INTRODUCTION

This anthology has been compiled to introduce you to the rich poetic tradition in the English language up to 1900, and to provide an overview of some important literary and linguistic developments. It is expected that you will have read all the poems in this anthology in preparation for LL1 Section A.

The questions in LL1 Section A will assess your ability to:

- select and apply relevant concepts and approaches from integrated linguistic and literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate, coherent written expression (AO1)
- demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in a range of spoken and written texts (AO2)
- use integrated approaches to explore relationships between texts, analysing and evaluating the significance of contextual factors in their production and reception (AO3)

when exploring relationships between a printed poem from this anthology and an unseen text. The anthology is arranged chronologically to demonstrate the way language and poetic forms have evolved. The poems have been selected from different sources, with attention paid to finding poems closest to the original texts. However, in some instances the most accessible or familiar versions have been chosen.

When reading poetry from before 1900, it is worth remembering that Standard English as we know it today did not exist then. Until the introduction of Caxton's printing press in the early 1470s, most texts were handwritten, and there were both regional and personal variations in orthography, grammar and lexis. Many short-hand techniques existed to save expensive vellum, including the use of the macron and the ampersand. These continued even after the advent of printing on paper. Orthography, too, was not fixed, even after the publication of Dr Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755. Writers in the Middle English period used some graphemes (letters) that are no longer used. An interesting example of this is the use of Y as in Ye Olde Shoppe. This letter is a corruption of the old Anglo-Saxon runic letter (þ) called the thorn and pronounced th, and its use persisted into the Early Modern period. In most modern versions of pre-1900 poetry the linguistic features of the texts have been standardised. Punctuation is usually modernised. To make a true judgement of the linguistic features of a particular period, you should read facsimiles of the original poems.

When discussing the syntax of poetry, you should also bear in mind that this can be affected by the scansion of the line and the dictates of a rhyming pattern.

The choice of poetry before 1900 is incredibly varied and the poems in this collection represent a small proportion of those available. Most of the poems in this anthology can be found in any good collection of poetry, such as The New Oxford Book of Verse, or can be accessed on the Internet. The University of Toronto website has an excellent collection of verse with some helpful biographical information and footnotes at www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/rp

You may find it useful to explore the poems in thematic groups, comparing the different ways that poets from different periods have dealt with some universal subjects.

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LOVE THAT DOTH REIGN AND LIVE WITHIN MY THOUGHT

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)

Love that doth reign and live within my thought,
And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love then to the heart apace
Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and 'plain,
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain.
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove.
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.
NEW PRINCE, NEW POMP

Robert Southwell (1561-1595)

Behold, a seely tender babe
In freezing winter night
In homely manger trembling lies,-
Alas, a piteous sight!

The inns are full, no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed,
But forced he is with seely beasts
In crib to shroud his head.

Despise him not for lying there,
First, what he is enquire,
An orient pearl is often found
In depth of dirty mire.

Weigh not his crib, his wooden dish,
Nor beasts that by him feed;
Weigh not his mother's poor attire
Nor Joseph's simple weed.

This stable is a prince's court,
This crib his chair of state,
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The wooden dish his plate.

The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The prince himself is come from heaven;
This pomp is prizéd there.

With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy king;
And highly prize his humble pomp
Which he from heaven doth bring.
SONNET CXXX

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips’ red,
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun:
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head:
I have seen roses damask’d, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight,
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go -
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
    And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare,
    As any she belied with false compare.
SONNET: BATTER MY HEART

John Donne (1572-1631)

Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for, you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn, and make mee new.
I, like an usurpt towne, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved faine,
But am betroth'd unto your enemie:
Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe,
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.
TO VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
    Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
    To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
    The higher he's a-getting;
The sooner will his race be run,
    And nearer he's to setting.

