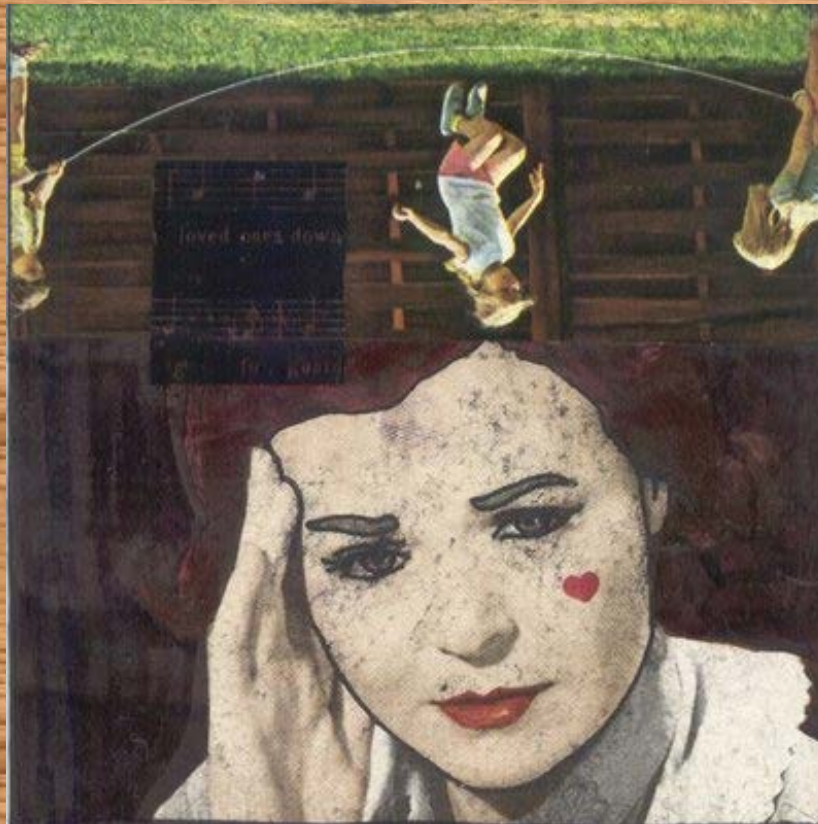


Poem/Song Sample Project

Theme: Nostalgia



Essential Questions

- **Why does the past often seem better than today?**
- **How can our memories of the past help us to improve our present and future?**

Nostalgia Goggles - Specifications



The Imagery of Nostalgia: Matthews vs. Thomas

Thesis: Unlike Matthews' straight-forward lyrics yearning for earlier days, Thomas' poem leaves readers with a more profound notion: the paradox that, even at birth, we are living and dying simultaneously, singing in our "chains like the sea."

Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson: you find the present tense, but the past perfect.

SONG: [Old Dirt Hill](#)

Dave Matthews' Literary Techniques:

-Refrain/Repetition

-Imagery/Symbolism

-Alliteration

-Tone

David John "Dave" Matthews (born January 9, 1967) is a [South African-American](#) musician and [actor](#). He is best known as the [lead vocalist](#), [songwriter](#), and [guitarist](#) for the [Dave Matthews Band](#). His father died from lung cancer in 1977. Biographer Nevin Martell argues that Dave's father's death may be an impetus for his "[carpe diem](#)" lyrics. Matthews' older sister, Anne, who lived in South Africa, was murdered by her husband, who subsequently committed suicide, on or around January 27 of that year. The event had a drastic effect on Matthews' outlook on life. This song was on "Stand" album, produced in 2005.

Dave Matthews
Old Dirt Hill

bring that beat back to me again,
come on take me back, can't catch me can't catch me
bring that beat back to me again
come on take me back, can't catch me can't catch me

i ride my bike down the old dirt hill,
first time without my training wheels.
first time i kissed you i lost my legs,
bring that beat back to me again.
screaming shouting louder innocence
days when all we did would never end

bring that beat back to me again
come on take me back, can't catch me can't catch me
bring that beat back to me again
come on take me back, can't catch me can't catch me

smoking under the railroad bridge
I used to ride my bike down that old dirt hill
the first time i kissed you i lost my legs
bring that beat back to me again
screaming shouting louder innocence
days when all we did would never end

screaming down that old dirt hill
bring that beat back to me again

that's when the days i remember seem so far away
that's what i miss oh take me back take me back to that beat again
smoking on the railroad bridge

bring that beat back to me again

- What are the images that are symbolic of childhood?
- How does Matthews use the refrain to evoke his message?
- What other literary techniques are used?
- What is the message?

