Words for Departure Study Guide

Words for Departure by Louise Bogan

Contents

Introduction

Louise Bogan's poem "Words for Departure" was published in her first book of poetry, *Body of This Death* (1923). In 1922, Bogan had spent six months in Vienna, immersing herself in her work and studying European poetry. When she returned from this period of study, she found a publisher, Robert M. McBride & Company of New York City and within months had published her first compilation of poems. The twenty-seven poems in this first collection of work often focus on romantic relationships and on sexual betrayal. This is true of "Words for Departure," as well, which, while offering advice for a departing lover, also reveals the depth of pain suffered at a lover's betrayal.

The poems in this first book reveal Bogan's study of classical lyrical poetry, with its emphasis on traditional themes. The author uses the classical lyrical motifs of love, time, nature, and rebirth in "Words for Departure" to suggest that all four of these themes are permanently interwoven when love is lost. Bogan studied the poetry of William Butler Yeats and was influenced by modern poetry, but she also adopted the ideas of English Renaissance poets such as John Donne, including some of the metaphysical poet's traditions.

"Words for Departure" was written only a few years after Bogan's husband died but, because the marriage was not a happy one, it is difficult to identify his death as a source for this poem. While Bogan used her poetry to tell stories, the narrative is never obvious and the source of the image not easily defined. Instead the reader must work at deciphering the meaning.

Many of the poems from *Body of This Death* were reprinted in Bogan's later books, though this is not true for "Words for Departure," which is contained only in this first collection. *Body of This Death* has been out of print for many years and as of 2004 was difficult to find; however, "Words for Departure" can be found online at some poetry Websites.

Author Biography

Louise Bogan was born August 11, 1897, in Livermore Falls, Maine. During her early childhood, the family moved frequently, although Bogan's education was not neglected during these moves. In 1910 Bogan enrolled in Boston's Girls' Latin School, where she studied Latin, Greek, and French, in addition to the more traditional high school subjects of mathematics, science, and history. While still in high school, Bogan began publishing her first poems, initially in her high school literary magazine, the *Jabberwock*, and later in the *Boston Evening Transcript*. In 1916, after her education at the Girls' Latin School was completed, Bogan enrolled at Boston University, but only studied there for a year. That same year, she married Curt Alexander, who was in the army. In 1917, the couple moved to New York City, and then Bogan's husband was transferred to Panama, where the couple's daughter Mathilde (Maidie) was born. Bogan was unhappy in Panama and with her marriage in general, and in 1918 she took her daughter and returned to her parents' home in Massachusetts. She briefly reconciled with her husband after the war ended but then left him again in 1919. Alexander died the following year, and Bogan used her army widow's pension to support her fledgling career as a writer in New York City.

In New York, Bogan quickly became active in the literary life of the city. She tried to make up for the lack of a formal education by reading, especially the works of early twentieth-century poets such as William Butler Yeats, whose work influenced her own. She used this time to develop her own writing skills, often publishing poems in literary journals such as *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* and the *Measure*.

By 1923, Bogan had a publisher for her first book of poems, *Body of This Death* (1923), from which the poem "Words for Departure" is taken. Many of the poems in this collection reflect themes of sexual betrayal, which is not surprising considering that Bogan's mother's frequent sexual infidelity occupied much of the author's childhood. After the publication of her first book, Bogan also began to write poetry reviews and criticism, particularly for the *New Yorker*, an endeavor that continued for thirty-eight years.

In 1925, Bogan married again, this time to poet Raymond Holden. The marriage allowed Bogan to reclaim Maidie from her parents' home, where the child had been living since 1919. The marriage, however, was unsuccessful and, by 1931, a severely depressed Bogan had entered the New York Neurological Institute, hoping to find a cure for the depression that plagued her for the rest of her life. Bogan and Holden were divorced in 1937, and she never married again.

During the next thirty years, Bogan continued to write and publish. Her autobiography *Journey around My Room: The Autobiography of Louise Bogan* was published posthumously in 1980. Bogan received many awards in her lifetime, including the John Reed Memorial Prize in 1930 and the Helen Haire Levinson Memorial Prize in 1937. In 1933 and 1937, Bogan was awarded Guggenheim fellowships. In 1944 she received a Library of Congress fellowship in American Letters, and in 1945 she was awarded the

Library of Congress Chair in Poetry, a position she held until 1946. Additional recognition quickly followed with the Harriet Monroe Poetry Award in 1948 and a National Institute of Arts and Letters grant in1951. In 1955, Bogan received the Bollingen Prize in poetry for *Collected Poems, 1923—1953* (1954). During the next several years, she continued to earn honors for her poetry, receiving an Academy of American Poets fellowship in 1958, a Brandeis University Creative Arts Award in poetry in 1961, and a National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1967. Bogan died February 4, 1970, in her New York apartment.

Plot Summary

Overview

Bogan's lyrical poem "Words for Departure" offers instructions for a departing lover, but the poem goes beyond simple leave-taking to create an image of love found and then lost. The poem is divided into three sections, each containing several stanzas. The first section is one of oppositions and takes place in the present tense. The second section is focused on memories, recalling the lover as he was in the past. The final section pushes the lover away and looks to the future. The poem itself is filled with ambiguities that reveal the pain the speaker feels at her lover's betrayal. In the end, although she instructs him on how a lover should leave, her own grief at this loss is captured in her inability to watch him leave.

