# English – Unit 2

Curious George





Poetry vs. prose?

# Lesson 1



What is poetry?

so much depends
upon

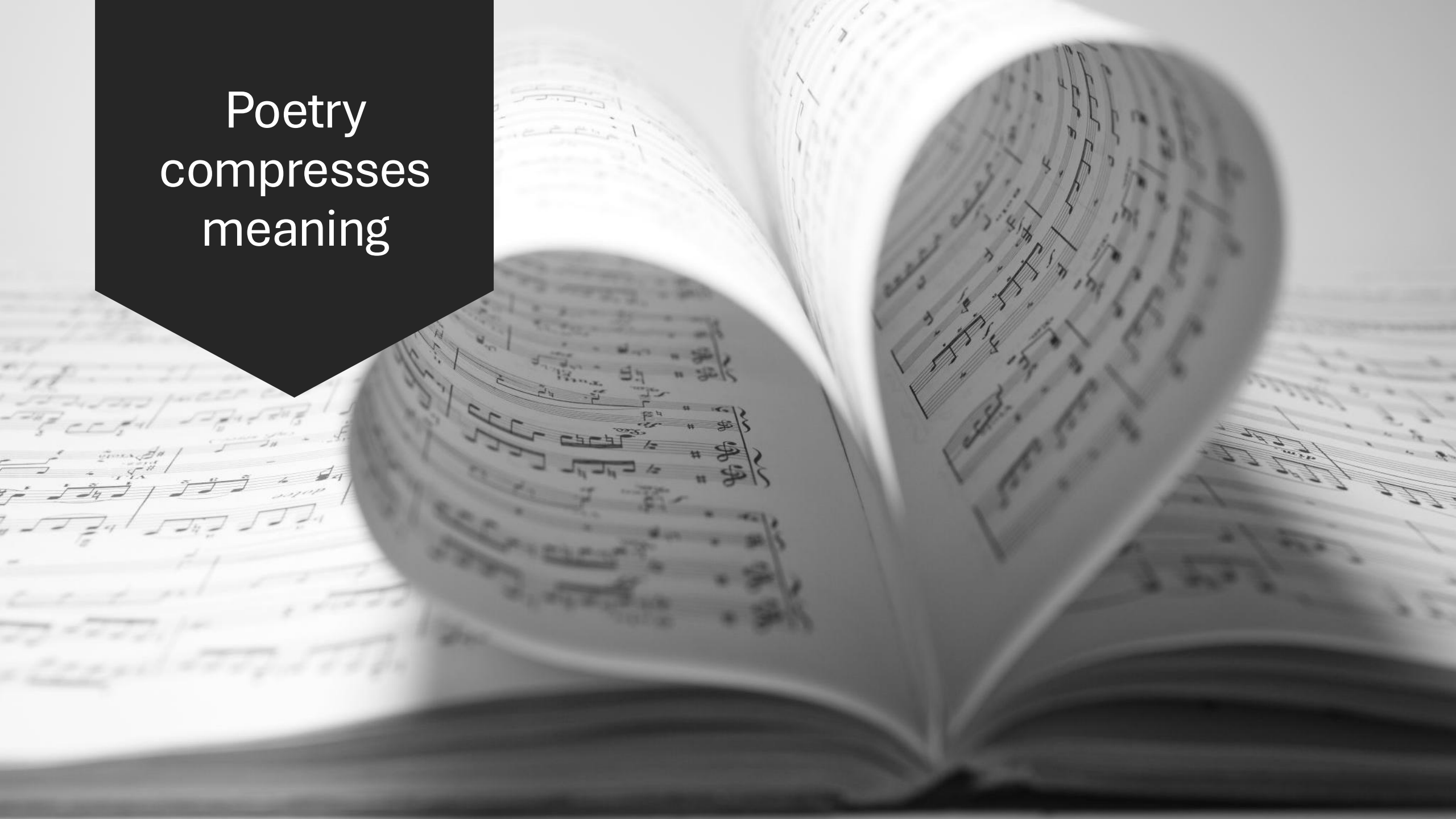
a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.



# Poetry compresses meaning



# Poetry

Makes us slow down

Capture a moment ( a snapshot)

But also gives us details behind the moment



so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

"A red wheelbarrow sits beside several white chickens after the rain. Many things depend upon it."

## Is this the same work?

# Next 5 lessons

- Margaret Atwood — “This Is a Photograph of Me”
- Earle Birney — “David”
- Rita Joe — “I Lost My Talk”
- Michael Ondaatje — “The Cinnamon Peeler”

Four poems.
Six lessons.
Many ways of seeing.

