Look at the picture, 'Woman Ironing', painted by Degas (you can access the Walker Art Gallery at www.nmgm.org.uk/walker/ and then do a search or use this direct link: http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/brief_enc/graphics/degasbig.jpg).

In pairs or small groups discuss the following:

- what interests you about this painting?
- is there anything unusual about the way the woman has been pictured?

Imagine you are the woman in the picture. Write a short speech explaining how you feel about the way you have been represented in the painting.

If you could speak to Degas about the painting what would you say? In pairs, role play a conversation between Degas and the woman from the picture.

1. What does Fanthorpe think would be a more appropriate title for this painting and why?

2. How does Fanthorpe imagine the experience of being painted was different from the woman's expectations?

3. Look back at the painting. Can you explain the comment about the woman's right shoulder in the second stanza?

4. How does Degas treat the woman ironing according to the poem?

5. What does the woman think about how she has been represented in the painting and why does she find it difficult to express her feelings to Degas?

6. What is revealed about Degas' aims for the painting in the last stanza?

7. Discuss the language and tone of the poem.