Lines 1—5

The first line of Bogan's poem begins with the word "nothing," a word that is repeated several times in the first section of the poem. With the first line, the author also creates an opposition that dominates the entire poem. Initially the first line suggests a stagnant existence, when time stops and nothing is remembered and nothing is forgotten. The speaker would like time to stand still, but the poem quickly moves into real time, as images of the passing day reveal that she cannot hold back time. The author recalls the early morning world outside the lovers' room, with the noise of wagons moving on the pavement and the evidence of recent rain still on the windowsill. The use of "we awoke" reveals they are lovers who have shared this room during the night.

There is a world beyond their room, and it is this world that will intrude. The town exists just outside the window. Bogan creates images of the town in only a few words. The chimney pots that grace the rooflines are compared to trees, only this image is a "grotesque" caricature of nature in which birds must nestle among the roofs in manmade perches rather then those created by nature's hand. In this instance, pavement and buildings have replaced nature, defiling what nature has constructed. The word "grotesque" also refers to the narrator's individual world, which is in turmoil because the loved one will leave that day for another love. The loss of the lover is a distortion of the author's own world, an incongruity in her natural world, where love has been replaced by treachery.

Lines 6—11

The second stanza of the first section repeats the opening of the first stanza, with the repetition of the word "nothing" and the same opposition of ideas and lack of movement that opened the poem. The moment of separation is approaching, but the poet has not yet accepted the end of the love affair, and she cannot look beyond this moment to a future without her lover. All she sees at this moment is *nothing*. In the next lines Bogan's

focus shifts subtly from the lovers to the passage of time that marks their final hours together. The hours of the day are marked by "bells" that remind the speaker that only a few hours remain before the lover leaves her. The warm summer day begins to cool as evening approaches. While the first stanza noted the morning of their final day, the second stanza observes that time is continuing its unstoppable move toward the day's conclusion. The day wanes and the "streets" become "deserted." Soon the moon begins to light the dusk and the day is ending. The dark signals both the end of the day and the end of the relationship.

Lines 12—15

The last stanza of the first section develops a fuller picture of the lovers. While they were not described in the poem's opening lines, in these lines the lovers stand together, face-to-face, with hands clasped and foreheads touching. It is the moment of their parting. Once again the author uses *nothing* to describe this couple. Nothing remains of the love that once existed. In line 14 Bogan suggests that the woman never really possessed her partner's love and thus she cannot have lost what she has never had. In this moment of dissolution, she gains nothing and loses nothing, and in the final line of this section, she explains that he has not offered her the gift of love, nor has he denied his love for another. Initially it appears that in the nothingness of their love's finality, the lovers will part without words of love or recrimination. The speaker seems to accept that there is nothing that remains of the love they once knew, but the following sections of the poem reveal that she cannot walk away so easily.

Lines 16—18

The second section of the poem moves backward from the present tense of the first section to an image of the lovers' past. In lines 17 and 18 the narrator begins to reveal the depth of her attachment for her lover. He was not a brief moment in her life, a quick stop at an unfamiliar town. Her love for him was sure and steady and not a love, as she reminds the reader in line 18, from which she had fled. In these lines the author offers the first suggestion of the depth of pain with which she has been left. She was committed to loving him and did not deny him the fullness of her love. These lines also reveal a growing tone of bitterness that the poet is unable to mask.

Lines 19—23

In the final five lines of the second section of the poem, the author uses images from nature to explain the importance of the lover in her life. Lines 19 and 20 describe the newness of the relationship and the inexperience of the lover. Their initial time together was tentative, the hesitancy of new love described as "awkward as flesh." And yet how can flesh, nature's creation, be awkward? The tension created with the pairing of words such as "flesh" and "awkward" suggests the speaker is returning to the lovers' earliest days together, searching for signs of incompatibility that she might have missed.

Perhaps she missed warnings of what was to come? She describes her lover's initial touch as uncertain and as weightless as early morning frost or the dusting of ash that adds no weight and yet covers and obscures a surface. Both the frost and the ash continue the oppositions the author favors in this poem: one image is of clean white purity, while the other image is the remains of something annihilated. Ash, so easily stirred by wind, is grey; it is nature's response to the fire that destroys life, and it hides what might remain after the fire has been extinguished. The lover's touch, once so light and pure, was really something darker that hid the betrayal that lay below.

Line 21 continues this image of something hidden. The rind of fruit hides what is concealed within, but the image is incomplete, and the rind is not pealed away to reveal the fruit. The lover is without substance. There is nothing below the surface, no depth of feeling. The next image focuses on the purity of an apple. The speaker is all interior, all emotion. She has no outer rind to protect her and is instead open to all the emotions that flow from her. The two fruits continue the opposition noted elsewhere in the poem. The cliché about the fundamental differences between apples and oranges is a familiar one, but Bogan uses this old cliché in a new manner. In this case the rind of the orange is paired with the white-juiced interior of the apple to demonstrate that the lovers never belonged together. In the final line of the second section, the author compares the lovers to music that has been written but never completed. The music that would have given voice to the lyrics is missing, just as the lovers were unable to find completeness in their relationship. Now that their relationship is ending, their song together will never be completed; their story is left unfinished.

