

## Poetryclass Fresh Ideas for Learning from the Poetry Society

# A Feast of Words

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KS3

KS4

### Topics at a glance

- Poetic devices
- Unseen poem
- Speaking & listening skills
- Descriptive language
- Cultural traditions

### Introduction

This lesson plan uses found objects and lines from Sala Fadelallah's 2014 winning Foyle poem 'The End of Our Journey' (reprinted here on p.3) to inspire poetry writing in the classroom through group and pair work.

### Opening discussion

Start the class off with the following: what are the requirements of an effective poem? Recap the ideas that are generated and remind the class of devices such as rhyme, repetition, emotive language and metaphor. Can students think of a poem they have studied recently, or a song they know the lyrics to that use any of these devices?

### Creative warm-up: what's in the box?

*To prepare you'll need a box with a cloth over the top that you can use to disguise the contents, plus some interesting objects to put inside.*

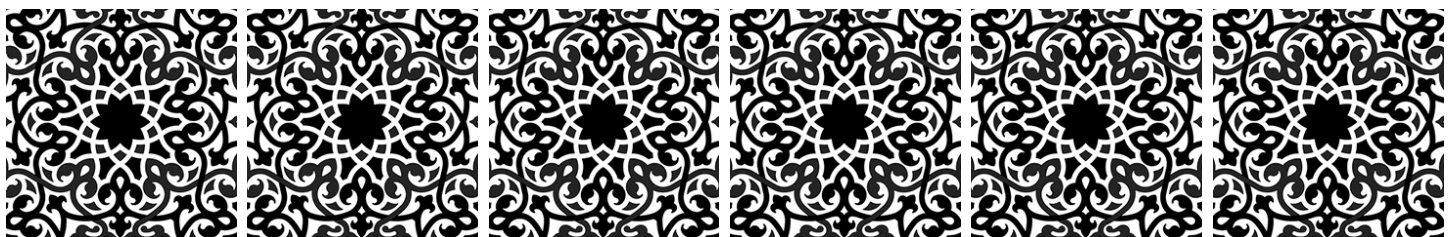
The first volunteer places their hand inside the box and describes what they can feel using *only* simile, metaphor or adjectives (depending on the ability of the student). Invite the class to guess, before the volunteer guesses, what's in the box.

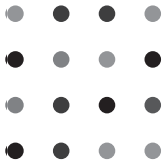
The volunteer then takes out the object to see if they're correct.

Some good objects for this activity are:

- A plastic glass
- Confetti
- A key
- A ball of wool
- Buttons

Discuss with the class how the objects linked to their descriptions. Which descriptions worked best, and why?





## Language analysis: Quotation Jar

*To prepare you'll need a container of some sort with the quotations from Sala's poem printed on p.5 cut into strips.*

Ask a volunteer to pick a quotation from the Quotation Jar. Ask them to read it aloud and then talk for thirty seconds about what they think the poem will be about.

- What subject do they think it is exploring?
- What style do they think it will take?
- Will it be short or long?

Whatever their conclusions, there are no wrong answers as long as their ideas are based on evidence in the quotation. After you have repeated this a few times, discuss as a class what you think the poem will be like.

## Pair work

Give each pair a quotation from the Quotation Jar.

Ask students to look at the lines that they have been given and discuss with their partner for two minutes. What connotations come to mind as they read each word? What clues do they give about a text that we are going to look at?

*Extension idea:* Ask students to write a paragraph in pairs, about their quotation. To challenge the more able students, give them the task of writing a P.Q.E (point, quote, explain) paragraph to make their analysis.

## 'The End of Our Journey'

*Before reading the poem you may want to remind the class about Eid and Ramadan, with the information on p.4.*

Give each student a copy of Sala's poem (on p.3) and read it – twice – together in or in pairs.

The first time, listen and enjoy. The second time, as students listen ask them to highlight any words and phrases that jump out. Discuss these together or in pairs. Can students spot any poetic devices as we read?

Remind them to annotate their copy of the poem and note down their ideas.

Ask students individually to underline the line that stands out to them the most and briefly explain why. Now, focus even more closely upon the language. What is the *one word* that stands out? Explain why.

Ask for class feedback. Which parts stand out most? What do you like about the poem and why?

Extra discussion ideas:

- What is the poem about?
- How do we know?
- Is the poem positive or negative?
- What 'journey' is 'coming to an end', as per the poem's title?

Students could write their responses to the above first, or discuss with a partner.

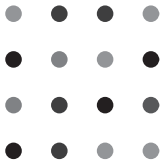
## Creative response

Return to the quotations you handed out and ask students to identify one literary technique that Sala has used. This may be the alliteration of "placid plodder" or the simile in "rice... like a desert".

