

Poetry Annotation

Name . Artavazd Galstyan

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1. Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud

By John Donne

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
 Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
 Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally
 And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Commented [1]: Death is directly personified where the poet directly talks to it. The author also make use of an apostrophe to show the subject being adressed cannot respond ie death

Commented [2]: use of alliteration of letters th

Commented [3]: dost is another way of saying doesn't

Commented [4]: The word overthrow is used to mean kill creating a line break between overthrow and kill which brings out a nice dramatic pause

Commented [5]: here death is compared to rest and sleep and the word pleasure is even used to describe the feeling of death. Death should bring a restful pleasure just like sleep does.

Commented [6]: Repetition of sound e in the sentence

Commented [7]: Death is deccribed using "rest their bones and "Soul's delivery "making death seem like a welcome friend

Commented [8]: The use of And in each sentence indicates anaphora

2. Anecdote of the Jar

By Wallace Stevens

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
 And round it was, upon a hill.
 It made the slovenly wilderness
 Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
 And sprawled around, no longer wild.
 The jar was round upon the ground
 And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
 The jar was gray and bare.

Commented [9]: This means man's conquest over nature

Commented [10]: Placing the jar on top of a hill means the natural world –the wilderness –must grow around the jar resulting to nature losing its wildness. The jar plays a role of infecting everything around it, removing wildness and making the natural world how it is.

Commented [11]: A jar is used as a symbol –we process food from nature and sell it in jars

Commented [12]: The repetition of these words round, around, ground put emphases on the round shape of the jar and the difference between wilderness of nature and manmade jar.

It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Commented [13]: This means the jar is an inanimate object –it did not care about the nature surrounding it, or else it could mean the jar has no contribution to the natural world unlike the bush and bird.

3. Rite of Passage

Commented [14]: The title shows someone will be facing trials and overcoming obstacles with a meaning of coming of age in life

By Sharon Olds

As the guests arrive at our son’s party
they gather in the living room—
short men, men in first grade
with smooth jaws and chins.
Hands in pockets, they stand around
Jostling, jockeying for place, small fights
breaking out and calming. One says to another
How old are you? —Six. —I’m seven. —So?
They eye each other, seeing themselves
tiny in the other’s pupils. They clear their
throats a lot, a room of small bankers,
they fold their arms and frown. *I could beat you*
up, a seven says to a six,
the midnight cake, round and heavy as a
turret behind them on the table. My son,
freckles like specks of nutmeg on his cheeks,
chest narrow as the balsa keel of a
model boat, long hands
cool and thin as the day they guided him
out of me, speaks up as a host
for the sake of the group.

Commented [15]: The word tiny pupils is used to represent young pupils in the house and the purity they hold within regardless of their tyrannical nature –symbol

Commented [16]: The babies are being compared with serious or stoic figures such as bankers presenting an image of how the boys see and carry themselves =metaphor

Commented [17]: Turret is used to mean a small tower

Commented [18]: Simile: heavy as a turret, the cake being describe as a grand tower could mean the vital role it plays in the boy’s initiation of turning 7 years

We could easily kill a two-year-old,
he says in his clear voice. The other
men agree, they clear their throats
like Generals, they relax and get down to
playing war, celebrating my son’s life.

Commented [19]: This phrase holds a magnitude that is not close or related to the innocence and simplicity of the child’s birthday party -Hyperbole

Commented [20]: Clearing their throat like generals, there is comparison between the two –Simile

Commented [21]: The batch of minors being described as those of generals –ironic

4. Fire and Ice

Commented [22]: The title of the poem is about end of the world –eschatology and gives out two causes of the end either ice or fire.

By Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,
 Some say in ice.
 From what I've tasted of desire
 I hold with those who favor fire.
 But if it had to perish twice,
 I think I know enough of hate
 To say that for destruction ice
 Is also great
 And would suffice.

