

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE POEMS FOR NSC 2017 ON A GRID [prepared by J. Singh: SES English Home Language]

[NOTE: Some points in these notes have been gleaned from outside sources. Feel free to add to these observations.]

No	Title	Message / Central Idea	Tone	Noteworthy Features
1	Remember – C. Rosseti Speaker first asks her beloved to remember her after she dies, and then asks to be forgotten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The paradox of wanting to be remembered and forgotten * Speaker’s awareness of her impending death and its effect on her beloved’s memory of her * Speaker doesn’t want to be remembered with sadness * Imperiousness of the title – the beloved is ordered to remember her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled Beseeching/imploring Contemplative Conciliatory Sadness Acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The simple language conveys the heartfelt and genuine love the speaker feels for her beloved. * Placing of ‘remember’: lines 1 & 5 remember is imperative; line 7 ‘only remember’; line 10 ‘afterwards remember’; line 14 ‘better ... you should forget... than ...remember’ [power of request to remember is fading/decreasing] * Turning point in line 9: ‘Yet’ (also called ‘the volta’)
2	First Day after the War – K. Mazisi Using the metaphor of a wedding party the speaker describes the feelings of the people who celebrate the first day after the end of apartheid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The sheer joy of people at the realization that they are free from the shackles of apartheid. * Invitation to everyone to celebrate the freedom * Sharing of the joy * use of sound to spread the happiness * References to nature to emphasise the healing process after the suffering endured during apartheid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration Exhilaration Elation Delight Tranquility/serenity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Freedom personified as a woman – bride? * The powerful emotion in ‘ululating’ (also onomatopoeic) * symbolism of ‘wedding’ – a new joyous life * image of light – hope & optimism * pride the ancestors would have felt at this time (traveling tall)
3	The Zulu Girl – R. Campbell A Zulu girl working in the heat on the fields takes a break to feed her hungry baby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The hardships endured by the Zulu girl & the discomfort suffered by the baby *The undercurrent of resentment felt by the Zulu nation at their subjugation * The mother’s love for her child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repressed anger Deep love Deep resentment Fear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Imagery of intense heat * References to heat and shade *Impending doom implied in the last stanza *Impending rebellion of the Zulu people

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4	Motho ke Motho – J. Cronin A wordless conversation between two prisoners as a prison guard scrutinizes them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The cleverness of the 2 prisoners in finding ways to maintain communication with sign language *Defiance of prison rules *Rising above the degradation of imprisonment (communication being forbidden) *The resilience of the human spirit *Communication without words *The victory of human connection across prison cell and colour line The spirit of 'Ubuntu' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversational Undertone of rebellion Sardonic (mocks principle of imprisonment – restriction of personal freedom) Ironic Defiance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Use of italics to convey speech (although silent) *The iconic symbol of the black fist *The hand-held mirror is an apt metaphor for how increasingly common it is for people today to look at life indirectly *L5: Clever use of 'I' In the mirror, I [consider 'eye'] see him see ...
5	Funeral Blues – W.A. Auden The speaker wants everything to come to a standstill as life is meaningless because his loved one has died.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A poignant expression of grief, memory, devastation and longing, after the death of a loved one. * An expression of grief that goes beyond words into silence * Life becomes pointless when a loved one dies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intense grief Appears to be a mocking tone in stanzas 1 & 2 (mocks the fact that all the shows of grief will never be able to capture the real grief the speaker feels) In stanza 3 tone of sincerity (of grief) Anger ; bitterness; sorrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The imperative mood of the verbs in Stanzas 1 and 4 conveys the forcefulness of the speaker in demanding that everyone joins him in his grief * image of the compass in stanza 3 - the loss of direction in life when one loses a loved one * metaphor of stars in stanza 4 – aspirations in life
6	A Hard Frost – C.D. Lewis The speaker describes the short transformation the world around him undergoes before and after the arrival of a sudden frost at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The transient beauty of the countryside after the frost at night * The transformation from death to life, that takes place with the arrival of spring *The brilliance of the beauty of the scene transformed by frost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accusatory Admiration Admonition Pity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Powerful imagery: changeling, bride (implied in 'bridal gear'), raw country maid * strong verbs: 1st line of each stanza: stole (l. 1); blaze (l. 10) * power of nature in 'unclenches' (line 18)

