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**Tips for Poetry Critiques**

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Compose your critiques in two parts: mechanics and theme.

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*mechanics*

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1. Who is the speaker? Is the speaker effective and believable? Why or why not?
2. What is the setting (time, place, season, hour, indoors, outdoors, country, city, etc.)? Is the setting appropriate for the poem?
3. What is the tone of the poem? How is it achieved? Is it effective?
4. Discuss the diction of the poem. Point out words that are particularly well-chosen and point out why they work well.
5. Point out words that don't fit and explain why.
6. Discuss the imagery of the poem. Which images are the strongest? Which need more development? Why would that development be helpful to the poem?
7. Point out and explain any symbolism, metaphor, simile, personification, or other literary devices, and discuss if they are used effectively or not.
8. Point out examples of effective usage of sound (near rhyme) and prosody.
9. How are the line breaks? Are they effective or distracting? Why?
10. Discuss any particularly strong parts of the poem.
11. Discuss any parts that are unclear or that need further development.

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*theme*

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1. What does the poem do (create nostalgia, convert the reader, create shock, evoke a mood, etc)? What is the central purpose of the poem?
2. What is the poem about? State your interpretation of the central idea of theme of the poem in a single sentence.
3. Is the imagery used successful in developing the theme of the poem? Why or why not?
4. Point out and explain any allusions or references. What is their function? Are they effective or distracting?
5. Evaluate the poem. Did it achieve its purpose? How well did it communicate its central idea or theme?
6. Summarize how all the parts of the poem (structure, organization, imagery, diction, prosody, etc.) contribute to the effectiveness of the poem as a whole.
7. Did the poem work for you? Why or why not?