

Eduqas Anthology

Key Context

Examination 2027
onwards

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Context is assessed for Anthology Poetry, just as it is for A Christmas Carol. It is interpreted quite broadly by Eduqas:



Context can include:

- the time and place the poem was written
- how the poem has been read at different times and in different situations
- biographical details about a writer's life
- how the poem relates to literary traditions
- times and places referred to in the poem

Knowing about these things can give us an insight into the poet's intentions and purpose in writing a poem. A poem may appeal to you more strongly during a particular stage of your life. Also consider how different readers might have engaged with a poem through time. These factors can all influence the way a poem is interpreted, so the final meaning of a poem is never entirely fixed.

When commenting on context, it's important that you only offer information that is **relevant to the question**, rather than just including everything you know about a poem or the poet.

'The Schoolboy' by William Blake

Highlight key points as you read.

- William Blake was born in London in 1757. The poem was written in 1789 as part of his collection Songs of Innocence.
- The poem was later revised and included in the collection Songs of Experience which was first published in 1794.
- William Blake was part of a group of poets called The Romantics. In the poem, Blake presents a child's love of nature and freedom and contrasts it with the rigid, dull nature of school. Blake's poem is very anti-authoritarian. He criticises the type of authority that enforce obedience without compassion.
- Influenced by the traditions of the countryside, which idealised nature, the poem's themes of childhood, nature and personal freedom are typical of the Romantic movement.
- Nature in the poem represents freedom, joy and emotional/spiritual growth.
- Although a Christian, he disagreed with the established church and was critical of authority, supporting both the French and American revolutions.
- Blake saw education as part of the larger machinery (like the church and state) that controls and limits the human spirit. He sees formal education as unnatural and oppressive and felt that schools repressed creativity and natural innocence.
- In the poem, school is depicted as a form of imprisonment that stifles joy, curiosity and imagination. Blake does not oppose learning or acquiring knowledge. He opposes formal, rigid, oppressive schooling systems that suppress joy and creativity.
- In Blake's time, formal education was becoming more structured and was often harsh and moralistic. Corporal punishment was common and creativity was discouraged.
- Blake believed education should be nurturing and imaginative. He felt children should learn from nature rather than rigid rules.
- The poem is a critique of society. The poem acts as vehicle for Blake's deeper concerns about society and how it stifles innocence and freedom. It is a poem of protest.

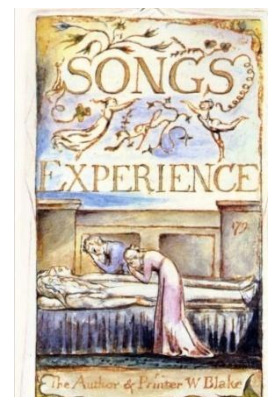
William Blake part of which group of poets? _____

What does anti-authoritarian mean in relation to William Blake? _____

How does Blake use nature in the poem? What does it represent? _____

Why did Blake criticise schools of his time? _____

What kind of education did he believe in? _____



'I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud' by William Wordsworth

Highlight key points as you read

- William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth in Cumberland (now Cumbria), on the edge of the Lake District, in 1770.
- Wordsworth was inspired by a walk he took with his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth, in April 1802, near Ullswater in the Lake District.
- Dorothy described the daffodils in her diary, which later helped Wordsworth recall the scene and compose the poem in 1804.
- The poem was published in 1870.
- He believed in the theory of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' This is the idea that poetry comes from reflecting on feelings and not just spontaneous emotion.
- The poem reflects on the healing power of nature and its ability to inspire creativity.

Romanticism - Wordsworth was a key figure in the Romantic movement.

- Romanticism was a school of thinking which believed in restoring the balance between man and nature. They believed that emotion was a key element to poetry.
- Romantic poets were influenced by the French Revolution. They detested the absolute power of monarchies (kings). They instead focused on the power of nature.
- Romantic poets rejected complex verse in favour of easy-to-understand poetry for the common man. They saw it as their duty to inform and inspire. Much of his poetry is about feelings and experiences of ordinary people, often linked to nature and expressed in straightforward language.
- Wordsworth's belief was in the power of the natural world to be a source of inspiration. He believed nature could almost act as a parent or teacher, influencing feelings or behaviour. He believed that certain moments in life make us go beyond the 'reality' and experience the world more vividly.
- In the poem, the daffodils are symbolic and represent nature's enduring ability to uplift the human spirit, even after the moment has passed. It's not just about what Wordsworth saw, but how memory transformed his emotional state later.

