# **Dessa Shapiro, period 5, 8/4/22**

# **Analysis of poetry**

# The History Teacher

Trying to protect his students’ innocence

he told them the Ice Age was really just

the Chilly Age, a period of a million years

when everyone had to wear sweaters.

And the Stone Age became the Gravel Age,

named after the long driveways of the time.

The Spanish Inquisition was nothing more

than an outbreak of questions such as

“How far is it from here to Madrid?”

“What do you call the matador’s hat?”

The War of the Roses took place in a garden,

and the Enola Gay dropped one tiny atom on Japan.

The children would leave his classroom

for the playground to torment the weak

and the smart,

mussing up their hair and breaking their glasses,

while he gathered up his notes and walked home

past flower beds and white picket fences,

wondering if they would believe that soldiers

in the Boer War told long, rambling stories

designed to make the enemy nod off.

~Billy Collins

**Analysis**:

Images:

1. a superficial children's classroom with pictures of cartoon flowers on the wall
2. students listening in a class, sitting behind their desks, hands raised excitedly, smiles on their faces.
3. A white painted school building with manicured greenery and a sterile feel.

Language:

1. Uses comparison and parallelism to show comparison
2. A switch in language from talking about the method to the result/ directed from history to the present

**What is this poem about:**

This poem is about a history teacher who teaches tragic historical events in an innocent way. Showing how that leads to kids “tormenting the weak”

**What is this poem means/what it’s really *about*:**

Ignorance about the past can lead to repetition. If teachers and educators filter the cruelty and consequences of reality from their students, they take away their ability to learn from humanity. If the kids are not traumatized they can't grow to know not to traumatize and abuse others, because they do not know the results and possible consequences of hate, war, and belief.

Inoccence can lead to cruelty