The age is best, which is the first,
    When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
    Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
    And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
    You may for ever tarry.
SONNET XIX: ON HIS BLINDNESS

John Milton (1608-1674)

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."
TO MY DEAR AND LOVING HUSBAND

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay.
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persever
That when we live no more, we may live ever.
THE MOWER AGAINST GARDENS

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Luxurious man, to bring his vice in use,
   Did after him the world seduce;
And from the fields the flowers and plants allure,
   Where Nature was most plain and pure.
He first enclosed within the garden’s square
   A dead and standing pool of air,
And a more luscious earth for them did knead,
   Which stupefied them while it fed.
The pink grew then as double as his mind;
   The nutriment did change the kind.
With strange perfumes he did the roses taint;
   And flow’rs themselves were taught to paint.
The tulip, white, did for complexion seek,
   And learned to interline its cheek;
Its onion root they then so high did hold,
   That one was for a meadow sold:
Another world was searched, through oceans new,
   To find the Marvel of Peru;
And yet these rarities might be allowed
   To man, that sovereign thing and proud,
Had he not dealt between the bark and tree,
   Forbidden mixtures there to see.
No plant now knew the stock from which it came;
   He grafts upon the wild the tame:
That the uncertain and adulterate fruit
   Might put the palate in dispute.
His green Seraglio has its eunuchs too,
   Lest any tyrant him outdo;
And in the cherry he does Nature vex,
   To procreate without a sex.
'Tis all enforced, the fountain and the grot,
   While the sweet fields do lie forgot,
Where willing Nature does to all dispense
   A wild and fragrant innocence;
And fauns and fairies do the meadows till,
   More by their presence than their skill.
Their statues, polished by some ancient hand,
   May to adorn the gardens stand,
But, howsoe’er the figures do excel,
   The gods themselves with us do dwell.
His Grace! impossible! what, dead!
Of old age too, and in his bed!
And could that mighty warrior fall,
And so inglorious, after all?
Well, since he's gone, no matter how,
The last loud trump must wake him now;
And, trust me, as the noise grows stronger,
He'd wish to sleep a little longer.
And could he be indeed so old
As by the newspapers we're told?
Threescore, I think, is pretty high;
'Twas time in conscience he should die!
This world he cumber'd long enough;
He burnt his candle to the snuff;
And that's the reason, some folks think,
He left behind so great a stink.
Behold his funeral appears,
Nor widows' sighs, nor orphans' tears,
Wont at such times each heart to pierce,
Attend the progress of his hearse.
But what of that? his friends may say,
He had those honours in his day.
True to his profit and his pride,
He made them weep before he died.
Come hither, all ye empty things!
Ye bubbles rais'd by breath of kings!
Who float upon the tide of state;
Come hither, and behold your fate!
Let pride be taught by this rebuke,
How very mean a thing's a duke;
From all his ill-got honours flung,
Turn'd to that dirt from whence he sprung.
THE TYGER

William Blake (1757-1827)

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes!
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water’d heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?
‘I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD’

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of the bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company
I gazed -- and gazed -- but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.
KUBLA KHAN (Extract)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
       Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank, in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
       The shadow of the dome of pleasure
       Floated midway on the waves;
       Where was heard the mingled measure
       From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
THE WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR

Thomas Love Peacock  (1785–1866)

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deem’d it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met a host and quell’d it;
We forced a strong position
And kill’d the men who held it.

On Dyfed’s richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rush’d to meet us;
We met them, and o’erthrew them:
They struggled hard to beat us,
But we conquer’d them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king march’d forth to catch us:
His rage surpass’d all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall pillars;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sack’d his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewild’ring,
Spilt blood enough to swim in:
We orphan’d many children
And widow’d many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen;
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoan’d them,
Two thousand head of cattle
And the head of him who own’d them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.
SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron  (1788–1824)

She walks in beauty, like the night
    Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
    Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
    Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
    Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
    Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
    How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
    So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
    But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
    A heart whose love is innocent!
OZYMANDIAS

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
FIRST LOVE

John Clare (1793-1864)

I ne'er was struck before that hour
With love so sudden and so sweet,
Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower
And stole my heart away complete.

My face turned pale as deadly pale.
My legs refused to walk away,
And when she looked, what could I ail?
My life and all seemed turned to clay.

And then my blood rushed to my face
And took my eyesight quite away,
The trees and bushes round the place
Seemed midnight at noonday.

I could not see a single thing,
Words from my eyes did start --
They spoke as chords do from the string,
And blood burnt round my heart.

