

# Poetry Practice

## Activity One Figures of Speech:

### I. Identify (+ explain) similes included in these examples:

1. She had been .....  
Solid as a tree, .....  
A fur around her neck, a .....  
Light-skinned matron whose car was parked. ....
  
2. When my legs gave out, my grandmother .....  
dragged me up and held me like God .....  
holds saints by the .....  
roots of the hair. ....
  
3. Life is a broken-winged bird .....  
Life is a barren field .....  
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4. The snow was like a blanket. ....  
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5. I wondered lonely as a cloud. ....  
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6. Sadness falls inside me like rain. ....  
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### II. Identify (+explain) metaphors included in these examples:

1. The snow was a blanket over the earth. ....  
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2. My mother has a heart of gold. ....  
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3. Laughter is the best medicine. ....  
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4. Time is money. ....  
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5. The world is a stage .....  
All men and women merely players. ....  
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### III. Identify (+explain) personifications included in these examples:

1. Winter is here! The Masterful King .....  
 Sits high on his icy white throne .....  
 Watching his personal artist create .....  
 A work of art all of his own. ....
  
2. Because I could not stop for death- .....  
 He kindly stopped for me- .....  
 The carriage held but just Ourselves- .....  
 And immortality. (Emily Dickinson) .....
  
3. The stars winked in the night sky.  
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**IV. Identify (+explain) metonymies included in these examples:**

1. The pen is mightier than the sword.  
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 .....
  
2. Let me give you a hand.  
 .....  
 .....
  
3. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" (William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act I).  
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**V. Identify (+explain) paradoxes included in these examples:**

1. Less is more.  
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2. Ignorance is strength.  
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**VI. Identify (+explain) overstatement/understatement in these examples:**

1. I was so hungry. I could eat a cow.  
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 .....
  
2. Albert Einstein was pretty smart.  
 .....  
 .....
  
3. My backpack weighs more than a truckload of bricks.  
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**Activity Two**

**Poem Analysis (use the elements we have seen in the class)**

**“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”**

(By: William Wordsworth )

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.  
  
The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:  
  
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

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**“Lament”**

(By: Edna St. Vincent Millay)

Listen, children:  
Your father is dead.  
From his old coats  
I'll make you little jackets;  
I'll make you little trousers  
From his old pants.  
There'll be in his pockets  
Things he used to put there,  
Keys and pennies  
Covered with tobacco;  
Dan shall have the pennies  
To save in his bank;  
Anne shall have the keys  
To make a pretty noise with.  
Life must go on,  
And the dead be forgotten;  
Life must go on,  
Though good men die;  
Anne, eat your breakfast;  
Dan, take your medicine;  
Life must go on;  
I forget just why.

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**“Ballad of Birmingham”**

(By: Dudley Randall )

*(On the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963)*

“Mother dear, may I go downtown  
Instead of out to play,  
And march the streets of Birmingham  
In a Freedom March today?”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,  
For the dogs are fierce and wild,  
And clubs and hoses, guns and jails  
Aren’t good for a little child.”

“But, mother, I won’t be alone.  
Other children will go with me,  
And march the streets of Birmingham  
To make our country free.”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,  
For I fear those guns will fire.  
But you may go to church instead  
And sing in the children’s choir.”

She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair,  
And bathed rose petal sweet,  
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,  
And white shoes on her feet.

The mother smiled to know her child  
Was in the sacred place,  
But that smile was the last smile  
To come upon her face.

For when she heard the explosion,  
Her eyes grew wet and wild.  
She raced through the streets of Birmingham  
Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,  
Then lifted out a shoe.  
“O, here’s the shoe my baby wore,  
But, baby, where are you?”

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## Further Practice

- **To master the tools of analyzing poetry, read the following poems and analyze them.**  
(Analyzing a poem means identifying the elements of poetry we have seen in the class)

### **“A Poison Tree”**

(By: William Blake )

I was angry with my friend;  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,  
Night & morning with my tears:  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine,  
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,  
When the night had veild the pole;  
In the morning glad I see;  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

### **“A Minor Bird”**

(By: Robert Frost)

I have wished a bird would fly away,  
And not sing by my house all day;

Have clapped my hands at him from the door  
When it seemed as if I could bear no more.

The fault must partly have been in me.  
The bird was not to blame for his key.

And of course there must be something wrong  
In wanting to silence any song.

### **“My Heart Leaps Up”**

(By: William Wordsworth)

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!  
The Child is father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

### **“Fire and Ice”**

(By: Robert Frost)

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

**Test Yourself**

- Read the following poem by Wordsworth and answer the questions:

**“Composed upon Westminster Bridge”** (By: William Wordsworth)

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear

The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!

The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

**1- What is the form of this poem? How many stanzas are there? What is the rhyme scheme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza?**

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**2- What is the name of the figure of speech included in the 14<sup>th</sup> line? Explain.**

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**3- Identify another image and explain it.**

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**4- What is the denotation and the connotation of the underlined word depending on the context established in the poem?**

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**5- Find two different sound devices in this poem and explain them.**

(a) .....

(b) .....

*Good Luck*