



Michael
Crummey
Hard
Light

with a new introduction
by Lisa Moore

TEACHER GUIDE

BRICK BOOKS CLASSICS 5 BRICK BOOKS

Brick Books has produced this Teacher Guide as an aid in discussing and studying the titles from its Brick Books Classics poetry series in secondary and post-secondary classrooms.

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Written by Linda E. Lucas, who thanks fellow teachers Michael Pizzuti, Gloria Getty, and Wendy Hirschegger for their assistance.

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INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

WHAT MAKES POETRY, POETRY?

Begin with some of your assumptions and preconceptions about poetry by answering the following questions as true or false. If you believe the statement to be false, you may indicate why with a brief explanation to the right of the statement. The final question invites you, in your own notebook, to write whatever else you believe to be true (or false) about poetry. Quiz someone close to you with your own suppositions.

1. T/F **Poetry has a beat.**

2. T/F **Poetry rhymes.**

3. T/F **Poetry does not run margin to margin, as prose does, but has line breaks.**

4. T/F **Poetry deals with imagery (allegory, symbol, metaphor, simile, etc.).**

5. T/F **Poetry is difficult.**

6. T/F **Poetry has stanzas.**

7. T/F **Poetry has verses.**

8. T/F **There is no difference between a stanza and a verse.**

9. T/F **Songs that have words are poetry.**

10. T/F **Poems, unlike short fiction, don't tell a story.**

11. T/F **Free verse has no rules.**

12. T/F **Blank verse has no rules.**

13. T/F **All poems have a regular metre or cadence.**

14. T/F **Poems have one valid interpretation.**

15. T/F **All poets are extremely well-educated.**

16. T/F **Rap is poetry.**

17. T/F **Poetry is/isn't...**

HOW DO POETS TALK ABOUT POETRY?

Read some of the quotations below to discover what published poets say about their own craft. In the box below their statements, create your own statement about poetry.

“Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.”

—**William Wordsworth**

“Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

—**Percy Bysshe Shelley**

“Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.”

—**T. S. Eliot**

“Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things, and hence its importance.”

—**Matthew Arnold**

“The poet is the priest of the invisible.”

—**Wallace Stevens**

“If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?”

—**Emily Dickinson**

“Poems come out of wonder, not out of knowing.”

—**Lucille Clifton**

“Poetry isn’t a profession; it’s a way of life. It’s an empty basket; you put your life into it and make something out of that.”

—**Mary Oliver**

“When an angel carries away my soul / all shrouded in fog, folded in flames / I have no body, no tears to weep / just a bag in my heart, full of poems.”

—**Elena Svarts**

I think that poetry is ...

TEACHER GUIDE TO HARD LIGHT: BRICK BOOKS CLASSICS 5

by MICHAEL CRUMMEY

For each of the selections, before you respond to the questions, keep in mind the following important considerations for each piece:

- a) Imagine the identity of the speaker.
- b) Imagine an audience for the address.
- c) What imagery (sensory detail, metaphors, similes, symbols, etc.) does the poet use?
- d) What technical elements are in play (structure, rhythm or its lack, rhyme or its lack)?
- e) What allusions does the poet make to ideas/people/places (historical figures, works of art, scientific terms, etc.) that have a life outside the poem?
- f) Are there elements of the poet's biography (family life, profession, relationships, etc.) that inform the work? If so, how do they inform the poetry?

Rust (page 21)

- ▶ Why is this prelude to *Hard Light* called "Rust"?
- ▶ Why do you think it stands apart from the three sets of poetry that follow it?

32 LITTLE STORIES: Water

- ▶ Comment on the change of vocal perspective throughout the section *Water*. Which voices do we hear? What effect does the use of differing perspectives have on the work?

East by the Sea and West by the Sea (page 27)

- ▶ How much did the speaker's father pay for his house, fishing room, stage, and store house? Why do you suppose he paid such a small sum?

- ▶ The **stage** would not be anything theatrical. To what do you think the term **fishing stage** refers?
- ▶ What event happened in 1934 in Newfoundland and why was/is it significant?

The Way Things Were (page 28)

- ▶ What about the style and imagery of this prose qualifies it as poetic?
- ▶ Where is the ship *The Kyle* headed and why is the boy on board?
- ▶ What class distinctions are evident between the Canadian fishermen and the American tourists on board?

Making the Fish (page 30)

- ▶ What is a **quintal** and what is its etymology?
- ▶ How many stages are there to **making fish**?
- ▶ Without using a dictionary, define the word **bawn** by context. Then look up the word in a dictionary and see how closely your definition matches the formal one.
- ▶ Mention is made of “the girl” and her wages being paid to her by the skipper for her summer of work but no specific job for her is detailed. What do you think her role was?

Acts of God (page 33)

- ▶ To which catastrophes is the speaker referring when alluding to “acts of God”?
- ▶ What natural remedies are suggested by the speaker for dealing with the ailments of a fisherperson’s hands?
- ▶ What human quality is the speaker asking the reader to develop according to paragraph 5? Why?

