

College Guild
P.O. Box 6448, Brunswick, ME 04011

POETRY CLUB

Unit 4 of 7

In this Unit, you will be writing 4 poems, including 3 with specific guidelines relating to the poems presented in the Appendices; remember, only one of them rhyming. And, as in Unit 3, you'll be critiquing 3 other poems in depth.

- 1. Write an original poem on the subject of your choosing.
- 2. Refer back to the list of considerations in the introduction to Unit 1. Using this list, fully critique the poem in Appendix B, "Fat Sparrow," by Dennis Dechaine.
- 3. Write a poem of 12 lines about any kind of animal.
- 4. Critique the poem in Appendix C, (untitled) by Alex O.
- 5. Write a poem about war or about peace.

Read the poem "Apple Picking," by Robert Frost in Appendix D. Robert Frost was honored by becoming the first poet in this country's history to recite at the inauguration of a president (John F. Kennedy, 1961). Much of his work revolved around simple country themes, yet his honors extended to four Pulitzer Prizes and, also a first in this country's history, a resolution by Congress for congratulations on his 75th birthday!

- 6. Discuss this poem as you did Wallace Stevens' in Unit 3 (message, impact, what makes it unique, etc.)
- 7. Write a poem about a season. How is the season a metaphor for the poet's life?
- 8. What have you learned from any, or all three, of the poems you have read in this unit that you can apply to your own work? Be specific, and provide (an) example(s).

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

APPENDIX B

Fat Sparrow

Fat sparrow on the outside
 looking in
 At a man in a cage
 looking out
 Fat sparrow head cocked curious
 looking in
 Engenders flights of fancy.

Dennis J. Dechaine

APPENDIX C

Describe a day in the life of a child in Afghanistan. (from Captivities, Unit 1)

Hide, hungry, angry
 someone gives him a rifle;
 soldier boy attack –
 someone sees a dead boy
 rifle in hand clutching still.
 He picks rifle up;
 gives to another boy.

Alex O.

APPENDIX D

After Apple Picking

My long two pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
 Toward heaven still,
 And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
 Beside it, and there may be two or three
 Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
 But I am done with apple-picking now.
 Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
 The scent of apples; I am drowsing off.
 I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
 I got from looking through a pane of glass
 I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
 And held against the world of hoary grass.
 It melted, and I let it fall and break.
 But I was well
 Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
 And I could tell
 What form my dreaming was about to take.
 Magnified apples appear and disappear,
 Stem end and blossom end,
 And every fleck of russet showing clear.
 My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
 It keeps the pressure of a ladder round.
 I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
 The rumbling sound
 Of load on load of apples coming in.
 For I have had too much
 Of apple-picking: I am overtired
 Of the great harvest I myself desired.
 There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
 Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
 For all
 That struck the earth,
 No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
 Went surely to the cider-apple heap
 As of no worth.
 One can see what will trouble
 This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
 Were he not gone,
 The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
 Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
 Or just some human sleep.

Robert Frost

Following is a selection of more Frost poems, including *Fire and Ice*, *A Minor Bird*, and *Lodged*. We'll end with one of the great humorists of poetry, Ogden Nash. His poems *The Hunter* and *Good Riddance, But Now What?* will likely make you chuckle.

Fire and Ice

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.

A Minor Bird

I have wished a bird would fly away,
And not sing by my house all day;

Have clapped my hands at him from the door
When it seemed as if I could bear no more.

The fault must partly have been in me.
The bird was not to blame for his key.

And of course there must be something wrong
In wanting to silence any song.

Lodged

The rain to the wind said
'You push and I'll pelt.'
They so smote the garden bed
That the flowers actually knelt
And lay lodged – though not dead.
I know how the flowers felt.

The Hunter

The hunter crouches in his blind
'Neath camouflage of every kind,
And conjures up a quacking noise
To lend allure to his decoys.
This grown-up man, with pluck and luck
Is hoping to outwit a duck.

Good Riddance, But Now What?

Good children, gather round my knee;
Something good is about to be.

Tonight's December thirty-first,
Something is about to burst

The clock is crouching, dark and small,
Like a time bomb in the hall.

Hark, it's midnight, children dear.
Duck! Here comes another year!