Lines 24—28

At the beginning of the third section, the speaker tells her lover that there will be no further recounting of the past. He is told to "Go from mine," the speaker's world, "to the other," the world of a new lover. She tells him to create a new life with a new lover, and yet there is ambivalence in these final words. This ambivalence is present in the opposition of images relayed in this section of the poem. Initially the lover is told to "Be together" with his new love, to "eat" and "dance," but the contrast appears with the inclusion of the word "despair" in this line. The lover will know contentment initially, but the time with the new love will not be without its grief. This idea is continued in line 27, when the author instructs the lover to "Sleep, be threatened, endure." The speaker reminds the lover that his sleep will also be coupled with discord, just as it was when they were together. He will "know the way of that," since the lover experienced those same emotions of unhappiness when he was with the speaker. Although the lover is moving on to someone new, the patterns of the old relationship will not be lost, and happiness will continue to be elusive for someone who is so easily dissatisfied with a lover. In these lines the tone of bitterness that earlier crept into the poem becomes more obvious. Although the speaker suggested in line 15 there would be no recrimination, the lover's betrayal and the pain it has caused linger near the surface, and she is unable to let him walk away without pointing out his weaknesses.

Lines 29—34

In these next four lines, the speaker looks ahead to the end of her lover's next relationship. She is sure he will treat his next lover the same way he treated her, and so she offers him advice on how to leave the new lover. When that relationship ends, he is told to "be insolent." He should be impertinent and disrespectful as he departs, but he should also not linger. As he cuts off the relationship, he should do so quickly, with a quick "strike." And he should not be too serious, but instead be "absurd," and yet he is also instructed to "be mad." The opposition of images that began this poem continues in the final lines. Contrasting phrases such as "be absurd" but "be mad" suggest that this is how he treated the poet when he was preparing to leave her. There was no logic or fairness in how her lover treated her. He was absurd, then angry, and then disrespectful. Since he treated her so badly, he should continue this behavior with his new love and "be insolent" but not "talk." These commands reveal the depth of her pain. She has been betrayed, and love neither ends simply and easily, nor ends without pain. She predicts that this new love will soon lose the "bloom" of happiness and end with silence, just as their love ended with a lover's silence. The reader never hears the word of the lover in these lines. He is silent, but the poet's accusations serve to tell his story.

In the final two lines of the poem, the speaker moves from the future and her lover's next relationship back into the present and the moment of leave-taking. She tells her lover to walk away into the dark; he should not need a lantern to light the way. Rather than illuminate his departure, the speaker prefers this leave-taking to occur at night. If she cannot see him actually leave, there can be "some uncertainty" about his departure. If he walks into the darkness and completely disappears, she need not ever see him actually leave. There will be no need to imagine him with his new love. In the final two lines of "Words for Departure" the speaker reveals the depth of her pain at her lover's betrayal. She has used the previous seven lines to chastise him and to predict his inability to find happiness, but as he leaves all that is forgotten as she tries to grasp the enormity of his leaving.

Themes

Beginning and Ending

In "Words for Departure," Bogan offers many contrasting images, but one important aspect of the poem is the duel image of the lovers beginning and ending their relationship. In her descriptions of the lovers' earliest time together, the speaker gives voice to memories that are now clouded with pain. In line 19 the speaker describes the hesitancy of a new relationship. In the beginning her lover was unsure of himself. She describes his ineptitude as "awkward as flesh." The analogy reveals one of the tensions in the poem. Awkwardness with a new lover is understandable, and the uncertainty of action that accompanies new love is to be expected, but the speaker couples it with the word "flesh," a word that denotes something that is natural. Flesh cannot be awkward, but as the speaker looks back to the beginning, she searches for hints that might have anticipated this loss. The pairing of these words in the same phrase suggests that perhaps the awkwardness of flesh should have warned her that they did not belong together. The end of the relation actually occurs in lines 12 and 13, even though he does not walk away until line 34. The emotional parting is depicted in the image of the lovers "Hand clasped hand, / Forehead still bowed to forehead." This is their last touch, and it is the last moment before the author is swept away by the pain of her lover's leave-taking. The speaker continues to recount their time together and to offer bitter words about how the relationship has ended, but it is this last touching that signals the end of love. In the final section of the poem, the speaker tells her lover, "you have learned from the beginning." With this phrase the speaker brings the beginning forward to the end, and the cycle of beginnings and endings is complete.

Grief

Bogan's poem is filled with images of grief at the loss of love's promise. She begins with the simple phrase, "Nothing was remembered, nothing forgotten." The speaker cannot bear to remember, nor can she possibly forget. The repetition of the word *nothing* describes the emptiness of her life as her lover prepares to leave her. She has not yet accepted that her lover is leaving, and she cannot yet look beyond it. Instead there is only nothing. In line 14 she acknowledges she never really possessed him. This realization offers little relief for her grief, and so in the next several lines she gives voice to her pain. She questions whether she missed signs that they did not belong together, and in moments of pain and irony she instructs him how to break-up with his next lover. The depth of her grief is captured in the final two lines of the poem, when the speaker instructs her lover to go in darkness. If he leaves without light, she will not actually see him leave, and hence there will be "some uncertainty about [his] departure." In these final lines it becomes clear that she cannot sustain the anger of the previous lines, and all she feels now is grief.

Light and Darkness

Bogan's poem begins with dawn, with the rain of the night still lingering on the windowsills and the chirping of early-morning birds outside. The lovers' day of parting begins in the light of morning. Traditionally dawn signals a new beginning, a rebirth. This dawn signals the end of one relationship and the beginning of the speaker's life without her lover. When the day ends and dusk begins to fall, the speaker begins to reflect on her time with her lover as she prepares for his departure. In this case darkness not only ends the day, it also ends their time together as a couple. She asks him to walk away in the dark. She wants no light to illuminate his going. Darkness signifies a conclusion, but for the speaker it also helps create an illusion that might sustain her for a few more hours.

