Carol Ann Duffy: Mean Time

The Captain of the 1964 Top of the Form Team

1. What kind of childhood did the speaker of this poem have?
2. What kind of adult life does the speaker of this poem have?
3. What does the speaker of the poem feel about his childhood and adult life?
4. What is the importance of time and memory in this poem?

The Good Teachers

1. What has provided the inspiration for this poem?
2. What impression do you get of the speaker’s childhood?
3. Comment on the ideas and attitudes in the final stanza. Is there a change of tone here?

Welltread

1. What kind of person is Welltread? Discuss the speaker of the poem’s encounter with him.
2. Comment on the following words or phrases:
   
   ‘the Head’s face was a fist.’
   ‘Yes, I’ve got him.’
   ‘He meant well. They all did then.’
   ‘stalked’
   ‘My socks dissolved’
   ‘The memory brings me to my feet/ as a foul would.’
   ‘then hurt himself more than he hurt me’

A. Make a list of similarities and differences between these poems. Consider language, tone, theme and feelings.

B. What interests you about the way Duffy presents childhood in these poems?