

Studying Gillian Clarke's poems
in the WJEC GCSE Literature 2001-2 Anthology

This work was produced by Michael Hartland, Head of English, Clayesmore School, Dorset
and found free at www.englishresources.co.uk

The Vet

1. How do we know that the girl is dreading the experience? (look at diction)
2. What images are used in the poem? (3 in third verse, 3 at least in the last) : what does each image suggest?
3. How does Clarke feel at the end of the poem about the birth? How can you tell? (diction)

Swimming with Seals

1. There are three groups in this poem: the swimmers, the elderly and the seals. How are each described?
2. In the first verse, what is the effect of the phrase 'shadowy water-gardens'?
3. In the second verse, whom does the seal resemble?
4. Which word links the elderly and seals in this verse?
5. Notice the imagery in the third verse. What does it suggest?
6. What comparisons and issues are being explored in the last verse? Again, examine the imagery.

Lament

1. What is a 'lament' (use dictionary)
2. Look for ways that pollution and war are referred to.
3. Look for imagery and why it is used.

Letters from Bosnia

1. What is familiar about the scene and children in Vites, a town in Bosnia?
2. What do you notice about the ending?
3. How does l.16 hint at the violence of the ending?

Peregrine Falcon

1. What do you notice about the general style of the poem?
2. There are many references to houses and things found in houses in the poem. These are images. Why are they used? What do they suggest about what the falcon is like?
3. What other images are used in the poem?
4. What feelings are you left with at the end?

My Box

1. What do you notice about the style of this poem? What mood does it create?
2. Which words and phrases are repeated? Why?
3. What do you think the golden tree symbolises?