- Commented [23]:** In fire means desire as a destructive force
- Commented [24]:** The use of word the word some say in the beginning of the two sentences-Anaphora allowing for establishment of antithesis
- Commented [25]:** The end of the world is weighed up using two scenarios some think it will end in ice while other think it will end in fire.
- Commented [26]:** Ice is used to mean hatred
- Commented [27]:** The speaker tend to agree that the world will end in fire according to his /her experience
- Commented [28]:** This means that if the world was to end twice, ice would also be a powerful destruction method.
- Commented [29]:** Is used to mean do the job sufficiently

5. Dreams

By Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
 For if dreams die
 Life is a broken-winged bird
 That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
 For when dreams go
 Life is a barren field
 Frozen with snow.

- Commented [30]:** The repetition of the word dreams instead of using "they" which is grammatical correct speaks of the significance of the word dream
- Commented [31]:** The word if means such a fate of dream's death is only a possibility.
- Commented [32]:** Broken winged means destroyed
- Commented [33]:** Life is claimed to be a broken winged bird –Metaphor
- Commented [34]:** Repetition of the sentence to show how important "holding to dreams "is
- Commented [35]:** These sentences mean that one day dream will vanish, the quality of life will eventually lessen but the impact of dreams will be worth cherishing.

6. Trees

By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

Commented [36]: Shall never see....use of alliteration making it more rhyme

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

Commented [37]: Use of alliteration ' lifts', "leafy "

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Commented [38]: The tree is given human characteristics which include the hair arms and breasts .the is also referred to a she (woman) which relates to mother earth figure-personification

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Commented [39]: The sentences use anaphora –Using letter A in each sentence

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Commented [40]: Repetition –the word tree has severally been repeated

7. Remember

By Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd;
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Commented [41]: This means no longer around

Commented [42]: Symbolism -The "silent land" is used to symbolize death, it also emphasizes the loneliness of the narrator without her beloved which she fears more than death.

Commented [43]: These lines make clear that the poem is an apostrophe, the poem is directly addressed to someone without the reader not knowing who is being addressed

Commented [44]: When you can't hold my hand anymore

Commented [45]: Remember me when you can no longer tell me about all your future plans for us

Commented [46]: Shortened form of planned

Commented [47]: Repetition –The word remember have been repeated throughout the poem. This shows us the fear the narrator has to her beloved not heeding to her request.

Commented [48]: But in case you forget me for a while and remember me later you should not feel bad.

Commented [49]: The poem is strongly associated with love poetry

Commented [50R49]: The poem is a sonnet -14 line poem

8. The Red Wheelbarrow

By William Carlos William

so much depends

upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

9. The New Colossus

By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Commented [51]: The language used creates a calm tone, to begin with the whole poem have no punctuation or capitalization whatsoever, no strict grammar rules is followed.

Commented [52]: The wheelbarrow is used to symbolize farm work and farm workers as well.

Commented [53]: There is use of enjambment where one line depends upon the line that follows.

Commented [54]: This means a red single wheeled cart

Commented [55]: The one am seeing now is wet from rain

Commented [56]: The statue of liberty is compared to an ancient Greek statue i.e. the Colossus of Rhodes

Commented [57]: The construction of the Colossus of Rhodes was to commemorate the victory of military victory and was supposed to stand on its legs on both sides of a harbour.

Commented [58]: Use of alliteration "sea" "sunset"

Commented [59]: The statue is given voice where she speaks directly to the European nations saying she doesn't want to be part of their powers.

Commented [60]: The people have been rejected and forgotten in their overpopulated countries with little resources.

Commented [61]: The statue again commands ancient nations to send her the exiles and those with misfortunes

Commented [62]: The poem has 14 stanzas –sonnet

10. Nothing Gold Can Stay

By Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,

Commented [63]: The title fleets about nature of youth, beauty, and life itself.

Commented [64]: This sentence means the trees fresh bud are gold during early spring

Commented [65]: "Green is gold" –Alliteration

Commented [66]: Gold is symbolic of everything beautiful, fresh and youthful

Her hardest hue to hold.
 Her early leaf's a flower;
 But only so an hour.
 Then leaf subsides to leaf.
 So Eden sank to grief,
 So dawn goes down to day.
 Nothing gold can stay.

Commented [67]: By the use "she "nature is personified as a female figure

Commented [68]: The word her is repeated in the beginning of the two sentences –Anaphora

Commented [69]: Using So in the two sentences also indicates anaphora

Commented [70]: Nothing, fresh, pure or beautiful last forever.