Movement of Time

In "Words for Departure" the poet plays with time, slipping between present, past, and future tense. The poem opens in the present tense; it is the morning of the last day. Even though she would like to hold time static, the day marches on. She hears the bells ringing the time, "separated hour from hour." The heat of the summer wanes and the coolness of dusk approaches, and the day is nearly gone as the first section of the poem ends. In the second section, the author recalls the past. She reflects on the lovers' time together, remembering hints from time past that might have portended this ending. In the final section, she tells her lover to learn from the past, even as she looks to a future in which he will be as dissatisfied with his new lover as he was with the old one whom he leaves this day. At the end of the poem, the speaker reverts to present tense as she bids her lover to leave. In shifting time from present to past to future and back again to the present, the speaker uses manipulation of time to paint a complex picture of this final day with her lover. The poet adds a depth to the narrative that a straightforward chronological story would lack, and the reader is allowed to experience both the speaker's pain and the lover's duplicity in a series of images.

Nature

Lyric poetry uses nature to depict images of order and disorder. In Bogan's poem, the messiness of the break-up of this love affair is reflected in the images of nature that are present. The birds that scatter in line 4 settle in "chimneypots" that mirror "grotesque trees." Rather than find haven in a tree, the birds look to manmade perches. This reversal of nature is what the poet finds in the disorder of her own life. What she thought was the naturalness of love has now been revealed to be as false as the birds' perches. Initially the oranges and apples in lines 21 and 22 might suggest the perfection of nature that the poet thought analogous to the lovers, and yet on close examination, the orange is revealed as a rind with no center, while the apple contains a center with no covering. These fruits are imperfect examples of nature, just as her love affair was imperfect. Earlier the love seemed ideal, but now the speaker notices the differences and the disruptions in nature that had been hidden.

Rememberance

The center section of Bogan's poem is occupied with the speaker's remembrance of the lovers' past. In line 16 she recalls, "I have remembered you." These words reveal that she will not forget him. He was not a brief moment in her life, not "the town visited once." She loved him deeply and did not withhold herself. Rather than protect herself from love, she welcomed love and did not run from it. She was not "the road falling behind running feet." She stood still and embraced him in love. The speaker uses these memories to probe for reasons why their love did not last. She reflects on the lovers' time together and acknowledges their differences. In recalling these memories, the speaker is able to begin grieving for what is being lost.

Style

Analogy

Analogy is a common element of poetry, used to suggest a similarity between things that appear on the surface to be dissimilar. For example, the lover is "a rind" with no substance inside. The speaker, on the other hand, is the fruit of the apple, all emotion with no thick skin to protect her. The use of analogy in Bogan's poem is subtle, which means that the reader needs to read the poem carefully to understand all the analogies.

Imagery

Simply put, imagery refers to the images in a poem. The relationships between images can suggest important meanings in a poem, and with imagery, a poet uses language and specific words to create meaning. For instance, Bogan includes images from nature to illustrate the disruption in her natural world. She also includes an image of the lovers' parting, with hands clasped and foreheads touching, an image that reveals the depth of loss that shakes her being. The contrasting images Bogan includes help create tension in the poem and add to its complexity.

Lyric Poetry

Lyric poems are strongly associated with emotion, imagination, and a song-like resonance, especially when associated with an individual speaker or speakers. Lyric poetry emerged during the Archaic Age, around the eighth century b.c. The poems of this time period were shorter than the previous narrative poetry of Homer or the didactic poetry of Hesiod. Since lyric poetry is so individual and emotional in its content, it is by its very nature also subjective. Lyric poetry is also the most common form of poetry, especially since its attributes are common to many other forms of poetry. Bogan's poem combines many of the attributes of lyric poetry, with its emphasis on love and loss and on nature and chaos.

Metaphysical Poetry

Metaphysical poetry began in the seventeenth century as a revolt against the conventions of the Petrarchan poetry so popular in the Elizabethan period. Metaphysical poetry is notable for its use of psychological analysis of love, its depiction of the poet's complexity of thought, and its imagery of the disillusionment of love. The seventeenth-century poet John Donne is most often associated with metaphysical poetry. Bogan studied Donne's work carefully, and her poem "Words for Departure" contains effective images of disillusionment, as well as a psychological analysis of what went wrong in the love affair.

Narrative Poetry

A narrative poem is a poem that tells a story or recounts events. Bogan's poem tells the story of her lover's departure from her life. However, Bogan makes this structure her own by refusing to tell the story in a straight chronological form. Instead she shifts time in her narrative and creates tension and complexity in her story. The story ends with the poet's recognition that she cannot change what is happening. Her lover will leave in spite of her words and neither her love for him nor her anger at his actions will change what is happening.

Parallelism

Paralelism is a grammatical device that conveys equal importance of two or more ideas by using the same syntax for each idea. For example, Bogan uses parallelism to describe the emptiness she feels as her lover is preparing to leave her. In line 1 she explains, "Nothing was remembered, nothing forgotten." She again repeats this structure in line 6 with "Nothing was accepted, nothing looked beyond." Bogan returns to this structure in line 14 with "Nothing was lost, nothing possessed." All three lines have exactly the same structure. This use of parallelism focuses the reader's attention on these lines and on specific words and signifies that they are important elements of the poem.

