

November Night, Edinburgh

The night tinkles like ice in glasses.
Leaves are glued to the pavements with frost.
The brown air fumes at the shop windows,
Tries the door, and sidles past.

I gulp down winter raw. The heady
Darkness swirls with tenements.
In a brown fuzz of cotton wool
Lamps fade up crags, die into pits.

Frost in my lungs is harsh as leaves
Scraped up on paths. — I look up, there,
A high roof sails, at the mast-head
Fluttering a grey and ragged star.

The world's a bear shrugged in his den.
It's snug and close in the snoring night.
And outside like Chrysanthemums
The fog unfolds its bitter scent.

Norman MacCaig (b. 1910)

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By Mr Field

DISCUSS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POEM

How do we do that?

Effectiveness means the effects the poem has on you.

1. In groups talk about and make notes these questions: [1 paragraph for each]

- Which lines do you like best? Why?
- I identify any imagery you can find. (Metaphors and Similes)
- Does the poet use any 'clever' images? What effect do these have?
- Is the poem descriptive? What detail does it include? (Adjectives)
- What 'message' does the poem say to you? What the point of the poem?
- Examine the structure of the poem - Rhyme? Stanzas? Lines?

2. Select phrases or words that your group think are important, and explain why.

e.g. 'die into pits' - we like this image because it describes how the light from the street lamp goes into a deep, dark pit - it fades away quickly. The idea of it dying is clever as it allows you to picture the scene in your mind clearly. The light is described as something with life.