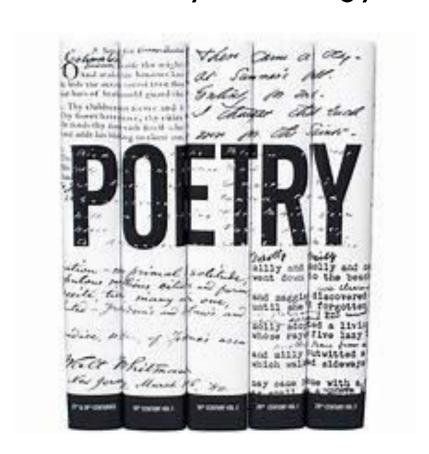




# **BBEC**

# English Literature Revision Guide EDUQAS Poetry Anthology Notes



2024



# <u>Death of a Naturalist by Seamus</u> <u>Heaney</u>



#### Who, what, where, when and why:

The poem is split into two parts. The first focuses on a childhood memory and the enjoyment that learning about frogs brings; a childhood curiosity is filled. The second part focuses on the present, and the narrator coming across frogs again. This time, they are sinister and gross, and he fears them. This is a coming-of-age poem that explores the idea that perception changes over time.

Key Quotations:	<ul> <li>"Warm thick slobber of frogspawn" – something that might be seen as disgusting as an adult seems exciting as a child. The language used shows that the narrator is an innocent child.</li> <li>"A coarse croaking that I had not heard Before" – there has been a change in tone. What was once exciting to the young boy has now changed and become alien; he does not recognise the sound and the adjective "coarse" implies there was threat to it.</li> <li>"The great slime kings were gathered there for vengeance" – "Great slimes kings" show the power has shifted to the frogs. They rule the flax-dam now.</li> </ul>
Context:	<ul> <li>Seamus Heaney suffered loss as a child after his brother died in a car accident when he was four years old. This is just one of many of his poems dealing with the theme of a loss of innocence.</li> <li>Heaney enjoyed nature and grew-up on a farm; the poem reflects his own childhood curiosity in the great outdoors.</li> </ul>
Structure:	<ul> <li>In the first stanza, the speaker in the poem is excited about discovering new parts of nature and is joyful.</li> <li>In the last stanza, it changes as he becomes more fearful of the nature around him. He is less excited about nature and more aware of the dangers it brings.</li> </ul>
Possible Themes and Links:	<ul> <li>Loss of innocence – Afternoons</li> <li>Childhood memories – Excerpt from The Prelude</li> <li>Passing of time – As Imperceptibly as Grief, Excerpt from The Prelude and To Autumn</li> <li>Nature - To Autumn, As Imperceptibly as Grief</li> </ul>

The "Death" that is referred to in the title is metaphorical – it alludes to a loss of innocence and childhood.

Flax is a type of plant.

### Death of a Naturalist

'Heart' suggests that this is the central place to his childhood world.

The verbs, 'festered,'
and 'rotted,' shows
the decay of the
plants – at this point
it's exciting, but it
could symbolising the
rotting of his
childhood innocence.

rotting of his childhood innocence. 'Best of all' shows the excitement at the grossest part of nature (childhood innocence). 'Slobber' highlights how gross it

A simplistic discussion of how tadpoles are formed again highlights the innocence of the speaker, and the teacher trying to preserve this.

would be to other

people.

'Then' shows the shift in tone and innocence.

'Invaded,' 'cocked on' sods' and 'mud grenades' all suggest a war between the speaker and the <u>frogs</u> – symbolic of the moment children begin to grow-up.

'Great slimes kings' show the power has shifted to the frogs. They rule the flax-dam now.

ln rain.