The Law of the Ocean (page 34)

- ▶ Who is the speaker?
- ▶ What is “the law of the ocean”?
- ▶ Why did the Americans in question not charge the Canadians salvaging their survey boat? (Be mindful of the date of the account.)

Grace (page 36)

- ▶ What is a **turr**?
- ▶ Speculate as to why the speaker has difficulty using his friend Sandy’s German rifle.
- ▶ According to the definition of **poetic justice**, does this literary term apply to what happened to Sandy’s hand?

When the Time Came (page 39)

- ▶ What aspect(s) of the speaker's sister's birth do you find surprising? Why?
- ▶ Speculate on the identity of Dixon Crummey. How does this person fit into the Crummey family?
- ▶ When did the speaker discover that his mother was expecting a child?

Fifties (page 40)

- ▶ When the speaker left home at the age of 16 to find work, what kept him longer than he had intended?
- ▶ When the speaker says in the last line that he felt like he'd "lost something for good," what loss does he lament?
- ▶ How old was he when "the arse [went] out of the fishery"?
- ▶ What did he do in order to offset his two-year debt to old man Sellars?

32 LITTLE STORIES: Earth

- ▶ Compare the themes of the *Water* poems with those of the *Earth* poems. What do you notice?

Bread (page 43)

- ▶ Who is speaking?
- ▶ Why is this piece called "Bread"?
- ▶ In paragraph 4, the pronouns are ambiguous. Is this accidental (an oversight of the editing process) or deliberate? Defend your answer.
- ▶ What is the significance of the husband's decision to buy a second bag of flour? Respond from the speaker's point of view, and then from the husband's.

Root Cellar (page 44)

- ▶ Why would there be so many capelin that the women would use them as fertilizer for the soil?
- ▶ What are *scrunchions*?
- ▶ What imagery is used in this piece? Identify examples of metaphor, simile, synaesthesia. How are these images unified?
- ▶ A common technique of Crummey's is his use of a past or present participle as a stand-in for a full verb. How does this technique affect your reading of the piece? Use examples from this piece in your response.

Husbanding (page 46)

- ▶ Who is the speaker? Why is this piece called “Husbanding”?
- ▶ What element of **husbanding** (in the sense in which it is used in this piece) was most difficult for the speaker?
- ▶ Since milk will not keep in a root cellar, how do you suppose the speaker kept her milk?

Stones (page 48)

- ▶ Why is this piece called “Stones”?
- ▶ Why would “living cruelly” be a necessity of farm life?
- ▶ Why would the skills of veterinarians not be used in such circumstances?

Bay De Verde (page 49)

- ▶ What is the origin of the name of Conception Bay? Why is it pertinent to this piece?
- ▶ How is this piece tied to the last one?
- ▶ What are the mood and tone of the poem? How does the poet achieve these effects?

The Burnt Woods (page 51)

- ▶ Using the information provided by the speaker, draw a full-body portrait of William T. Rose.
- ▶ Why did he leave to work in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia?
- ▶ What happened as a result of that work?

Jiggs’ Dinner (page 52)

- ▶ Who was Jiggs?
- ▶ Three types of imagery pull at each other in this piece: the spiritual, the temporal, and the physical. Give examples of each and examine the tension among them.
- ▶ Find out the origin of the expression **rule of thumb**.
- ▶ Write a recipe for a favourite meal, attempting to emulate this piece.

Old Christmas Day (page 55)

- ▶ Who is the speaker? Estimate his/her/their age.
- ▶ Why do the first two paragraphs seem highly unlikely? Give at least two reasons.
- ▶ Interpret the line “The first mill he had burnt down.”
- ▶ How do the last two lines of the piece alter our perception of the narrator?

- ▶ What does the photo add to the piece?
- ▶ Why is January 6th called Old Christmas Day?

32 LITTLE STORIES: Fire

- ▶ Write a short poem relevant to your experience that you feel might fit well in the *Fire* section of this volume.

32 Little Stories (page 59)

- ▶ When did Newfoundland join Confederation and which Liberal leader helped make it happen?
- ▶ Identify elements of anti-Francophone sentiment in the speaker's voice and actions. What do you suppose is the source of this enmity?
- ▶ Judge the reaction of Kitch Williams to the textbook incident. Judge the speaker's reaction to Williams's suggestion. What does the silence at the end of the story signify?

Bonfire Night (page 61)

- ▶ When is Guy Fawkes Day and what does it celebrate?
- ▶ Why does rebellion figure so prominently in the psyche of most teenagers?
- ▶ Draw a picture of a teen horse-jumping a bonfire.

Flame (page 62)

- ▶ Choose a favourite example each of metaphor, simile, or hyperbole from this selection and explain why it appeals to you.
- ▶ Why did Newfoundlanders migrate to Labrador to fish during the summer months?
- ▶ Draw a picture of Mike Tobin and Joe Crowley at some point before, during, or after the cigarette incident.

The Tennessee Waltz (page 64)

- ▶ Identify the year, artist, and writer the first year that "The Tennessee Waltz" was a hit song.
- ▶ Write a poem imitative of this piece, altering the year, the place, and the recipe. Suggest a different hit song for the title.
- ▶ Define the expression *new-milk warm* and suggest what it tells us about Newfoundland and Labrador culture.

