



How to Read a Poem

Read the poem once, out loud, for enjoyment.

Read the poem a second time. Then:

Consider the author. What do you know about him or her? What is the author's attitude about this subject?

Look at the poem's title. Does it tell you anything?

Ask yourself: What is this poem about? What is the subject of the poem? Who is narrating this?

Look up in the dictionary any words you don't know.

Ask yourself: What is the situation? Where is this poem taking place? What people/animals/events are mentioned?

Read the poem a third time. Then:

Notice the structure of the poem. Are there stanzas? Does the poem proceed in a chronological order? Does it progress in any way?

Notice the form: the meter, rhythm, and rhyme.

Notice the sounds: Does the author use alliteration or onomatopoeia?

Notice the language: Does the poet use figurative language, hyperbole, similes, or metaphors?

Now read the poem for a fourth time.

Ask yourself: What is the "big idea" in this poem? What is its purpose? How does it make me feel?



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