

1 Walt Whitman

- 1855 Whitman wrote Leaves of Grass
- Sent a copy to Emerson, who thought extremely highly of it.
- Emerson said "I greet you at the beginning of a great career."
- Optimism, vitality, freedom of expression, love of nature show through in his poems. Much of this can be associated with Transcendentalism and Romanticism.
- Introduced free verse to American poetry.

2 Terms

Free Verse: Poetry that does not conform to a consistent rhyme scheme or meter.

Catalog: A list of things, people, or events.

Vignette: A brief literary description or dramatic sketch.

Cadence: The rise and fall of the words as they are spoken.

Dramatic Monologue: A poem in which the character speaks to one or more listeners.

Anaphora: Repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive lines, clauses, or sentences.

3 I Can Hear America Singing

- Each person in the poem is singing, and expresses their own individuality, "what belongs to him or her," and nothing else. In this poem and this catalog of people doing work. As they work during the day they sing their song. People party after they work.
- Tone in this poem is very optimistic, has a positive outlook on America.

4 Song of Myself

- The opening poem to Whitman's book, and Whitman is the first person speaker, sounding like an observant speaker. Speaks to the reader.
- Announces the poem's topic in the first line, and announces that everything belonging to him belongs to the reader implying that we are all connected and one. Very much an opening poem.
- Answers 3 questions: Who the speaker is, What his intentions are, How he will compose his song of self-celebration.
- First Question: The speaker is Whitman. He is 37, in "Perfect health," is born "here" meaning in America, of parents also born in America. Their parents were also Americans.
- Ends by speaking of his own writing, says he is writing poetry and has intentions to get his point across in his poetry, and will hold creeds and schools in abeyance, which means he will put aside these specific ways of doing things. He is already doing this by instead of writing in some form of verse he uses free verse. Says he will use nature and energy as inspiration in the last line.

- Catalogue of Grass, 6 begins with a child asking what the grass is, then goes on to describe it with several metaphors, saying it may be the handkerchief of the Lord, a child, the uncut hair of graves, or a hieroglyphic.
- Uses parallelism and repetition. In the extended metaphor of the hair of graves, he basically includes all people.
- Says that death is not a permanent thing, that people should not fear death, and that life goes on forever somewhere in the universe. In this way it is similar to *Thanatopsis*
- Catalogue of Death Return in death to nature, return to Earth in death.
- Uses imagery to discuss the diffusion of the self into nature, speaks of the fact his message and his spirit will live on after he dies.

5 American Realism

- By mid-1800s the north was based on manufacture and commerce, while the South remained dependent on slaves and agriculture. States had to start facing the issue of rights of individual states within a Democratic Union. Abolitionists became more and more vocal with regards to slavery.
- The growth of cities and doubling of America's population through immigration from abroad both occurred during this period. The Liberator and Uncle Tom's Cabin are written and enjoy a popularity.
- In 1860, honest Abraham Lincoln becomes the 16th president of these United States. In 1861, the Civil War begins, which lasts until the surrender at Appomattox in 1865.
- Following the Civil War, America had some pretty significant issues. The South had to go through Reconstruction, which took a while and did less than it wanted to. After the war the trans-continental railroad, the telephone, the lightbulb, and the horseless carriage all see invention. Well, technically the railroad itself was invented long before, but the one across the continent was implemented then.
- Whitman's free verse is a serious contribution of the time.

Realism: A literary movement producing literature which depicts life as it is actually lived.

Regionalism: A literary movement that focused on the special atmosphere or local color of a particular area.

Local Color: The use of specific details describing the dialect, dress, customs, and scenery associated with a particular region or section of the country.

Naturalism: A literary movement portraying people caught within forces of nature and society beyond their understanding or control.

6 Abraham Lincoln

- 1809-1865, Four Score and Seven Years Ago...
- Born in a log cabin in Kentucky in 1809, grew up in a poor family in Indiana. Had almost no formal schooling, instead educated himself via reading. In 1830, moved to Illinois and became interested in politics.
- Believed that as president one of his chief duties was preservation of the Union, dreamt that the nation be reunited. The war was won, and was assassinated by Booth in the Ford Theatre 5 days later.