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart Of the foundand, green and heavy headed Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods. Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun. Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell. There were dragon-flies, spotted bufferflies, But best of all was the warm thick slobber Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring... l would fill jampotfuls of the jellied 💂 Specks to range on window-sills at home, On shelves at school, and wait and watch until The fattening dots burst into nimble-Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how The daddy frog was called a bullfrog And how he croaked and how the mammy frog Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was

Then one hot day when fields were rank

With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.
Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked

Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs to

For they were yellow in the sun and brown

On sads; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat

Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

Seamus Heaney

The sun is personified to show relentless and harsh summer can be – especially looking back on the long, hot

summers of childhood.

'Delicately' is interesting as it shows the appreciation and beauty the young narrator finds in something that others would find so disgusting.

'Jampatfuls,' 'jellied specks' and 'slobber' all show how innocent and naïve the speaker of the poem is.

'Wait' and 'watch' show how excited the speaker is. They cannot wait to see the miraculous transformation.

The speaker remembers the little facts about frogs that children tend to cling to.

> Change in perception no longer fascinating.

> > 'I had not heard before' shows the change in the speaker – the relationship has changed.

He now sees the dangers of the world – his childhood innocence is lost.

'Clutch' implies that they are now a danger – do they want vengeance for him stealing the spawn?



## **Hawk Roosting by Ted Hughes**



#### Who, what, where, when and why:

The speaker throughout the poem is a hawk. He is proud of his place at the top of the food chain and enjoys the power this brings. He is quite cruel in his outlook but the poem displays the thoughts behind dictatorship and what it means to have power.

Key Quotations:	<ul> <li>"In sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat" – he enjoys killing so much he dreams about it. Every kill is "perfect" as he is so well-designed, he is unstoppable.</li> <li>"Now I hold Creation in my foot" – arrogant tone. He is very self-assured and confident in himself. He knows he is at the top of the food chain.</li> <li>"I am going to keep things like this" - shows the power that the hawk has. He is untouchable and at the top of the food chain. No-one can challenge them.</li> </ul>
Context:	<ul> <li>Ted Hughes was Poet Laureate until his death in 1984. He wrote a lot of poems about the natural world.</li> <li>Hughes has said that the poem was simply written to show a hawk's natural way of thinking. He didn't want to portray him as cruel, but simply as the way a hawk would naturally be.</li> </ul>
Structure:	<ul> <li>The clearly organised structure of the six stanzas reflects the hawk's control the lands around him.</li> <li>The steady and calm pace to the poem shows the control of the hawk; he has a regular pace and will not be rushed or hurried by anyone.</li> </ul>
Possible Themes and Links:	<ul> <li>Power and control – Ozymandias</li> <li>The natural world – To Autumn, Afternoons, Death of a Naturalist</li> </ul>

'Roosting' shows that the hawk is settled and comfortable where he is.

'The top' shows his position in the food chain — he is in control. 'My wood' also shows his dominance in the area.

His claws are dug in. The repetition of 'hooked' shows

he's in control and command

'Convenience' suggests that ' the world has been adapted for him.

All parts of nature are to his advantage – everything is in his faxour.

> The verb, 'locked,' shows that he is focused on his surroundings.

He can look down on the world and watch it revolving for him.

He is perfect – you cannot argue with his body.

Contrast of 'bones' and 'living' shows he has the potential to take life away.

Can be interpreted as the, sun supporting him.

He will always be at the top of the food chain; it is nature and this will keep being the case. He cannot be challenged.

### Hawk Roosting

Arrogant tone — doesn't <u>need</u> to look at the world to know it's his.

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

Inaction, no falsifying dream

Between my hooked head and hooked feet:

Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;

And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.

It took the whole of <u>Creation</u> To produce my foot, <u>my each</u> feather: Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly –

1 kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:

My manners are tearing off heads –

The allotment of death. For the one path of my flight is direct Through the bones of the living.

No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.

Nothing has changed since I began.

My eye has permitted to change.

Lam going to keep things like this.

Ted Hughes

Ends with an arrogant tone showing that he is going to remain in control. Why would he want to change anything? The reality of life is better than his dreams – he doesn't need to escape.

