The last enemy

The prospect of death

Emily Brontë

The extract below is taken from Juliet Barker's biography* The Brontës. *It describes the last day in the life of Emily Brontë, who died in 1848.

The evening before her death, she insisted on feeding the dogs, Keeper and Flossy, as she had always done. As she stepped from the warmth of the kitchen into the cold air of the damp, stone-flagged passage, she staggered and almost fell against the wall. Charlotte and Anne, rushing to help her, were brushed aside and, recovering herself, she went on to give the dogs their dinner. Mrs Gaskell reported how Charlotte shivered recalling the pang she had felt when, having searched over the bleak December moors for a single sprig of heather to take in to Emily, she realized that her sister had not even recognized her favourite flower. On the morning of Tuesday, 19 December 1848, she insisted on rising at seven as was her habit. Combing her hair before the fire, the comb slipped from her fingers and fell into the hearth: she was too weak to pick it up, and before Martha Brown arrived and retrieved it for her, a large part of it had been burnt away by the flames. Neither Martha nor Charlotte dared to offer assistance as Emily slowly dressed herself and made her way downstairs. Still struggling to keep up an appearance of normality, she even attempted to pick up her sewing. Watching her laboured breathing, Charlotte scribbled a brief note to Ellen: 'I should have written to you before if I had had one word of hope to say - but I have not - She grows daily weaker ... Moments so dark as these I have never known - I pray for God's support to us all. Hitherto he has granted it.'

By midday, Emily was worse. Her unbending spirit finally broken, she whispered between gasps for breath, 'If you will send for a doctor, I will see him now.' Dr Wheelhouse was summoned immediately but, of course, it was too late: there was nothing he could do. Tradition has it that Emily refused to the last to retire to bed, dying, as unconventionally as she had lived, on the sofa in the parsonage dining room. This seems unlikely, as there is no contemporary source for the story and Charlotte later movingly described how Emily's dog, Keeper, 'lay at the side of her dying-bed'. In all probability, therefore, Emily was carried upstairs to her own bedroom, overlooking the moors she had always loved. Unlike Branwell, she fought death to the end. And it was a bitter end. There was no time for consolatory words or acceptance of the inevitable. After 'a hard, short conflict', Emily was torn from the world, 'turning her dying eyes reluctantly from the pleasant sun'. At two o'clock in the afternoon, aged thirty, she died: the relentless conflict between strangely strong spirit and fragile frame was over.

JULIET BARKER, *THE BRONTËS*

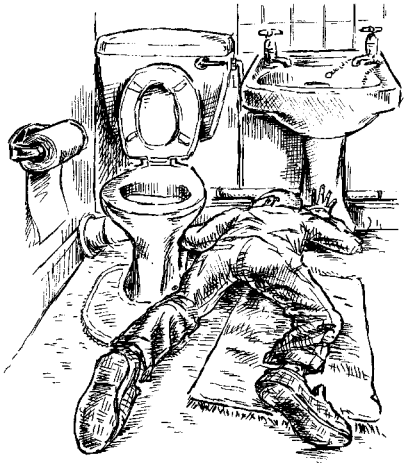
Philip Larkin

The poet Philip Larkin died in 1995. Andrew Motion, in his biography* Philip Larkin; A Writer's Life *gives this account of the end of his life.

The prospect of death, acknowledged but unnamed, raged out at him, concentrating the terrors he had kept before him all his life. In his twenties, thirties and forties he had sometimes tried to 'talk (him)self into regarding death as a merciful oblivion', but had always worried that 'the moment of death ... must be a little choppy, a fribbling as the currents of life fray against the currents of death'. In his fifties, the dread of oblivion darkened everything. Death, he said, 'remains a sort of Bluebeard's Chamber in the mind, something one is always afraid of'. As he entered his sixties his fears grew rapidly. Reviewing D. J. Enright's *Oxford Book of Death* in 1983 he said, 'Man's most remarkable talent is for ignoring death. For once the certainty of permanent extinction is realized, only a more immediate calamity can dislodge it from the mind, and then only temporarily.' Two years later, immediately before he fell ill, he told John Wain, 'I don't think about death *all* the time, though I don't see why one shouldn't, just as you might expect a man in a condemned cell to think about the drop all the time. Why aren't I screaming?' Now he told Monica he was 'spiralling down towards extinction'. It was, she says, 'one of those lugubrious, melodramatic remarks he used to make, but this time I knew it was true. He said it with a fascinated horror, looking as though he was about to burst into tears. I can see him now, sitting there by the fire, saying it.'

