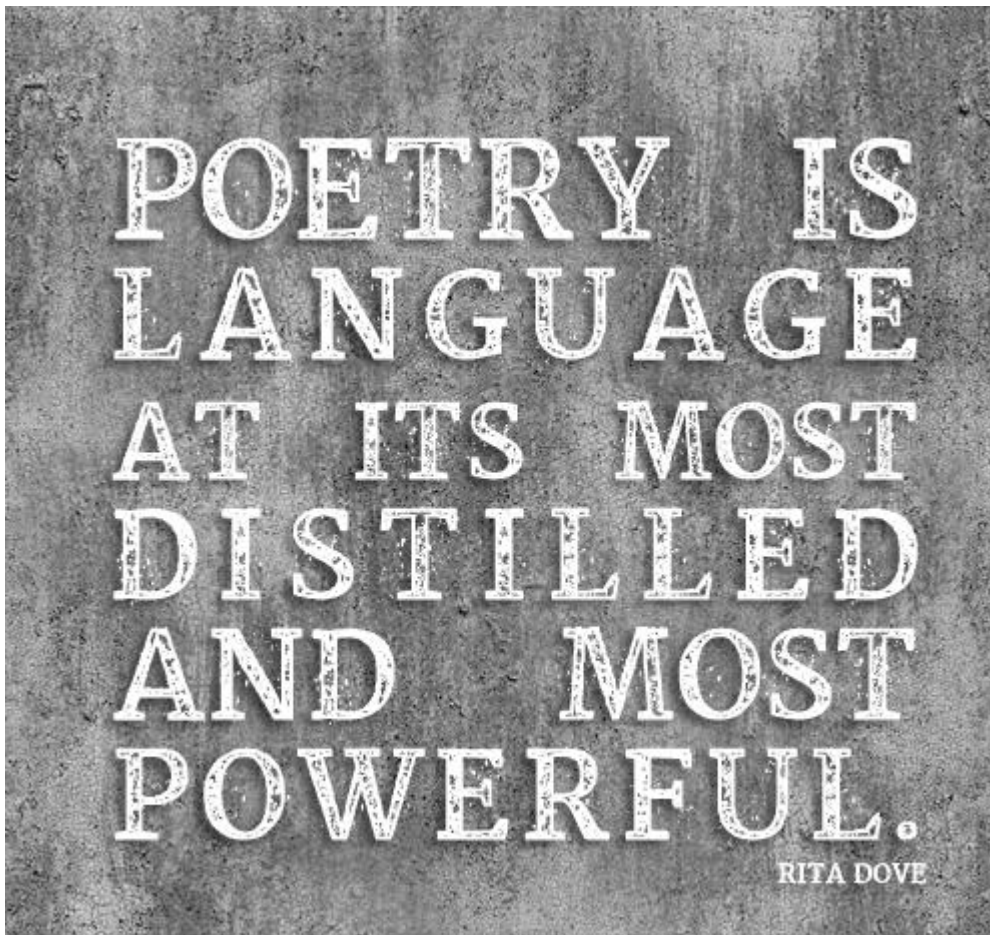


# A Guide to Teaching the Anthology



# The Manhunt by Simon Armitage

- The title 'The Manhunt' suggests a chase or searching for something or that he is lost
- Images of delicate materials "porcelain" and "silk" suggests beauty and vulnerability
- Images of broken body parts "grazed heart", "broken ribs" suggests human casualties of war
- Pain still growing mentally and physically "foetus of metal" and "unexploded mine" suggests potential to still explode or permanent scarring
- Final words – "only then did I come close" suggests it is a journey through his pain and healing and their reconciliation as a couple. She is finally closer to 'catching' him.

## Context

- Told from the perspective of a soldier's wife – deals with the idea of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its impact on the soldier and those around him/her.