Which details do you consider to be most influential to Wordsworth? Why?



'Cousin Kate' by Christina Rossetti

Highlight key points as you read

- Christina Rossetti was born and lived in the Victorian era. She was born in 1830 and died in 1894.
- She wrote the poem in 1862.
- Rossetti was known for her strict Anglican faith and strong moral values. In the poem, she gives a voice to woman wronged by a man and society.
- Rossetti herself rejected admirers on moral or religious grounds and she sympathised with fallen women (those who had lost their virtue in society's eyes). She even volunteered in a refuge for such women,
- At the time of writing the society was patriarchal – women were thought to be inferior to men and were subject to stricter moral expectations than men. Women were expected to be chaste and virtuous. A woman's reputation was everything. Those who had relationships outside of marriage were often rejected by society.
- The poem explores society's expectations of women and the injustice of gender inequality.
- It highlights the patriarchal nature of Victorian society – the need for a male heir is evidence of this.
- The poem highlights the double standards of the Victorian era as no blame is attached to the lord and his behaviour.
- In the poem, women are viewed as property or things to be owned which was typical of the time.
- The poem can be read as a critique of how women's worth was judged primarily by their sexual behaviour and how those in power (men) could control and dispose of women at will.



Choose two pieces of context which you think link directly to ideas in the poem. Summarise the context and then link it to a key quotation from the poem. An example has been done for you.

E.g. The idea of honour and shame in Victorian times. The poem shows the disgrace the narrator suffers attached to her loss of virtue/honour. 'I'm stained by my shame'

[illegible]

'Sonnet 29' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Highlight key points as you read.

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born in County Durham in 1806.
- Sonnet 29 was written between 1845 and 1846 during the secret relationship she had with Robert Browning.
- Elizabeth wrote and published a series of 44 sonnets, called Sonnets from the Portuguese (which was Robert's nickname for her). Sonnet 29 is thought to be an autobiographical poem about Robert Browning.
- The title was a fictional device used by Barrett Browning to conceal how personal the poems were.
- When she was 39 she made her father angry by secretly marrying, and moving to live in Italy with, another poet, Robert Browning. Here she wrote most of her poems. She died there in 1861.
- She was deeply religious. Barrett Browning's love for Robert was often framed in spiritual terms.
- In Victorian times, women were subservient to men, and were not always respected as writers, but Elizabeth was a famous poet in her own right. In fact, her husband first met her because he was a fan of her work. Elizabeth was also widely read and highly intelligent.
- In Victorian society, women were not encouraged to express sexual desire or intellectual independence in romantic relationships.
- Sonnet 29 is radical in that it centres on a female speaker's passionate longing – not just spiritual love but physical desire.



- The end of the poem may be representative of casting off Victorian restraints and showing rebellion from the gender expectations she was bound to.
- Sonnets are 14-line poems, written in iambic pentameter, with a clear structure. Elizabeth used the Petrarchan or Italian structure (where the lines are organised as 8 lines (the octave) + 6 (the sestet), with a sort of twist at the end). They are often associated with love or strong feelings.

Personal Context and Biography

Why did Elizabeth Barrett Browning use the title *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, and how does this relate to the personal nature of the poems? _____

[illegible]

Cultural and Social Context

How did Victorian society's expectations of women influence Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry, particularly in *Sonnet 29*? _____

[illegible]

'Drummer Hodge' by Thomas Hardy

Highlight key points as you read.

What influenced Hardy to write the poem?

