

Nature Poetry

“Daisies” by Louise Gluck

Who is the **speaker**?

Tone?

Lines 6-12 : what do they suggest about human habits or inclinations?

Line 13-14: How is the listener feeling?

Why are people reluctant to engage with nature?

Line 20-24: How is the listener feeling?

Theme:

“Crossing the Water” -Sylvia Plath

-Confessional Poet : poetry draws heavily on poet’s own life

-wrote this poem during a depression – it explores Plath’s emotions

-she writes about themes of loneliness, human suffering, and death

1. Read the first stanza. What **mood** do you think the poem will have? Why?
2. Find and explain the **hyperbole** in the poem.
3. What **image** does the line “Cold worlds shake from the oar” create?
4. What **image** does the line “A snag is lifting a valedictory, pale hand” create?
5. How are the first and last stanzas the same? Why does she do this?
6. How does the **mood** of the poem affect the way you interpret the last line?
-“This is the silence of astounded souls”

“The Fish” by Elizabeth Bishop

- she focuses on sharing her impressions of the physical world

- closely examined nature in order to better understand it

1. Fish = _____
2. What does the description of the fish indicate about Nature?
 - a. List detailed images that support your answer.
 - b. What is the significance of the fish’s eyes?
3. 5 hooks in his lower lip: **simile** “like medals with their ribbons / frayed and wavering”
 - a. What is the purpose of the simile?
4. Read the line -“a five-haired beard of wisdom.” What is the speaker’s feelings toward the fish?
 - a. What realization does the speaker come to?
5. Theme?

The Fish

Elizabeth Bishop, 1911 - 1979

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth.
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,
and its pattern of darker brown
was like wallpaper:
shapes like full-blown roses
stained and lost through age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
fine rosettes of lime,
and infested
with tiny white sea-lice,
and underneath two or three
rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
—the frightening gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that can cut so badly—
I thought of the coarse white flesh
packed in like feathers,
the big bones and the little bones,
the dramatic reds and blacks
of his shiny entrails,
and the pink swim-bladder
like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
which were far larger than mine
but shallower, and yellowed,
the irises backed and packed
with tarnished tinfoil
seen through the lenses
of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
to return my stare.
—It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
the mechanism of his jaw,
and then I saw
that from his lower lip

—if you could call it a lip—
grim, wet, and weaponlike,
hung five old pieces of fish-line,
or four and a wire leader
with the swivel still attached,
with all their five big hooks
grown firmly in his mouth.
A green line, frayed at the end
where he broke it, two heavier lines,
and a fine black thread
still crimped from the strain and snap
when it broke and he got away.
Like medals with their ribbons
frayed and wavering,
a five-haired beard of wisdom
trailing from his aching jaw.
I stared and stared
and victory filled up
the little rented boat,
from the pool of bilge
where oil had spread a rainbow
around the rusted engine
to the bailer rusted orange,
the sun-cracked thwarts,
the oarlocks on their strings,
the gunnels—until everything
was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
And I let the fish go.

Daisies

by Louise Gluck, from [*"The Wild Iris"*](#)

Go ahead: say what you're thinking. The garden
is not the real world. Machines
are the real world. Say frankly what any fool
could read in your face: it makes sense
to avoid us, to resist
nostalgia. It is
not modern enough, the sound the wind makes
stirring a meadow of daisies: the mind
cannot shine following it. And the mind
wants to shine, plainly, as
machines shine, and not
grow deep, as, for example, roots. It is very touching,
all the same, to see you cautiously
approaching the meadow's border in early morning,
when no one could possibly
be watching you. The longer you stand at the edge,
the more nervous you seem. No one wants to hear
impressions of the natural world: you will be
laughed at again; scorn will be piled on you.
As for what you're actually

hearing this morning: think twice
before you tell anyone what was said in this field
and by whom.

Crossing the Water

by Sylvia Plath

Black lake, black boat, two black, cut-paper people.
Where do the black trees go that drink here?
Their shadows must cover Canada.

A little light is filtering from the water flowers.
Their leaves do not wish us to hurry:
They are round and flat and full of dark advice.

Cold worlds shake from the oar.
The spirit of blackness is in us, it is in the fishes.
A snag is lifting a valedictory, pale hand;

Stars open among the lilies.
Are you not blinded by such expressionless sirens?
This is the silence of astounded souls.