Bonfire Night (2) (page 65)

- ▶ Identify the elements of ritual in this piece. How is Newfoundland and Labrador culture different from other Canadian provinces?
- ▶ Compare and contrast “Bonfire Night” and “Bonfire Night (2).” What is the essential difference between the two pieces?
- ▶ What are *flankers*? What literary technique is employed in their description?
- ▶ What is ironic about the boys’ “resourcefulness” in finding the “nice barrels”?

What We Needed (page 68)

- ▶ What were the political and financial climates of the early 1930s?
- ▶ Characterize the men of Twillingate based on their actions in this piece.
- ▶ Why is the title “What We Needed” particularly appropriate for this segment?
- ▶ Why is there a lack of romantic sentimentality about this volume thus far?

Solomon Evans’ Son (page 71)

- ▶ What does the photograph of the note about the new school in 1895 tell you about the writer of the note?
- ▶ Choose an example of simile, metaphor, synaesthesia, or personification and explain why the use of this imagery appeals to you.
- ▶ Draw the scene at Ellen Kennel’s graveside.

Infrared (page 72)

- ▶ The use of *never* in the first sentence indicates the speaker’s certainty that such a photo could never have been taken. Why?
- ▶ Draw a triptych including drawings of:
 - a) the kitchen before bed
 - b) the living room
 - c) the upstairs bedrooms.

32 LITTLE STORIES: Air**Her Mark (page 75)**

- ▶ What are some of the reasons that the author might have called this piece “Her Mark”?
- ▶ What clues in the text tell the reader the education level of Ellen Rose Crummey?
- ▶ What kind of person was Ellen Rose Crummey? Quote the text to support your response.
- ▶ Take a look at the document on the next page. What conclusions can you draw from this document about Ellen Rose Crummey?

Procession (page 77)

- ▶ Do some research about airships in the 1930s. How familiar would people from Newfoundland and Labrador have been with them?
- ▶ Why would the sight of a zeppelin have caused Mary Penny to “die of fright”?
- ▶ Do some research and determine:
 - a) if this story is likely true and
 - b) which zeppelin passed over Mary Penny’s property that day.

Old Wives’ Tales (page 79)

- ▶ What does the speaker suggest about the phrase *old wives’ tales* in the first sentence?
- ▶ Is it a good practice for adults to assume that young children do not need to be protected from adult conversation since they don’t understand it? Why or why not?
- ▶ Recount a story of your own in which a child’s perception of a situation caused a calamitous event.

Two Voices (page 80)

- ▶ Estimate the uncle’s age in this piece. Support your response with textual quotations.
- ▶ Why does the uncle become temporarily deaf?
- ▶ Examine the similes in this piece. What is it about them that typifies the character of life in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Your Soul, Your Soul, Your Soul (page 81)

- ▶ Compare this piece to “What We Needed.” Both selections deal with height as a theme. How are they different?
- ▶ Compare this piece to “Flame.” Each deals with practical jokes. Is the speaker’s attitude toward the practice similar or different in each piece?

Kite (page 82)

- ▶ Comment on the effectiveness of the similes used in this piece.
- ▶ How do you think Hollis died? Defend your answer(s).
- ▶ Recount an event from your childhood in which you were so angry that you “wanted to do something unforgivable.”

Stan's Last Song (page 83)

- ▶ Orangeman's Day is traditionally July 12th. Do some research and find out why some Newfoundland and Labrador regions celebrated it on New Year's Day instead.
- ▶ What does Orangeman's Day celebrate?
- ▶ What is interesting about "the Time" after ten p.m.?
- ▶ Visit a heritage site online pertaining to Newfoundland and Labrador. What are some other typical days of celebration that are perhaps not celebrated elsewhere in Canada?

Dominion (page 86)

- ▶ Why is Newfoundland referred to as "That other Dominion"?
- ▶ Identify the religious imagery used in the piece and explain how it relates to the subject matter.
- ▶ Even during a hockey game, Newfoundlanders are aware of the natural world around them. How is this awareness present in this piece?

DISCOVERING DARKNESS

- ▶ In the Afterword to this volume, you will find the source of this diary. Who wrote it? Between which years did the diarist live? The speaker notes that he was "retired from the sea." In what capacity had he worked at sea?

Magic Lantern (April, 1889) (page 89)

- ▶ This piece, like "Rust" before *32 Little Stories*, serves as a preface to this section of the volume. Based on this piece, what themes will permeate *Discovering Darkness*?

Learning the Price of Fish, 1876-1887

- ▶ Explore the connotations of the word **price** and predict what themes this section of poems will treat.

'And now to make a start as a boy of very little understanding.' (1876) (page 93)

- ▶ Research the French Shore of Newfoundland. Which of three treaties will affect the speaker?
- ▶ In what ways is this a coming-of-age piece?
- ▶ What do you suppose the speaker means by **discovering darkness**?

'A hard toil and worry for nothing.' (1879) (page 94)

- ▶ Draw a ship "raftered / between pans."
- ▶ If the speaker was 16 when he joined a sealing crew, how old was he when he:
 - a) jigged for cod and
 - b) mined for copper?
- ▶ What had been the speaker's worry and toil? Why was it "for nothing"?

'A trip to the Labrador among the Esquimaux' (1882) (page 96)

- ▶ What can you infer from the passage here about the speaker's attitude to the Esquimaux?
- ▶ What do Arctic peoples call themselves currently?
- ▶ What can you infer about Captain Herl based on this passage?

'The price of fish.' (September, 1887) (page 97)

- ▶ How old was the speaker when he left home?
- ▶ Name three ways in which you can lose your life fishing.
- ▶ What is the price of fish?

EXPECTING TO BE CHANGED, 1887-1894

- ▶ The title implies an alteration. In whom or in what?

'On the broad Atlantic for the first time to cross the pond.' (November, 1887) (page 101)

- ▶ What does the expression **cross the pond** mean?
- ▶ What is the likely nationality of the captain of *Konigsburg*?
- ▶ Identify at least five modern conveniences that would not be available aboard *Konigsburg* in November 1887.

'Names of the Ropes' (1887) (page 102)

- ▶ What do the terms **reef**, **clew**, and **furl** mean?
- ▶ Draw a tall ship and label each of its sails and gear as outlined here.
- ▶ What is paradoxical about the use of the spider web metaphor in the last six lines?

'Crossing the Equator. Arrived in Rio Grande.' (1888) (page 103)

- ▶ Using the place names at your disposal, identify the country to which the speaker sailed from Spain.
- ▶ Why would a ship carry horn, hides, and tallow?
- ▶ What does the man learn about sailors' stories that he had dismissed as a boy?

'Arrived in Hong Kong, November 9. The histories of China.' (1888) (page 104)

- ▶ Why did the creation of foot-binding persist for over 1 000 years in China? What was its appeal at the time of its origin?
- ▶ Discuss the ways in which the speaker felt alienated in China.
- ▶ What gave him comfort? Why?

'The Fearnot of Liverpool' (1889) (page 105)

- ▶ Why did the captain and his crew not board the abandoned ship that they encountered?
- ▶ How did one crew member end up overboard?
- ▶ Why is the name of the ship in the title ironic?

'Arrived in Odessa, Russia. Bonaparte at Moscow.' (1889) (page 106)

- ▶ What is history's account of who defeated Napoleon?
- ▶ What extended metaphor unites each stanza of this piece?
- ▶ What symbol comes to mind in the last three lines that is connected to that extended metaphor?

'In a great row and got locked up.' (1890) (page 107)

- ▶ What is a quartermaster?
- ▶ From which country does a Cockney hail?
- ▶ Analyse the nature of the homosocial friendship among sailors of the time period based on this selection.

'Observatory on Mount Pleasant' (1890) (page 109)

- ▶ Draw the scenario in which the speaker is looking down on the scene.
- ▶ How big is a humpback whale?
- ▶ How is this piece linked to those on pages 103 and 104?

'A hard looking sight but not lost.' (1890) (page 110)

- ▶ What is the *spanker* in this context?
- ▶ What parts of a ship are the *bulwarks*, *galley*, and *forecastle*?
- ▶ What do the last four lines suggest about the speaker's character?

'Taking photographs.' (1891) (page 112)

- ▶ Up to this point, who had access to "photographical outfit[s]"?
- ▶ How does the speaker view photography?

‘Now in Africa among the Natives.’ (1891) (page 113)

- ▶ What attitude to other faiths and cultures is evidenced by the opening 19th century missionary hymn segment?
- ▶ How does the speaker see Africans? How do the missionaries?
- ▶ How does the speaker reveal where the true blindness lies in the world?

‘A narrow escape almost but saved.’ (1892) (page 114)

- ▶ Define the terms *martingale*, *whisker*, and *bowsprit* in this context.
- ▶ Draw a picture of the speaker reboarding after his fall.
- ▶ Write a poem called “peculiar darkness” in which you recount an event whose outcome, which you thought certain, was not what you expected.

‘Useful Information, the Holy Lands’ (1893) (page 116)

- ▶ Check the speaker’s science. Was the earth at one time covered completely with water? Provide your sources with your details.
- ▶ How are life in the desert and life on the high seas very similar?
- ▶ Defend or refute the statement that “it is mostly thirst/ that makes a place holy”

UNDERSTANDING THE HEART, 1894-1935

- ▶ Predict which aspects of the heart will be the focus of this section.

‘When I started trading.’ (1884) (page 121)

- ▶ To which Greek myth is the speaker referring when he says he “stopped up” his ears?
- ▶ How does the structure of this piece reflect its theme?
- ▶ What metaphor does the speaker use for the act of marriage? Which one of its dictionary meanings seems most relevant to this piece?

‘Boat Building.’ (1889) (page 122)

- ▶ Which of the multiple meanings of the word *scarf* applies to the context of this piece?
- ▶ What is a *stanchion*? What is its etymology?
- ▶ How does the structure of this poem resemble the one before it?

‘Who can understand the heart of a man.’ (1907) (page 123)

- ▶ Outline the facts of this case as if you were a detective. Attempt to ascertain:
 - a) what the father did and to whom
 - b) what his method was

c) what his motive was.