## Possible Themes and Links

- War and its lasting effects – *Mametz Wood* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*
- Relationships and love – *Cozy Apologia* and *A Wife in London*
- Suffering (mental and physical) - *Mametz Wood* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*

## Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

- The opening line “How do I love thee?” suggests an intimate conversation between lovers
- “Depth”, “breadth” and “height” are weighty concepts which suggest her love is comprehensive and allows her to reach impossible extremes
- Poem of comparisons – “Most quiet need” and “men strive for Right” are two very different ideas. One is simple and one is complex showing the intensity of her feelings
- Replaced her faith in God with her love for her husband – “lost saints”
- Final words – “I love thee better after death” suggests even death will not part them. Their love is eternal.

### Context

- Part of a larger series of poems ‘Sonnets from the Portuguese’ – a collection of love poems
- EBB’s brother drowned at a young age and as a result her father was very over-protective. She eloped against his wishes with the poet, Robert Browning, showing how important love was to her

### Possible Themes and Links

- Relationships and love – *Cozy Apologia*, *Valentine* and *She Walks in Beauty*

# London by William Blake

- The opening “I wander thro’” shows the poem is structured as a journey
- Repetition of “charter’d” suggests London is owned and people have been robbed of their rights
- In stanza two, the repetition of “every” suggests enormity of poverty from children through to adults
- Blake places blame on the church and state – “black’ning Church” and “Runs in blood down Palace walls”
- Final words – “blights with plagues” suggests everything good is destroyed. “Plagues” implies decay and pestilence

## Context

- Published as part of ‘Songs of Innocence and Experience’. This poem is one of the songs of Experience reflecting the more negative aspects of life
- Blake lived and worked in London during the Victorian era, a time of great poverty and industrial change

## Possible Themes and Links

- Welfare and living conditions – Living Space

# The Soldier by Rupert Brooke

- The title 'The Soldier' suggests an anonymous person, reflecting how many soldiers died during WWI. It is a sonnet, a love poem to England
- Opening line "If I should die" suggests an acceptance of death and modal verb "should" indicates a willingness to die for his country
- The words "richer dust" suggests the remains of his body are superior to the ground he lies in because he is English not foreign. Dust also relates to the religious idea of our bodies becoming "dust" when we die
- "A pulse in the eternal mind" suggests his presence in the soil of foreign land will always live on, making him immortal
- Final words – "under an English heaven" shows his pride in England as he is suggesting England is almost like paradise and to die in England's name would bring him "peace"

## Context

- Rupert Brooke was a soldier during WWI and died of blood poisoning. He was buried in "a foreign field" in Cyprus
- He never was involved in active service

## Possible Themes and Links

- Patriotism – *Dulce et Decorum Est*
- Loss in war – *Dulce et Decorum Est* and *A Wife in London*
- Pride – *Ozymandias* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*

# She Walks in Beauty by Lord Byron

- The title and opening line “She walks in beauty” celebrates female beauty, a portrait of a woman through someone else’s eyes
- References to light suggests an inner radiance – “starry skies” and “tender light”
- Sense of mystery surrounding her - she is compared to the darkness of night and “raven tress” is associated with bad omens
- Suggestion of a recent encounter as description is superficial – “smiles that win, the tints that glow” suggests inner modesty and she is loved by all
- Final words – “A heart whose love is innocent!” is the first time love is mentioned and her beauty is described both internally and externally

## Context

- Published as part of Hebrew Melodies, Byron was a leading figure in the Romantic movement and his poetry emphasised emotion
- Byron’s personal life was very public and may have had an impact on his idea of romantic love

## Possible Themes and Links

- Relationships and love – *Sonnet 43*, *Cozy Apologia* and *Valentine*

# Living Space by Imtiaz Dharker

- The title is ironic as there isn't much "living space" in the slums of Mumbai
- The enjambment of the poem reflects how the structures lean over and are on top of each other and the central stanza is "squeezed" in to reflect how living spaces are "squeezed" into small gaps
- Language such as "crookedly", "clutch" and "leans dangerously" suggests it is unsafe
- The image of the "eggs" shows ordinary objects make the slums feel like home and also reflect the fragility of life
- Final words – "thin walls of faith" suggests the existence of these living spaces is a miracle and implies they still have "faith" even in difficult conditions

