**Poetry Unit** (Class Set: Please do NOT write on this.)

“To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” by Robert Herrick

p. 408 (dark green book) / 265 (light green book)

1) What warning does the speaker impart in lines 3-4?

2) What does the first line, “Gather ye rosebuds, while ye may” mean?

2) What message is the speaker trying to convey in the first stanza?

3) In the second stanza, what **metaphor** does the speaker use to describe the sun? How does the path of the sun reinforce the speaker’s message?

4. Summarize the speaker’s views on youth and ages expressed in each stanza

5. What conclusion does the speaker reach in the last stanza? How could you restate the last two lines?

6. What is **personification** and where is it used in the poem and how? Explain.

7. What is the **rhyme scheme** of this poem?

8. ***Carpe diem*** is a Latin phrase meaning “seize the day”; in other words, “make the most of each

moment.” Sixteenth and seventeenth lyric poets particularly enjoyed writing *carpe diem* poems. Identify at least 3 **couplets** that convey the carpe diem motif and explain each.

**Lyric Poetry**: Often short and highly musical, lyric poetry expresses personal thoughts and emotions, rather than telling a story as narrative poetry does. The word lyric comes from lyre, a stringed instrument used to accompany poetry in ancient Greece. While the subject of a lyric poem may be an object, a person, or an event, the emphasis is on the experience of the emotion.

“The Constant Lover” by Sir John Suckling

p. 411 (dark green book)

1. How long has the speaker been in love thus far? How much longer will he be in love “if it prove fair weather”? What do these statements suggest about the speaker’s love?

2. What is ironic about the speaker’s claim in the second stanza?

3. According to the speaker, who deserves the praise for his fidelity/faithfulness?

4. Describe the tone of “The Constant Lover.” Explain why you describe it as you do.

5. How would you advice a friend who was being pursued by someone with an attitude like the speakers? Why?

“She Walks in Beauty” by George Gordon, Lord Byron

p. 727 (dark green book) / p. 611 (light green book)

1.To what does the speaker compare the woman?

2. Besides beauty, what other qualities does the woman have, according to the speaker? What can you infer about the speaker’s feelings towards her?

3.What **images** in the poem best communicate to you the woman’s beauty?

(Give more than one.)

“Ode to a Grecian Urn” by John Keats

p. 750 (dark green book) / p. 652 (light green book)

**Note**: An **ode** is a long, serious lyric poem that is elevated in tone and style.

1.What is an urn?

2. What metaphors does the speaker use to describe the urn in lines 1-3? What do the metaphors reveal about the speaker’s view of the urn?

3. Why might an “unheard melody” be sweeter than a heard melody?

4. What people does the speaker address in the second stanza and what does he say about their plight? Why does the speaker envy this situation? Explain with some textual reinforcement.

5. What does the speaker address in the third stanza and what does he say about this situation?

Why does the speaker envy this situation? Explain with some textual reinforcement.

6. What can you infer about Keats’s opinion of art? Support your inference with evidence from the poem.

7. What is the theme of “Ode to a Grecian Urn”? Reinforce your answer and explain.

8. What is the rhyme scheme of “Ode to a Grecian Urn”?

“To Autumn” by John Keats

p. 753 (dark green book)

Note: We may do the “Pastoral Poetry” assignment with this.

1. What are four things from **stanza** 1 that autumn and the sun conspired to do?

2. Describe the **personified** images of autumn in the second stanza. In what ways do these differ from those in the first stanza?

3. Why does a “wailful choir” sing the songs of autumn?

4. At what time of day do the creatures sing? Why might this be an appropriate time for autumn’s music?

5. How might the “songs of spring” differ from the songs of autumn? Why?

6. What examples of **imagery**–sensory details that appeal to one or more of the five senses-do you find in “To Autumn”? What do these images contribute to the poem?

7. What is the **rhyme scheme** of the first stanza?

8. What is your favorite season? Explain why.

9. What do you like about fall (things to do, food, colors, feelings, events etc.)?

“Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” by Dylan Thomas

p. 1122 (dark green book) / 1057 (light green book)

1. What is the speaker’s advice in the first stanza? What do night and light symbolize?

2. What types of people are mentioned in the poem? Why does each rage against death?

3. Describe the attitude the speaker wants his father to take toward death?

4. What is the message that this poem gives about life?

5. Howe effective are the **refrains** repeated in each stanza? Do they enhance the poem? Explain.

6. In the line, “Grave men, near death, wo see with blinding sight.” What is the oxymoron and what does it mean? What does the line mean?

“Dulce Et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen

p. 970 (dark green book) / p. 822 (light green book)

1. In the first stanza, how does the speaker describe the soldiers’ march? What do you learn about their physical and mental condition?

2. What theme, or message, do you think the speaker wants to convey in lines 25-28?

3. How might this message apply to today?

4. Evaluate the poet’s use of **simile.** How do these comparisons help you imagine what the poet is describing? Give specific examples.

5. The emotional quality, or atmosphere, of a work of literature is its mood. A number of elements may contribute to the **mood** (poet’s language, subject matter, setting, speaker’s tone etc.). What is the mood of this poem? Explain why.

“The Man He Killed” by Thomas Hardy

p. 835 (dark green book)

l. What does the speaker think would happen if he had met the man at an inn? What actually happened? Why?

2. In the fourth stanza, how does the speaker compare himself to the dead man? Why does he make this comparison?

3. Based on the last two stanzas, what can you infer about the speaker’s attitude towards war? Explain.

*Note*: **Meter** – a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllable

that gives a line of poetry a predictable rhythm.

