

Tutorial discussion 1: Sam

Key Terms:

Retrospective/ retrospection – to look back

Enjambment – sentences that are not finished, but fall over the next line

Punctuation – can slow down or speed up the pace of a poem

Rhetorical questions – questions of rhetoric, not necessarily meant to be answered – points to consider.

Metaphorical language – visual metaphors which draw parallels between experience and ideas.

Verbs – doing words (actions) - Evocative, suggestive and allusive connotations of his verbs.

Pronoun – replaces the name of a person, animal or object.

Onomatopoeia – words that sound the same as they are spelt.

Imagery – drawing up images of the event, feeling or experience in our minds.

Repetition – highlighting an issue or idea

Quatrain – four lines

Analogous – parallel, alike or similar.

Contextualisation:

- Hughes talks about Plath's personality in this poem.
 - The poem is in response to an experience of hers, which she writes about in her poem 'Witness I remember'.
 - It was in fact a horse ride that Plath had taken.
 - Talks about the human spirit or condition.
- o Ted Hughes wasn't there.*

'Witness I remember':

Conflicting perspectives:

- Hughes seems to identify with the horse. Why do you think this?
Parallel experiences with Plath?
- Hughes is denying responsibility for her mental state.
- The use of the pronoun 'you' is almost alleging or accusatory.
- "How did you hang on?" the repetition of this reinforces his perspective and wonder of her. We see this repetition more than just physical strength, perhaps can extend into her life and battle with mental illness.
- Analogous feeling in the last quatrain.

Metaphorical sense – When reading the poem, you can imagine how it works as an almost extended metaphor (the horse ride, the horse, the rider and their relationship and experiences) for the relationships of Plath & Hughes or Plath and her father.

- He describes the physical features of the horse, then the location.
- Describes the imagined experience of the rider.
- Imagined experience
- Questioning – represents the fact he didn't personally experience this event.
- Symbolism of white – Sylvia's colour for fear + death.

Homework:

- Annotate the poem with reference to the techniques + ideas discussed.
- Fill in the scaffold 'Quote – technique – visual effect – link (analysis)'.

Sam

It was all of a piece to you
That was your horse, the white calm stallion, Sam,
Decided he'd had enough
And started home at a gallop. I can live
Your incredulity, your certainty
That this was it. You lost your stirrups. He galloped
Straight down the white line of the Barton Road.
You lost your reins, you lost your seat -
It was grab his neck and adore him
Or free-fall. You slewed under his neck,
An upside-down jockey with nothing
Between you and the cataract of macadam,
That horribly hard, swift river,
But the propeller terrors of his front legs
And the clangour of the iron shoes, so far beneath you.

Luck was already there. Did you have a helmet?
How did you cling on? Baby monkey
Using your arms and legs for clinging steel.
What saved you? Maybe your poems
Saved themselves, slung under that plunging neck,
Hammocked in your body over the switchback road.

You saw only blur. And a cyclist's shock-mask,
Fallen, dragging his bicycle over him, protective.
I can feel your bounced and dangling anguish,
Hugging what was left of your steerage.
How did you hang on? You couldn't have done it.
Something in you not you did it for itself.
You clung on, probably near unconscious.
Till he walked into his stable. That gallop
Was practice, but not enough, and quite useless.

When I jumped a fence you strangled me
One giddy moment, then fell off,
Flung yourself off and under my feet to trip me
And tripped me and lay dead. Over in a flash.

he tried to help her + she wouldn't help him
he cheated on her.

Whiteness I Remember

by Plath

Whiteness being what I remember

About Sam: whiteness and the great run

He gave me. I've gone nowhere since but

Going's been tame deviation. White,

Not of heraldic stallions: off-white

Of the stable horse whose history's

Humdrum, unexceptionable, his

Tried sobriety hiring him out

To novices and to the timid.

Yet the dapple toning his white down

To safe gray never grayed his temper.

I see him one-tracked, stubborn, white horse,

First horse under me, high as the roofs,

His near trot pitching my tense poise up,

Unsteady the steady-rooted green

Of country hedgerows and cow pastures

To a giddy jog. Then for ill will

Or to try me he suddenly set

Green grass streaming, houses a river

Of pale fronts, straw thatchings, the hard road

An anvil, hooves four hammers to jolt

Me off into their space of beating,

Stirrups undone, and decorum. And

Wouldn't slow for the hauled reins, his name,

Or shouts of walkers: crossed traffic

Stalling curbside at his oncoming,

The world subdued to his run of it.

I hung on his neck. Resoluteness

Simplified me: a rider, riding

Hung out over the hazard, over hooves

Loud on earth's bedrock. Almost thrown, not

Thrown: fear, wisdom, at one: all colors

Spinning to still in his one whiteness.

Tutorial discussion 1: *Sam*

Key Terms:

Contextualisation:

'Witness I remember':

Conflicting perspectives:

