



CREW WJEC GCSE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE FOR WALES:
RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

2022 Poems:

Suggested Pairings for Comparative Study

These notes are intended to help teachers identify productive pairings and can be used alongside the helpsheets on individual poems at <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/crew/gcse-resources/>

2022 Poems

Dannie Abse, 'A Night Out' (pp. 313–4 of *Poetry 1900–2000*)
Alun Lewis, 'Goodbye' (pp 179–80)
Duncan Bush, '"Caroline": a County Life' (pp 586–8)
Joseph P. Clancy, 'Anniversary' (pp 357–8)
Tony Curtis, 'Portrait of the Painter Hans Theo Richter and his Wife Gisela in Dresden, 1933' (pp 600–1)
Dannie Abse, 'Epithalamion' (pp 305–6)
Eiluned Lewis, 'Ships' Sirens' (pp 39–40)
Eiluned Lewis, 'The Bride Chest' (pp 38–39)
Stuart Evans, 'Blue Carnations' (pp 419)
Gillian Clarke, 'My Box' (pp 480–81)
Jean Earle, 'Jugged Hare' (pp 126–7)
Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, 'The Sealwife' (pp 706–7)
John Ormond, 'In September' (pp 290–1)
Owen Sheers, 'Antonia's Story' (pp 856–7)
R.S. Thomas, 'A Marriage' (p 151)

Suggested Pairings

1. Dannie Abse, 'A Night Out', and Tony Curtis, 'Portrait of the Painter Hans Theo Richter and his Wife Gisela in Dresden, 1933'

These poems demonstrate a shared concern with how international history and politics impact on everyday life and relationships. They both explore the aftermath of war and its effects on art and human relationships, and similarly focus on the description of an artwork (film/painting). Please note, too, that Curtis has testified to the influence of Abse on his writing; it would be interesting to discuss the evidence for this in Curtis's later poem.

2. Alun Lewis, 'Goodbye' and R.S. Thomas, 'A Marriage'.

These poems use the shared trope of saying goodbye to the beloved, within different personal and historical contexts. They are similarly characterised by an elegance and lyricism of expression, which they use to explore the fleetingness of time and the mystery of being. They also imbue death with a certain elegance or aesthetic beauty.

3. Duncan Bush, '“Caroline”: a County Life', and Owen Sheers, 'Antonia's Story'.

Both poems consider the role of reportage and witnessing in poetry. They both explore – through an ambiguous moral frame that refuses to offer clear-cut conclusions – social and domestic gender oppression and violence.

4. J. P Clancy, 'Anniversary', and Stewart Evans, 'Blue Carnations'.

Both poems share a self-deprecating, confessional tone, suggesting that self-awareness is the key to the continuation of relationships; common to both is a focus on process and the idea of love as an emotional journey, as well as a contrasting of roles between the partners, whose relationship is rendered more playful and performative in 'Blue Carnations'.

5. Dannie Abse, 'Epithalamion' and John Ormond, 'In September'.

Both poems engage with ancient tradition and ritual motifs of guests, ghosts, hosts and gifts. They connect human love to the wider processes of the natural universe, and offer a similar yet also contrasting portrayal of the image of the wedding ring. They also share a sense of love as a measure for time's passing and recurrence.

6. Dannie Abse, 'Epithalamion', and Alun Lewis, 'Goodbye'.

Both poems make a connection between love/marriage and death, acknowledging the lovers' vulnerable mortality while connecting them to the natural world; both poems feature the idea of being on borrowed or 'rent[ed]' time, and both engage, in different ways, with a lyrical, Romantic tradition in poetry.

7. Eiluned Lewis, 'Ships' Sirens' and Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, 'The Sealwife'.

These poems similarly present the sea as a motif for exploring a (lost or thwarted) desire, and evoke a sense of loss and mourning through imagery and sound. There is a common engagement with folklore and myth, albeit in different contexts and for different purposes.

8. Eiluned Lewis, 'Ships' Sirens' and Dannie Abse, 'Epithalamion'.

These poems present contrasting and complementary depictions of the relation between the earthly and spiritual worlds, and give differently gendered perspectives on the idea of the 'cargo'.

9. Eiluned Lewis, 'The Bride Chest', and Gillian Clarke, 'My Box'.

The poems similarly explore the concept of a female legacy, and place emphasis on the importance of spaces, nature and material objects in their representation of gender, love, marriage and memory.

10. Jean Earle, 'Jugged Hare' and J.P. Clancy 'Anniversary'

Reading these poems side by side invite us to question the darker tones and gender inequalities in Clancy's work. In what ways is the renewal of vows celebrated in Clancy's poem shown in Earle's text to be a product of female art, effort and self-sacrifice? Both poems also depict an older speaker reflecting on their memories as a younger person.

11. Jean Earle, 'Jugged Hare' and Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, 'The Sealwife'.

It would be interesting to explore the different ways in which these poets explore and question female identity and creativity (and the constraints placed on these by domesticity) through reference to animals and the non-human world.

12. Owen Sheers, 'Antonia's Story' and Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, 'The Sealwife'

There is a shared focus in these poems on sound and dramatic storytelling, focused in and on the female body, as well as an engagement with natural imagery, repressed memories and dreams.

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