- ▶ Why does the speaker describe the knife the way he does in the last three lines?
- ▶ Characterize the light in the second last line.

***'Distance from Newfoundland. Northernmost grave in the world.'* (1913) (page 125)**

- ▶ What is a **cairn**? How common are cairns in Newfoundland?
- ▶ What is a **sledge runner**?
- ▶ Pinpoint the route on a map where the speaker has travelled. Pinpoint the location of the cairn.
- ▶ Research Lydia and Saint Paul. Why is Lydia said to be Europe's first Christian?
- ▶ What kept George Porter from being "lost forever?"

***'Life and its pleasures.'* (1921) (page 127)**

- ▶ How does the metaphor of the lottery work unusually in this poem?
- ▶ Do some research and find other place names in the world with potentially humorous or offensive content.
- ▶ Do some research regarding Fortuna, the goddess of fate. Based on her description, draw or sculpt her.

***'At home on a cold winter's night. The changing scenes of Life.'* (1928) (page 129)**

- ▶ How does a sailor navigate by the stars?
 - a) Which star helps you find true north?
 - b) Which star helps you find true south?
 - c) Which star(s) help you find true east and west?

***'An old sailor's portion.'* (1932) (page 131)**

- ▶ How does this poem hearken back to the one on page 103?
- ▶ What is the origin of the word **darkie**? What does the speaker's use of this word say about him?
- ▶ Why does an old sailor doubt himself?

***'Pulling along toward the last end of the Warp of life and the man changes.'* (1935) (page 133)**

- ▶ Define the terms **warp** and **weft**.
- ▶ Why is the "last end of the warp of life" a good metaphor?
- ▶ How has the man changed from the boy who began his relationship with the sea by jigging for cod?

A MAP OF THE ISLANDS

- ▶ Read the two quotations on page 136. Predict some of the themes for the poems in this section.

What's Lost (page 137)

- ▶ Find the commonality in the imagery used to describe the shoals and islands. Why would they be “a cartographer’s nightmare”?
- ▶ Fifty years ago, how did a third mate navigate these islands?
- ▶ Discuss the paradox of the last two lines.
- ▶ What is the “this” that the speaker can’t “recall forgetting”?

Naming the Islands (page 140)

- ▶ Why has the poet provided you with the map on page 139?
- ▶ In many cultures, naming is a sacred act, giving a magical key to the essence of what it names, so much so that to know something’s essential name is to have power over it. For example, the naming of the animals in *Genesis* in the Christian *Bible* is what gives Adam dominion over them. In what sense does naming an island give one power over it?
- ▶ There is a Chinese proverb: “The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names.” Do any of these names seem to be “right names”? How so?
- ▶ Go outside of Newfoundland and find one name that fits in each category listed in this poem.

All the Way Home (page 142)

- ▶ Choose the image in this poem that, in your opinion, is the most arresting. Explain why it affects you in this way.
- ▶ Of what does the string image in the last six lines remind you?
- ▶ Which images convey the sheer immensity of the whales?

Stealing Bait (page 144)

- ▶ Where is Nain? What are its demographics?
- ▶ When you read the poem, do you sympathize with the teacher or the elder? Why?

Cousin (page 145)

- ▶ Research Saddle Island, Red Bay, Labrador. List three unusual details about it.
- ▶ How are the whales and their hunters similar?
- ▶ Why is this poem called “Cousin”? What theme does the title ask us to explore?

Capelin Scull (page 147)

- ▶ Why do capelin migrate all the way from the Caribbean?
- ▶ What image is held up for comparison to the capelin? Is it appropriate in your opinion? Why? Why not? Support your opinions with quotations from the text.
- ▶ What is the mortality rate of male capelin? How does this fact relate to what you now know about life in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Water Glass (page 149)

- ▶ What is Domino Run?
- ▶ Create two columns. In one, trace the religious imagery in this poem and comment on why it is used. In the other, list the storm imagery and do the same.
- ▶ Of all the possible meanings for **water glass**, which one resonates most for you in this poem?

Newfoundland Sealing Disaster (page 151)

- ▶ Research the *Newfoundland* sealing disaster. What year did it take place? How many vessels were involved and under whose command? How many sealers died and what caused their deaths?
- ▶ Apart from the loss of human life, how does the speaker feel about the practice of sealing? How do you know?
- ▶ What does the verb **to flense** mean? Why has the poet chosen to use this word in this context?

Hunters & Gatherers (page 152)

- ▶ Where is Davis Inlet?
- ▶ What effect has the displacement by Western whites had on the nomadic Innu and Inuit?
- ▶ What is an Inukshuk? What does it symbolize to the Inuit? In your opinion, has it been appropriated by white culture? If so, how?
- ▶ What does the speaker suggest by the final two lines: “It will stand that way for / a long time to come”?

The Women (page 155)

- ▶ What work did young girls do if hired on by fishing crews?
- ▶ What were their working conditions like?
- ▶ Why would a parent allow his or her 13-year-old to work among four or five adult men?