November came to an end. On Thursday 28th Virginia Peace rang Newland Park to arrange to do some shopping and found Larkin's voice 'very slurred'. He wanted her to take his cash card to the bank and collect some money, but when she did so 'the machine ate it'. She paid for the shopping herself, then took it back to the house where Larkin wrote her a cheque. 'He made it out to Mrs Virginia Peace,' she says, 'punctilious to the last, though the writing was very weak and spidery, not like his usual writing at all, which had been so beautiful. And he looked deathly thin. Really, it was terrible.'

As Friday wore on Larkin grew steadily weaker. In the evening, trying to get into his chair in the sitting-room, he fell to the ground and picked himself up with difficulty. Monica, not strong enough to help him herself, rang for a neighbour. Later Larkin collapsed again in the downstairs lavatory, jamming the door shut with his feet. Monica was unable to force the door open. She couldn't even make him hear her - he had left his hearing-aid behind - but she could hear him. 'Hot! Hot!' he was whispering pitifully. He had fallen with his face pressed to one of the central heating pipes that ran round the lavatory wall.



The next-door neighbour was called again, the door was opened, and Larkin was carried into the kitchen. He asked for some Complan, and while Monica prepared this she also rang for an ambulance to take him to the Nuffield. When the ambulance arrived he looked up at her wildly, begging her to destroy his diaries, then was taken out of the house on a stretcher. ' I'll see you tomorrow, Bun,' he said as he was borne away.

The next day, Saturday, Betty took Monica to see Larkin, but he was too heavily sedated to make sense. 'He looked at

Extract continued on page 137

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Extract continued from page 136

the TV,' Betty says, '(not watching it), as though he was seeing beyond the bounds of the material world.' On Saturday Michael Bowen ferried Monica to and from the hospital. 'If Philip hadn't been drugged,' Bowen says, 'he would have been raving. He was that frightened.' It was the same on Sunday. They sat by Larkin's bed in silence, and when visiting hour was over Bowen returned Monica to Newland Park. He left her sitting by the telephone, waiting. It rang in the early hours of Monday. Larkin had died at 1.24 a.m., turning to the nurse who was with him, squeezing her hand, and saying faintly: 'I am going to the inevitable.'

ANDREW MOTION, *PHILIP LARKIN; A WRITER'S LIFE*

Read the extracts about Emily Brontë and Philip Larkin.

10.1

Comparing content

•What did a) Emily Brontë b) Philip Larkin do in their last 24 hours?
Do not write more than 50 words on each.

•Both knew that they were approaching death. What do we learn about their attitudes and states of mind?
For each one, quote one or two short extracts that illustrate what you have said.

•Why do you suppose that each one reacted like this?
Try to find evidence to support your answers.

10.2

Considering detail

•Consider carefully some of the details that are included.

•Choose four of the following and suggest why the biographer included each.
What does each add to the narrative?

- heather
- a comb
- Keeper
- cash card
- hearing aid
- Complan

10.3

Comparing language

•From each extract, choose a sentence or phrase that you think would make a good title for the whole piece.

•What sources does each biographer use?
What differences do you notice in the sources and the biographer's use of them?

•What else would you like to have had included? Try to explain why.

10.4

Choice of words

Look closely at the language used by each biographer.
•Consider whether the choice of words could affect the way the reader feels.
How did you feel when you read these extracts?
Did you feel sympathetic, puzzled, amused, sad?

•Select some examples from each passage and examine the choice of words.
You could start with the last sentence from **Emily Brontë** and the first sentence from **Philip Larkin**.

10.5

Comparative writing

•Using the evidence that you have collected in answering 10.1 - 10.4 and adding other information that you think will help, write an essay comparing the two extracts.

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River or sea

The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran,was published in 1926. In this long poem the prophet is waiting 'for his ship that was to return and bear him back to the isle of his birth'.*