4. How does the use of sound devices such as **rhyme,** **meter**, and **alliteration** help convey meaning?

5. What is **alliteration**? Give an example from the poem.

6. What is the effect of Hardy’s use of words from the Dorset **dialect**?

7. What details suggest that the speaker is being ironic when he uses the word “quaint” to secribe war?

“Are you Digging on My Grave?” by Thomas Hardy

p. 835 (dark green book)

1. Is the author the speaker in his poem? Explain.

2. Who does the speaker think might be digging on her grave? How do these people regard the woman?

3. How does the woman react when she learns who is digging? What can you infer from the digger’s response? Explain.

4. Why do you think Hardy wrote this poem as a dialogue?

5. **Situational Irony** occurs when the reader or a character expects one thing to happen, and something completely different takes place. Works with surprise endings all make use of situational irony. Describe situational irony in this poem.

“To an Athlete Dying Young” by A.E. Housman

p. 852 (dark green book) / p. 727 (light green book)

1. Compare the two occasions on which the athlete is brought home “shoulder high.” What has happened to him in each case?

2. Summarize the commentary and advice the speaker gives in lines 9-28. What can you infer about the speaker’s attitude toward youth, fame, and early death? Explain.

3. Do the poem’s meter and rhyme seem well suited to its subject matter? Explain.

*Note*: **Meter** – a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllable

that gives a line of poetry a predictable rhythm.

4. **Lyric Poetry**: Often short and highly musical, lyric poetry expresses personal thoughts and emotions, rather than telling a story as narrative poetry does. The word lyric comes from lyre, a stringed instrument used to accompany poetry in ancient Greece. While the subject of a lyric poem may be an object, a person, or an event, the emphasis is on the experience of the emotion. What personal thoughts and emotion is expressed by the speaker in this poem?

“No Man is an island” from *Meditation 17* by John Donne

No man is an island,  
Entire of itself,  
Every man is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less.  
As well as if a promontory were.  
As well as if a manor of thy friend's  
Or of thine own were:  
Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind,  
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;   
It tolls for thee.

**Note**: Promontory: a point of high land that juts out into a large body of water.

1.What does Donne mean when he says, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main"?

2.Why does Donne say Europe should be concerned if a single clod of land is washed away into the sea? How does that correspond to the way humanity should be concerned if a single person dies?

3.Why does Donne think that "Any man's death diminishes me"?

4.Why should a person never "send to know" (i.e. ask) for whom a funeral bell is tolling? What is the inevitable answer?

5. How can this poem apply to you?

**Reading a Sonnet** (pp.208-209 in dark green book)

-Always read a sonnet at least three times

-The first time, read it for content.

-The second time, read it to notice the meter and rhyme patterns.

-The third time, read it do discover the puzzle of the poem; that is the problem the poet is trying to solve or the issue the poet explores. Then look for the “turn,” where the poet shifts focus and begins to explore solutions. Finally, find the lines that present the solution or final answer.

“Sonnet 75” by Edmund Spencer

p. 221

1. What happened to the name the speaker writes on the sand? What does the speaker do then?

2. How does the speaker’s beloved respond and what does she mean?

3. How does the speaker answer his loved one? How do his views about immortality differ from hers. Support your response with details from the poem.

4. What does the end suggest about the power of poetry?

5. Whom has time proved to be more correct-the speaker or the woman? Explain.

6. How many lines are in a sonnet?

7. What is the rhyme scheme of the “Spenserian Sonnet”?

8. What is a quatrain?

9. What is a couplet?

10. How does the content change from the quatrain to the couplet?

“When I consider how my light is spent” by John Milton (Italian/Petrarchan Sonnet)

p. 426 (dark green book) / p. 380 (light green book)

**Note**: In this sonnet, Milton dramatizes a calamity that hit him in middle age; blindness. Long before he completed his life’s work, he lost his sight at age 49. Milton is deeply religious and believes that everyone is accountable God.

1. Paraphrase the question that the speaker asks of God in the octave.

2. The answer to the question indicates the turn in this sonnet. Paraphrase the sestet.

3. The word “talent” in line three is both a pun and an allusion that Milton’s readers would have recognized instantly. In Matthew 25: 14-30, there servants are given coins called talents. The first two invest their talents and double their value, while the third is punished for burying the one talent he received, accomplishing nothing at all. What is Milton’s “one talent”? How is this situation similar to or different from that of the third servant in the parable?

4. The phrase “mild yoke” in line 11 refers to the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:30: “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” What is Milton’s “yoke” or burden? By making such an **allusion**, what is Milton saying about his situation?

“Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare (English Sonnet / Shakespearean Sonnet)

**SONNET 18**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?   
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:   
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;   
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;   
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

1. Explain the rhyme scheme?

2. How are English/Shakespearean Sonnets organized? (quatrains/couplets etc.)

3. Based on this poem, what does the speaker think about the person the poem is written to? How do you know?

4. What are the specific points of comparison between “thee” and a summer's day, and how does “thee” rate in the comparison? (Better? Worse? How do you know?)

5. Does the poem have a purpose? Does the speaker want something from “thee”? Does he want to say something special to him or her?

6. Does Shakespeare’s poetry actually make the beloved more "eternal" than summer?

7. Why do you think the speaker chose the season of summer in particular? Why not Fall, Winter, or Spring? How would the poem work with different seasons?

8. Does this poem necessarily keep living so long as humans keep breathing? Is the speaker right? Explain your reasoning. What other poems presented this same idea?