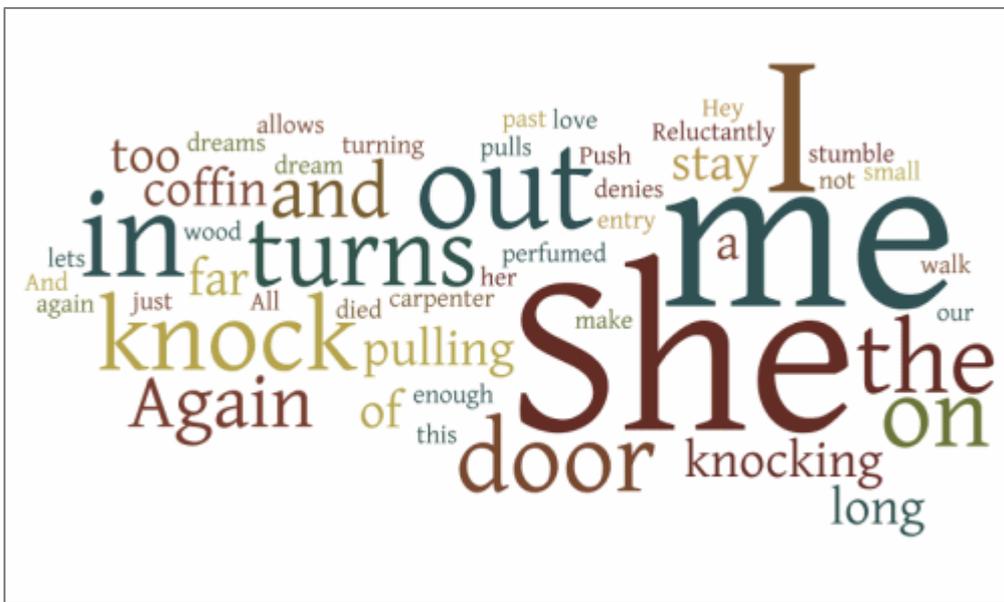


knocking and pulling (A Lesson Outline for English Classes)

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1. Wordle – guess as a class about poem based on the vocabulary (and vocabulary size/frequency):



2. Listen and watch the poem – quick class discussion about possible meanings (perhaps starting with the question: Is the poet actually referring to a person's house?)
3. Sight and sound – divide the class into two halves, listen and watch performance again with one group watching and listening to the speaker, the other half concentrating on the music. Each group should write down adjectives to describe what they see/hear (feelings, mood, etc.) and then share as a class, making a lists for poet and music on the whiteboard.
4. Vocabulary/Language Work – Explain, describe and/or elicit some of the following language features from the poem:

- a. “pull” versus “let” (lines 2/6)
 - b. “turn” (turn, turn out, turn s.b. out/away, turn s.th. out, turnout) – this would make a great dictionary exercise, as there are at least 8 different definitions or forms of use for “turn out” alone.
 - c. “enough” versus “too” (*not long enough, too long, far too far*)
 - d. Words for permission (**let, allow, grant/deny entry**) from general/informal to formal and stronger/stricter/severe
 - e. “reluctantly”, “stumble”, “push (past)”
 - f. Listen again and decide which words are stressed/emphasized in line 23. What effect does this create?
 - g. “carpenter” (guessing from context – *make, coffin, wood*)
 - h. “coffin” (why small? why perfumed?)
5. Have students highlight the words covered in (4) in their texts, then watch and listen to the poem again, listening for the words they have highlighted.
6. Tense:
- a. What tense is the poem written in? (Present simple)
 - b. Why not past tense? What meaning or mood is conveyed here by simple present? (being part of a live story, or something that happens regularly/over a period of time?)
7. Focus on the final stanza:
- a. The poet says “all this knocking and pulling and turning out” – have the students count the occurrences (with the exception of the title and this line in the poem) of **knock** (4-5), **pull** (1), **turn/s out** (4). Is it fair/accurate of the poet to infer there has been as much “pulling” as there has been “knocking” and “turning out”?
 - b. Why does the poet call on a carpenter and a coffin? What picture does this create for the reader/listener?
 - c. When the poet claims “our dream just died”, did it in fact just die (for both people)? Should it be “our dream” or just “my dream”? What in the poem suggests it died significantly earlier for the lady concerned?

8. Discuss the meaning of the poem from different hypothetical angles (in groups, then report to the whole class):
 - a. "I" is one person and "She" is one other person
 - b. "I" is one person, but the "she" in each stanza of the poem is a different woman!
 - c. The "I" in each stanza is a different person, but the "she" is always the same woman.
 - d. The poem covers a period of 3 months.
 - e. The poem covers a period of 30 years.
 - f. The "she" in the poem is a musical instrument.
 - g. The "she" in the poem is a foreign language (like English).
 - h. The "she" in the poem is a foreign country (where "I" has gone to live).
 - i. The "I" in the poem is a musical instrument, foreign language, or foreign country.

9. Read out the first four stanzas of the poem again, but in reverse order (not each line, just each complete stanza). Ask the students:
 - a. How has the overall meaning/situation changed?
 - b. How might the music sound different in between each of these stanzas (compared to the original version) and at the end?

10. Language consolidation (any or all of below):
 - a. Distribute one or both of Gap Fill 1 and Gap Fill 2 to the students to complete in pairs or groups (Gap Fill 1 concentrates mostly on the key vocabulary featured in (4) above, while Gap Fill 2 omits most of the unstressed (and hence possibly less salient) words from the poem). Have them refer to the original version of the poem to self-correct their answers.

 - b. Place the students in teams and play the performance up to again, this time as a Dictogloss (with the teams writing down what they hear/remember during the interludes between each stanza), with students pooling and discussing their notes (without referring to the original) and then attempting to reconstruct the poem as accurately as possible. Have them refer to the original version of the poem to self-correct their answers (as notes alongside their reconstructions).

 - c. Have the learners write down sentences about themselves using any or all of language points (a)-(f) in (4) above, then share with the class (with teacher correcting/advising on use as necessary).

11. Focus on Punctuation – Have the learners listen and read again, but this time the challenge is to add some punctuation features (for example capitalisation, ..., -, !) so that the text better reflects the oral delivery of the poem.

12. Performance – Divide the learners into groups of 3-6 and have each group work together to perform the poem (as a group). Let them decide how to do this (it could be alternating lines, or complete stanzas for different students) and then perform the poem in front of the class (for higher levels, require them to memorise their parts!).

13. Writing – Have learners choose from the topics below and write in response to one of them (and/or design writing topics entirely of their own):
 - a. Pretend you are the poet. Write a letter to the woman in the poem and explain how you feel.
 - b. Pretend you are the woman in the poem. Write a letter to the poet and explain how you feel and why.
 - c. Write a letter to the poet and try to give him/her some advice based on your opinion.
 - d. Have you ever felt the way the poet appears to feel (about a person, a thing or a place)? Write about that experience.
 - e. Try re-writing the poem so that it ends on a happier or more positive note.