## Context

- Born in Pakistan but raised in Scotland, Imtiaz Dharker has an interest in representing a different culture

## Possible Themes and Links

- Welfare and living conditions – *London*
- Fragility of life and resilience of spirit – *The Manhunt* and *Mametz Wood*

# As Imperceptibly as Grief by Emily Dickinson

- The title and the first line “As imperceptibly as Grief” links the idea of grief to the passing of summer
- The tone is melancholic – “Twilight long begun” suggests that grief is overtaking her happiness
- The images of the end of a day/season such as “dusk”, “twilight” and “Summer lapsed away” suggest the passing of time and life
- Final words – “Summer made her light escape Into the Beautiful” suggests the passage of time is inevitable but will end in something more positive – possibly a release into heaven
- The tone of the final words is more hopeful than the rest of the poem

## Context

- Emily Dickinson was a recluse, lived opposite a graveyard and saw many friends die

## Possible Themes and Links

- Time passing – *To Autumn* and *Afternoons*
- The natural world – *To Autumn*, *Excerpt from the Prelude* and *Death of a Naturalist*



## Cozy Apologia (for Fred) by Rita Dove

- The poem is in first person and could be autobiographical – “I could pick anything and think of you”
- Uses a cliché ironically – “the chain mail glinting” and has a dreamy tone but is affectionate and humorous
- It is a love poem filled with day to day details such as “compact disks” and “faxes” which shows it is about the realities of relationships, not “the divine”
- The hurricane “Big Bad Floyd” has allowed her to daydream about the “worthless” boys of her past
- Final words – “I fill this stolen time with you” suggests their relationship is happy and appreciated and the tone is reflective and thoughtful. Being content is better than great romance – it is consistent

### Context

- Floyd hit the east coast of America in 1999
- Rita Dove is American and married to the writer Fred Viebahn (probably the “Fred” in the poem)

### Possible Themes and Links

- Relationships and love – *Sonnet 43*, *She Walks in Beauty* and *Valentine*

## Valentine by Carol Ann Duffy

- The title suggests a typical love poem but the opening line “Not a red rose or a satin heart” suggests the poet flouts traditional images of love
- The poem is written in first person, “I give you an onion” immediately debunking the idea of a traditional gift
- The idea of love isn’t elevated or refined as “a wobbling photo of grief” suggests love can be painful and our emotions can overwhelm us
- Language such as “blind”, “fierce” and “possessive” suggests an intensity to love that will only last as long as they are true to each other. “If you like” implies the intensity of love isn’t dependant on a wedding ring
- Final words – “cling to your knife” suggests love can be dangerous and all consuming. The slightly sinister tone suggests an obsessive side to love

### Context

- Carol Ann Duffy is a lesbian and, at the time of writing the poem would have been unable to marry her partner

### Possible Themes and Links

- Relationships and love – *Sonnet 43*, *She Walks in Beauty* and *Cozy Apologia*

## A Wife in London by Thomas Hardy

- The poem is structured in two halves “The Tragedy” and “The Irony” showing it is like chapters in a tragic story. The two halves could suggest her life has been split into two
- The language is ominous, indicating darkness and tragedy – “tawny vapour”, “webby fold” and “waning taper”
- “He – has fallen” is a euphemism to shield the widow from the harsh truth but the dashes represent her grief and inability to process the news
- Pathetic fallacy of the “fog hangs thicker” shows her grief is settling in
- Final words – “new love that they would learn” shows the irony that that he was looking forward to their new life together. It is heartbreaking because they will never be together

### Context

- Thomas Hardy was a novelist – so was a storyteller
- The poem is probably related to the Boer War