- Hardy wrote the poem in 1899 during the second Boer War (1899 – 1902) It is to this war, which the poem refers. The war took place in South Africa and related to disputed lands. It involved the British and the Boer settlers.
- The Boers were farmers who rebelled against British rule in the Transvaal in northern South Africa in a bid to re-establish their independence.
- Many young, inexperienced British soldiers (like Drummer Hodge) were sent abroad with little understanding of where they were going and why.
- Drummer Hodge is fictional but representative of real, ordinary soldiers sent to die in distant, imperial wars.
- Hardy was critical of the futility of war and the way working-class men were sacrificed in imperial conflicts.
- Hardy often wrote about ordinary people caught in large, uncaring systems – in this case, a boy soldier who dies far from home.
- 'Hodge' was a slang term for a rural farmworker and Hardy uses it to symbolise innocent, uneducated men used by the military.
- Though Hardy was not overtly political, the poem subtly critiques the British Empire and its treatment of colonial wars as noble or glorious.
- The poem emphasises how Drummer Hodge is buried on foreign soil, under unfamiliar stars, suggesting a permanent disconnection from home. The burial is alienating.
- Hardy presents war as tragic, senseless and dehumanising.



Answer the following questions briefly:

1. **When was *Drummer Hodge* written, and which war is it connected to?**



2. **How does the character of Drummer Hodge represent ordinary soldiers in the poem?**



3. **What does Hardy's use of the name "Hodge" suggest about the soldier?**



4. **How does Hardy view the British Empire and imperial wars in *Drummer Hodge*?**



Part 2: Summary Paragraph (Synthesis Task)

Write a **3-4 sentence summary** of the context of *Drummer Hodge*. Your summary should touch on the following points:

- The historical background of the poem (e.g., the Boer War, Drummer Hodge's role).
- Hardy's perspective on war and the treatment of soldiers.
- The symbolic use of the name "Hodge" and the theme of alienation in the poem.

Tip: Use the information you've already written in the short-answer questions to help frame your response. _____

Disabled by Wilfred Owen

Highlight key points as you read.

- Born March 1893 – November 4th 1918
- After school he went to France in 1913, to work as a language tutor. He began writing poetry as a teenager.
- In 1915 he returned to England to enlist in the army.
- In WW1 many soldiers enlisted out of patriotism, peer pressure or a romanticised view of war.
- Reality clashed violently with propaganda, as the war left thousands dead or severely wounded – both physically and psychologically.
- After spending the remainder of the year training in England, Owen left for the western front early in January 1917. After experiencing heavy fighting, he was diagnosed with shellshock and was evacuated to Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh in June. He met the poet Siegfried Sassoon there.
- He wrote 'Disabled' in 1917 while Owen was convalescing. It was likely inspired by the real, wounded soldiers he encountered.
- Disabled soldiers were often neglected or forgotten once they returned home from war. This is a stark reality which is portrayed in the poem.
- Wilfred Owen returned to France in August 1918 and was awarded the Military Cross for bravery. On 4 November 1918 he was killed in action.
- The news of his death reached his parents on 11 November, Armistice Day.



- Wilfred Owen was awarded the Military Cross following his actions on 1-2 October 1918. Confirmation of the award came after his death.

Which details do you consider to be most influential to Wilfred Owen and why?

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Craiglockhart War Hospital

'I Shall Return' by Claude McKay

Highlight key points as you read.

- McKay was born in Sunny Ville, Jamaica, in 1889. It was then a British Colony. He was the son of peasant farmers and was infused with pride in his African heritage.
- He was interested in English poetry from a young age and was helped by his brother, a school teacher and an English man by the name of Walter Jekyll. McKay studied the British masters including John Milton and Alexander Pope, and later the Romantics.
- At the age of 17 he left Sunny Ville and worked in the Jamaican capital, Kingston. It was here that he experienced extensive racism. The population was predominantly white and black people were considered inferior and capable of only basic tasks.
- McKay quickly became disgusted with the bigoted society and returned to Sunny Ville. Once back here, with Jekyll's encouragement he published his first poetry collections – Songs of Jamaica and Constab Ballads in 1912.
- McKay later befriended Max Eastman, an editor of a magazine which published McKay's poem 'If We Must Die' which defended the rights of black people and threatened retaliation for prejudice and abuse.
- Following this, McKay commenced two years of travel and work abroad. He went to New York City in 1914 and was shocked by American racism. His writing often reflects the global consciousness, combining experiences of colonial subjugation with racial injustices he in the U.S. and Europe.
- He often felt alienated or treated as an outsider wherever he went, and his poetry reflects a longing for belonging, but also a deep commitment to his identity.
- McKay was one of the first major black poets to use sonnet form and traditional structure to address racism and injustice. This was a



deliberate choice by McKay to subvert expectations and demand respect in literary tradition.