His dreams are 'perfect kills,' nignlighting his enjoyment,' Thinking about death is

Thinking about death is enjoyable for him.

> Arrogant tone here – he is the one scrutinising the earth.

He thinks he is like God.

Still emphasises his God-like status in his own eyes. He has power over all other Creations.

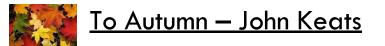
> Selfish and power obsessed – also emphasises his obsession with death.

He doesn't try to hide his violent <u>nature;</u> he is proud of it.

He is in control and decides who lives and dies. He looks down upon a graveyard.

The lack of 'arguments' show that this is a dictatorship. No one can challenge his authority.

He is the one who <u>decided</u> ('permitted'). He makes the rules and others <u>baye</u> to follow them.





#### Who, what, where, when and why:

The poem, 'To Autumn' by John Keats is an ode to autumn, meaning it is a poem which has been written in dedication to the season. There are three stages of the poem as Keats focuses on the ripe fruits that are ready to be harvested before moving onto the animals getting ready for hibernation. He ends the poem by focusing on the end of the season and the winter coming.

Key Quotations:	<ul> <li>"Fill all fruit with ripeness to the core" - suggests that autumn is brilliant because everything is ready to be shared with the world. There is so much of everything that everyone can enjoy what it brings.</li> <li>"On a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep" - she is "sound asleep" as she is exhausted from everything she brings to the world. She is so adept at bringing autumn to the world that she is able to take time.</li> <li>"Where are the songs of Spring?" - when people miss the songs of spring, they can instead enjoy the "music" that autumn has to offer.</li> </ul>
Context:	<ul> <li>Keats was a Romantic poet and wrote a lot about nature and the natural world. This ode shows his love of the natural world, especially as he personifies autumn all the way through.</li> <li>The poem could be his way of trying to make a lasting impression – he doesn't want to be like autumn which is fleeting. He wanted his memory to live on despite his early death at 25.</li> </ul>
Structure:	<ul> <li>The first stanza is a celebration and it suggests that autumn begins in a rich and calm way.</li> <li>In the second stanza, Keats speaks directly to autumn and makes the suggestion that autumn is in no rush to move on.</li> <li>The final stanza shows change, just as the season is changing from autumn to winter. Keats recognises this and is accepting of the fact he cannot control this.</li> </ul>
Possible Themes and Links:	<ul> <li>The passing of time – Afternoons, Death of a Naturalist, As Imperceptibly as Grief</li> <li>The natural world – Excerpt from The Prelude, Death of a Naturalist</li> </ul>

#### A celebration of the season

#### A season of change

#### \*To Autumn

'Mellow' suggests autumn is calm – the changes aren't disruptive, just at times unwanted.

Suggests that autumn works closely with summer to <u>produce</u> wonderful things – the fruit, the harvest crops.

'Swell,' 'plump,' and 'g'erbrimmed,' suggest that there is an abundance of crops and fruit.

It tricks everyone that' summer will never end.

Autumn works hard to create changes in the seasons but the word, 'careless,' shows that everything she creates is done so effortlessly; she is a master at work.

'Oozing' reflects the time that autumn has got to enjoy <u>watching</u> what she has created.

When people miss the songs of spring, they can instead enjoy the 'music' that autumn has to offer.

'The red breast' is the robin, a sure sign' that winter is <u>coming</u> and autumn is closing. Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with his how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bed with apples the moss d cottage trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has a erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
They hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swathe and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozing hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn,
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

The swallows are gathering so they can move to warmer countries for the winter. They have accepted that autumn has come to an end. The adjective 'maturing' suggests that summer is coming to an end. Time is passing.

> 'Conspiring' suggests autumn is secretive — it likes to surprise.

Suggests that autumn is <u>brilliant</u> because everything is ready to be shared with the world.

There are sign of autumn everywhere —
everyone has seen her.