- Gettysburg Address delivered in November, at the dedication of the National Soldiers' Cemetery at the Gettysburg battlefield. Lincoln has a style, and uses repetition.
- Speech was a rally around the idea of winning the war. Structure in 3 parts: What has led to the scenario, what cannot be done, and what must be done. Past/Present/Future. At the start of the speech, talks of the birth of the nation. Speaks about the people who have died, and of a possible rebirth for the nation. A new birth of freedom and a devotion to the principles for which the soldiers died.
- Uses formal diction, rhythm, and is very eloquent. Uses parallelism and repetition as a means of inspiration. Speech is heavily emphasized by a lot of its aspects. Definitely speaks to the sense of unity between Lincoln and the people gathered.
- The use of the word "dedicate" through the speech

7 Frederick Douglass

- "You will see how a man was made a slave, you will see how a slave was made a man."
- Born into slavery in the Auld house in Baltimore, where he learned to read. On his second attempt to escape in 1838, he succeeded and was free. Published autobiographies, and was a powerful abolitionist speaker. Founded The North Star, an abolitionist newspaper. Was influential in the war and was even an advisor to Lincoln. Got sent to a plantation and it was decided that his spirit needed to be broken. Covey, renowned for being a slave breaker, is kind of a dick. Douglass describes the first 6 months of his stay with Covey. Douglass admits that Covey succeeded in breaking him. The first 6 months were apparently the worst.
- Douglass goes back to Master Thomas's, and has a conversation with him. This shows perseverance. Thomas listens to him,

8 An Occurrence at Owl Creek

- Ambrose Bierce, author of this work, fought in the civil war, moved to San Francisco and became a successful journalist. Became known for writing satirical stories. Is now primarily known for short stories. Also wrote a satirical novel, poems, and essays, apparently. Deeply affected by the glorification of war and its wastefulness. At 71 years old, went to report on the Mexican Revolution, and never was seen again.
- The third part of the story is not real, definitely. Story opens with description of soldiers, spectators, lieutenant at the right end of the line. "Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him."
- Narrator then draws focus to the man being hanged. A planter, about 35, owns slaves, has a family, and supports secession. While we do not know what he did, we know he was no "vulgar assassin."
- Narration shifts to limited omniscience. Looks down and sees madly swirling stream, but driftwood in the stream is moving pretty slowly. This is strange.
- Watch is symbolic. There is an indication here that things aren't what they seem to be. Ticking of his watch bothers him much, does not enjoy anticipating death. Sound is called the tolling of a deathknell, and as his fear increases he perceives them more strongly. Story goes to a flashback.
- Man is ardently devoted to the Southern cause, but cannot fight with the army. Wants to do something to be a part of it. Is a civilian who is at heart a soldier. Encounters a man who seems to be a confederate soldier. He is being hanged because of the driftwood thing.

- Part II goes back to objective.
- Part III opens, he loses consciousness and is as one already dead. Feels himself suffocating. We come to know the rope is broken and he is fallen into the stream. He thinks to himself that being hanged and drowned is not so bad, but being shot would be unfair.
- Many details of the third part are unrealistic, for example the fact Farquahr is able to sense things far more clearly than he should be hearing. This especially applies to sounds, which he hears with an amazing degree of clarity. He hears fish sliding through the water. Too much detail is visible, he has superhuman strength, things that can't happen keep happening. Finds his neck horribly swollen and in pain.

9 Stephen Crane

- War is Kind and all that.
- Naturalism plays a role, portrayal of Fred Collins is naturalistic, he is an ordinary character who speaks in the dialect of the time, and shows that people's lives are affected by natural and social forces.
- Collins's physical needs take precedence over other concerns, proving that some force other than his will is at work in the story.
- Story implies that heroic behavior, as it is a mystery, is not easy to define. Crane employs a lot of irony in the story, often involving the chaos and brutality of war, which become ironic when contrasted with certain situations in the story. Final irony, at the end of the story, is that after all of his effort the water is wasted.
- This brings it back to naturalism, and brings focus to the futility of human effort to control some events.
- Uncertainty lies behind much of human behavior. Heroism is elusive and often beyond our understanding, but ordinary people have the ability to reach beyond themselves and act heroically.

10 Kate Chopin

- Began writing in St. Louis, MO. Wrote short stories, concerning the lives of the French Creoles in Louisiana. Wrote *The Awakening*, which was met by hostility in the Victorian American time period, and contained themes of the repression women were facing.
- Story takes place at the turn of the century, women were faced with great amounts of limitation.
- *The Story of an Hour* covers issues of feeling free, living as one's own person and not being controlled by others, and other themes of being glad your husband is dead.
- Main character of the story has a heart problem, did not hear the death of her husband with disbelief but instead wept and went to her room alone. Open window symbolic of a new beginning, of a new freedom. Sees different things happening outside, and feels new.
- Whispers the words "free, free, free."
- Sometimes loved her husband, but felt repressed. She died of heart disease, of "joy that kills."
- She was finally free of her husband, but as fate would have it he was actually not dead and she dies. Technically frees her anyway.

- Themes of relativity of time, that things are not always as they seem, and the irony of fate are all developed in the story. Is an example of realism depicted through the ordinary individual's reaction to a normal event.