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7	<p>An African Thunderstorm – D. Rubadri</p> <p>The speaker describes the arrival of a fierce storm in Africa and the reaction of the village women and children to it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The suddenness and violence of the storm * The impending destruction caused by the storm * Implied reference to an army – ‘And the pelting march of the storm * Implied allegorical reference to the destructive effects of colonialism in Africa * Are women and children more susceptible to colonialism? [men are not mentioned in the poem] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dismay Fear Excitement panic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Rhythm, throughout the poem, conveys the turbulent and violent progress of the storm – the pace of the words echoes the strength of the wind, the exploding sound of thunder and the brilliant flashes of lightning * Length of lines is of particular significance in this poem * Personification of the wind and clouds as a gigantic dragon * Onomatopoeia in ‘Rumble, tremble and crack’
8	<p>An African Elegy – Ben Okiri</p> <p>The speaker takes a positive look at the difficulties faced in life from an African perspective. He passes on a message from the ancestors to view life positively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mankind must see himself as being precious because he was created by God * Overcoming problems and difficulties of life by being positive is the rewarding – this is the African way of dealing with suffering. * The ancestors/mystic entity are ever-present in offering support and guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet confidence Optimism Hope Acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Why is this an ‘Elegy’ ? Perhaps there is praise for one’s ability to see to the ‘death’ of negativity in life. * The regular 5-line stanza structure probably suggests the balance one can create in life by off-setting the negative with the positive.
9	<p>Somewhere I have never traveled – e.e. cummings</p> <p>An unconventional love poem in which the speaker describes his powerful love for his lover and the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Speaker’s intense love for and utter devotion to his lover * The tremendous power she exercises over him * The fragility of the woman he loves * The opening and closing of the petals of the rose convey the blossoming and, if probable, the ending of love, which he will gladly accept (my life will shut very 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sincerity Passion Devotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Created his signature style in which he ignored traditional rules of poetry and experimental use of punctuation, capitalization and spacing * Complicated ‘syntax’ of the poem echoes the complicated nature of love * Imagery of touch, eyes and roses

	total control she has over him, even though she doesn't realize it.	beautifully) * Speaker's acceptance of the mystery of the tremendous power his lover has over him		* Presence of paradoxes in the imagery: e.g he is touched by the 'untouchable' which is love * Significance of 'Spring' being the only word which is capitalised
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10	The Garden of Love – W. Blake The speaker visits a beautiful garden but is disappointed to find that a chapel has been built there and that there are priests parading the grounds .	* Frustration with a religious system that condemns the joy that man finds in nature and in physical/instinctual pleasures * The oppressive role of the church *The church/organized religion – the source of guilt/unhappiness in society	Anger Dismay Frustration Disappointment	* Short lines of 1 st stanza as compared to long lines in last stanza: emphasizes the death and decay of pleasure compared to the short-lived joy of the speaker before the church steps in * Contrast between flowers and graves/tombstones * Contrast between pastoral and gothic imagery * negativity of last stanza * Priests seen as prison guards * Use of the word 'And' in all lines that convey a negative idea/disapproval/dismay * Internal rhyme: lines 13 & 14: gowns – rounds; briars – desires conveys the overwhelming oppression exercised by the church; speaker's hopes are crushed * The Garden – symbolic of a place within ourselves where we store our primal emotions?? * The use of capitals for Garden, Love, Chapel, Priests

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11	<p>Felix Randal – G.M. Hopkins The speaker reflects on the long illness and eventual death of a powerfully strong farrier called Felix Randall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The deep bond between the priest and the farrier * The ravages of physical illness *The lessons learned through tending to the ill. *The mortality of man *The compassion of the priest * Important role played by religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pity Compassion Admiration Acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contrast between stanza 1 and stanza 4: description of the farrier * Reference to two type of strength: Physical and Spiritual * Irony in ‘mould of man’ to refer to Felix Randal * Significance of “broke’ (line 5)
12	<p>Vultures – Chinua Achebe Poem consists of 2 parts: a description of two vultures nestling together affectionately after having fed on a decomposing body; a description of a concentration-camp commandant going home to his child after having presided over the killing and cremation of thousands of Jews during WW2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The repulsiveness of the physical description of the vultures. * The incongruity between the affection the vultures show each other and their horrific day-time activity of devouring pieces of a dead body * The mystery of the existence of love in the most unexpected places of killing and horror * The shocking contrast between the Commandant’s day-time activities and his buying of sweets for his child *The appalling contrast between the Commandant as a murderer and a daddy. * The bleakness of stanza 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revulsion Bleakness Horror Incredulity Disbelief Condemnation Ruthlessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The moral comment at the end of each of the 2 parts of the poem * The vivid references to the corpse that the vultures feasted on * The personification of love * The horror in the reference to ‘human roast’ * The horrific reality provided by Stanza 4 * Cold reality of the existence of good and evil in one being