

1: POETRY ANTHOLOGIES

Reading a poetry anthology – some questions you might ask:

How did you read it?

Did you enjoy the reading experience?

Did you start at the beginning and work through to the end, or did you dip in at random?

Why did you read it the way that you did? How accessible was it?

How have the poems been laid out on the page? How does this impact on the reading experience?

Which poems stand out for you? Why?

What did you discover?

Who has edited the anthology?

Is there an introduction? Does the editor explain their approach to selection?

Is there a stated motivation behind the anthology? Why was it published?

What did the editor discover while editing the anthology?

How has the anthology been structured?

What sort of chapter headings have been chosen? Why?

How have the poems been ordered? How coherent or pleasing is the arrangement?

What is the coverage of the anthology?

What time periods does it span?

Do poems from previous centuries sit comfortably alongside contemporary poems?

What is the geographical spread?

What forms of poetry have been included?

Which poets or poems are included? Why? Which poets or poems are not included?

Does it attempt to be a comprehensive or impartial survey of its subject matter?

Can you detect the editor's own taste?

Do you feel that the anthology is successful in representing its theme?

What types of poem have been included? Are there any surprises?

Does the anthology provide fresh insight into its topic?

What interesting points arise from the chosen juxtaposition of the poems?

What are its weaknesses? How would you improve it?

What is the purpose of a poetry anthology?

Why are they published? Why do we read them?

What problems are there with anthologies?

What makes a good anthology?