- McKay became a leading voice in the Harlem Renaissance (1920s – 1930s) – a cultural movement in which African American writers, artists and musicians celebrated Black identity and resisted racial oppression. He was one of its most radical voices, often focusing on the anger, resilience and dignity of black people in the face of systemic racism.
- He wrote 'I Shall Return' in 1920.
- He died of heart failure in 1948.

Write a Summary of Claude McKay's Life and Significance (150–200 words)

Your summary should:

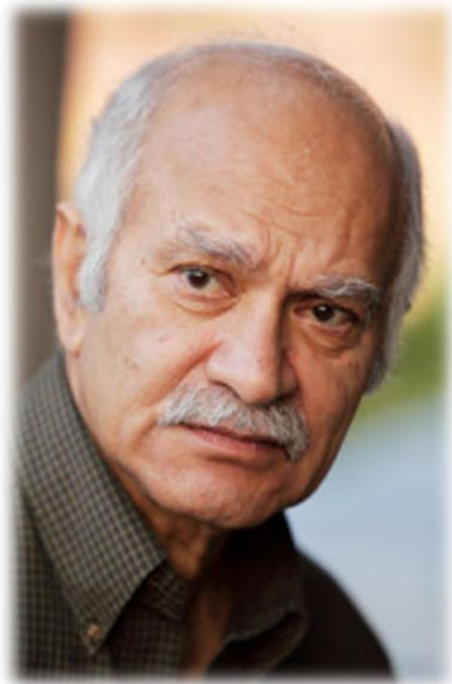
- Briefly explain **where and when McKay was born**, and what influenced his early interest in poetry.
- Describe the **racism he experienced** and how it influenced his work.
- Mention **key publications** and his use of **traditional poetic forms** to challenge racism.
- Explain his **role in the Harlem Renaissance** and the **themes** often explored in his poetry.
- Note **his travels**, feelings of alienation, and how they shaped his global perspective on injustice.
- End with when he wrote **'I Shall Return'** and his **death**.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

'Decomposition' by Zulfikar Ghose

Highlight key points as you read.

- Zulfikar Ghose was born in 1935 in Pakistan
- Post-Colonial Identity: He grew up as a Muslim in Sialkot, Pakistan and in largely Hindu Bombay (Mumbai) and then moved with his family to England. In 1969 he moved to the U.S. to teach at the University of Texas. His writing often grapples with displacement, cultural duality and Western perceptions of the 'third world'.
- The poem 'Decomposition' was published in the 1970s and is shaped by the poet's experiences as a Pakistani born writer living in the West.
- The poem focuses on a homeless man lying in a Bombay (now Mumbai) street. This reflects the realities of poverty in post-colonial Indian cities, which were often ignored or romanticised by the Western (and sometimes local) artists.
- The speaker in the poem had taken a photograph of the dying man, initially thinking the image was artistically powerful. – describing it as having 'composition'
- The poem highlights the dehumanisation of the poor by art, journalism and even well-meaning observers.
- While it focuses on one individual, the poem uses him to symbolise systemic poverty and how society views the poor.
- It questions the ethics of turning suffering into 'art' without truly engaging with the pain behind it.
- He became a U.S. citizen in 2004.
- He died in June 2022.



After reading the contextual information, answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. **How does Zulfikar Ghose's personal background and experiences influence the themes explored in his poem 'Decomposition'?**

(Consider his cultural identity, migration, and life in the West.) _____

2. **Why might Ghose choose to focus on a single homeless man in the poem? What broader issues is he commenting on through this image?**

(Think about symbolism and social commentary.) _____

3. **What ethical questions does 'Decomposition' raise about the role of art and photography in representing suffering? How does this relate to Western or privileged perspectives on poverty?** _____

'Catrin' by Gillian Clarke

Highlight the key points as you read.