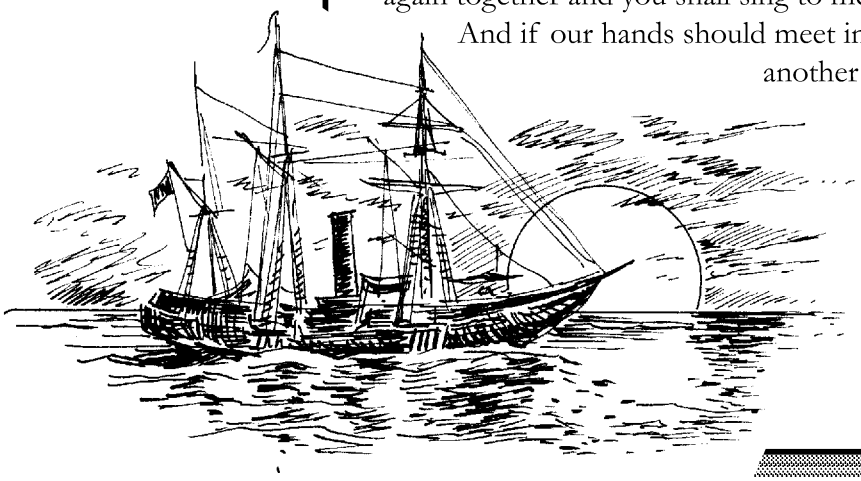
While he waits, he speaks about various subjects suggested by his hearers. He begins with love, marriage and children, and covers subjects ranging from houses and clothes to crime and punishment, pain, and good and evil. The second to last topic suggested is religion: the prophet says that he has been talking about nothing else.

Lastly, he speaks of death, and his own imminent journey.

After saying these things he looked about him, and he saw the pilot of his ship standing by the helm and gazing now at the full sails and now at the distance.
And he said:
Patient, over patient, is the captain of my ship.
The wind blows, and restless are the sails;
Even the rudder begs direction;
Yet quietly my captain awaits my silence.
And these my mariners, who have heard the choir of the greater sea, they too have heard me patiently.
Now they shall wait no longer.
I am ready.
The stream has reached the sea, and once more the great mother holds her son against her breast.

Fare you well, people of Orphalese.
This day has ended.
It is closing upon us even as the water-lily upon its own to-morrow.
What was given us here we shall keep,
And if it suffices not, then again must we come together and together stretch our hands unto the giver.
Forget not that I shall come back to you.
A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body.
A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.

Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with you.
It was but yesterday we met in a dream.
You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky.
But now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn.
The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to fuller day, and we must part.
If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a deeper song.
And if our hands should meet in another dream we shall build another tower in the sky.



So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightaway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its moorings, and they moved eastward.

Extract continued on page 139

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Extract continued from page 138

And a cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting.
Only Almitra was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into the mist.
And when all the people were dispersed she still stood alone upon the sea-wall, remembering in her heart his saying:

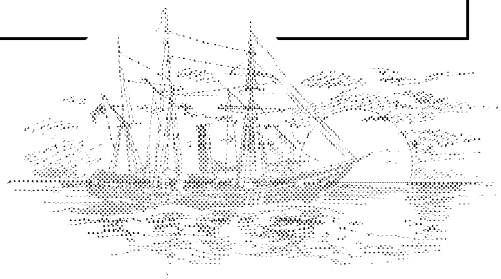
"A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me."

KAHLIL GIBRAN, *THE PROPHET*

10.6

Understanding the passage

- Who is the speaker (or "voice") for most of this?
- What would you expect someone with this title to be like?
- How does the speaker feel about the journey ahead of him? Which words show this?
- Pick out some of the words that show that it is a journey by sea.
- What could the sea represent?
- "He made a signal to the seamen.." What, exactly, is happening here?
- What idea is introduced in Almitra's recollections at the end of this extract?
- What seems to be the next stage of the journey?



Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote this short poem in the last century, towards the end of his life.

Crossing the bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

LORD TENNYSON

10.7

Understanding the poem

- Who is speaking here?
- Which three words describe the journey that the speaker expects to make?
- What do you think the bar could represent?
- What do you think the sea represents?
- Another image is also present in this poem. What references can you find to the time of day, and what effect do these have?
- Who do you suppose is "my Pilot"?
- What does this suggest about the journey just made?
- What does it suggest about the poet?

bar: sandbank or area of shallow water at the mouth of a harbour or estuary.

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John Bunyan wrote* The Pilgim's Progress *between 1678 and 1684. In the extract below, Christian and his companion Hopeful are almost at the end of their journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. There is a river between them and their destination.

The Pilgrim's Progress

Now I further saw, that between them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over; and the river was very deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate.

Then they addressed themselves to the water and entering, Christian began to sink; and, crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, 'I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head; all the waves go over me. Selah.'

Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah! my friend, 'the sorrows of death hath compassed me about; ' I shall not see the land that floweth with milk and honey. And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him.