# Remember the literary lenses from Unit 1:

- Formalism
- Psychological
- Marxist
- Feminist
- Reader Response

# Lesson 2 – Imagery & Symbolism

**Formalist critics ask:**

- **How does the text create meaning?**
- **Why were these artistic choices made?**
- **How do language and structure affect our understanding?**

# Formalism

# What Is Imagery?

Imagery is language that appeals to our senses in order to shape our experience of a text.

Imagery may appeal to:

- 👁️ Sight
- 👂 Sound
- 👃 Smell

# What is symbolism?

## What Is Symbolism?

A symbol is something concrete that also carries larger ideas.

A symbol begins with something real.
It then invites readers to think beyond its literal meaning.

Literal Object → Possible Symbolic Meanings
Photograph → Memory, truth, identity
Mountain → Challenge, sacrifice, morality
Language → Identity, belonging, culture
Cinnamon → Identity, intimacy, memory












D BOY

# The Cinnamon Peeler



# Featured Poet: Michael Ondaatje

## Featured Poem: The Cinnamon Peeler

- Born in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1943)
- Immigrated to Canada after spending part of his youth in England
- Poet, novelist, memoirist, and internationally celebrated author
- Best known for The English Patient
- Known for vivid sensory language and rich imagery

# Symbolism in "The Cinnamon Peeler"

**Symbol:** Cinnamon

**Literal meaning:**
A spice harvested by the speaker.

**Possible symbolic meanings:**

- Identity
- Intimacy
- Memory
- The lasting marks people leave on one another

# Lesson 3

# Voice & Perspective

## Margaret Atwood - “This Is a Photograph of Me”

1966

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;

then, as you scan
it, you see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.

In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.

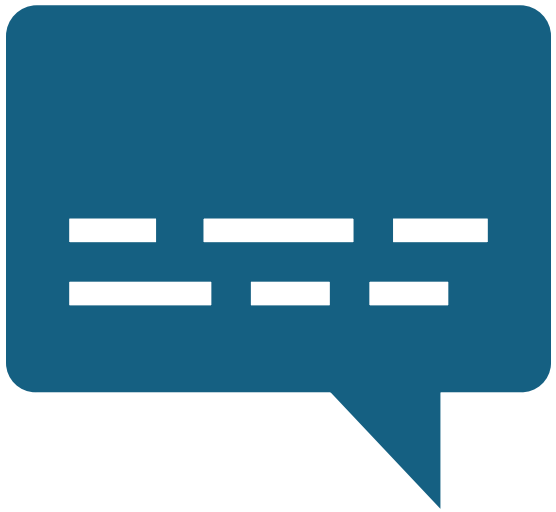
(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.

I am in the lake, in the center
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion

but if you look long enough,
eventually
you will be able to see me.)

# Reader response



What did you notice?