- Gillian Clarke is a Welsh Poet
- She was born in 1937 in Cardiff, Wales.
- The poem is autobiographical and is about her real -life daughter, also named Catrin.
- 'Catrin' was written in 1978 and is a personal reflection on the birth of her daughter and their evolving relationship.
- It explores the push-pull of love and conflict, showing how tension is part of growing up and parenting.
- In the 1970s. more women were beginning to explore personal and feminist themes in literature.
- The poem is quite feminist as Clarke wanted to show women voicing their experiences- a move away from the way women were once presented as homemakers.
- The poem is part of a wide tradition of confessional poetry, where writers draw deeply on personal experience.
- Unlike war poetry or political poetry, 'Catrin' is rooted in the everyday: hospital rooms, family arguments, windows and streets.
- The poem explores the emotional aftermath of giving birth and how the emotional struggle continues as the child grows up and seeks independence.



Read the contextual information about *Gillian Clarke* and her poem '*Catrin*'. Then complete the tasks below to show your understanding.

Part A – Match the Term to the Explanation

Draw a line or write the letter next to the correct definition.

Term	Definition
A. Confessional Poetry	1. A type of poetry focused on everyday moments and emotions.
B. Feminist Writing	2. Poetry that draws on personal experiences, often emotional or intimate.
C. Autobiographical	3. Writing that aims to highlight women's voices and challenge gender roles.
D. Domestic Imagery	4. A style that uses personal life events as the basis for creative work.

Part B – True or False?

Circle **True** or **False** for each statement.

1. Gillian Clarke's poem '*Catrin*' is about the relationship between a mother and her son.

True / False

2. The poem explores both the joy and tension in a mother-daughter bond.

True / False

3. '*Catrin*' reflects a shift toward women writing about their own experiences.

True / False

Part C – Short Answer. Answer the following questions in full sentences.

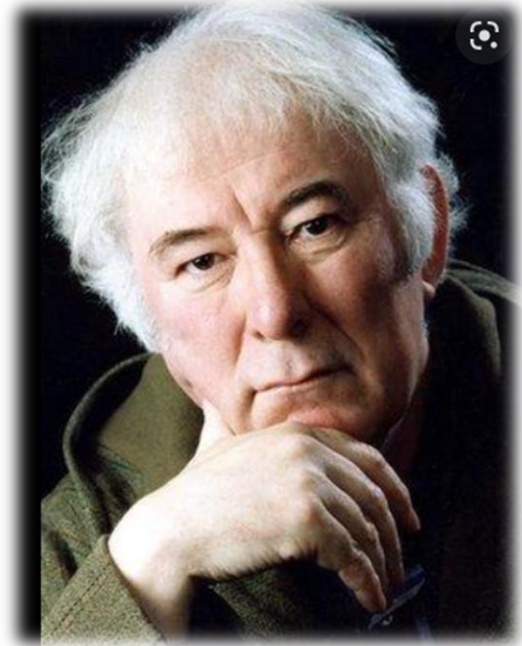
1. **How does '*Catrin*' reflect feminist ideas for its time?** _____

2. **Why is '*Catrin*' described as part of the confessional poetry tradition?** _____

'Blackberry Picking' by Seamus Heaney

Highlight the key points as you read

Seamus Justin Heaney was born on the 13th April 1939 and died on the 30th August 2013. He was an Irish poet, playwright, translator and lecturer. In 1995, Heaney won the Nobel Prize for Literature and was considered one of the principal contributors to poetry in the 21st century. Towards the latter part of his life, Heaney was described by The Independent newspaper as 'probably the best-known poet in the world'.



Seamus Heaney, had a rural upbringing and grew up on a farm in Northern Ireland. This theme often features in his writing. His teenage years were affected by the death of his brother, who died in a road accident at the age of 4. He was 14 when his brother died.