### Possible Themes and Links

- London life - *London*
- Relationships and war – *The Manhunt*

# Death of a Naturalist by Seamus Heaney

- The title is metaphorical – the “death” symbolises the speaker’s loss of innocence as he grows up
- The tone of the poem at the beginning is almost enthusiastic – the verbs “sweltered”, “festered” and “gargled” suggest the speaker is almost relishing the vile smells of the dam
- Language such as “jampots full”, “fattening dots” and “mammy frog” suggest childhood innocence
- The tone changes on “one hot day” and the tone becomes more aware of the dangers – “angry frogs”
- Final words – “spawn would clutch it” shows the contrast with when he would collect the “jellied specks” – he has grown up and no longer wants to play the games of his childhood

## Context

- Seamus Heaney’s four year old brother died in a car accident when Heaney was a young boy. The death affected him badly and many of his poems are about loss of innocence
- Heaney grew up on a farm and many of his poems reflect his upbringing

## Possible Themes and Links

- Loss of innocence – *Afternoons*
- Childhood memories – *Excerpt from The Prelude*
- Passing of time – *As Imperceptibly as Grief, Excerpt from The Prelude* and *To Autumn*

# Hawk Roosting by Ted Hughes

- In the title of the poem “roosting” suggests the hawk is still, not a swooping bird of prey as we may imagine. This gives a sense of the hawk meditating on his powers of destruction
- The tone is haughty. The hawk is focussed and not distracted – “no falsifying dream”
- The language creates an arrogance to the hawk – “I hold Creation in my foot”, “it is all mine”
- There is a sense of control and that the hawk is playing God throughout the poem – “allotment of death”
- Final words – “I am going to keep things like this” shows the power that the hawk has. It is a statement suggesting he is king of the animal kingdom and untouchable

## Context

- Ted Hughes was Poet Laureate until his death in 1984 and wrote many poems about the natural world
- Hughes said the poem wasn't about cruelty – he just wanted to show a hawk's 'natural way of thinking'

## Possible Themes and Links

- Power - *Ozymandias*
- Natural world – *To Autumn* and *Death of a Naturalist*

# To Autumn by John Keats

- The poem is an 'ode' which is like a dedication – Keats is writing to Autumn to celebrate it although he could also be advancing “to” the premature autumn years of his life (as he died very young)
- The tone in the first stanza is celebratory – “fruitfulness”, “load and bless” and “ripeness” all suggest abundance and growth
- Keats personifies autumn and addresses it directly – he suggests Autumn has all the time in the world “sound asleep”. The tone in this stanza is wistful as Keats was aware of his own mortality
- In the final stanza the tone becomes more resigned as the poem moves towards Winter showing the passing of time and the “soft dying day”
- The third stanza ends with signs of the impending winter such as “the red breast whistles”

## Context

- John Keats was a Romantic poet and wrote a lot about nature and the natural world
- Keats dies at the age of 25 from tuberculosis or consumption. He didn't have the opportunity to have children or marry. He was convinced he would leave no lasting mark on the world

## Possible Themes and Links

- Passing of time – *Afternoons*, *Death of a Naturalist* and *As Imperceptibly as Grief*
- The natural world – *Excerpt from The Prelude* and *Death of a Naturalist*

## Afternoons by Philip Larkin

- The title “Afternoons” suggests the end of the day and time passing
- The tone is wistful and the poem has a sense of longing for the past – “summer is fading”
- The language suggests there is little meaning in the lives of the “young mothers” – “hollow” and “assemble” suggest routine and boredom creating a sense of emptiness
- The idea of time passing is developed throughout the poem – “their beauty has thickened” suggest aging
- The last line “to the side of their own lives” echoes the idea of “setting free their children” from the first stanza. There is the implication that their lives are ruled by their children who “expect to be taken home”

### Context

- Philip Larkin’s poetry celebrates the ordinary details of day to day life
- Larkin never married, had children or even left the UK in his whole life

### Possible Themes and Links

- Time passing – *To Autumn* and *As Imperceptibly as Grief*
- Loss of innocence/growing up – *Death of a Naturalist*

# Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen

- The opening image of the soldiers, “Bent double”, “coughing like hags”, suggests they have been physically broken by war, they are exhausted and dirty, they “trudge”, they march “asleep”, they are “drink with fatigue”
- The use of the exclamation mark and capitalisation in “Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!” suggests the urgency and fear of the impending gas attack
- The stand-alone stanza, together with the verbs “guttering, choking, drowning” reinforced the horror of the soldier caught in the attack. The verb “drowning” also suggests the impenetrability of the gas and how it is invading his lungs
- The repetition of “dreams” emphasises how war has infiltrated his sleep, how he can never have peace, not even when he is sleeping
- Final words – “the old Lie”, allows Owen to highlight how war is not honourable or glorious, but cruel, degrading, dirty and horrifying

## Context

- Wilfred Owen was killed in action on 4 November 1918 exactly one week (almost to the hour) before the signing of the Armistice which ended the First World War.
- His mother received the telegram informing her of his death on Armistice Day, as the church bells were ringing out in celebration.

## Possible Themes and Links

- War and suffering – *Mametz Wood, Manhunt*
- Patriotism – *The Soldier*



# Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

- The poem opens in the first person as the speaker tells of a “traveller” he has met. The use of the adjective “antique” suggests the land he is visiting is rich with history
- The “frown” and “wrinkled”, the “sneer of cold command” suggests that the leader’s proud, arrogant and stern face is still “stamped” on the broken stone, even though he and the sculptor are both long dead
- The king’s proud boast, “Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!” has been ironically disproved
- “Nothing beside remains”, suggests that Ozymandias’ works have crumbled, his civilisation is gone and has been turned to dust by the power of history and time
- Final words – “The lone and level sands stretch far away,” suggests how the broken statue is a monument to man’s hubris. The poem is a statement about insignificance of human beings to the passage of time

## Context

- Percy Bysshe Shelley was a Romantic poet
- He held some radical political and social views

## Possible Themes and Links

- Power – *Hawk Roosting*

# Mametz Wood by Owen Sheers

- The poem opens with the phrase “For years afterwards...”, which suggests that the horror of war, and this particular tragedy still affects us.
- The language, such as “china plate”, “broken bird’s egg of a skull”, the broken “mosaic of bone” used suggests that the soldiers were vulnerable and fragile
- The poem’s stanzas alternate between ideas to do with the land, “the earth stands sentinel” and imagery to do with the bones of the dead soldiers. The earth is a witness to the tragedy
- The imagery evokes the horror of war. The “socketed heads tilted back at an angle” brutally visualises the moment the men were shot and their screams of pain
- Final words – “their absent tongues”, suggests that the soldiers have finally found a voice. The final stanza combines both elements of the alternating stanzas and suggests that the poem is about offering redemption or justice, both for the dead and the land

## Context

- Mametz Wood was an objective during the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of the Somme in 1916
- The 38<sup>th</sup> Welsh Division lost 4,000 men during the attack which lasted five days

## Possible Themes and Links

- War, suffering, patriotism – *Dulce et Decorum Est*, *A Wife in London*, *The Soldier*
- Fragility of soldiers – *Manhunt*

## Excerpt from The Prelude by William Wordsworth

- The poem opens with imagery to do with winter, such as “frosty”, and suggests the premature end of a wintery day. Images of warmth, such as as “blaz’d” and “the sun” are contrasted with this
- The use of verbs such as “wheel’d”, “hiss’d” and “flew”, such rapid movement, while the noun “rapture” suggests the intense enjoyment of the boys skating on the lake
- The natural world is represented in the poem, with “woodland pleasure”, and “leafless trees”, while the humans are also portrayed as animals. The skaters are all “shod with steel” like “untir’d” horses, chasing the “hunted hare”
- There is imagery to do with sounds, the pack is “bellowing”, the icy crags “tinkled like iron”, there is an “alien sound/Of melancholy
- Final words – “in the west/The orange sky of evening died away”, which suggests the vivid image of a sunset as we return to the warm glow of the evening

## Context

- William Wordsworth was one of the first and most influential of the Romantic era
- His poetry was interested in the natural environment, particularly the English countryside

## Possible Themes and Links

- The natural world – *Death of a Naturalist*, *To Autumn*