

“I am very bothered when I think”

Simon Armitage

1. Outline Of The Poem

scars heated remembering fingers young handles loved medical
--

The poem is about a man looking back and _____ the bad things he has done in his life. He remembers one particular incident in the chemistry lab at school. He _____ up some scissors, in a bunsen burner flame, until the _____ were very hot. He then handed them to a girl he fancied. Her _____ were badly burned. She had to have _____ attention and was left with two ring-like _____. At the end, the poem tries to say that in a stupid sort of way, he was trying to tell the girl that he _____ her. It was his way at that _____ age of paying her attention.

Put the following into the correct order:

Lines 1-7	give an explanation of why he did it
Lines 8-11	tell the story of the incident
Lines 12-14	describe the consequences of his stupid action

Answer these three questions on your file paper:

1. The poet confesses to something he did when he was younger. Write one paragraph explaining what he did.
2. How do we know that the girl in the poem was badly hurt?
3. What excuse did the boy give for what he did?

NOW ANNOTATE THE POEM

2. Poet's Thoughts and Feelings

Simon Armitage is being very **honest** in the poem, when he **confesses** to his stupid action, which seriously hurt the girl. When he was thirteen, he **thought** that he **loved** the girl. He did not know how to show it then, so he **tried to attract** her attention by doing something outrageous. Now that he is **grown up**, he feels **very guilty** for the harm he did to the girl.

Choose a word from the poem that shows Simon Armitage feels guilty now that he is older.

Underline the word on your Anthology and write the words "feels guilty" by the side.

Choose a word from the poem that shows how Armitage felt about the girl when he was thirteen.

Underline the word on your Anthology and write the words "loved girl" by the side.

Answer these questions on your file paper:

- 1.If the boy was keen on the girl, why did he hand her the scissors?
- 2.What different feelings are shown in the poem? Write three sentences about the different feelings. Use the highlighted words from the paragraph.

3. Structure And Form

Copy and complete the following on your file paper:

There are _____ stanzas in the poem.

There are _____ lines in the first stanza.

There are _____ lines in the second stanza.

There are _____ lines in the third stanza.

All together there are _____ lines, which makes a kind of poem called a 'sonnet'. The longest stanza is the _____ one, which shows how guilty he feels because he can still remember what happened so clearly.

The poem does not have a regular rhythm and there is no obvious rhyme. There are some half-rhymes though, inside the lines.

Copy and complete the following half-rhymes, then underline them on your Anthology.

'burner/----' 'skin/----- --' 'if I say/----- ----'

4. Use Of Language

The **language** and words in the poem are used **to show** the **poet's feelings**.
The **sounds** of the words **are** very **important**.

Write the highlighted words, above, on your Anthology.

Assonance is when a sound inside a word is repeated. For example 'blades' and 'played'. The repeated sound here shows how the memory is playing on his mind.

Underline 'blades' and 'played' on your Anthology and write by the side 'Assonance shows memory playing on mind.'

Another example of Assonance is in the words 'flame' and 'name'.

Underline these words on your Anthology and write by the side, 'Assonance shows feelings he had for girl.'

Alliteration is when the first letter of more than one word is repeated, for example, 'blades' and 'Bunsen burner'. Here the Alliteration shows the dangerous thing he did to the girl.

Underline the words 'blades' and Bunsen burner' on your Anthology. Write by the side, 'Alliteration shows dangerous thing he did.'

There are interesting choices of words in the poem:

Highlight these words on your Anthology and make notes by the side of the poem about what the words mean.

4. Personal Response

Do you think the poem is realistic? Do boys and girls often say and do cruel things to attract each other's attention?

Write the answers to these questions on your Anthology.