

2: SINGLE POET COLLECTIONS

Reading a collection by a single poet – some questions you might ask:

What are the preoccupations of the poet?

What are the poems about?

When were they written?

Can you detect any themes running through the poems?

What do you know about the poet?

Does knowing a poet's biographical details assist you when reading the work?

How does this volume sit in the context of the poet's other volumes of poetry?

Is this a first collection? A posthumous one? A prize-winning one?

How has the collection been arranged?

Is there any significance to the order of the poems?

Are there any poems that you feel are pivotal ones in the collection?

Why has the title been chosen? Does it have any significance?

What is the importance of any epigrams or quotations included by the poet?

How would you describe the poet's style or way of writing?

Does the poet have a distinctive use of language or form?

How do the poems look on the page? How do they sound when read aloud?

How does the poet use rhyme, punctuation, line breaks?

What sort of words does the poet use and how are they arranged?

What makes work by this poet different to that of another poet?

What is your intellectual or emotional response to the poems?

Were there poems that you found difficult to understand or relate to? Why do you think this was?

How did you read the collection?

If you liked the collection, note some of the reasons. Equally, if you didn't like it, why was this?

Which poems stand out for you as a reader?

Are there any disappointing poems in the collection?

Which are the most memorable for you? Why?

What makes a good single collection?

What will you take away from reading this collection?

Will you read more by this poet?

What does this collection make you want to read next?

