



Poets and their Themes

As we learned when we studied Paul Laurence Dunbar and Dylan Thomas, there exists a strong link between a poet's life and his/her work. Your research paper will explore the link(s) between a poet of your choosing and his/her writing.

We will be following a similar format to the literary analysis you wrote in September. Your paper will begin with a well-constructed introduction and thesis statement, then launch into biographical information and the connections you are able to make to the poetry. You will need to illustrate those connections through excerpting and citations. We will discuss the detailed requirements and you will receive a number of handouts as we move through the process.

Below are the poets we discussed in groups as a class:

Edgar Allan Poe

Emily Dickinson

Robert Frost

Langston Hughes

Sylvia Plath

Maya Angelou

Dylan Thomas (only 3-4)

Paul Laurence Dunbar (not 3-4)

This is your main menu:

Anne Sexton	depression and fantasy
Robert Lowell	strains of childhood, rebelliousness
Sharon Olds	abusiveness/domestic violence
John Berryman	background in Oklahoma, coming of age discoveries
Robert Bly	political poet
Gwendolyn Brooks	underclass of city life and the nation's black neighborhoods
Sonia Sanchez	race struggles
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	huge life shift from dominating father to loving husband
Lucille Clifton	family background and slavery
Rita Dove	social justice and women's issues (she was born in 1952)
T. S. Elliot	concentrate on the postwar generation and sense of disillusionment, his religious leanings because of loss
Ralph Waldo Emerson	religion and transcendentalism, no more said
Federico Garcia Lorca	The Spanish Civil War
Louise Glück	rejection, loss, isolation
Nikki Giovanni	"A Black American, a daughter, a mother..."
Stanley Kunitz	lost father
Audre Lorde	Black lesbian feminist
Amy Lowell	(many connections if you take some time)
Claude McKay	Harlem Renaissance
Edna St. Vincent Millay	rebelliousness of social/political issues
Czeslaw Milosz	the violence of the century, political
Pablo Neruda	politics of South America, Communism
Octavio Paz	Mexican identity
Robert Pinsky	Judaism, the Holocaust, World War II, childhood
Ezra Pound	Fascism, World War II
Adrienne Rich	women's culture, sexual identity and alienation, feminism
Theodore Roethke	death of father, father fixation
Stevie Smith	death, loss of innocence, love, religion
Dylan Thomas (3-4 only)	neurotic, sickly child; alcoholic

César Vallejo	political poet and personal crises
Walt Whitman (not 13-14)	The Civil War
Wallace Stevens	religion, divinity in nature
Marie Howe	personal loss; the self and the soul
Ted Hughes	loss and guilt
Cornelius Eady	father issues
Thomas Merton	Catholic writer
Elizabeth Bishop	(many connections if you take some time)
Naomi Shahib Nye	multiculturalism
Mary Oliver	anti-establishment
Simon J. Ortiz	Native American poet
Leslie Marmon Silko	Native American female poet
Rainer Maria Rilke	modernist writer in the age of disbelief and solitude
Yehuda Amichai	Israeli writer, German-born, emigrated to Palestine in 1935
H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)	changing world (war), changing style of life (bisexuality), infidelity of husbands
William Carlos Williams	NEW JERSEY and the changes/industrialism in the northeastern sections