Ask students to use the same device and create four phrases of their own about something in their lives that they would like to celebrate. This might be a family meal, like Sala, or an achievement they have recently attained. Ask them to use these devices to try and put the reader there in the moment.

Using these four phrases as the first foundations, ask students to build around these to create a short poem celebrating the important things in their life. Refine the language to try and convey their message as precisely as Sala.

Share with the class.



# The End of Our Journey

By Sala Fadelallah

A volcano of rainbows,  
Waiting  
To erupt.

Our women's multicoloured scarves  
Whip and dip  
In a fury,  
As they lay the table for Eid.

The placid plodder's trek  
Along the grains of desert rice  
Wasn't easy.  
But my connection with the almighty  
Has kept me fighting strong.

The first batch rises from the oven.  
The scent of sweet spices  
Drown the kitchen.  
The warmth of Haboba's *kaak*  
Was highly heart-warming.

The rice was like the desert.  
The lamb like the gateway.  
The broccoli, the centre of the oasis.

All fellow guests  
Gather at our home, our oasis.  
Young ones enlightened,  
Screaming with popcorn souls.  
Agitated eyes shining with elation.

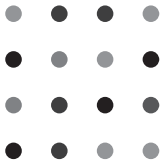
Laying on the rich ceremonial salver  
Was a cheery lamb.  
Without it,  
The glistening pool,  
In the centre of the oasis,  
Would vanish.

We all sat  
On our beige mounds  
Like the land of the burning sun.

It is time  
To enjoy our felicity feast.

*Poet's note:* Haboba is my grandmother and kaak are traditional biscuits.

*This poem was one of the fifteen winning poems in the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2014. For more information and up-to-date details of how to enter the latest competition, visit [www.foyleyoungpoets.org](http://www.foyleyoungpoets.org)*



## Background information

### Eid and Ramadan

**Eid**, meaning 'festival' or 'holiday' in Arabic, can refer to a number of Muslim holidays, but without a full name is most likely to refer to Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr (Feast of Breaking the Fast), marks the end of the month of Ramadan.

**Ramadan** is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It was during this month that the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Observing Ramadan is the fourth of the five pillars of Islam.

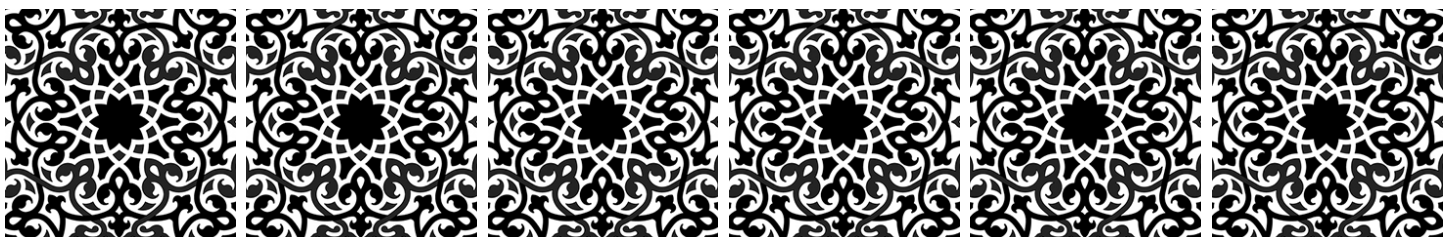
#### Observing Ramadan

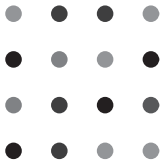
Muslims across the world observe Ramadan by fasting during daylight hours. Fasting is intended to help teach Muslims self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity. It also reminds them of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well. It is common to have one meal (known as the *suhoor*), just before sunrise and another (known as the *iftar*), directly after sunset. As well as fasting, many Muslims try to give up bad habits during Ramadan, and some will try to become better Muslims by praying more or reading the Qur'an. Some Muslims will attempt to read the whole of the Qur'an at least once during the Ramadan period. Many will also attend special services in Mosques during which the Qur'an is read.

#### Eid ul Fitr

Muslims are not only celebrating the end of fasting, but thanking Allah for the help and strength that he gave them throughout the previous month to help them practise self-control. The festival begins when the first sight of the new moon is seen in the sky. There are special services outdoors and in Mosques, processions through the streets, and of course, a special celebratory meal. This is eaten during daytime, the first daytime meal Muslims will have had in a month.

Eid is also a time of forgiveness, and making amends. During Eid-ul-Fitr Muslims dress in their finest clothes, give gifts to children and spend time with their friends and family. For many Muslims it is also obligatory to give a set amount of money to charity to be used to help poor people buy new clothes and food so they too can celebrate.





### Cut outs: The End of Our Journey

✂ .....

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To erupt.

✂ .....

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