Poetic Form

The word poem is generally assigned to mean a literary composition distinguished by emotion, imagination, and meaning. But the term *poem* may also fit certain designated formulas, such as a sonnet or a sestina, which are defined by a specific length and/or a particular rhyme scheme. A poem may also include divisions into stanzas, a sort of paragraph-like division of ideas, and may also include a specific number of stressed or unstressed syllables in each line. Bogan's poem is divided into separate sections, with each section also divided into stanzas of varying lengths. Every word in Bogan's poem suggests an image or idea, and nothing is wasted. Modern poetry has moved away from the strict formulas used by early poets, but even contemporary poets still strive for an impassioned response to their poems. Bogan studied the Renaissance lyric poets, and she is able to make effective use of traditional poetic forms.

Historical Context

The early 1920s was a period of clashing ideals and traditions, of contradictions and sometimes frightening possibilities. The end of World War I resulted in a *carpe diem* attitude, an eat-drink-and-be-merry view of the world. The loss of life from the war, followed by the flu epidemic of 1918, left many people frightened and unsure about the future. Many people just wanted to be happy and have fun after this terrible period in history. During this same time, women won the right to vote in 1920, after a seventy-two-year struggle. Although they often voted as the men in their lives instructed, winning the right to vote suggested to women that perhaps they were equal to men. And there were other changes afoot that would set women free from the household duties that consumed their time. Apartments were being built, and smaller apartments did not require much work to keep clean. The sale of canned and convenience foods was growing, and as a result, some of the drudgery of cooking was eliminated. Bakeries and commercial laundries opened. There were washing machines and irons to aid with cleaning, and many houses had telephones and radios. It was easier to keep in touch with the outside world. New inventions permeated every aspect of people's lives. Automobiles made transportation available to many people, who now used cars to journey beyond their towns, whereas in the past most people lived and died within only a few miles of their birthplace. The car also led to greater sexual freedom. In the past, few young men and women had the opportunity to be alone. Most young people lived with their parents, and cars offered a privacy not previously experienced.

By July 1920 leading newspapers were reporting the scandalous news that women's skirts were now at least nine inches off the ground. For the first time, women were showing their ankles. Over the next few months, skirt lengths continued to rise. Suddenly women were wearing thin, shapeless dresses that stopped well above the woman's shin-bone. Women were no longer strapped-in by corsets. Suddenly the softness of a woman's body was available to be touched. Women were also wearing cosmetics and cutting their hair and letting it hang loosely. The new hairstyles and clothing were easier to maintain. Women were also dancing, and it was not the ladylike waltz that had been considered so proper in the past. In the new dances, women were pressed close to their partners and no stiff corset separated the dancing pair. Moreover, young women were smoking in public and drinking, although the latter occurred somewhat more privately. Prohibition, after all, had supposedly outlawed drinking.

This youthful rebellion by young women did not go unnoticed. Parents were appalled, but most thought the descriptions that filled the newspapers were of other people's children. There were attempts to curtail women's freedom and return them to the repressive old days. Religious journals denounced the new kind of freer dancing as carnal, and parents were lectured from pulpits to take better control of their children, especially their daughters. Additional opposition to women's freedom came from leading women who proposed that a society be created to monitor women's clothing styles. Across the United States, local clergymen were asked to submit their ideas for the proper female dress. In several states, bills were proposed that would make wearing skirts more than three inches above the ankle a crime; in one state even two inches

above the ankle would be illegal. Bills were also introduced that would make the exposure of more than three inches of a woman's throat a crime.

The changes in women's clothing and behavior signaled huge changes in society. Women were demanding more independence, and not just from corsets, but from antiquated rules that repressed and defined women as chaste and pure and as destined only for marriage and motherhood. Bogan's poem "Words for Departure" depicts a woman being abandoned by her lover. There is no suggestion that the couple is married, although a divorce would still have been considered scandalous. This freedom for young women was every parent's nightmare, but it was independence that women craved. The early 1920s marks a time when women escaped from their traditional roles and sought the opportunity to express themselves, a freedom of expression evidenced in Bogan's poem.

Critical Overview

Bogan's poem "Words for Departure" was included in her first published collection of poems, *Body of This Death*. Although she was a young poet at the time of its publication, Bogan had already published poems in poetry magazines and so there was some notice paid in 1923 to this thin book of twenty-seven poems. As Martha Collins observes in her study of Bogan's work titled *Critical Essays on Louise Bogan*, critics in general found her first collection to be a "small book" filled with rather short poems. Collins states that "Bogan's strongest admirers have almost always been poets."

Perhaps Collins's observation helps explain the mixed reviews that greeted Bogan's first book. In a letter written March 1, 1924, and included in Ruth Limmer's collection of Bogan's personal letters (*What the Woman Lived: Selected Letters of Louise Bogan, 1920—1970*), Bogan mentions several unfavorable reviews. She writes, "*The Dial* certainly gave [*Body of This Death*] a rotten smack, didn't it?" Bogan also notes, "Johnny Weaver in the *Brooklyn Eagle* put me down as *very slight* and wanted to know why all the hosannas had been raised." Bogan then mentions a third critic, John Gould Fletcher, who "in *The Freeman* said my 'lack of thought' was painful." Bogan's attitude seems to be nonchalant about these negative reviews, however, perhaps because she has more confidence in her own work than did the critics.