11. On the Death of Richard West

By [Thomas Gray](#)

In vain to me the smiling Mornings shine,
 And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire;
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
 A different object do these eyes require;
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain;
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

Commented [71]: Alliteration "smiling and shine "

Commented [72]: Use of personal pronoun of the first persona –me, my

Commented [73]: This section illustrates the effect of sadness on the speaker's own body, his eyes and ears long to see and hear something different from what he perceives.

Commented [74]: This can be used to indicate the persona is a male

Commented [75]: Little loves –Alliteration

Commented [76]: This indicates that the person being addressed is not able to hear or respond presumably because he is dead.

Commented [77]: This brings out the theme of loneliness, grievance and sadness

12. War

By [Mariana Llanos](#)

War
 War Motive
 War Marvel
 War Mother
 War Martyr
 War Mourning
 War Money
 War Monger

War Murder
War Monster
War Monster
War Monster
Monster

Commented [78]: Repetition –“War monster has been repeated in the three sentences
Commented [79]: The word war in the start of every statement indicates anaphora

13. Poetry is My Underwear

By April Halprin Wayland

My sister found them.

Commented [80]: Use of first persona

Read them out loud.
She’s so proud,

she’s running to our parents
waving my poems in the air.

Commented [81]: She’s is used to mean she is
Commented [82]: Use of anaphora with the two sentences starting with she

Doesn’t she know
she’s waving my underwear?

Commented [83]: She doesn’t know
Commented [84]: Underwear is used to symbolize something valuable

14. Harlem

By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Commented [85]: What happens to a vision that is delayed or put off

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Commented [86]: Dry up like a raising in the sun-simile
Commented [87]: Fester like a sore –simile

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Commented [88]: Simile
Commented [89]: Syrupy sweet –Alliteration

Or does it explode?

Commented [90]: Simile
Commented [91]: This is an action verb as it is showing the action taking place.

15. Alone”

By Edgar Allan Poe

From childhood's hour I have not been
 As others were—I have not seen
 As others saw—I could not bring
 My passions from a common spring—
 From the same source I have not taken
 My sorrow—I could not awaken
 My heart to joy at the same tone—
 And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—
 Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
 Of a most stormy life—was drawn
 From ev'ry depth of good and ill
 The mystery which binds me still—
 From the torrent, or the fountain—
 From the red cliff of the mountain—
 From the sun that 'round me roll'd
 In its autumn tint of gold—
 From the lightning in the sky
 As it pass'd me flying by—
 From the thunder, and the storm—
 And the cloud that took the form
 (When the rest of Heaven was blue)
 Of a demon in my view—

- Commented [92]:** This means the speaker was different from others since childhood
- Commented [93]:** As others is repeated in these two sentences to show intense loneliness
- Commented [94]:** The speaker is explaining how he was sad alone but he enjoyed it.
- Commented [95]:** Is used to represent loneliness

- Commented [96]:** Consonance –The constant sound /r/ is repeated
- Commented [97]:** Round me roll'd –Alliteration
- Commented [98]:** Use of imagery
- Commented [99]:** The three sentences starts with “from the “-Anaphora
- Commented [100]:** Is used to mean rolled
- Commented [101]:** Alliteration –the, thunder, the
- Commented [102]:** The heaven is personified as if it can feel pain –personification

16. The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

By Sir Walter Raleigh

If all the world and love were young,
 And truth in every Shepherd's tongue,
 These pretty pleasures might me move,
 To live with thee, and be thy love.
 Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
 When Rivers rage and Rocks grow cold,
 And Philomel becometh dumb,
 The rest complains of cares to come.
 The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,
 To wayward winter reckoning yields,
 A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
 Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.
 Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,

- Commented [103]:** If the world was more like Eden she would go live with shepherd
- Commented [104]:** If the shepherd is saying the truth, the speaker will and stay with him
- Commented [105]:** Enclosed area of a sheep
- Commented [106]:** A phenomenal woman
- Commented [107]:** Becomes
- Commented [108]:** Lacing the power of speech
- Commented [109]:** Not controlled or limited
- Commented [110]:** Judging
- Commented [111]:** The speaker says that rivers are occasionally violent and destructive, and cold rocks don't make the best sitting place.
- Commented [112]:** Bitterness of spirit
- Commented [113]:** The feeling of loving something or someone

Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Commented [114]: The two lines starts with the word thy –anaphora

Commented [115]: Lack of good sense or judgment; foolishness.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,
The Coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

Commented [116]: The speaker means if the world was more Eden-like, and the spring and summer always last, Then what you promised me might move me to go live with you and be your lover.

