

These first five poems by published writers (a couple perhaps familiar to you) are related in a number of ways to characters, themes, setting, and even elements of plot in *The Yearling*.

How many connections can you find in each poem? Which is your favorite poem and why?

Hard Questions

by Margaret Tsuda

Why wildness?

Why not mark out the land
into neat rectangles
squares and clover leaves?

Put on them cubes
of varying sizes
according to use-
dwellings
singles/multiples
complexes
commercial/industrial.

Bale them together with
bands of roads.

Doesn't that make the land useful?

What if a child shall cry
"I have never known spring!
I have never seen autumn!"

What is that?

What if a man shall say
"I have never heard
silence fraught with living
in swamp or forest!"
What if the eye shall never see
marsh birds and muskrats?

What are these?

Does not the heart need
wildness?
Does not the thought need
something to rest upon
not self-made by man,
a bosom not his own?



The Story-Teller

by Mark Van Doren

He talked, and as he talked
wallpaper came alive
Suddenly, ghosts walked,
and four doors were five

Calendars ran backward,
And maps had mouths
Ships went backward
In a great drowse

Trains climbed trees
and soon dripped down
Like honey of bees
On the cold brick town

He had wakened a worm
in the world's brain
And nothing stood firm
until day again...

By Emily Dickinson

The Wind begun to rock the Grass
With threatening Tunes and low --
He threw a Menace at the Earth --
A Menace at the Sky.

The Leaves unhooked themselves from Trees --
And started all abroad
The Dust did scoop itself like Hands
And threw away the Road.

The Wagons quickened on the Streets
The Thunder hurried slow --
The Lightning showed a Yellow Beak
And then a livid Claw.

The Birds put up the Bars to Nests --
The Cattle fled to Barns --
There came one drop of Giant Rain
And then as if the Hands

That held the Dams had parted hold
The Waters Wrecked the Sky,
But overlooked my Father's House --
Just quartering a Tree --

These next five poems are by 7th grade students. The first two are sonnets. The last three, by Michael Neimi, are from choice #11 from Activities for *The Yearling*.

Woman With Flower by Naomi Long Madgett

I wouldn't coax the plant if I were you.
Such watchful nurturing may do it harm.
Let the soil rest from so much digging.
And wait until it's dry before you water it.
The leaf's inclined to find its own direction;
Give it a chance to seek the sunlight for itself.

Much growth is stunted by too much prodding,
Too eager tenderness.
The things we love we have to learn to leave alone.

How Shall We Raise Our Children? by Alastair Reid

Daedalus

My son has birds in his head.
I know them now. I catch
the pitch of their calls, their shrill
cacophonies, their chitterlings, their coos.
They hover behind his eyes, and come to rest
on a branch, on a book, grow still,
claws curled, wings furled.
His is a bird world.

I learn the flutter of his moods,
his moments of swoop and soar.
From the ground, I feel him try the limits of the air—
sudden lift, sudden terror—
and move in time to cradle
his quivering, feather fear.

At evening, in the tower,
I see him to sleep, and see
the hooding over of eyes,
the slow folding of wings.
I wake to his morning twitterings,
To the croomb of his becoming.

He chooses his selves—wren, hawk,
swallow, or owl—to explore
the trees and rooftops of his heady wishing.

Tomtit, birdwit.

Am I to call him down to give him
a grounding, teach him gravity?
Gently, gently.

Time tells us what we weigh, and soon enough
his feet will reach the ground.
Age, like a cage, will enclose him.
So the wise men said.
My son has birds in his head.

Thunderstorm

by Lauren Butts

As hours pass the heavy sky grows dark
Sunshine has given up and lost the fight
Bolts of lightning flash about and spark
The storm continues through the inky night.
A strong wind blows and the trees start to sway
Animals all run, and people hide
The storm won't stop until it has its way
With fear, the humans rush to go inside.
Sheets of rain are pelting through the sky
And wind is whistling through the fallen trees
Nervous frightened children start to cry
It seems it's rained enough to fill the seas.

All night the storm continues to rage on
But with the dawn's arrival it is gone.

Nature's Anger by Chris Lewis

The raging storm starts crashing and then rumbles
Trees and limbs slam wildly back and forth
A man caught in the chaos trips and stumbles
The air fills with debris; it seems to morph
The birds scuttle for shelter in the trees
Thunder rolls, protesting lightning streaks
As do the insects, mammals, and the bees
The cows stampede
and then the field mouse squeaks
The wind howls and the waves then start to crash
The water churns and floods over the town
The storm calms, but has viciously strewn trash
The flood surrenders and then goes back down
The wind has finally stopped; the waters dry
As animals emerge to cloudless sky.

A Summary
By Michael Neimi

A flutter mill turned
A friend was there
A legend challenged
A meal nourished
A vacant heart ached
A feud was started
A snake struck
A friend helped
A hole was filled
A friend deceased
A Spaniard loomed
A hurricane ravaged
A plague scared with
death
A species decimated
A legend defeated
A friend departed
A yearling leapt
A shot rang out
A hunger engulfed
A home was found
And a yearling
and a boy
Ran under a magnolia
And were gone forever

Jody
Rambling boy
Curious, playful, learning
Lover of nature, Penny, and Flag
Who wanted something of his own
Who believed he could make it work
Who used a fence, a collar and a gun
Who gave his time
Who said, "There's Flag, Pa."

Baxter

As Sneaky as a Fawn

Curious
Playful yearling
Wandering and eating
Growing fast
Jody