- ▶ Why use the word **seeded** in reference to the marriages in the poem?
- ▶ What in your opinion does the men's refusal to admit to sexual assault do to the psyche, and credibility of the women who experience it?

Cain (page 156)

- ▶ Give a brief account of the story of Cain and Abel from *Genesis* in the Christian *Bible*.
- ▶ Why does the speaker's father now identify with his brother in remembering the stabbing incident?

The Cold War (page 157)

- ▶ Research the CBC coverage of Hopedale. Why would the base have been torn down?

Moravians (page 158)

- ▶ Who were the Moravians? Why did they come to Labrador?
- ▶ What happened to the first Moravian missionaries?
- ▶ What eventually became of the Moravian dream of "the word of the Gospel / in a new land"?

Painting the Islands (page 259)

- ▶ Read the first stanza of "Painting the Islands" aloud. Comment on the musical elements present.
- ▶ What visual effect is highlighted by the use of the word **Neapolitan**?
- ▶ What colour is mica? What is the primary use of mica most relevant to this poem? Why?

Company (page 161)

- ▶ How is Saddle Island personified?
- ▶ What is a **midden**?
- ▶ What simile is used to describe the whalers' graves?
- ▶ What do the last three lines suggest about the character of the island itself?

The Change Islands (page 162)

- ▶ Examine the structure of this poem. How does it reflect the theme of change?
- ▶ What is the more local name for the lingonberry in Newfoundland?
- ▶ When did Earle Son's & Company close? Why?

Cataract (page 165)

- ▶ Why do you suppose the father and son want to return to a place that the father hasn't seen for fifty years?
- ▶ Why do they never reach their destination?
- ▶ How does the speaker describe the seascape? Choose one of those images and use it as a springboard to a poem of your own.
- ▶ Why is the title of this piece "Cataract"?

Afterword (page 167)

- ▶ Indicate the success or failure achieved by Michael Crummey in the following pursuits:
 - a) capturing "a prodigal vocabulary meant for talk"
 - b) structuring work "which seemed individual and all of a piece"
 - c) voicing a volume of poetry "from which the author was almost completely absent."

A Note on the Text (page 170)

- ▶ Michael Crummey's work has been described as ***ethnographic salvage***, ***post-Colonial***, ***fused identities***, and ***continuous flux***. Choose one of these descriptions and argue its appropriateness or make up a descriptor of your own and argue its aptness.

Biographical Note (page 173)

- ▶ How are Michael Crummy and his introducer, Lisa Moore, uniquely qualified to write about Newfoundland?

What other questions would you like to discuss that were not asked above?

GLOSSARY OF POETIC TERMS

For a more comprehensive list of literary terms related to poetry, consider the online Oxford or Abrams glossaries.

Alliteration

Repeated consonant sounds in close proximity.
ex: *Bugsy borrows bouncing baby buggies.*

Allusion

A reference to a person, place, or event outside the text.
ex: *“There is no need to become Woody Allen.” Gwyneth Paltrow, Sliding Doors.*

Analogy

A comparison between unlike things to show an underlying similarity.
ex: *“And the night is clear and empty / as a lake of acid rain.” Bruce Cockburn, Don’t Feel Your Touch.*

Anecdote

A funny little story.
ex: *Any story that begins “When I was your age ...”*

Antagonist

The obstacle to the protagonist (the character with whom the reader sympathizes).
ex: *The shark in Jaws.*

Archetype

A type of character universally recognized across many cultures.
ex: *“Follow the dreamer, the fool and the sage / back to the days of the Innocent Age.” Dan Fogelberg, The Innocent Age.*

Argument

Any writing which attempts to convince or sway the reader.

ex: *Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, which outlines the needs of the female writer.*

Ballad

A lengthy poem, often in song form, having many stanzas and a refrain.

ex: *Gordon Lightfoot's The Canadian Railroad Trilogy.*

Character

A person or animal in a story.

- *Static Character*: like a piece of furniture, just there.
- *Dynamic Character*: changes or develops as the story unfolds.
- *Flat*: like cardboard, having only two dimensions, not well-developed.
- *Round*: an interesting and complex character whom the reader gets to know well.

Characterization

4 ways to develop characters:

- By what they say.
- By what they do.
- By what others in the text say.
- By what the speaker/narrator/author says.

Chronological Order

Events arranged in the time order in which they occurred.

ex: *Lists of Canadian Prime Ministers from first to last.*

Cliché

An overused expression that has lost its effectiveness over time.

ex: *"Avoid clichés like the plague."*

Conflict

Forces in opposition.

- *External*: another character, society, nature (*Person vs. Person, Person vs. Society, Person vs. Nature*).
- *Internal*: within a character; a choice or decision (*Person vs. Self*).

Description

Writing meant to conjure up a person, place, thing, event, or experience for the reader using adjectives or imagery. Pays close attention to sensory details.

Dialect

Way of speaking characteristic of a geography or a people.

ex: *"I's the b'y that builds the boat."* Newfoundland folk song.