Although Bogan did not highlight any positive reviews of *Body of This Death* in her letters of this period, there were reviews that praised the book's many strengths. Two of the first reviews of Bogan's early poetry are included in Collins's book. In a review originally published in the *Nation*, Mark Van Doren suggests that Bogan's poems "take effect directly upon the imagination." Van Doren acknowledges that Bogan's poems are not easily understood, but he observes, "Miss Bogan has always spoken with intensity and intelligent skill." He concludes his review with high praise, writing the book "may be a classic."

Collins also includes an essay originally contained in Llewellyn Jones's *First Impressions: Essays on Poetry, Criticism and Prose*. Jones writes of Bogan's first book that the poetry in this collection depicts the struggle "against all that stifles, diverts, and disarms life." According to Jones, Bogan's poems also portray the struggle "against the pettiness that haunts the footsteps of love." Jones compares Bogan's work to that of William Butler Yeats, whose work Bogan admired. Like Yeats, says Jones, Bogan "has not sacrificed beauty to . . . austerity." Jones finds Bogan "is not afraid to deck her beauty in imagery, natural or classical." It appears Jones had read earlier criticism of Bogan's work because the critic urges readers to "make allowances" for those poems that seem obscure to the reader, since the poet "is giving us subjective poetry distilled from what is evidently intense experience."

As Lee Upton notes in his essay "The Re-Making of a Poet: Louise Bogan," "whether poets are born or made, surely they are remade by their critics." While Bogan's first work may not have achieved overwhelming critical acclaim, she did eventually hold an important place in critical discussions of modern poetry.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Metzger has a doctorate in English Renaissance literature. Metzger teaches literature and drama at the University of New Mexico, where she is a lecturer in the University Honors Program. In this essay, Metzger explores the fractured depiction of self in Bogan's "Words for Departure," which she suggests can be read as an icon of the poet's own childhood experiences.

In composing poetry, Bogan used a variety of poetic forms, but the poems in *Body of This Death*, and the poem that is the subject of this essay, "Words for Departure," are lyric poems, often defined by their emotional response to the grief, chaos, and betrayal associated with love. Bogan writes in her autobiography *Journey around My Room* that lyric poetry is "the most intense, the most condensed, the most purified form of language," and thus it is to be expected that she would turn to lyric poetry to express the fabric of emotion that is rendered by the betrayal of love. Bogan was an intensely private person, who rarely revealed the personal details of her own life. The posthumous publication of her autobiography and letters opened her life to study and to the inevitable rereading of her poetry in a search for the connections between her poems and the events and people depicted in her autobiographical writings. As only one example of what might be constructed from an examination of these connections, Bogan's poem "Words for Departure" can be examined as illustrating an effort by Bogan to locate herself in her poems of betrayed love.

Many critics have cited Bogan's turbulent childhood, her mother's infidelity, and Bogan's first marriage as explanation of why Bogan's many poems in her first collection of poetry, *Body of This Death*, are so centered on betrayal. In her autobiography, Bogan recounts episodes of her life, always presented as brief vignettes, like photos in an album that reveal the incongruity of her life. Many of the episodes that involve her mother are marked by tumult and discord. As a response to all this strife, Bogan also notes something as simple as her mother sewing, the click of a needle against a thimble, as a moment "that meant peace." There must have been much discord for Bogan, who, writing so many years after the events that are recalled, remembers a needle click as a particular sound that suggested peace in this stormy household. Bogan also writes of her mother's friend Dede, whose presence scared the child and who brought disruption to the house as she acted as "go-between" between Bogan's mother and her lover. Bogan knew that her mother had lovers, had even walked in unexpectedly and caught her mother with her lover. Thus, it is easy to appreciate Bogan's comments that when her mother "dressed to go to town, the fear came back." These trips meant "going to the city; it meant her other world; it meant trouble." Bogan's mother was prone to sudden anger, blaming everyone, and presumably her daughter, when things went wrong. Her mother would suddenly disappear for weeks and then just as suddenly reappear, creating tumult and tension in her daughter's life.

Still another betrayal occured in 1909 when Bogan's family moved to Boston. Bogan was only a teenager when she began to study drawing with a Miss Cooper, whom the young girl began to idolize as genteel and refined□the qualities that Bogan's mother

most lacked and that the young girl most admired. Miss Cooper was thought to be perfect, for about two years. Bogan was about fifteen years old when she discovered that her idol was human, and she writes in her autobiography that Miss Cooper betrayed her. The betrayal was as simple as a sigh, a moment that signaled dissatisfaction or discontent, or perhaps boredom. Whatever the meaning of the sigh, the perfection of Miss Cooper's persona was disrupted, never to reappear. Bogan's days at the drawing studio had given her a peaceful retreat from her mother's chaotic world, and so the betrayal was all the more painful. She describes angry tears, disillusionment, and dismay. Bogan's reaction was extreme, but this disillusionment, coupled with all the chaos and betrayal of her early life, eventually led a very young Bogan to marry an unsuitable older man as a means of escape. She did not write of the marriage in her autobiography, but when asked what she has sought in her life, she replied that she sought love. She explains that she has sought love because she "worked from memory and example." Her mother constantly sought reassurance of her own worth in love affairs, and Bogan experienced her father's anger and the fighting between parents. Bogan writes in her autobiography how all the agony of her childhood "has long been absorbed" into her work. It is this absorption of agony that Bogan captures and reveals in "Words for Departure."

