

## Absurdist Poetry

Directions: Each of these modern poets' grapple with some of the same issues as Hamlet. After we read each poem and briefly discuss it, individually identify a conflict each deal with and write a thematic statement that includes the speaker's philosophical response to it.

Thematic Topic (Conflict):

Thematic Statement:

Thesis Statement:

Connection to Works Read this Year:

## Don't Let That Horse . . .

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

Don't let that horse  
eat that violin

cried Chagall's mother

But he  
kept right on  
painting

And became famous

And kept on painting

The Horse With Violin In Mouth

And when he finally finished it  
he jumped up upon the horse

and rode away  
waving the violin

And then with a low bow gave it  
to the first naked nude he ran across

And there were no strings  
attached

## Polonius

Miroslav Holub

Behind every arras  
he does his duty  
unswervingly.  
Walls are his ears,  
keyholes his eyes.

He slinks up the stairs,  
oozes from the ceiling,  
floats through the door  
ready to give evidence,  
prove what is proven,  
stab with a needle  
or pin on an order.

His poems always rhyme,  
his brush is dipped in honey,  
his music flutes from marzipan and  
cane.

You buy him  
by weight, boneless,  
a pound of wax flesh,  
a pound of mousy philosophy,  
a pound of jellied flunkey.

And when he's sold out a  
nd the left-overs wrapped  
in a tasseled obituary,  
a paranoid funeral notice.

And when the spore-creating mould  
of memory covers him over,  
when he falls  
arse first to the stars,  
the whole continent will be lighter,  
earth's axis straighten up  
and in night's thunderous arena  
a bird will chirp in gratitude.

## The End of the World

Archibald MacLeish

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot  
The armless ambidextrian was lighting  
A match between his great  
and second toe And Ralph the  
lion was engaged in biting  
The neck of Madame Sossman  
while the drum Pointed, and  
Teeny was about to cough  
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by  
the thumb- Quite unexpectedly  
the top blew off.

And there, there overhead, there,  
there, hung over Those thousands of  
white faces, those dazed eyes, There  
in the starless dark, the poise, the  
hover, There with vast wings across  
the canceled skies, There in the  
sudden blackness, the black pall  
Of nothing, nothing, nothing-nothing at all.

Structural Analysis: Chunk each of the three poems by shifts. You may use the list below to look for shifts. Complete a “Says/Does/How” chart for each. After you finish, reflect on how the structure of the poem creates meaning. Revise your initial thesis statement. Choose one of the three poems and write an essay explaining your interpretation. Remember that your essay should have a strong thesis, claims that develop the thesis, sufficient evidence to support your claims, and commentary that explains the connection between your claims and evidence. Finally, your essays must show complex thinking to earn the sophistication point. Consider placing your interpretation in a broader context, offering alternative interpretations, or creating analogies to illustrate abstract ideas.

<b>Says</b>	<b>Does</b>	<b>How</b>
Paraphrase and summarize each chunk.	Determine the FUNCTION of each chunk.	Identify Literary Devices and ANALYZE their FUNCTION in creating meaning.

**Identifying Shifts:**

**Setting**

**Narrative Voice**

**Paragraphing**

**Punctuation**

**Syntactical Patterns**

**Description vs. Action vs. Dialogue**

**Levels of Language**

**Tone**

**Repetition**

**Time (flashback, flash forward, etc.)**

**Style**

**Pacing**

**Pronouns**