



five poems, the extract and the appreciation



The five poems

Abhisara: The Tryst

Rabindranath Tagore, the monk Upagupta refuses a dancing girl's invitation in her proud youth, then comes to her a year later when disease has left her outcast

Sonnet 116

William Shakespeare, a sonnet arguing that true love does not change or fade with circumstance

Death of a Naturalist

Seamus Heaney, a boy's fascination with frogspawn turns to fear the year the frogs seem to close in on him

Strange Meeting

Wilfred Owen, a soldier meets the enemy he killed in a dreamlike underworld, and the two speak as equals in loss

Why I Like the Hospital

Tony Hoagland, a wry, unsentimental poem on the hospital as the one place people are allowed to show what they really feel

Poetry extract and activities, what the extract asks

- an extract question tests the same reading skills as prose, complete a line, state a meaning, pick the right paraphrase
- a choose the correct alternative question is testing inference, the wrong options usually restate the line too literally
- picking out lines for a table rewards a slow first read rather than skimming for a keyword
- a line asked to be rewritten in your own words should keep the poem's meaning, not just swap a few words for synonyms

Reading a poem before answering *

- read the poem aloud once in full before touching a question, the rhythm often carries meaning prose misses
- note who the poem addresses and who speaks it, some of these five are dramatic monologues or direct addresses
- underline the shift if there is one, from fascination to fear, from grief to shared understanding
- a glossed word at the margin is there because the question will likely use it too



three steps in order along a dashed path, read aloud, note the shift, then answer

