

National Poetry Day, 8th October, 2015.

Light

2. Lightness/Darkness Poem

The word *light* generally has positive connotations: *brightness, openness, undemanding, easy, clear* and so on. In the yin yang of the world in which we live, and language too, there will usually be opposites, so the opposing word to *light* is *dark* and it generally has negative connotations: *concealed, hidden, dangerous, scary, difficult* and so on.

Therefore in writing a *Light* poem it might also be a natural urge to counter this with references to the opposite word *Dark*, and such contrasts can be useful prompts to generate ideas as well as proving interesting in the ‘battle’ they have with one another.

This idea isn’t, therefore, taking the theme of ‘light’ to necessarily mean happy or humorous – although this isn’t being banned! But it does allow you to write, if you wish, about more serious and challenging ideas, but remember to keep them ‘poetic’ – in other words, you do not have to be literal, and can suggest rather than tell/explain. **Model 1** is a good example of this where ideas are suggestive, for example

<i>lightness that sheds</i>	based on the phrase <i>shed a light</i> on something, like an idea
<i>darkness walking behind</i>	picking up on the sinister idea of being followed at night

Model 1

lightness that sheds
darkness walking behind
lightness like gravity sleeping
darkness in loneliness
lightness fainting
darkness waiting around that corner
lightness whispering
darkness in its own absence

Model 2 uses the contrast of light and dark but does so more ‘lightly’ [!] and is more playful overall.

Word of warning: there is an example of rhyming in the two lines that end respectively *soul* and *goal*. Rhyming can be effective, but should be used sparingly, often as a surprise rhyming couplet in a poem. The danger of using too much rhyme is you tend to search for rhyming words precisely for their sound rather than words for their meaning.

Another word of warning: the writer obviously got carried away with the football theme and revealed personal details. That's fine, but be prepared for others to laugh at you!

And you could upset cabbage lovers.....

Model 2

the lightness in dad's huge hug
the darkness of homework's call
the lightness dreaming sea rolls up the beach
the darkness in the roots of cabbage
the lightness of Christmas No 1
the darkness of Simon Cowell's Christmas No 1
the lightness marshmallowing my soul
the darkness missing that goal
the lightness refereeing its own win
the darkness when Ipswich FC fails