Poetry Analysis

The first poem I would like to recommend to the Year 8 anthology is ‘I Often Contradict Myself’ by Ken Nesbitt. It is a lively, humourous poem that relates to one differing, or contradicting, one’s decision. This poem is a witty outlook on daily behaviour and its simplistic language is easy to understand, so even young children would comprehend. Ken Nesbitt is a renowned children’s poet, whom I think needs to be recognised in the older community as an accomplished poet with a fantastic sense of humour.

The poetic techniques used in the poem are simple yet witty and imaginative. Nesbitt uses a form of dialogue, as if he is talking to himself to make sense of what he is saying. The poem shows how he has troubles understanding himself and what he is doing. The straightforward rhyming pattern makes no difficulty in reading and the language is basic and clear to the readers. This poem is one of the most entertaining poems I have read so far.

‘The Highwayman’ by Alfred Noyes is another poem I would recommend to the Year 8 Boarder Studies. This poem is a magnificent example of a dramatic and tragic love poem. Noyes gives the poem atmosphere of suspense, terror, and of course, love. It starts off with the highwayman riding towards the inn to meet his lover, Bess, the landlord’s daughter. They share a romantic kiss before he rides off to plunder. This is the first part. In the second part of the poem, Bess is kidnapped and is held captive to lure in the highwayman. This event in the poem is an example of society of today’s blackmail and bribery. The highwayman does not come and rescue Bess, so the kidnappers shoots Bess and leave her for dead as she was, waiting for the highwayman, her lover, to return.

Noyes uses a variety of poetic techniques in ‘The Highwayman’. The most used technique was the metaphors. ‘Ribbon of moonlight’ is an example of a metaphor, referring a ribbon to moonlight. Noyes also uses many adjectives and verbs to create an atmosphere of suspense and mystery. Repetition is used to indicate a sense of flowing. ‘The Highwayman’ by Alfred Noyes is a wonderful poem and should be read by all.
The last poem I would like to recommend to the Year 8 anthology is ‘The Shark’ by John Ciardi. This poem is about someone describing a shark to his daughter, who he refers to as ‘my sweet’. There is a lot of description of the shark in the poem. Ciardi depicts the shark as an unfavourable individual who has only eyes for himself. It is an upbeat poem about the qualities of a shark.

Ciardi uses the poetic technique called imagery. Imagery is when the poet uses words to describe the object, or animal in this case, to give the reader a picture, or image, of it. Ciardi also uses personification. ‘That when he eats, his manners are bad’ is an example of personification as it is implying the shark has bad table manners when this only applies to humans, hence personification. But as a shark is an animal, this technique is called anthromorphic, which is giving an animal human qualities.

Ciardi’s poem ‘The Shark’ is an enjoyable poem and has a very flowing rhythm. The poem scheme was very simple (AABB). This poem is a great example of writing descriptive poems in an old-fashioned language. The language used in the poem was quite traditional and slightly condescending. Overall, ‘The Shark’ is a wonderful poem in which the reader can picture the image of the shark quite clearly. Year 8 would most enjoy this poem.

Grade Commentary

Reese has demonstrated thorough knowledge of the selected poems and provided a clear justification for the inclusion of each one in a Year 8 anthology. Poetic techniques have been identified and explained, but the discussion of each poem is a little repetitive in structure and content. There is effective use of metalanguage but stronger analysis of how the techniques shape meaning would be beneficial.

Reese’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at grade B standard at the end of Stage 4.