Are flowers the winter's choice?
Is love's bed always snow?
She seemed to hear my silent voice,
Not love's appeals to know.

I never saw so sweet a face
As that I stood before.
My heart has left its dwelling-place
And can return no more
TO AUTUMN

John Keats (1795-1821)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Sparest the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, –
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Elizabeth Barrett Browning  (1806-1861)

What was he doing, the great god Pan,  
Down in the reeds by the river?  
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,  
And breaking the golden lilies afloat  
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
From the deep cool bed of the river:  
The limpid water turbidly ran,  
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,  
And the dragon-fly had fled away,  
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan  
While turbidly flowed the river;  
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,  
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,  
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed  
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,  
(How tall it stood in the river!)  
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,  
Steadily from the outside ring,  
And notched the poor dry empty thing  
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan  
(Laughed while he sat by the river),  
"The only way, since gods began  
To make sweet music, they could succeed."  
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,  
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
Piercing sweet by the river!  
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly  
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
To laugh as he sits by the river,  
Making a poet out of a man:  
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain, --  
For the reed which grows nevermore again  
As a reed with the reeds in the river.
BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.
SPELLBOUND

Emily Brontë (1818-1848)

The night is darkening round me,
    The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me,
    And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
    Their bare boughs weighed with snow;
The storm is fast descending,
    And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
    Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me:
    I will not, cannot go.
"There is no God," the wicked saith,
"And truly it's a blessing,
For what He might have done with us
It's better only guessing."

"There is no God," a youngster thinks,
"Or really, if there may be,
He surely didn't mean a man
Always to be a baby."

"There is no God, or if there is,"
The tradesman thinks, "'twere funny
If He should take it ill in me
To make a little money."

"Whether there be," the rich man says,
"It matters very little,
For I and mine, thank somebody,
Are not in want of victual."

Some others, also, to themselves,
Who scarce so much as doubt it,
Think there is none, when they are well,
And do not think about it.

But country folks who live beneath
The shadow of the steeple;
The parson and the parson's wife,
And mostly married people;

Youths green and happy in first love,
So thankful for illusion;
And men caught out in what the world
Calls guilt, in first confusion;

And almost everyone when age,
Disease, or sorrows strike him,
Inclines to think there is a God,
Or something very like Him.
DYING

Emily Dickinson  (1830-1886)

I heard a fly buzz when I died.
   The stillness in the room
Was like the stillness in the air
   Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes around had wrung them dry,
   And breaths were gathering firm
For that last onset when the king
   Be witnessed in the room.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
   What portion of me be
Assignable; and then it was
   There interposed a fly

With blue, uncertain stumbling buzz
   Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed; and then
   I could not see to see.
SONG

Christina Georgina Rossetti  (1830-1894)

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.
When I look forth at dawning, pool,
    Field, flock and lonely tree,
    All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school;

Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,
    As though the master’s ways
    Through the long teaching days
Had cowed them till their early zest was overborne.

Upon them stirs in lippings mere
    (As if once clear in call,
    But now scarce breathed at all)—
"We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!

"Has some Vast Imbecility,
    Mighty to build and blend,
    But impotent to tend,
Framed us in jest, and left us now to hazardry?

"Or come we of an Automaton
    Unconscious of our pains? . . .
    Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and eye now gone?

"Or is it that some high Plan betides,
    As yet not understood,
    Of Evil stormed by Good,
We the Forlorn Hope over which Achievement strides?"

Thus things around. No answerer I. . .
    Meanwhile the winds, and rains,
    And Earth's old glooms and pains
Are still the same, and Life and Death are neighbours nigh.
GOD'S GRANDEUR

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
  It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
  It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
  And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
  And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
  There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
  Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
  World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.
Lady Howard Robert Southwell
John Donne William Shakespeare
Robert Herrick Andrew Marvell
William Blake Jonathan Swift
Thomas Love Peacock Percy Shelley Lord Byron Percy Bysshe Shelley
John Keats Elizabeth Barrett
Tennyson Emily Dickinson
Emily Bronte Arthur
Christina Georgina Rossetti