But These Things Also

1. What is the poem about?

2. Is there a rhyme scheme and/or metre pattern? What effects are created?

3. Traditionally what does spring symbolise?

4. What is the effect of starting the poem on the word ‘but’? What effect does this create?

5. What is the effect of the dash on line one of the poem?

6. Why are spring and winter capitalised?

7. What is the impact of the grass being ‘greyer now’ than it was in winter? What point is Thomas making about the effects of ‘winter’?

8. What colour is repeated in the descriptions in stanza two? Why is this colour significant? What associations does it have?

9. Why is stanza two not a traditional description of spring?

10. Why does Thomas say that the items in stanza two are significant? What does man mistake them for? Why does this add to the poignancy of the items?

11. What is the effect of ‘violets’ being the signs of spring? What does the colour ‘violet’ symbolise?

12. On lines 11 and 12 the word ‘Winter’ is personified and repeated. What is the effect of this?

13. On line 12 Thomas uses a metaphor of ‘debt’ to describe what man and nature has been reduced to. What does this metaphor imply?

14. The ‘North’ could refer to the north wind. Are there any alternative interpretations you can think of to explain what the ‘north’ may be referring to?

15. What is the effect of the ‘startling flocks’ ‘chattering on and on’? What does it imply about the effects of winter?
Comprehension questions

16. The final line juxtaposes the hopefulness of spring’s arrival with the fear of winter not leaving. What effect does this create? What might this be symbolising?

17. There is only one full stop at the end of the poem. Why is this? What effect does it have?

18. Look at the other caesuras used in the poem. Are there any others that have been used to create specific effects?

19. Are there any occasions when enjambment has been used effectively in the poem?

20. What other poems does this one link to?

21. What are the main themes that are explored?
Melancholy

1. What is the effect of the title of the poem? What does it suggest about the content? How does this link to other poems in the collection?

2. Is there a rhyme scheme or metre pattern? What is the effect of this?

3. What is the effect created by the repetition in line one?

4. How does personifying the weather conditions with the verb ‘raved’ affect our understanding of the narrator’s feelings? What is this an example of?

5. What is the impact of the word ‘endlessly’?

6. What does ‘wrought magic’ imply about the power of the weather?

7. How have the weather conditions (and therefore nature) impacted the narrator’s feelings about human company?

8. What is the effect of repetition on line four?

9. On line six and seven the narrator implies that he doesn’t know what is causing the melancholy. What is the effect of this? How could we link this to the context?

10. What is the impact of the juxtaposition of ‘despair’ and ‘sweetness’? What is this implying about both nature and the human soul?

11. What is the ‘wild air’ symbolising?

12. On lines nine and ten the natural surroundings are described. What feeling or atmosphere is created by these descriptions? How does this link or contrast to the subject matter of the poem? (A dulcimer is a stringed instrument).

13. Find an example of sibilance on these lines. How does this add to the effect?
14. What is the effect of the simile on line 11? What does it tell us about the narrator’s memories of the events? How does this link to other poems in the collection?

15. Why is the word ‘Rumours’ significant here?

16. What is the impact of the word ‘touched’ on the final line? What does it imply?

17. What is the effect of the listing pattern on line 12, ‘my friends, my foes, or me’? Also, comment on the repeated personal pronoun use here. What effect does this create?

18. What links can be made between this poem and the context?

19. What are the main themes that are explored in this poem?

20. What other poems in the collection can this one be linked to?
March

1. What is the poem about? Is it a positive or a negative poem?

2. Who is the narrator?

3. Is there a rhyme scheme? What effect does this create?

4. Is there a metre pattern? What effect does this create?

5. What is the effect of the poem starting with the word: ‘Now’?

6. Look at the changes of tense in the poem. What does this suggest? What effect does this have? Can you explain why Thomas chose to do this?

7. What could spring be a metaphor for?

8. Identify all the examples of contrast and oxymoron in the second stanza. What effect does this create?

9. What is the overall emotion that is created in stanza two?

10. Examine the use of personification in stanza two. What examples can you identify? What effects does this create?

11. What might the lost wind be a metaphor for? How can we link this to the context of Thomas as a soldier poet?

12. What is the effect of the rhetorical question at the beginning of stanza three?

13. Look at the repeated position of the word ‘primroses’. What might be the reason for this repeated image? What impact does it have? Think about the colour of primroses.

14. Look at the listing pattern of the weather types at the beginning of stanza three. What do you notice about the order of the words? What is the impact of the listing pattern and caesura use here?
Comprehension questions

15. What is the effect of the simple sentence on line 18?

16. What do you notice about the places listed for where the birds sit (lines 18-19)? Look at alliteration and also positions of the perches. What effect is created? How does this create a sense of contrast to the tone of the poem?

17. What is the impact of the reference to fighting on line 20? Try to link it to context.

18. Count how many references are made to singing. What effect does this create?

19. What might ‘unwilling hoard of song’ mean?

20. Look at the contrast between ‘sang or screamed’. What effect does this aural imagery have? What point is Thomas trying to make?

21. Find an example where there is a connection between man and nature. What is the effect of this?

22. Examine the use of sibilance at the end of the poem. What effect does this create?

23. ‘silence / Stained’: look at the juxtaposition of aural and visual imagery here. What impact does it have?

24. Silence is personified at the end of the poem. What does the silence symbolise?

25. There is a lot of repetition at the end of the poem that links back to the start. What does this imply? What point is Thomas making?
Comprehension questions

**Old Man**

1. What is the poem about?

2. Who is the narrator?

3. Is there a rhyme scheme? What effect does this create?

4. Is there a metre pattern? What effect does this create?

5. The opening verse explores the two different names for a plant. What point is he making about the names?

6. Lines three and four provide factual information about the plant. What is the tone of this description - what does it imply about the narrator’s feelings about the plant?

7. In the final four lines of stanza one, Thomas comes back to the names given to the plant. What point is he making here? How do these lines suggest Thomas has a more personal attachment to the plant than lines three and four?

8. What is the impact of the verb ‘clings’?

9. The child referred to in stanza two links back to a memory from Thomas’ past. Examine the use of tense in this stanza - what effect does this have on our reading of the poem?

10. Examine the use of alliteration and sibilance in the first half of stanza two. What effect is created?

11. What is the effect of the girl running off juxtaposed to the stillness of the bush?

12. Look at the description of the memories linked to the bitter scent. How does this imagery differ from the description of the plant in stanza one?

13. How do the narrator’s and the child’s experience of the plant differ?

14. What effect does the narrator’s mirroring of the girl’s behaviour have? What does he want to achieve? (Think about the themes of time, memory and change).

15. The words ‘bitter’ and ‘sniff’ are repeated here. What effect does this create?
Comprehension questions

16. What is the key metaphor for? What effect does this metaphor create?

17. What is the effect of the repeated word ‘nothing’?

18. What effect is created by many senses responding to ‘nothing’?

19. Look at the repetition of ‘no’ and ‘nor’ at the end of the poem. What is the effect of this?

20. Look at the repeated memory described here and in stanza two. What differences are there in the description of the memory? Why is this significant?

21. What characters are described here compared with earlier in the poem? What does this imply?

22. What is the final line a metaphor for?

23. How does the title enhance our understanding of the poem?

24. What is the significance of the avenue being ‘nameless’?