

Poetry questions:

1. SPEAKER & POV
 - a. Is the poem written in first, second, or third person, singular or plural?
 - b. Who is the speaker? Is it possible to determine the speaker's age, sex, sensibilities, level of awareness, and values?
 - c. Is the speaker addressing anyone in particular?
 - d. How do you respond to the speaker? Favorably? Negatively? What is the situation? Are there any special circumstances that inform what the speaker says?
 - e. What can you determine about the need (action), motivation and subtext of the speaker?
2. SPACE & TIME
 - a. Does the poem take place in a specific place? Is there a spatial structure to this place? Which passages capture the sense of place?
 - b. Does the poem evolve in space? How?
 - c. Does the poem take place at a specific time? Is there a structure to the time? Which passages capture the sense of time?
 - d. Does the poem evolve in time? How?
3. EMOTION
 - a. What does the Title emphasize?
 - b. Does reading the poem aloud help you understand it? Why?
 - c. Is the poem lyrical or narrative?
 - d. If the poem is lyrical, does it have an emotional beginning, middle and end? Is the emotional structure more complex than this? Less complex?
 - e. If the poem is narrative, what is its checkmark story structure?
 - f. How do your emotions change as you read the poem?
 - g. Did you enjoy the poem? What, specifically, pleased or displeased you about what was expressed and how it was expressed?
4. MEANINGS
 - a. Do any allusions enrich the poem's meaning? How?
 - b. Does the diction reveal meaning? Are any words repeated? Do any carry evocative connotative meanings?
 - c. Are there ambiguities in meaning that enhance your understanding? Are there words that have multiple meanings that seem to apply?
 - d. Are there any puns or other forms of verbal wit?
 - e. Are figures of speech used? How does the figurative language contribute to the poem's vividness and meaning?
 - f. Is irony used. Is understatement or paradox used?
 - g. Do any objects, persons, places, events, or actions have allegorical or symbolic meanings? What other details of the poem support your interpretations?
 - h. What is the tone of the poem? Is the tone consistent?
 - i. Is the language of the poem intense and concentrated? Do you think it warrants more than one or two close readings?
 - j. How does the poet use images to engage the senses?
5. SOUNDS & METER
 - a. Does the poem use onomatopoeia, assonance, consonance, or alliteration? How do these sounds affect you?
 - b. What sounds are repeated? If there are rhymes, what is their effect? Do they seem forced or natural? Is there a rhyme scheme? Do the rhymes contribute to the poem's meaning?
 - c. Do the lines have a regular meter? What is the predominant meter? Are there significant variations? Does the rhythm seem appropriate for the poem's tone?
 - d. What patterns do you find in the syntax and line breaks? What impact do these have on your reading?
 - e. Does the poem's form—it's overall structure—follow an established pattern? Do you think the form is a suitable vehicle for the poem's meaning and effects?
 - f. Does the poem have a specific form or is it open?