

wordsworth

GRASMERE

Poetry Prompts Toolkit: Secondary Schools

An Ode To...

Make a list of things that are often considered a bit unpleasant. Things like broken mugs, or spiders, or sewers, or smelly feet, or mud. Choose one, then challenge yourself to come up with a list of positives about it. Using that list, write a poem addressing your chosen thing (so, using 'you' to describe whatever it is), and making sure to praise it.

If you want, you can start each line with 'I want to praise...'

For example, a poem about a broken mug might start: 'I want to praise your gleaming china and sharp edges. I want to praise the way you spread yourself across the whole floor like an army of ants.'

How To

Read Imtiaz Dharker's 'How to Cut a Pomegranate' ([LINK](#)).

Write about a time someone taught you how to do something – maybe something that they have a particular way of doing, or maybe something more general. What advice did they give you? Describe that person doing whatever it was. What happened when you tried it? Was it the same, or different? Don't forget to use your senses – and other describing techniques, such as simile and metaphor.

Unlocking the Cliché

Make a list of clichés or idioms. Things like 'I cried a river' or 'he threw a tantrum' or 'I'm free as a bird'. Then try to write about them as though they literally happened.

For example: what if you *actually* cried a river? What sort of river would you cry? A small stream chattering down the mountainside? Or the Amazon, snappy with piranhas? Or the Thames, full of muck and old shopping trolleys? Try to picture the river. How big is it? Where is it going? What sort of things are in the river? What happens on its banks?

Ekphrastic Poetry (Writing from a Picture)

Start with a painting (a good example to use is Bruegel's 'Hunters in the Snow': ([LINK](#))). Spend a few minutes looking at it, before even thinking about writing. What's happening in the picture? What can you notice? How does it make you feel? What would it be like to be inside the scene?

Write about what's going on in the picture, from the point of view of someone / something in the picture. This can be a person or an animal, or it can be an inanimate object. (Maybe you want to write from the perspective of the snow, or the sky looking down on the scene, or the fire everyone's gathering round.) How might it feel to be that person / thing? What do they notice about the scene? Again, try to use all your senses, and think about including things like simile, metaphor and alliteration.

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