POEM: Fern Hill

Dylan Thomas's Literary Techniques:

- Refrain/Repetition
- Imagery/Symbolism
- First Person/Past Tense
- Paradox
- Personification
- Shifting Tone

Dylan Marlais Thomas (27 October 1914 – 9 November 1953) was a [Welsh](#) poet and writer. His best-known works include the celebrated [villanelle](#) for his dying father, [Do not go gentle into that good night](#), and the rhapsodic lyrical poem [Fern Hill](#). Thomas's childhood was spent largely in Swansea, with regular summer trips to visit his maternal aunt's [Carmarthenshire](#) dairy farm. These trips provided inspiration for the poem [Fern Hill](#), published in 1946. Thomas was known to be a sickly child who shied away from school and preferred reading on his own and was considered too frail to fight in World War II, instead serving the war effort by writing scripts for the government. He suffered from [bronchitis](#) and [asthma](#).

Fern Hill

BY DYLAN THOMAS

Now as **I was young and easy under the apple boughs** NOTE SHIFTS IN THE SPEAKER

About the lilting house and **happy as the grass was green,**

The night above the dingle starry,

Time let me hail and climb

Golden in the heydays of his eyes,

And honoured among wagons **I was prince of the apple towns**

And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves

Trail with daisies and barley

Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as **I was green and carefree, famous** among the barns

About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,

In the **sun that is young once only,**

Time let me play and be

Golden in the mercy of his means,

And **green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman,** the calves

Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,

And the **sabbath rang slowly** TRANSITION/TIME'S EFFECT ON THE FARM

In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long **it was running, it was lovely, the hay**
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, **it was air**
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the **farm, like a wanderer white**
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day. WHAT HAPPENED?
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light BIBLICAL ALLUSION
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and **happy as the heart was long,**
 In the sun born over and over,
 I ran my heedless ways,
 My wishes raced through the house high hay
And **nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows**
In all his tuneful turning **so few** and such morning **songs**
 Before **the children green and golden**
 Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the **lamb white days,** that **time would take me**
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
 In the moon that is always rising,
 Nor that riding to sleep
 I should hear him fly with the high fields
And **wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.**
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means, HINDSIGHT
 Time held me green and dying
 Though I sang in my chains like the sea. PARADOX

- How does Thomas use the repetition of green and gold to evoke a theme and tone?
- What is Thomas' tone throughout the poem?
- Does it shift?
- How do the use of first person, past tense, and personification add to the theme and tone of the poem?
- What are the images Thomas paints for his reader? Are they at all similar to Dave Matthews'? How so?
- Which lyric is better at evoking the common theme of nostalgia? (this is an opinion question—but I'd like you to provide support of your answer)

Comparison: Matthews vs. Thomas

-carpe diem themes

-lyrics which recall childhood

-both authors drink a lot (Matthews has been in rehab and Thomas died from alcoholism).

Thesis: Unlike Matthews' straight-forward lyrics yearning for earlier days, Thomas' poem leaves readers with a more profound notion: the paradox that, even at birth, we are living and dying simultaneously, singing in our "chains like the sea."

Essential Question #1

Why does the past often seem better than today?

Both reliving an experience and recalling a glorified version of a complicated past make the past often seem better than today. Take, for instance, my adult trip to Disney World. I enjoy this trip due to the fact that I *still* like Space Mountain—the huge chocolate chip cookie-like projections on the ceiling, the red tube of light, the cranking noise the coaster makes just before it plunges quickly down into the spiraling ride. Yet, the ride also brings me back to the first time I rode on the pitch black Alpha track with my dad when I was five. When I have that flashback to my dad’s face beaming with pride since his daughter was brave enough to ride, I don’t remember the fact that my parents always fought on these Disney trips or the fact that I threw up right after the ride when a bee stung me. I just erase the bad parts and narrow down my five-year-old Disney experience to one amazing space ride, and this streamlining of the past combined with my current enjoyment of the coaster fuel the ride.

Essential Question #2

How can our memories of the past help us to improve our present and future?

Our inner dream worlds enliven our everyday lives. For instance, in *Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl (a holocaust survivor) uses images of his past life with his wife to nourish his mind, so that he can survive and even joke with a fellow prisoner about what their wives would say if they could see the men marching and digging. In other words, Frankl improves a bad situation with memories of a much better one. But there is another way that we can allow our daydreams to inform our current selves. Since our daydreams often spotlight a memory when someone else made us feel good about ourselves, these daydreams prove the power of our own every day interactions with others. Will your next comment or action provide mental inspiration for someone else in ten or twenty years from now? This potential certainly makes us more aware of the power of our own words and actions.

My Poem

Shattered glass has been on my mind these days,
Perhaps because of Kristallnacht, a Holocaust unit I just taught,
Or maybe because of the fall I envision over and over,
When my daughter fell, so far, so fast, and was caught
By god? The fates? Preventing such a disasterous shattering.
And my own life, once simply expanding in front of my eyes,
Now kaleidoscopes wildly beyond my control
Creating such lovely images, nostalgic patterns,
Palimpsests of a yesterday when I had not yet fallen
In love, in life, in loss