Theme, Feeling, Message

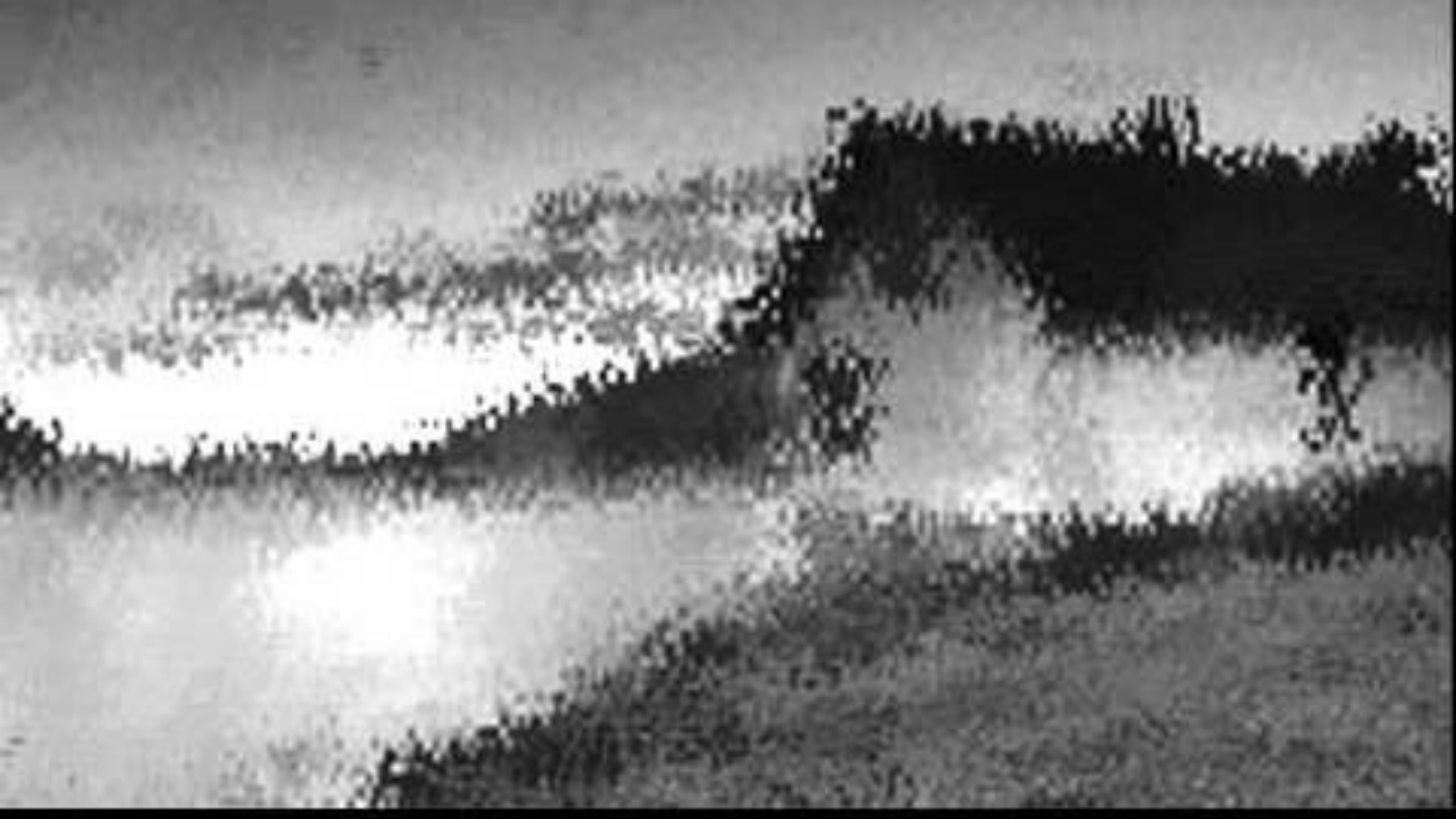
What is the *voice* of the speaker in the poem?


Voice: who is speaking?
Perspective: How are they seeing the event?

Experiencing the same event differntly











Margaret Atwood

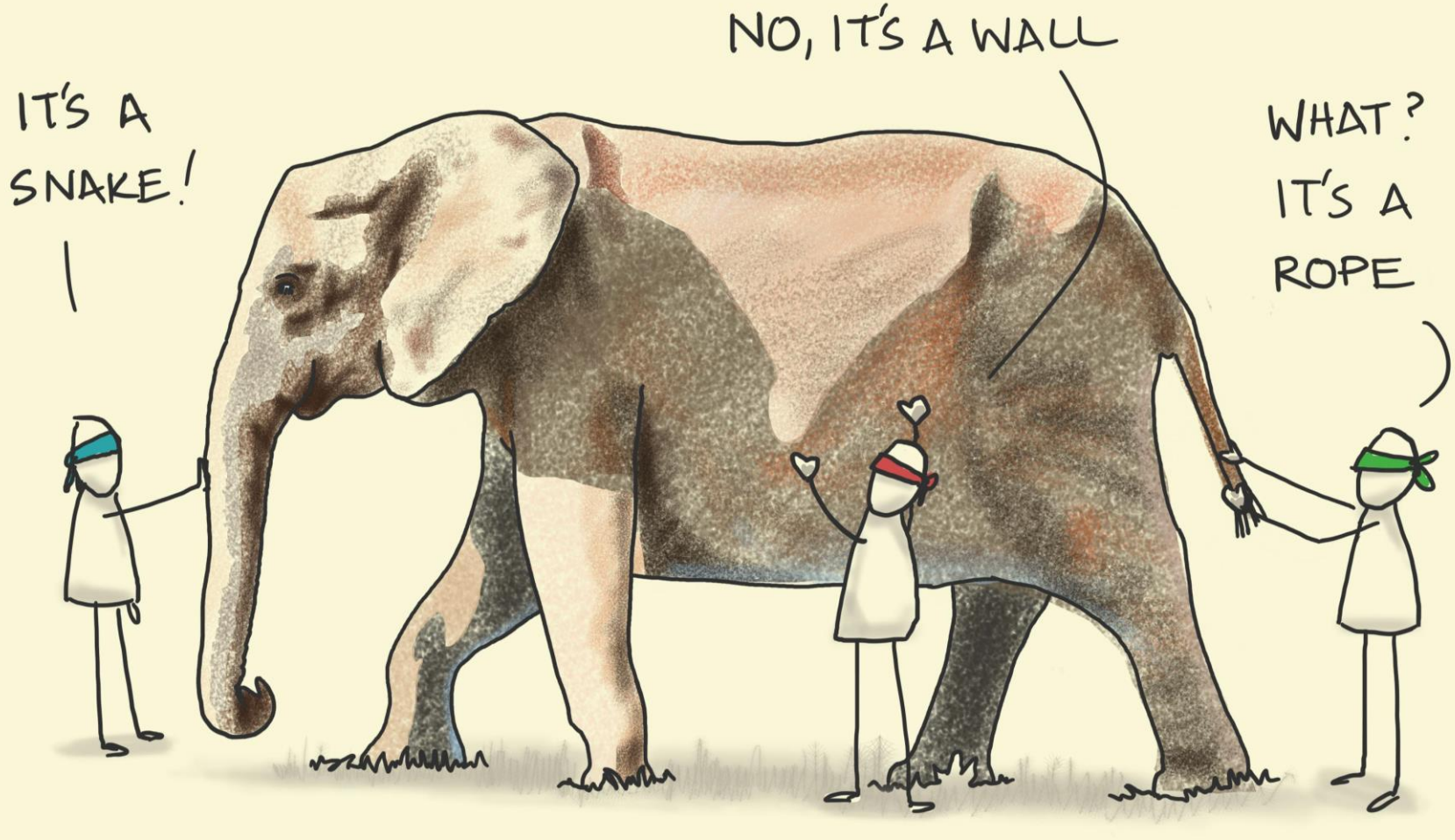
Featured Poem:
This Is a Photograph of Me