In her essay "Lethal Brevity: Louise Bogan's Lyric Career," Marcia Aldrich says, "[l]ike many other writers early in the century, Bogan turned cultural and personal disappointments into modernist poetry." In her discussion of *Body of This Death*, Aldrich charges that the subject of "women in the throes of love" is a traditional one for poets, but that in this instance "the volume finds that the literary life of feeling is one of depersonalization and disillusionment." The poems in *Body of This Death* provide no happy endings, as the title certainly suggests. The poems contained within, according to Aldrich, "define a possessive love between unequal lovers." This critique is certainly true of "Words for Departure." In the poem, it is the male lover who holds all the power. Regardless of the depth of her love for him, the speaker cannot prevent his leaving. All control rests with the male lover and not with the female narrator, and as Aldrich suggests, these lovers are unequal. And yet, as Christine Colasurdo notes in "The Dramatic Ambivalence of Self in the Poetry of Louise Bogan," Bogan's poems are not victim poems. Colasurdo suggests that "What appear to be victim poems are in fact celebrations of the self's emergence from family constraints, failed love, and rigid gender roles." Bogan is a woman who has survived her family and her husband. It is not easy for Bogan to reveal herself, and as Colasurdo observes, Bogan was "a poet who vigorously avoided self-display in her life and work." And yet, she is a poet who also created poems that use the language of suppression and silence.

Although Bogan does use the language of self-suppression, especially in her multiple uses of the word "nothing" in "Words for Departure," she also reveals the painful experience of love, especially in the last line of the poem: "Let there be some uncertainty about your departure." As a child and as a young wife, Bogan experienced many departures. Her ambivalence at these many comings and goings is part of what creates so much tension in her poetry. In his essay "The Re-Making of a Poet: Louise Bogan," Lee Upton points out that Bogan seems to present "a closed face" to critics. Consequently, Bogan emerges as stern and limited and perceived as a poet who

depicts "female victims without imagining a more compelling conception of women." Noting that Bogan's poems are "profoundly oppositional," Upton explains that "[s]eparation rather than unity propels her poetics." In "Words for Departure," a lover leaves. He also leaves behind anger, grief, and betrayal. These are mismatched lovers; one, perhaps a man, but equally possibly a woman, is secretive. This lover is the "rind"; nothing is known of the interior, what this lover is feeling or thinking. This lover has mysteries to unlock, words and feelings that remain hidden. The other lover is the opposite, the interior, the "white-juiced apple"; everything is known and nothing is hidden. As Bogan notes in her autobiography, separations, secrets, and deception defined her childhood. Her poetry is charged with her personal story of betrayal. Bogan, whose public "closed face" gives away nothing of her personal life, gives voice to a lover's betrayal in "Words for Departure." Her mother had "her fantasies, her despairs, her secrets, her subterfuges." She was like the rind, the lover whose secrets and whose departure brings such pain.

Upton also indicates that it is Bogan's position as an outsider that leads to many of the oppositional forces found in her poems. Bogan writes in her autobiography that she was "a member of a racial and religious minority." She knew this from a young age; she experienced the bigotry directed against Irish Catholics, and she understood that she "was a 'Mick,'" regardless of her other "faults or virtues." Her status as an outsider, says Upton, can be found in her poetry: "[d]ivided voices dominate her work and require that we read her poems not as simple polemics but as explorations of multiple levels of psychological crisis." The opposition noted in "Words for Departure," the countering of "Nothing was remembered, nothing forgotten," the repetition of this parallelism throughout the poem□these are Bogan's divided voice. She creates divisions and breaks in unity in her poetry, just as her life was a series of moves, separations, betrayals, and broken attachments. In exploring meaning in Bogan's poetry, Upton suggests that for Bogan "separation became a means of survival." While still quite young, she removed herself from her parents and husband and even her young daughter, and moved to New York City to live on her own. This leaving is what she understands as normal, given her own childhood experiences.

Bogan, who had so little control over her childhood existence, tried as an adult to control her own life. In her essay "Music in the Granite Hill," Deborah Pope suggests that the women in Bogan's poems "struggle to establish a sense of selfhood and control over their emotional and social environments, which constantly operate to defeat them." Pope proposes that "Words for Departure" is part of a poetic sequence that reveals the emotional turmoil of Bogan's failed marriage. As Pope also notes, with so much turmoil in her own early life, Bogan sought control in her poetry. "Words for Departure" reveals a stasis in the poet's world. Each movement of the poem is balanced; lines and phrasing are parallel, the oppositions counterpoised and the symmetry clear. Nothing is out of control, and yet, one lover is leaving and another is in pain. Yet even that inequity is equal. The lover does leave, but the other lover assumes control also. It is this lover's voice that is heard in the poem and this lover who demands that her lover leave in the dark. It is the abandoned lover who issues warning and it is this lover who commands the reader's attention. Like Bogan, this lover is a survivor. Upton suggests that Bogan's

poetry "explores the unconscious dynamics of women's experience." It may also reveal the dynamics of Bogan's own life.

Source: Sheri E. Metzger, Critical Essay on "Words for Departure," in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Topics for Further Study

Poetry should create images and pictures in the reader's mind. Using Bogan's poem, draw or illustrate one of the images her poem creates.

Bogan's poem was published in the early 1920s. Her poem depicts unmarried lovers who are ending their relationship. Examine the cultural and social lives of women in the early 1920s. Pay close attention to the life of an unmarried woman living alone, and try to determine what options were available for women who did not wish to marry.

The nineteenth amendment, giving women the right to vote, was finally approved in 1920. Research the suffrage movement and try to determine the reasons why so many people were opposed to allowing women to vote.

