



# National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

## 'Water'



Teaching  
Resources:  
for adult  
reading  
and writing  
groups

## for adult reading and writing groups

Maoilios Caimbeul, 'Rudan a nì uisge'  
Thomas A. Clark, 'Coire Fhionn Lochan'  
George Campbell Hay, 'Seeker, Reaper'  
Diana Hendry, 'What Is the Pond Doing?'  
Kathleen Jamie, 'The Whale-watcher'  
Kapka Kassabova, 'The Travel Guide to the Country of Your Birth'  
Jackie Kay, 'Think of a flood'  
Don Paterson, 'Rain'

Ideas for group reading and discussion, and creative writing:

## The Poets and The Poems

For background information about the poets, and the individual poems, see the Teachers' Resources for each poem, available at [www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/learn](http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/learn)

## Reading The Poems

The questions below are intended as starting points for discussion – some may be more appropriate to certain poems than to others.

### Content

Where and when does the poem take place?  
What do we learn about the speaker of the poem?  
What role in the poem does water play? Think about it in terms of the setting

- the emotions of the characters in the poem
- the narrative of the poem
- the relationships in the poem – between people, and between the narrator and his or her environment

What is the overall mood of the poem?  
Do you think the poem is broadly optimistic or pessimistic? Why?

Continued >

1.  
SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY  
FOR ADULT READING AND WRITING GROUPS



# National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

## 'Water'



Teaching  
Resources:  
for adult  
reading  
and writing  
groups

Look at the way contrast is used in the poem.

What images are there of

- stillness & movement
- sound & silence
- light & dark
- near & far
- life & death
- time & eternity

Look at the title of the poem.

How does the title relate to the poem?

Is the title purely descriptive, or does it provide or suggest something additional?

Does the title affect your reading of the poem?

In other words, would you read the poem in the same way if the title were absent, or different?

Can you suggest an alternative title for the poem?

What do you think the poem would gain and/or lose with this alternative title?

### Form

Look at the form of the poem. As well as reading the poem on the page, be sure to read it aloud

– you can often hear certain patterns or 'sound effects' which may be less obvious on the page.

How many stanzas (verses) does the poem have?

How long is each stanza?

Is each stanza the same length?

How many lines does the poem have?

Is each line the same length?

Is the metre (rhythm) regular or irregular?

Does the poem rhyme?

If so, is there a regular or irregular pattern of rhymes?

If the poem uses rhyme, write out a rhyme scheme for the poem.

Which lines use enjambment, that is carry over a phrase from one line to the next?

How do these formal aspects of the poem – stanzas, lines, rhymes and enjambment – affect your understanding of the poem? Why do you think the poem has chosen they form they have for the poem?

### Comparison >

2.

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY  
FOR ADULT READING AND WRITING GROUPS



# National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

## 'Water'



Teaching  
Resources:  
for adult  
reading  
and writing  
groups

### Comparison

Compare two of the poems, in terms of their content and form.

What are the main differences between them?

What are the main similarities (if any) between them?

Which of the two poems do you prefer? Why?

### Discussion & Research

Make a list of any names local to you that are related to water.

Think about the names of

- ponds
- burns
- rivers
- lochs
- canals

Discuss the way water features in your everyday life.

You could try to think of all the ways in which you have encountered water in the past 24 hours, for example

- in the home – drinking, washing, cleaning, cooking, and so on
- outwith the home – watering the garden, washing the car, being out in rain, avoiding puddles, swimming in a pool, and so on
- in the landscape – crossing a bridge, walking by a river, fishing, and so on

The Scottish Water website has more information on how to use water wisely in and around your home.

Visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/savewater](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/savewater)

### Creative Activity

Use the names, and the 'water in everyday life' ideas, you've come up with, in your own poems.

You could include one of the names or ideas in

- a haiku including one of the names
- an acrostic or mesostic poem featuring one of the names

**Continued >**

3.

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY  
FOR ADULT READING AND WRITING GROUPS



# National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

## 'Water'



Teaching  
Resources:  
for adult  
reading  
and writing  
groups

You could use some or all of the names or ideas in

- a 'days of the week' poem, with each line or stanza featuring one day of the week plus one of the names or ideas
- a list poem, with each line including one name or idea
- an alphabet poem – your own A to Z of water
- a 'day in the life' poem, outlining how water comes into someone's life over the course of a day

**There are writing activities related to the individual poems in the Teachers' Resources, as follows:**

Maoilios Caimbeul, 'Rudan a nì uisge' & Jackie Kay, 'Think of a flood'

Write a poem about the way you use water.

Thomas A. Clark, 'coire fhionn lochan'

Write a poem naming different lochs in Scotland;  
write a poem about a particular loch you know.

George Campbell Hay, 'Seeker, Reaper'

Write a poem about a journey, by sea or by land.

Diana Hendry, 'What Is the Pond Doing?'

Write about a pond at different times of the year;  
write a poem answering the question about a different type of water, e.g. 'What Is the Waterfall Doing?'

Kathleen Jamie, 'The Whale-watcher'

Write a poem based on observation of a wild creature.

Kapka Kassabova, 'The Travel Guide to the Country of Your Birth'

Write a 'travel guide' poem about Scotland.

Don Paterson, 'Rain'

Write a poem imagining someone preparing for a flood.

4.

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY  
FOR ADULT READING AND WRITING GROUPS



# National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

## 'Water'



Teaching  
Resources:  
for adult  
reading  
and writing  
groups

### Further Reading and Links

For books and websites related to the individual poets, see the relevant teachers' resource at

[www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/learn/teachers/national-poetry-day-teachers](http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/learn/teachers/national-poetry-day-teachers)

### Books

Davidson, Robert (ed.): *After the Watergaw: a collection of new poetry from Scotland inspired by water* (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1998)

Finlay, Alec (ed.): *Green Waters: An Anthology of Boats & Voyages* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998)

Lawrie, Alistair; Matthews, Hellen; Ritchie, Douglas (eds.): *Glimmer of cold brine: a Scottish sea anthology* (Aberdeen : Aberdeen UP, 1988)

### Websites

[www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk)

by Ken Cockburn

[www.kencockburn.co.uk](http://www.kencockburn.co.uk)

June 2013

5.  
SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY  
FOR ADULT READING AND WRITING GROUPS



[www.facebook.com/scottishpoetrylibrary](http://www.facebook.com/scottishpoetrylibrary)



@ByLeavesWeLive

NPD poem posters, teaching resources & films:

[www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

Explore Scottish Water's education materials:

[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

Supported by:



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

In partnership:

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY

By leaves we live



Scottish  
Water  
Always serving Scotland