'Blackberry Picking' was published in 1966 in his first collection 'Death of a Naturalist'. Like other poems in the collection, it reflects on the moment a child becomes aware of decay, time and mortality.

The decaying berries in the poem are symbolic. They represent how hopes and dreams can spoil and how even the most intense pleasures are short-lived.

The poem draws directly from Heaney's childhood memories of collecting blackberries during summer.

Although 'Blackberry Picking' seems simple, it is shaped by Heaney's deep awareness of Irish rural tradition and the cycles of nature that defined daily life.

Part A – Key Points Box

Complete **short bullet points** that summarise each key area of context:

Topic	Key Details
Who was Seamus Heaney?	
His Background	
Personal Tragedy	
Main Themes	
Symbolism in the Poem	

Part B – Sentence Summary

Now write a short **paragraph summary** (5–6 sentences) using the information you have noted. Try to include:

- Who Heaney was
- What influenced his poetry
- What '*Blackberry Picking*' is about
- How it links to childhood, memory and loss
- The deeper meaning behind the imagery

Start here:

Seamus Heaney was an Irish poet known for drawing on his rural upbringing and childhood memories.

[illegible]

'Kamikaze' by Beatrice Garland

Highlight key points as you read.

- Beatrice Garland is a contemporary British poet who has said she is fascinated by what could cause someone to make such a decision – or to change their mind.
- The poem was written in 2013.
- The word 'Kamikaze' means 'divine wind' originally referring to a typhoon that protected Japan from invasion in the 13th century
- Kamikaze pilots were Japanese soldiers in World War II who were expected to fly suicide missions, crashing their planes into enemy ships. These missions were seen as the ultimate act of patriotism and honour in Japanese culture.
- Kamikaze pilots were responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941 where the USA suffered one of its heaviest losses.
- Refusing to die on such a mission was considered deeply shameful and dishonourable, bringing disgrace to the soldier and his family.
- The poem is fictional but inspired by real historical events and cultural practices in Japan.
- Though she is not Japanese, Garland writes from an empathetic and imaginative perspective, focusing on human emotion, not glorifying war.
- The poet is critical of blind nationalism and explores the emotional cost of honour-based expectations.
- Garland explores the mental conflict of a man caught between duty to his country and love for life and his family.
- The poem reflects on the long-term effects of guilt, shame and societal rejection.



After reading the contextual information, answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. **Why were Kamikaze pilots seen as heroic in Japanese culture during World War II, and what were the consequences of refusing such a mission?**

(Think about ideas of honour, shame, and family.) _____

2. **Garland is not Japanese and did not experience war firsthand. Why do you think she chose to write from this perspective, and what does this suggest about her intentions as a poet?**

(Consider her interest in human emotion and empathy.) _____

3. **How does Garland's portrayal of the pilot challenge traditional ideas about patriotism and national duty?**

(Refer to how the poem critiques blind nationalism and explores emotional consequences.) _____

4. **The poem deals with long-term emotional effects. What emotions and conflicts does Garland highlight, and why might these be more powerful than physical consequences of war?** _____

'War Photographer' by Carol Ann Duffy

Highlight the key points as you read.

- The poem was written in the 1980s: a time when images of war were increasingly published in newspapers and on television, particularly from conflicts like:
 - The Vietnam War, civil wars in places like Rwanda, Bosnia and Northern Ireland and ongoing Middle Eastern conflicts.
- Duffy was responding to how the media and public consume images of suffering passively, without fully grasping the horrors behind them.
- Duffy was inspired to write this poem by her friendship with war photographers Don McCullin and Philip Jones Griffiths, both well-known. She was especially intrigued by the peculiar challenge faced by these people whose job requires them to record terrible, horrific events without being able to directly help their subjects.
- The poem reflects the psychological toll such work takes, especially when returning home to a peaceful society that can't relate.
- Duffy was also moved by the emotional and ethical conflict that war photographers face: risking their lives to document atrocities, while others remained detached.
- Duffy perhaps shares an affinity with these photojournalists – while they use the medium of photography to convey certain truths about the human condition, she uses words and language to do the same job.
- 'War Photographer' is a dramatic monologue, that focuses not on the victims of war, but on the person documenting them, giving a rarely explored perspective.
- The photographer suffers from PTSD-like symptoms: his memories are vivid and his moral burden is heavy.
- By viewing this issue from the perspective of the photographer, she also reveals the difficulties of such an occupation. By the end of the poem, it is clear the photographer straddles two vastly different worlds yet increasingly feels he belongs to neither.
- The dark room becomes a metaphor for the emotional darkness he carries.
- Throughout the poem, Duffy provokes us to consider our own response when confronted with the photographs that we regularly see in our newspaper supplements, and why so many of us have become desensitised to these images.