'Drows'd in the fume of poppies' implies that autumn is incredibly beautiful and exhilarating to see. She is 'sound asleep as she is exhausted from everything she brings to the world.

She needs to spend time resting after all of her hard work creating the beautiful things in the season, so she has to, 'steady thy laden head.'

> The 'day' here represents the end of autumn, but the adjective, 'soft' before it stresses that the end is gradual, not instant.

 The small gnats 'wail' in 'mourn[ing]' as they are upset that autumn is ending and winter is coming.

When the wind 'lives or dies' it represents that autumn is dying and coming to an end; there is a battle between life and death.



# Excerpt from The Prelude by William Wordswort



#### Who, what, where, when and why:

The poem is a magical description of a young boy's adventures outside on a cold evening. He ignores his mother's calls to come in and instead continues to play outside. There is a freedom to his playing, as his games remind him of hunting. The natural world provides a joyous experience to him. There is a sense of nostalgia to the poem as Wordsworth celebrates the innocence of childhood and the happiness of the freedom it brought.

Key Quotations:	<ul> <li>"It was a time of rapture: clear and loud" – there is something magical and enlightening about this evening. There is a sense that this day is life changing for the boy and he is on a journey.</li> <li>"The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare" – the adventures the boy has on the ice is comparable to hunting.</li> <li>"The orange sky of evening died away" – this represents the finality of the exciting day the boy has had and the end of childhood for Wordsworth as well; the wonder of evening and twilight is replaced with the darkness of night, and innocence is replaced with adult responsibility.</li> </ul>
Context:	<ul> <li>William Wordsworth was another one of the great Romantic poets</li> <li>The Prelude explores Wordsworth wonder at his childhood memories, exploring outside and having adventures during winter. It is nostalgic in tone.</li> </ul>
Structure:	<ul> <li>The poem begins with the end of the day – the sun is setting and the warm lights of homes provide all the light they need.</li> <li>In the middle of the poem, Wordsworth focuses on the adventures he had outside on the ice, playing chase whilst ice-skating.</li> <li>The end of the poem sees the day come to a close, as the stars appear and the sun sets.</li> </ul>
Possible Themes and Links:	The natural world, passing of time – Death of a Naturalist, To Autumn

This is a small part of a much longer poem — it is a narrative of his life.

Lots of description of winter a time of change.

There is something magical and enlightening about this evening. There is a sense that this day is life changing for the boy and he is on a journey.

'Untir'd horse' creates the impression of boys who have yet to be tamed; they are wild and free and enjoying their childhood.

The adventures the boy has on the ice is comparable to hunting. It's a thrilling game for them all.

Nature is mimicking the sounds of the <u>children's</u> ice-skates on the ice. The simile allows the reader to see how wintry it is.

The 'sparkling' stars mimic the, magic of childhood everything is charming in childhood, and everything is an adventure.

### Excerpt from The Prelude

And in the frosty season when the sun

Was set, and visible for many a mile

The cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd.

I heed not the summons—happy time

It was, indeed, for all of us; to me

It was a time of rapture: clear and loud

The village clock toll'd six; I wheel'd about,

Proud and exalting, like an untir'd horse,

That cares not for his home—All shod with steel,

We hiss'd along the polish'd ice, in games

Confederate, imitative of the chace

And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,

The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,

And not a voice was idle; with the din,

The cou

Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud, and least less trees, and every icy craq.

Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills late the tumult sent an alien sound

Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars, Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west The orange sky of evening died away.

William Wordsworth

This represents the finality of the exciting day the boy has had and the end of childhood for Wordsworth as well; the wonder of evening and twilight is replaced with the darkness of night, and innocence is replaced with adult responsibility.

The cottage hints at a rural , setting in the countryside.

'The twilight blaz'd' shows the warmth and cosiness of the cottages; it reflects the warm and happy feelings Wordsworth has of his childhood.

He ignores his mum's calls to come in; he's having too much fun.

