

Finding connections in MacCaig's six poems

	Assisi	Visiting Hour	Aunt Julia	Basking Shark	Hotel Room 12 th Floor	Brooklyn Cop
Subject What is the subject of the poem? Does the title contribute to your understanding of the subject matter?	Beggar Church Hypocrisy	Poet visiting his very ill wife in hospital	Relationship with aunt Existence Himself	M bumps into a shark while he is out rowing a boat	Visit to New York late 60s	NYPD Police Officer
Central Concern	Hypocrisy	Facing mortality	Regret	Who is the monster?	Contrast in society	Good v evil
Theme What theme is dealt with in the poem? Is there a moral/ message in the poem?	Hypocrisy of the Church meant to save the poor and disabled	Death and dying Communication Isolation	Nature <i>But I hear her still, welcoming me in a seagull's voice across a hundred yards of peats apes and lazy beds</i>	Existence Himself Nature <i>Rise with a slounge out of the sea</i>	Violence and society	Violence and society
Voice Who is speaking in the poem? Does the poet adopt a persona? Who is being addressed?	Poet	Poet	Poet Childlike at start	Poet	Poet	Poet
Setting Is there a sense of place or time created?	Church in Assisi, Italy <i>Three tiers of churches built in honour of St Francis, brother of the poor</i>	<i>The hospital smell combs my nostrils</i>	Western Isles, box bed <i>Hers was the only house where I've lain at night in a box bed, listening to crickets</i>	North-west coast	New York City late 60s day then night	Brooklyn NY Late 60s
Imagery	Decay <i>Sat slumped like a half-filled sack</i>	Decay <i>A withered hand trembles on its stalk</i>	Decay <i>She lay silenced in the absolute black of a sandy grave</i>		<i>Empire State that jumbo sized dentist drill</i>	<i>Like a gorilla</i>

Tone Is the poem serious/ ironic/ humorous? How is this tone created?	Anger – that the priests should have cared for the dwarf but more interested in the tourists	Some humour at start Mood of despair Anger – that he can do nothing in the face of death	Nostalgic Reflective Anger – that by the time he was able to speak any Gaelic his aunt was dead and the chance was gone	Serious with humour Reflective	Despairing of how rich/poor live side by side	Ironic – cop uses violence to protect the weak
Structure Has the poet used a particular form? How does the form contribute to the meaning of the poem?	Free verse End line emphasis Beggar to priest to tourists Turning Point I understood the explanation and the cleverness	Turning point Ward 7	Free verse Verses 1–4 highlight life of AJ Verse 5 death	Rhyming triplets Stanzas Moves from observation to reflection		
Techniques What techniques has the poet used? (You must look at word choice/type of language/ images/ figures of speech) What are their effects?	Alliteration: emphasise disability Chicken metaphor Contrast – beggar and church	Imagery: cave, flowers, vampire, distance, bell	Turning Point <i>By the time I had learned a little she lay silenced</i>	<i>Imagery (rain, shark)</i> <i>Repetition</i> <i>Contrast (man and shark)</i> <i>Word choice: Scots words, movement</i>		
Word Choice (1) Striking words	<i>“Clucking”</i>	<i>“Guzzling”</i>	<i>“flouncing”</i>	<i>shoggled</i>	<i>Cold water flats</i>	<i>Thin tissue</i>
Word Choice (2)	<i>Grazie in a voice as sweet as a child's when she speaks to her mother</i>	<i>I will not feel, I will not feel, until I have to.</i>	<i>She was buckets .. She was winds ... She was brown eggs</i>			