Bogan was inspired by several poets, especially the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets, particularly John Donne. Compare Bogan's poem to one of Donne's poems. You might consider choosing "Woman's Constancy" or "The Sun Rising" as possible poems for this exercise. What similarities do you note? In what ways has Bogan altered Donne's ideas to fit her own poetic needs and style?

It is often helpful when studying poetry to try and write a poem. Poems need not have a rhyme scheme or be of any predetermined length to be successful, and often imitating a poet's style is an effective way to get started writing poetry. Choose the topic of lost love and create your own poem, modeling it after Bogan's poem.

Compare and Contrast

1920s: In the United States, women finally have the right to vote. The nineteenth amendment to the Constitution is approved August 26, 1920. It has taken more than seventy years of hard work, beginning with a women's rights convention in 1848, for women to finally achieve this right.

Today: The bitter and lengthy fight for the right to vote seems far removed for women today.

1920s: In January 1921 in London, the first women to serve on a divorce-court jury are sworn in. Divorce, however, is still rare and is still considered scandalous, particularly for women.

Today: Divorce is much more common, and few cases go to trial. A woman's ability to divorce is no longer decided by men, and society is much more accepting of divorce.

1920s: By 1922, the flapper girl has changed the image of women. A woman can now smoke and drink in public, wear lipstick, and wear short skirts. She no longer has to cover her body from neck to toes. Sexual freedom for women is also a part of this movement, although the double standard that condemns women's sexuality remains in effect.

Today: Women in Western countries show even more of their bodies in public, and there is no hesitancy about smoking and drinking or wearing cosmetics. Many women feel free to express their individuality in whatever way they choose.

1920s: T. S. Eliot publishes *The Waste Land* in October 1922. Eliot's long poem moves poetry in a new direction, incorporating a variety of poetic forms, languages, and references to older works. His poem also captures the despair of World War I and proves a counterpoint to the recklessness that otherwise grips the early 1920s.

Today: Poetry is less regimented by formulas and is more individualistic. Eliot's poem, now largely relegated to classroom study, no longer seems so shocking, unless it is studied within its historical context.

What Do I Read Next?

Collected Poems, 1923—1954 (1954), by Louise Bogan, is a collection of her early poems. Also included are three poems written after World War II ended. Bogan was awarded the 1955 Bollingen Prize for this collection.

The Blue Estuaries: Poems, 1923—1968 (1968) was Bogan's final work of poetry. This collection earned Bogan the best reviews she ever received for a book of poetry.

The Metaphysical Poets (1960, 3d ed.), edited by Helen Gardner, provides a good introduction that helps explain the characteristics of metaphysical poetry. The collection of poetry included provides a selection of poets, over many years.

The Poetry of John Donne and the Metaphysical Poets, reissued in 1989 and edited by Joseph E. Grennen, includes a comprehensive selection of Donne's work. Donne is considered the most important of the metaphysical poets, and he had an influence on Bogan's poetry.

Sleeping on the Wing: An Anthology of Modern Poetry with Essays on Reading and Writing (1982), by Kate Farrell and Kenneth Koch, is a collection of poetry selected from among twenty-three modern poets. In addition to a collection of wonderful poems, the authors also provide guides to help fledgling writers create their own poems.

Sound and Form in Modern Poetry (1996, 2d ed.), by Harvey Seymour and Robert McDowell, is a good basic text to help the student understand form and function in modern poetry. One strength of this book is its emphasis on metrical structure and stanza forms.

Further Study

Allen, Frederick Lewis, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s*, 1931, reprint, Perennial, 2000.

Allen's book is a social history of the 1920s. It is a very readable and entertaining history of a period of great social change.

Clift, Eleanor, *Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment*, John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

This book chronicles the struggle for women to be given the right to vote. Clift's book is very readable, filled with interesting anecdotes that provide a glimpse into history.

Frank, Elizabeth, *Louise Bogan: A Portrait*, Knopf, 1985.

Frank won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for this biography. She provides a good overview of Bogan's life, including insights into Bogan's childhood and rocky relationship with her mother.

Ruiz, Vicki L., and Ellen Carol DuBois, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, 3d ed., Routledge, 2000.

This book is a collection of thirty essays that provide a multicultural view of women's history. The essays cover all aspects of women's lives, including political, religious, social, racial, and sexual.

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Bogan, Louise, *Body of This Death*, Robert M. McBride, 1923, pp. 10—11.

□□□, *Journey around My Room: The Autobiography of Louise Bogan*, written with Ruth Limmer, Viking Press, 1980, pp. 29—31, 34—35, 40—43, 48—50, 52—53, 68.

Colasurdo, Christine, "The Dramatic Ambivalence of Self in the Poetry of Louise Bogan," in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Autumn 1994, pp. 339—61.

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Limmer, Ruth, ed., *What the Woman Lived: Selected letters of Louise Bogan, 1920—1970*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973, p. 5.

Pope, Deborah, "Music in the Granite Hill: The Poetry of Louise Bogan," in *A Separate Vision: Isolation in Contemporary Women's Poetry*, Louisiana State University Press, 1984, pp. 15—53.

Upton, Lee, "The Re-Making of a Poet: Louise Bogan," in *Centennial Review*, Vol. 3, No. 36, Fall 1992, pp. 557—72.

Van Doren, Mark, "Louise Bogan," in *Nation*, October 31, 1923, p. 494.

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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