Dialogue

Conversation between or among characters.

ex: *"Dude, where's my car?" "Where's your car, dude?"*

Diction

Choice of wording.

ex: *"Jen and I were accustomed to our father's last-will-and-testament diction, and were at times free to interrupt Atticus for a translation when it was beyond our understanding."* Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Drama

Writing meant to be performed on stage.

ex: *Any play by Shakespeare.*

Essay

Nonfiction writing that is arguable, provable, worth proving, with a limited scope.

- *Subjective*: from the essayist's point of view.
- *Objective*: an attempt to remove bias from the subject.
- *Argument/Persuasive*: the focus is swaying or convincing the reader.

Exposition

Writing that informs.

ex: *An article about how to improve your golf swing.*

Part of the plot of a narrative in which characters and setting are established. (see also **PLOT**)

ex: *Once upon a time, there were three little pigs and the time came for them to leave home and seek their fortunes.*

Euphemism

The exchange of an offensive or embarrassing term for a more polite one.

ex: *"XYZ!" for Examine your zipper; your fly is down!*

Fable

A story with a widely applicable life story. It often conveys a moral.

ex: *The Tortoise and The Hare tells the story of how slow and steady tends to win the race more often than speed.*

Fiction

Stories created from the imagination.

ex: *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial.*

Figure of Speech

An idiomatic expression which, when taken literally, does not make sense.

ex: *"Hit the road, Jack!" is not an instruction for someone named Jack to go outside and slap the road.*

Flashback

Insertion of an event prior to the actions currently happening.

ex: *The film Forrest Gump begins with Forrest waiting for a bus. As he waits, he goes backward in time to tell stories of his life that happened before that moment.*

Foreshadowing

Hints that suggest future events.

ex: *In Jurassic Park, Dr. Grant, during a moment of turbulence in a helicopter, hastily ties two female ends of a seat belt together. Her action foreshadows the female dinosaurs who will later reproduce regardless of the lack of male dinosaurs.*

Free Verse

Poetry with rhythm but without a regular metre or rhyme scheme.

ex: *"For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things, / Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff: / In the slow float of differing light and deep, / No! there is nothing! In the whole and all, / Nothing that's quite your own. / Yet this is you." Ezra Pound, "Portrait D'Une Femme."*

Historical Fiction

A created story set in a real historical time period.

ex: *Braveheart or Shakespeare in Love.*

Humour

Something funny or amusing.

ex: *Anything published by the Onion.*

Hyperbole

An exaggeration.

ex: *We've heard this story a million times!*

Idiom

An expression not meant to be taken literally.

ex: *Don't get your knickers in a twist.*

Imagery

Descriptive words and phrases that appeal to the senses (sight, taste, smell, hearing, touch); often uses figurative language.

ex: *"I wandered lonely as a cloud." William Wordsworth.*

Inference

A deduction about the text based on evidence.

ex: *Someone slams a door and you infer that the person must be upset or angry.*

Irony

A contrast between expectation and reality.

- *Verbal*: the gap between what appears to be true and what is actually true in spoken word.
- *Situational*: an expected outcome differs greatly from the actual outcome.
- *Dramatic*: the audience knows something which the character(s) on stage or in the work do not.

Legend

A story passed down culturally with historical roots but without authentication.

ex: *Sasquatch, The Loch Ness Monster.*

Limerick

A five-line poem with an AABBA rhyme scheme meant to be funny.

ex: *There once was a lady from York / who had an aversion to pork. / When piglets were born / with face all forlorn, / she hid both her knife and her fork.*

Literal Language

Language that has no interpretation other than the intended meaning.

ex: *“Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.”* Bitzer’s definition of a horse, given to his literally-minded teacher, Mr. Gradgrind.

Lyric Poem

A poem that expresses feelings, originally accompanied by a lyre.

ex: *Catullus’s “Odi et Amo” (I hate and I love) is an excellent example.*

Metamorphosis

A complete shift in physical form.

ex: *The overnight change of Gregor Samsa in Kafka’s Metamorphosis from human to insect. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly.*

Metaphor

An identification of two unlike things to suggest a commonality.

ex: *Simon and Garfunkel’s “I Am a Rock.”*

Mood

The emotions evoked in the reader by an author’s words.

ex: *The often-used opening “It was a dark and stormy night” is clearly an establisher of mood.*

Motif

Any object or idea repeating itself throughout a literary work.

ex: *The scars in J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter repeatedly point to both destiny and love.*

Myth

A story that typically explains the creation of the world and/or why it is the way it is. Generally involves gods or supernatural forces.

ex: *Sisyphus, Hercules, Romulus and Remus.*

Narrative

Writing that tells a story.

ex: *“Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy sucks thumb.”* Dennis Lee.

Narrative Poem

A poem that tells a story.

ex: *"The Highwayman"* by Alfred Noyes.

Narrator

The person telling the story.

ex: *The entire story of The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald is told through the character Nick Carraway.

Onomatopoeia

Words that imitate or resemble the sounds they describe.

ex: *Bang, plop, fizzle, hiss, ding.* "The moan of doves in immemorial elms, / And murmuring of innumerable bees." Tennyson, "Come down, O Maid."

Oxymoron

A juxtaposed contradictory term.

ex: *Just war, adult child, loose tights, paid volunteer.* "I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief." Charles Lamb.