Born in Ottawa (1939)

- One of Canada's most influential writers
- Poet, novelist, essayist, and literary critic
- Frequently explores memory, identity, power, and perception

# THE BLIND AND THE ELEPHANT

OUR OWN EXPERIENCE IS RARELY THE WHOLE TRUTH





# The words don’t change – we do!

# Below the surface

Appearance vs. Reality

Identity vs. invisibility

How many people we encounter every day without really seeing them? We may notice their physical presence without recognizing their experiences, struggles, identities, or potential.

# Lesson 4

## Diction, Sound & Structure: Building Emotional Experience

# Send to me:

## Read and analyse the poem David

- Find instances of:

- Symbolism
- Imagery
- Voice Perspective
- Sound
- Structure
- Emotions



# Lesson 5
# Theme, power & Identity

# Marxism & Feminism

**Marxist Criticism**

Who holds power?

What institutions are involved?

Whose interests are served?

**Feminist Criticism**

Whose voices are heard?

Whose experiences are overlooked?

How does identity shape experience?

# Subject or topic vs. Theme

Love vs. Love can become a part of a person’s identity


Shubenacadie

A **ballad** is traditionally a song or poem that tells a story, though in modern usage it most commonly refers to a slow, sentimental, or romantic popular song.



**Rita Joe - “I Lost My Talk”**

I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my word.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.

So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.



Rita Joe (1932–2007)

Rita Joe was a Mi'kmaq poet from Nova Scotia.

Her poetry often explores Indigenous identity, cultural survival, discrimination, and the lasting effects of residential schools.

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# Find in the poem:

| |
|---|
| **Repetition** |
| **Metaphor** |
| **Direct address** |
| **Imagery** |
| **Contrast** |
| **Symbolism** |

# Questions

1. Why does Rita Joe use the expression "I lost my talk" rather than "I lost my language"?

2. Who is the "you" in the poem? Is it an individual, a school, a government, or an entire culture?

3. Why does the poet repeat the phrase "I … like you"?

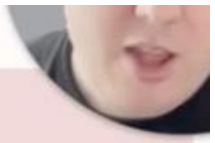
4. What does the statement "Your way is more powerful" reveal about the relationship between language and power?

5. Why do you think the poet chooses to end the poem with an offer of friendship rather than an expression of anger?

6. Can someone lose their language without losing their cultural identity? Explain.


loss
power
culture
identity
oppression
shame
recovery
disconnection
dominant
reconciliation

Rita Joe is not simply asking for her language back.
She is asking for the right to define who she is.



Poems can have multiple valid themes.

**The Cinnamon Peeler:** Love can become part of identity.
**This Is a Photograph of Me:** Reality depends on what we are able or willing to see.
**David:** Moral responsibility can demand impossible choices.
**I Lost My Talk:** Language is deeply connected to identity and belonging.



How does the poem create **meaning**?

What **ideas** does the poem explore?

# Review for the in-class assignment next week

1- Re-read the 4 poems we have studied

- I lost my talk
- The Cinnamon Peeler
- This is Photograph of me
- David

2- Determine meaning (have evidence) include:

**diction, imagery, metaphor, simile, symbolism, or personification, rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, or assonance**

3- Know your literary lenses and how to apply them to the poems