

A narrow fellow in the grass

Nature · How the poet presents the speaker's feelings about the snake

Name:

Class:

Date:

Do Now

1. Why do we write 'the speaker' about the voice in a poem, and not 'the poet'?

2. What does question 28.1 ask you to write about?

3. Which two assessment objectives are marked in question 28.1?

4. What is a euphemism?

5. What is a quatrain?

Read

A narrow fellow in the grass · Emily Dickinson · 1830–1886 · Project Gutenberg #12242, Poems by Emily Dickinson, Second Series

1 A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him, — did you not,
His notice sudden is.

5 The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,

10 A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash
Unbraiding in the sun, —

15 When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport

But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone.

Check your understanding

1. What is the “narrow fellow”?

2. Where does the snake like to live?

3. What did the speaker think the snake was when they were a child?

4. How does the speaker feel whenever they meet the snake?

Quotation explosion

“Without a tighter breathing, And zero at the bone.”

AO1 What feeling does this ending show, and how is it different from stanza 5?

AO2 What does the phrase “zero at the bone” suggest?

AO2 Why does the poet save this image for the very last line?

Naming a method: personification

Personification gives human qualities to something that is not human. Name it, quote it, then say what it makes the reader think or feel.

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Your task: Write one sentence explaining what calling the snake a “fellow” suggests about the speaker’s attitude at the start of the poem.

The question

Question 28.1

In 'A narrow fellow in the grass', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about the snake?

Today: plan your answer in 8 minutes. No essay.

My argument (thesis)	
Point 1 + quotation	
Point 2 + quotation	
Point 3 + quotation	
Structure and ending	

Have a go

Look again at stanzas 3 and 4. Answer in two or three sentences.

How does the poet use the speaker's childhood memory to make the snake seem impossible to catch? Use one quotation.

Green pen

- ☐ My thesis answers the question in one sentence.
- ☐ Each point has a short quotation and a named method.
- ☐ I said what each method makes the reader feel or think.
- ☐ My plan follows the poem through to its ending.

