Mid Stage 4 English – Selecting and Analysing Poems for an Anthology – Grade C

The poem *Central Park Tourney* by Mildred Weston would appeal to most students. It personifies many of characteristics of a car to a knight. In the line “with long spear lights” refers to a joust of armoured knights and the armour is the cars metal frame. Central park is turned into a tournament ring where cars instead of knights fight each other using their headlights as spears. The cars are really just driving across the park road but when you look at it from high up at night it looks like a joust. The lights pierce at each other with their lights. The lights ‘pierce the dark’ as they pierce the wind. The cars go from dusk to dawn so many cars must come through the park. “The journey goes on” means that it doesn’t stop just like a jousting tourney which is short but makes you feel like it’s a long time. The stanzas mostly describe different events. The first stanza compares the cars to real knights. The second stanza describes the event and where it was. This poem really compares cars to knights and is a great poem for all to read.

The poem I recommend for students is *Killing a whale* by David Gill. The first stanza tells us what is prepared before the hunting of the whale. The first 6 lines are like a procedure ‘a whale is killed as followed” “A shell is filled with dynamite and a harpoon takes the shell”. This poem deeply describes the whole process done to kill the whale. From lines 7–15 the poet describes the harpoon ripping into the whales as it “breeches the sliding sea” The harpoon “explodes terror through” and you can see its hollow fleshy chamber within. The lines of the first stanza make you feel as if you were on the ship itself witnessing all that was happening. The second stanza describes the death of the whale. The whale dies with panache which is flair. It whips the capstan just like a school boy would with his wooden top. The whale is described as a “machine” and its pain makes it clenches its teeth and hold its anger. Finally the whale pumps air inside to keep its corpse afloat. The whale has been conquered like a mountain. You kill a mountain with the flag of your nation as you would conquer a whale with a harpoon.

A poem I would also like to recommend for students is *My Country* by Dorothea Mackellar. This great poem reflects a lot on Australia’s outback and Dorothea’s love of it. The poem describes about her love and why. In one of her stanzas she loves the country’s beauty and also her terror too. The droughts, flooding rains and its sunburnt land. The poem also describes the noon of the day when it’s silent. The orchids and lianas and ferns grow on the crimson soil which is the sunburnt land itself. She tells the reader that the blue sky is pitiless and that rain doesn’t come often. The cattle die and everyone is sick at heart. When grey clouds come, it is a blessing for all as the crops are regrowing and the cattle have water to live now. Mackellar must love the country a lot to write a poem this great. She tells us of what happens in the outback and hardships as well. In her last stanza of the poem she tells us that people who have not loved our great country in which we live won’t understand all other splendours. The last line states “wherever I may die, my thoughts will fly to a great country”.

Grade Commentary

Taylor has demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of the selected poems. The response is well structured and coherent, indicating a sound personal engagement with the poems, but it has not expanded beyond providing a description of their contents. There is some understanding of the meaning created in the poems, but an analysis of the role of specific poetic devices besides personification is lacking. Some effective vocabulary has been used in the response with a variety of sentence structures, but there are no quotation marks to indicate quotations from the poem.

Taylor’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade C standard midway through Stage 4.