E.g. Duffy criticises the passive response to the atrocities seen in the photographs and the public's indifference to the suffering =

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



‘Dusting the Phone’ by Jackie Kay
Highlight the key points as you read.

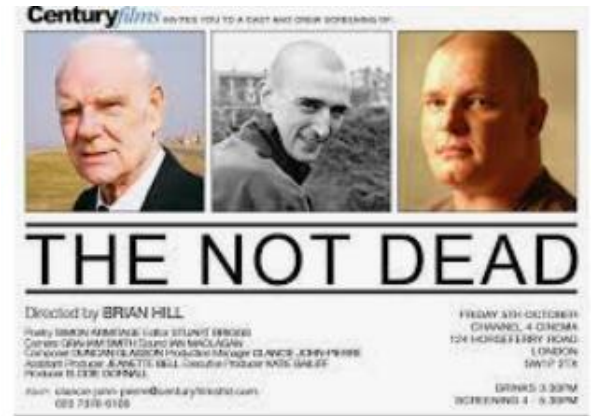
- Jackie Kay was born in 1961 to a Scottish mother and Nigerian father. She was adopted as a baby and raised in Glasgow.
- Her work often explores themes of identity, relationships, love and longing. Identifying as a lesbian, Kay’s poetry frequently draws on her experiences of love and heartbreak.
- The poem was written in 1993 and is a contemporary poem. It reflects the complexities of modern relationships, particularly the anxieties associated with waiting for communication from a lover.
- The poem delves into the emotional turbulence of longing, obsession and the uncertainties of love.
- Kay explores modern relationships and the way contemporary forms of communication, like phones, reflect emotional experiences.
- The poem is set in a pre-digital age; the poem highlights the limitations of communication methods of the time ,as it emphasises the speaker's isolation and longing,
- The universal themes of love and obsession are depicted in a modern context, highlighting complex and fragile human emotions.
- ‘Dusting the Phone’ reflects the ability to capture the nuances of human emotions in everyday situations, particularly the tension between hope and despair in love.



What do you consider to be the most important piece of contextual information and why? _____

'Remains' by Simon Armitage

- Simon Armitage's poetry is known for its colloquial style, strong rhythms and voice. He often uses the monologue form in his poetry to create immediate and moving characters. His delivery is deadpan and sometimes darkly humorous.
- The 'Manhunt' was originally aired as part of a 2007 Channel 4 documentary, *Forgotten Heroes: The Not Dead*.
- Armitage wrote poems based on interviews with war veterans from conflicts such as Iraq, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland.
- Armitage has not been to war himself but gained inspiration by talking to soldiers who had and listening to their testimonies.
- The reference to 'desert sand' suggests this poem is set in the Gulf War.
- It is set during military patrol in Iraq where a soldier shoots a looter. This setting illustrates the blurred moral lines of modern conflict and how soldiers are often left to process trauma alone.
- The poem is based on an interview with a real soldier, Guardsman Tromans.
- The poem presents a dark and disturbing image of a soldier suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and reflects the psychological impact of war.
- The soldier's voice in the poem reveals that guilt lingers: the title 'Remains' has a double meaning – physical and remains of the body and the mental remnants of the trauma.
- It critiques how war affects soldiers psychologically more than just physically, even when they survive.



Context Recap: complete the sentences below using the word bank.

