

EILÉAN NÍ CHUILLLEANÁIN



IMAGINATION

OVERVIEW

- ❖ Explores personal memories and experiences
- ❖ Uses symbols and motifs to express profound ideas
- ❖ Strong sense of place in her poetry
- ❖ Mystery in many of her poems - zone where things become other than themselves

- ❖ Endings of her poems are very powerful
- ❖ Makes use of folklore, myth and fairy tale
- ❖ Language can be simple but ideas are concrete

WHAT MIGHT THEY ASK YOU?

- ❖ Ní Chuilleanáin's beguiling poems emerge from an intense but insightful imagination.
- ❖ Ní Chuilleanáin is a truly original poet who leads us into altered landscapes and enhances our understanding of the world around us.
- ❖ Ní Chuilleanáin's subject matter can be challenging at times, but her writing style is always impressive

PLANNING AN ANSWER

- ❖ ‘Ní Chuilleanáin’s beguiling poems emerge from an intense but insightful imagination.’
- ❖ Intro: innovative treatment of a broad thematic range: myth, transience of life, memory, relationships, religious life, the forgotten victims of earlier times

- ❖ Poem 1: Fireman's Lift: compelling treatment of her mother's death. Importance of dramatic setting as a context for personal experiences / memories. Sympathetic tone, atmospheric detail, artistic references
- ❖ Poem 2: On Lacking the Killer Instinct: dramatic and intriguing treatment of father's final illness. Hare becomes a symbol of flight and fear. Moves from nature to history. Less of a sense of peace and comfort than in 'Fireman's Lift' but positive ending in that she returns. Imagination has helped her to unravel and understand her feelings.

- ❖ Poem 3: Translation: Also using history as a springboard for exploring and coming to terms with difficult issue. Although it is not personal, poet nevertheless conjures up vivid imagery of life in the laundry. Perceptive and sensitive. Effective symbols - mist, clouds, water...
- ❖ Poem 4: Street: Probably the most mysterious of the poems on the course. Cinematic quality. What is left unsaid allows us to use our imaginations. Dark and unusual. Leaves us wanting more.

STREET

- ❖ Interesting and unusual approach to love and attraction
- ❖ Based on a real memory
- ❖ Story-telling, cinematic quality
- ❖ Entices us and encourages us to use our imaginations to fill in the gaps
- ❖ Atmospheric
- ❖ Elusive - we don't know how it ends
- ❖ Secret world hinted at

TO NIALL WOODS

- ❖ Idea of storytelling is central to this poem
- ❖ More positive vision of love
- ❖ Moral - although love can be tested, if the couple is true and devoted then they will live happily ever after
- ❖ Unity of couple is mirrored by unity of cultures
- ❖ Mother's love and blessing is important

THE BEND IN THE ROAD

- ❖ Begins with a simple, autobiographical tale
- ❖ Broadens in scope
- ❖ Surreal atmosphere - 'A tall tree like a cat's tail'
- ❖ Sense of an afterlife - those who have gone before are always with us

FIREMAN'S LIFT

- ❖ Like 'The Bend in the Road', this poem offers us hope of an afterlife
- ❖ Based on personal memory
- ❖ Sense of love and consolation, but also sense of mystery
- ❖ The Virgin will vanish beyond the edge of the cloud