All children were screaming and shouting in excitement.

The countryside is alive with <u>music</u>

– all of nature's wonders create
their own sounds of excitement.

The 'alien sound of

melancholy' is an
unknown sound to the
boys — there is a sense
of sadness from
Wordsworth that these
days are <u>axer</u> and times
of childhood innocence
have passed.

#### Comprehension mini questions for each of the 4 poems.

#### **Death of a Naturalist**

- 1. In line 1, what did the flax-dam do?
- 2. In line four, what did the flax-dam do in the punishing sun?
- 3. Line 7 what delicate, pretty animals are seen?
- 4. Line 8/9 what is described as a 'warm thick slobber'?
- 5. Lines 14/15 what happened to the frogspawn he collected?
- 6. Line 23 what were the fields rank with?
- 7. Lines 23 24 what did the angry frogs invade?
- 8. Line 27 How are the frogs described now his feelings are changing?
- 9. Line 30 how does Heaney make the frog sound dangerous?
- 10. Line 31 32 how do you know Heaney respects the frogs but thinks they could be dangerous?

#### **Prelude**

- 1. In line 1, what time of year the poem is set?
- 2. In line 4 how did he feel?
- 3. Line 6/7 how did the village clock strike?
- 4. Line 8 what animal did he turn around like?
- 5. Lines 9/10 what are the children doing?
- 6. Line 13 what group of animals are the children compared to?
- 7. Lines 14 how did they move through the night?
- 8. Line 16 the tone changes here. Which word tells us something else is happening, not just focusing on the beauty of nature?
- 9. Line 19/20 how do we know there was a strange sound of sadness.
- 10. Line 22 which phrase suggests the night is endless?

#### **Hawk Roosting**

- 1. In line 1, where does the hawk sit to show he is powerful?
- 2. In line four, what violent words are used, even while the hawk sleeps?
- 3. Line 5 how do we know the hawk is excited by being covered by the high trees?
- 4. Line 5-7— what three things are of advantage to the hawk?
- 5. Lines 12 how do we know the hawk feels powerful, what does he think he holds?
- 6. Line 14 how does this line show the hawk is confident and arrogant?
- 7. Lines 16 what phrase shows the hawk is a predator, and enjoys this?
- 8. Line 20 what word shows people can no argue with the hawk's opinion of himself?
- 9. Line 21 how Hughes show the danger of the hawk's attack?
- 10. Line 24 how does the last line show the hawk remains in control?

#### To Autmun

- 1. In line 2, how do you know the sun has a good relationship with autumn?
- 2. In line 5, what word tells us there are a lot of apples?
- 3. Line 6-8 list 4 words that show nature is sweet and appealing.
- 4. Line 10 which phrase shows they think summer is endless?
- 5. Lines 14 what word suggests the granary is a nice place?
- 6. Line 21 how do we know nature/ autumn works for humans?
- 7. Lines 22 what repeated word suggests time passes slowly?

- 8. Line 23 what repeated word makes the speaker sound angry with spring?
- 9. Line 25 how does Keats make it sound as though things are coming to an end?
- 10. Line 32 how do you know Keats is showing winter is almost here?

### **Practice exam questions**

Death of a Naturalist is a poem about the loss of childhood innocence. How does Heaney explore his views on this theme? Remember to refer to the contexts of the poem in your answer

(15 marks)

excerpt from The Prelude is a poem about the beauty and excitement nature brings. How does Wordsworth explore his views on this theme? Remember to refer to the contexts of the poem in your answer

(15 marks)

Hawk Roosting is a poem about the power of nature. How does Hughes explore his views on this theme? Remember to refer to the contexts of the poem in your answer (15 marks)

To Autumn is a poem about the beauty of Autumn and the abundance of life. How does Keats explore his views on this theme? Remember to refer to the contexts of the poem in your answer

(15 marks)

You can make these in to the 25 mark questions by comparing two of the poems.