17. A Black Man Talks of Reaping

By Arna Bontemps

I have sown beside all waters in my day,
I planted deep, within my heart the fear
that wind or fowl would take the grain away,
I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

Commented [117]: The two sentences starts with I – anaphora

Commented [118]: The speaker shares his fear that the white majority will take away all of the goods they own.

Commented [119]: The speaker uses farming metaphor to describe how black felt as racist in America

Commented [120]: Scattered seed –Alliteration

I scattered seed enough to plant the land
in rows from Canada to Mexico
but for my reaping only what the hand
can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields
my brother's sons are gathering stalk and root;
small wonder then my children glean in fields
they have not sown, and feed on bitter fruit.

Commented [121]: Rhyme Scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF

18. From the Dark Tower

By Countee Cullen

(To Charles S. Johnson)

We shall not always plant while others reap
The golden increment of bursting fruit,
Not always countenance, abject and mute,
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
Not everlastingly while others sleep
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;
We were not made eternally to weep.

Commented [122]: We shall no longer be used as slaves

Commented [123]: Increase

Commented [124]: The speaker is expressing how that they will not stay quiet under oppression

The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,
White stars is no less lovely being dark,
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

Commented [125]: Means that anyone, no matter their skin colour, can be just as beautiful as the rest.

Commented [126]: They haven't yet rose up against slavery or racism, but they are about to and are hiding their anger while they suffer

19. The Adventures of a Turtle

By Russell Edson

The turtle carries his house on his back. He is both the house and the person of that house.
But actually, under the shell is a little room where the true turtle, wearing long
underwear, sits at a little table. At one end of the room a series of levers sticks out of slots in
the floor, like the controls of a steam shovel. It is with these that the turtle controls the legs of
his house.

Commented [127]: House is used to symbolize shell

Commented [128]: The turtle is personified as a man

Commented [129]: Alliteration

Most of the time the turtle sits under the sloping ceiling of his turtle room reading
catalogues at the little table where a candle burns. He leans on one elbow, and then the other.
He crosses one leg, and then the other. Finally he yawns and buries his head in his arms and
sleeps.

If he feels a child picking up his house he quickly douses the candle and runs to the
control levers and activates the legs of his house and tries to escape.

Commented [130]: If a turtle feels some steps it quickly puts the head in the shell and covers the whole body

If he cannot escape he retracts the legs and withdraws the so-called head and waits. He
knows that children are careless, and that there will come a time when he will be free to move
his house to some secluded place, where he will relight his candle, take out his catalogues and
read until at last he yawns. Then he'll bury his head in his arms and sleep....That is, until
another child picks up his house....

Commented [131]: Cover

20. From Blossoms

By Li-Young Lee

From blossoms comes
this brown paper bag of peaches
we bought from the boy
at the bend in the road where we turned toward
signs painted Peaches.

Commented [132]: Use of Alliteration

Commented [133]: The paper bag means taking inside of days

Commented [134]: His saliva /his breathings

From laden boughs, from hands,
from sweet fellowship in the bins,
comes nectar at the roadside, succulent
peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,
comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.

Commented [135]: Anaphora –both the two sentences start with from

O, to take what we love inside,
to carry within us an orchard, to eat

not only the skin, but the shade,
not only the sugar, but the days, to hold
the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into
the round jubilation of peach.

Commented [136]: The two sentences start with "not only the "-Anaphora

Commented [137]: Anaphora

There are days we live
as if death were nowhere
in the background; from joy
to joy to joy, from wing to wing,
from blossom to blossom to
impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.

Commented [138]: The ever present shadow of our death,

Commented [139]: Repetition of words