Hopeful, therefore, here had much ado to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere a while, he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful also would endeavour to comfort him, saying, Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us; but Christian would answer, 'Tis you, 'tis you they wait for; you have been hopeful ever since I knew you. And so have you, said he to Christian. Ah, brother, said he, surely if I were right he would now arise to help me: but for my sins he hath brought me into this snare, and hath left me. Then said Hopeful, My brother, you have quite forgot the text where it is said of the wicked, 'There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm; they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' These troubles and distresses that you go through are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses.

Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse a while. To whom also Hopeful added these words, Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. And with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, Oh, I see him again! and he tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' (*Isa.43:2*) Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone until they were gone over. Christian, therefore, presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the ground was but shallow: thus they got over.

Later on, other pilgrims go the same way.

Then it came to pass awhile after, that there was a post in the town that inquired for Mr. Honest. So he came to the house where he was, and delivered to his hand these lines: Thou art commanded to be ready against this day sevennight, to present thyself before thy Lord, at his

Extract continued on page 141

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10.8

The Pilgrim's Progress: continued

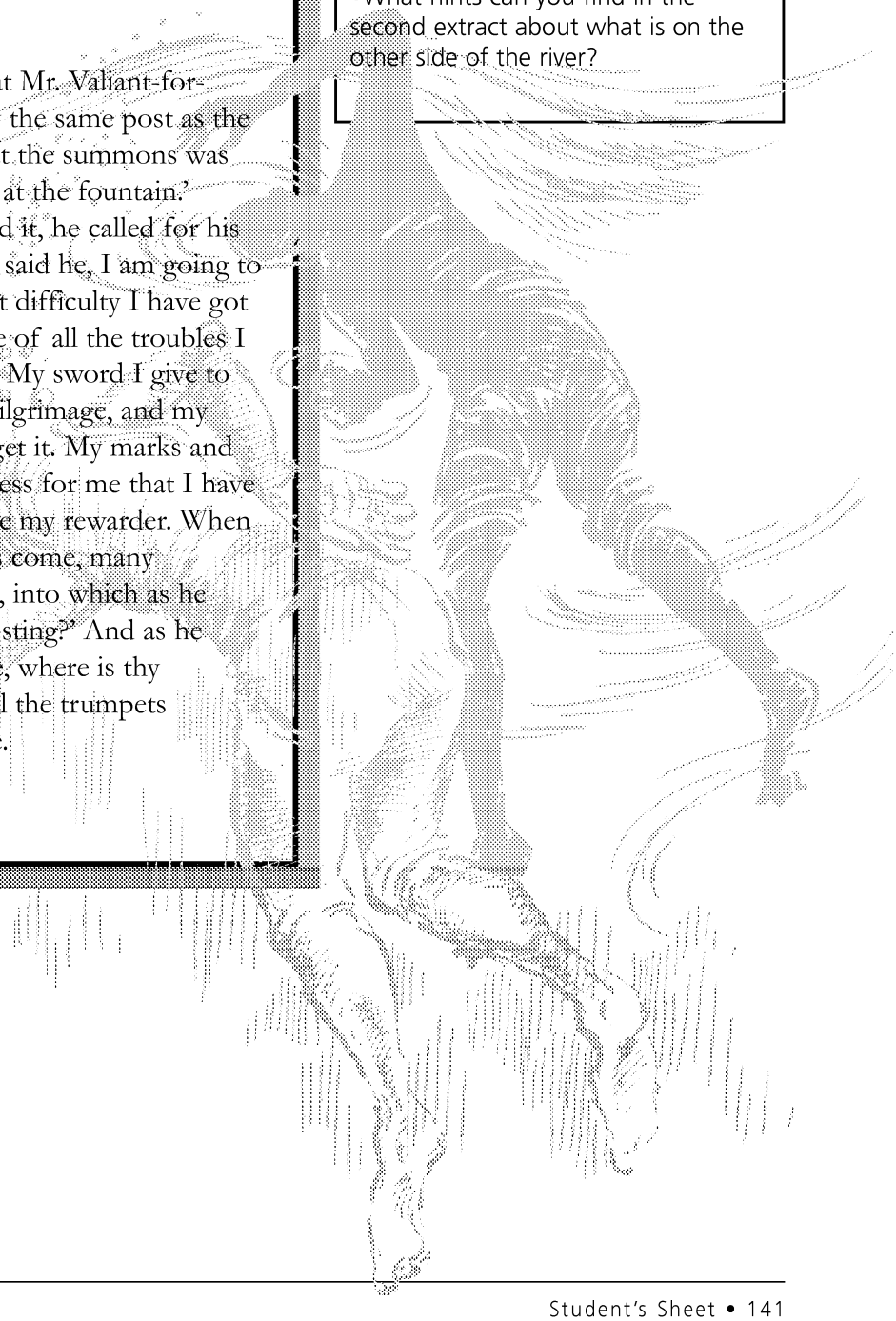
Father's house. And for a token that my message is true, 'All the daughters of music shall be brought low.' (*Eccles.12: 4.*) Then Mr. Honest called for his friends, and said unto them, I die, but shall make no will. As for my honesty, it shall go with me; let him that comes after be told of this. When the day that he was to be gone was come, he addressed himself to go over the river. Now the river at that time overflowed its banks in some places; but Mr. Honest, in his life-time, had spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him there; the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over. The last words of Mr. Honest were, Grace reigns! So he left the world.

