

HOW TO BETTER UNDERSTAND A POEM IN 5 EASY STEPS (AKA “MPWLLF”):

1. Read through once, and *circle any words you don't know*. Find the *MEANINGS*. You can't understand a poem if you don't understand the words within it.

2. Remember that *EVERY SINGLE piece of PUNCTUATION matters in a poem*. Which punctuation stands out? Note the way that commas, dashes, ellipsis, exclamation points, capitals, and any other punctuation is used.

3. *Every WORD in a poem counts*. Which words (or words) really stick out on the page? What might be the reason for that?

4. *The LINE LENGTH even matters*. Which lines are longer? Shorter? Why? What effect does it have on the way you read that line?

5. *Note the FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE the poet uses*. Simile, metaphor, personification, allusion, alliteration, onomatopoeia. How does it increase the value of what the poet is trying to say?

*** Apply these steps to ANY poem, and you'll have no problems! Promise!**