Word Bank:

PTSD | interviews | colloquial | monologue | Gulf War | testimonies | Guardsman Tromans | blurred | psychological | Channel 4

1. Simon Armitage is known for his _____ style, strong rhythms, and powerful voice.
2. He often uses the _____ form to bring characters to life.
3. The poem “*Remains*” is based on a real soldier’s account – _____.
4. Armitage wrote the poem after conducting _____ with veterans from various conflicts.
5. The soldier in the poem is dealing with the effects of _____.
6. The poem was originally featured in a _____ documentary called *Forgotten Heroes: The Not Dead*.
7. Though Armitage has not been to war himself, he was inspired by soldiers’ _____.
8. The setting of the poem suggests it took place during the _____.
9. The poem highlights the _____ moral lines of modern warfare.
10. The focus of “*Remains*” is on the _____ damage caused by conflict, not just physical injuries

Quick Reflection

Tick ✓ the statements that are **true**:

- ☐ Armitage’s poetry is often written in a formal and traditional style.
- ☐ “*Remains*” explores the long-lasting impact of war on soldiers.
- ☐ The poem shows a soldier struggling with guilt and trauma.
- ☐ The poem takes a humorous look at the experience of soldiers.
- ☐ Armitage uses real-life experiences to shape his poetry.

'Origin Story' by Eve L Ewing

Highlight key points as you read.

- Eve L Ewing was born
- The poem recounts the meeting of Ewing's parents at Greyhound Bus Station in Chicago during the mid 1980s.
- While the poem is based on real events, the poem blends fact and poetic imagination. Ewing plays with memory and myth to show that truth can be emotional and symbolic, not just literal.
- The poem serves as springboard to explore broader reflections on human connection and the force that shape our lives.
- The poem contemplates how love can emerge from unexpected circumstances, suggesting a sense of destiny in human connections.
- By recounting her parents' meeting, Ewing explores the formation of personal identity and the inheritance of cultural and familial legacies.
- Set in Chicago, the poem situates personal narratives within the urban landscape, highlighting the city's role in shaping individual lives
- The poem was published in 2017 at a time of a growing understanding of the need to celebrate and record the lived experiences of Black people in a way that was not always the case in the past.
- The poet uses an extended simile to compare love to a comic book.
- Right from their outset, comics were cheaply bought and widely disposed of once they had been read. Even those that weren't thrown away were easily damaged because of the fragile nature of the paper they were printed on. When comics started to



become valuable, collectors understood the need to preserve comics so they would last into the future. The poem details several ways this can be done.

- Eve L Ewing has written for several Marvel comic book titles. In the comic superhero world, an 'origin story' refers to the backstory of how a superhero gained their powers. This immediately implies a pride in herself and her own talents and 'powers' as a modern Black woman.
- Specific contextual references in Origin Story include:
 - Chaka Khan – a pop star from Chicago, known as the 'Queen of Funk'
 - Greyhound – an American bus company
 - afro puff – a type of hairstyle worn by some black people
 - communist – someone who believes in communism, where everyone shares wealth equally in society.

Reflection Task: Understanding the Context of “Origin Story” by Eve L. Ewing

Instructions:

Read each statement carefully. Tick (✓) all the statements that are **true** based on what you've learned about the poem and its context.

- ☐ The poem is entirely fictional and doesn't reference real events.
- ☐ “Origin Story” is about how Eve L. Ewing's parents first met at a bus station in Chicago.
- ☐ The poem explores how memory and imagination can blend together to reveal emotional truths.
- ☐ The poem avoids specific references to time or place.
- ☐ Ewing uses the idea of an “origin story” to reflect pride in her identity and cultural background.

- ☐ Comics are compared to love because both are fragile, disposable, and not worth preserving.
- ☐ The poet includes cultural references like Chaka Khan, Greyhound buses, and afro puffs to ground the poem in Black experience and Chicago life.
- ☐ Eve L. Ewing is known only as a poet and has never written for comic books.
- ☐ The poem connects personal history with broader themes like destiny, identity, and inheritance.
- ☐ "Origin Story" highlights how urban environments can shape people's lives and relationships.
- ☐ The poem suggests that love can appear in unexpected places and under ordinary circumstances.
- ☐ The poem was published at a time when more attention was being paid to preserving and celebrating Black experiences.