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was sent for by summons by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true, 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain.' (*Eccles. 12: 6.*) When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder. When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which as he went he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

JOHN BUNYAN, *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

Understanding the passage

- Who are mentioned by name?
- What do you notice about their names?
- Why does Christian have to go across the river the hard way?
- What is the river like? What is his journey like?
- Two later travellers make the same journey with less anguish. Why is this?
- What, exactly, does the river represent?
- What hints can you find in the second extract about what is on the other side of the river?



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The Prophet; Crossing the Bar; Pilgrim's Progress

10.9

Triumph or disaster?

•Complete the following chart.
•Now go back and put a cross against any sounds that suggest distress. Put a tick against any that suggest triumph. *Some will not be marked either way.*

	Sound(s) mentioned	Where it comes from
The Prophet	a cry	the people
Crossing the Bar		
Pilgrim's Progress	trumpets	the other side of the river

10.10

Taking note

•Think about the way each piece is written. Make careful notes on each of the following points:

- the different uses made of the sea/river metaphor
- the speaker or "voice" of each, and the effect that this has
- the use made of prose or poetry for the different approaches
- evidence of the time of writing from the language and the way it is used
- evidence of different beliefs or hopes of the different writers, shown in the content of each extract.

10.11

Comparisons - language

•Compare and contrast the content and use of language in any two of the pieces.
Use the information you have gathered in response to 10.6 - 10.10 to help you.
Add any other relevant points that occur to you.

10.12

Comparisons - imagery

•What use is made of a river or sea in each of the extracts? Which use do you prefer, and why?

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Personal approaches

Epitaph	Sir Walter Ralegh	?1554 - 1618
Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness	John Donne	1572 - 1631
Prospice	Robert Browning	1812 - 1889
Because I could not stop for Death	Emily Dickinson	1830 - 1886
Afterwards	Thomas Hardy	1840 - 1928
Do not go gentle into that good night	Dylan Thomas	1914 - 1953
The Fear of Death	Elizabeth Jennings	1926 -

Prospice

Fear death? - to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so - one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

ROBERT BROWNING

10.13

Group oral assignment

•In your groups, take one poem each. Spend a short time reading through your own poems. Then take it in turns to read aloud each poem to the group.

•What clues can you find to the time each of these was written?

Write down something for each one, then check with your teacher.

•What criteria did you use? How many did you place in the right century?

•Consider carefully what each poem is about. Then give each poem a title.

•Now think further about the approach taken to the subject in each poem.
Complete the chart on page 144 by putting a tick in any relevant space.
You may feel that some poems should have several ticks.
Add anything you consider has been omitted by writing it in the final column.

•Which poem(or poems) do you consider takes the most direct approach?
Why do you think this is?

•Which, if any, do you identify with or sympathise with?

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	Apprehensive/ fearful	**Defiant**	**Making preparations**	**Confident**	**Thoughtful**	**Hopeful**	**Grief-stricken**	**(Other)**
Afterwards								
The Chariot								
Do not go gentle								
Epitaph								
The Fear of Death								
Hymn to God								
Prospice								

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Because I could not stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children
played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

EMILY DICKINSON

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Because I could not stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death -
He kindly stopped for me -
The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
And Immortality.

We slowly drove - He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labour and my leisure too,
For His Civility -

We passed the School, where Children
strove
At Recess - in the Ring -
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
We passed the Setting Sun -

Or rather - He passed Us -
The Dews drew quivering and chill -
For only Gossamer, my Gown -
My Tippet - only Tulle -

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground -
The Roof was scarcely visible -
The Cornice - in the Ground -

Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity -

EMILY DICKINSON

10.14

Continuation work
(If you finish before the others)

- Look again at the two versions of *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*. Emily Dickinson's poems were edited - in some cases considerably - before publication.
- Identify the differences.
- Why do you think the changes have been made? Do they all improve the poem, do you think?
- Which is the original?