Personification

The attribution of human feelings, thoughts, behaviours, or attitudes to the non-human.

ex: *Justice is blind.*

Playwright

The author of a play.

ex: *Norm Foster.*

Plot

The series of events that make up a story.

- *Exposition (Introduction):* introduces conflict, characters, and setting.
- *Initial Incident:* the first action that happens in the story.
- *Rising Action:* the events which increase the conflict and the suspense.
- *Climax:* the most emotional moment in the story.
- *Crisis:* the turning point of the story. (Sometimes crisis and climax occur at the same time.)
- *Falling Action:* events which decrease the conflict and the suspense.
- *Resolution/Denouement:* conflicts are resolved, and mysteries are unravelled.

Point of View

The eyes or lens through which a story is told:

- *First Person*: we only know, see, and feel what the narrator knows, sees, and feels.
- *Second Person*: the narrator addresses “you”—who might be another character in the work, or the reader, or even the narrator him/herself. Often “I” as the teller of the story is implied.
- *Third Person Limited*: the reader is told the story through the eyes of only one character.
- *Third Person Omniscient*: the reader learns everything about all the characters through an all-seeing, god-like narrator.

Protagonist

The character with whom our sympathy most lies. The conflict revolves around the protagonist. The protagonist is opposed by the antagonist.

ex: *Christ or Satan in Milton’s Paradise Lost (depending on your point of view).*

Proverb

A pithy saying that states an obvious truth.

ex: *Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.*

Pun

A word with multiple, often humorous interpretations.

ex: *When you work in a calendar factory, it’s hard to take a day off.*

Rhyme Scheme

A coding of the rhymes in a poem with letters from the alphabet, beginning with ‘A.’ Each differing rhyme is labelled with the next letter and so on.

ex: *ABAB, AABB, ABBA, ABCB, etc.*

Setting

Where and when the story takes place.

ex: *Star Wars opening credits: “It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire. During the battle, Rebel forces managed to steal secret plans to the Empire’s ultimate weapon, the Death Star, an armoured space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet.”*

Simile

A comparison between two unlike things using the words *like* or *as*.

ex: *“Loneliness in a woman is like hunger in a dog.”* Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*.

Stanza

A group of lines in a poem that form a unit, sometimes with a regular metric and rhyme pattern; similar to paragraphs in prose.

ex: *“True wit is nature to advantage dress’d; / What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d.”* Alexander Pope, *“An Essay on Criticism.”*

Stereotype

Assigning qualities to an individual based on membership in a group.

ex: *All Canadians are nice and constantly apologize.*

Suspense

Withholding information from the reader to create anxiety or anticipation for what may come next.

ex: *The situation in Stephanie Meyer’s Twilight is a constant state of suspense: we know that Bella is in danger of being killed or turned into a vampire at some point by SOMEBODY but we don’t know who and we don’t know when.*

Symbol

Something with a universality about its meaning shared by many cultures.

ex: *Colours can have meaning almost universally understood: red can signify passion, anger, and love.*

Syntax

The accepted order in which words are commonly placed in a given language.

ex: *“Much to learn you still have.”* Yoda, *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. *His syntax, rather than subject-verb-object, is object-subject-verb. To English speakers, the syntax sounds alien.*

Tall Tale

An exaggerated, implausible story told as though it should be believed.

ex: *Paul Bunyan or Johnny Appleseed.*

Text Structure

How a piece of writing is constructed, in terms of how each part is placed.

ex: In Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, the chapters alternate between day and night to create a rhythm that accentuates the emphasis on female cycles and rhythms.

Theme

A theme is a recurrent idea that is threaded throughout a work of literature. In larger works there may be several themes.

ex: In The Princess Bride, the themes are explicitly stated: "Are you kidding? Fencing. Fighting. Torture. Revenge. Giants. Monsters. Chases. Escapes. True love. Miracles." William Goldman, The Princess Bride script.

Tone

The point of view is the lens through which the narrator sees the events, people, and places in the text; the tone is the attitude the narrator holds about those experiences.

ex: An approach to a subject can be formal, informal, humorous, satirical, jaunty, serious, emotional, objective. There are as many tones as there are emotions. If you can identify what the narrator is feeling about what is happening, you can usually identify the tone. For example, "Those who reside in vitreous domiciles should refrain from hurling geological objects." Essentially, it's the same thing as "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." However, the tone is much more formal and the diction more precise and scientific.

Tragedy

A tragedy happens when, at the crisis, the fortunes of the protagonist take a negative turn and do not recover.

ex: Great tragedies often involve irony: Romeo dies thinking Juliet is dead; she revives, finds Romeo dead, and kills herself. Lear, seeking signs of love and devotion from his daughter, divides his kingdom too early and loses her. Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman cannot make a success of anything in his life except his death, which leaves his wife "free and clear" with the insurance money but without the only thing that was ever important to her: Willy.

Understatement

The opposite of hyperbole.

ex: "Houston, we have a problem." Jim Lovell's summation of the situation in response to an exploded oxygen tank, 200 000 miles away from Earth on the Apollo 13 space mission.