Do not go gentle into that good night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

DYLAN THOMAS

The fear of death

Do not suppose that I do not fear death
Because I trust it is no end. You say
It must be a great comfort to live with
Such a faith, but you don't know the way
I battle on this earth

With faults of character I try to change
But they bound back on me like living things.
It is most difficult to re-arrange
Your life each day. I have known barren Springs
And death in Summer. Strange

Intimations come with Autumn. I
Would like, in certain moods, to die as leaves
Do, go back to earth. I watch the sky
Mellowing and find my strict beliefs
Hurting cruelly.

Who doesn't regret Lazarus was not
Questioned about after-lives? Of course
He only reached death's threshold. I fear what
Dark exercises may with cunning powers
Do when I am brought

To my conclusion. I have been where two
Or three died, only one of them a close
Friend. I mourn for him but he can't throw
A rope to me when that dark boatman rows
Me to what none can know.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

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Afterwards

When the Present has latched its postern
behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green
leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the
neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice such
things'?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's
soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the
shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a
gazer may think,
'To him this must have been a familiar sight.'

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness,
mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over
the lawn,
One may say, 'He strove that such innocent
creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he
is gone.'

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at
last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that
winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will
meet my face no more,
'He was one who had an eye for such
mysteries'?

And will any say when my bell of quittance
is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its
outrollings
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's
boom,
'He hears it not now, but used to notice such
things'?

THOMAS HARDY

Hymn to God, my God, in my Sickness

Since I am coming to that holy room,
Where, with thy quire of Saints for
evermore,
I shalt be made thy music; as I come
I tune the Instrument here at the door,
And what I must do then, think here before.

Whilst my Physicians by their love are grown
Cosmographers, and I their Map, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
That this is my South-west discovery
Per fretum febris, by these straits to die,

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
For, though their currents yield return to
none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and
East
In all flat Maps (and I am one) are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are
The Eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?
Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltare,
All straits, and none but straits, are ways to
them,
Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or
Sem.

We think that Paradise and Calvary,
Christ's Cross, and Adam's tree, stood in
one place;
Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;
As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

So, in his purple wrapp'd receive me, Lord,
By these his thorns give me his other Crown;
And as to others' souls I preach'd thy word,
Be this my Text, my Sermon to mine own:
Therefore that he may raise, the Lord
throws down.

JOHN DONNE

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Epitaph

EVEN such is Time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days:
And from which earth, and grave, and dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.

SIR WALTER RALEGH

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The Last Enemy

I shall not see ...
I shall not feel ...
I shall not hear ...

Mighty and dreadful

... slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men

Which of these do you most empathise with? Read carefully the sources of these quotations.

Christina Rossetti (1830 - 1894) is remembered mainly for her poetry.

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

John Donne (1572 - 1631) is remembered for his poems and sermons. After a varied career, he ended his life as Dean of St Paul's.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so:
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure - then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go -
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better, than thy stroke; -why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

JOHN DONNE

Personification

Donne uses personification when he addresses death as though it is a person that can feel pride and can itself die.

Personification: something that is not alive is described as if it were a person.

e.g.

"the morn in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill."

SHAKESPEARE

10.15

Comparisons

•Make notes on these two poems, using the following as your guide:

- the approach taken to the subject
- any reasons given for this approach
- key/memorable lines - write out or underline
- why each appears to have been written

saying:

- what they have in common
- any ways in which they are different.

Siegfried Sassoon (1886 - 1967) put into words something similar to the words of St Paul and Jesus quoted alongside:

Everyone Sang

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on - on -
and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away ... O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; and
the singing will never be done.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

(St Paul: *I Thessalonians* chapter 4 verses 14, 18)

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

(Jesus: *John* chapter 11 verses 25, 26)

10.16

Script Writing

It is the age of time travel! You are a TV presenter. Christina Rossetti and John Donne - both elderly but still alive - are your guests this evening. You are going to talk to them about death.

•Write the script (or part of the script) for this programme.
Give it a title.

You must let your guests have a fair say, and your tone must always be polite.
You are allowed to have a viewpoint or opinion of your own.
You may disagree with your guests or add extra material.

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