

## 2 Reading a poem

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Reading might seem as easy as A, B, C, or might seem to be something that you do unthinkingly, like breathing or walking or, perhaps, talking. We are bombarded by written messages every day and those of us who have successfully learnt to read at a young age and who do not suffer from dyslexia or a visual impairment tend hardly to notice the sheer amount of written stuff that we process every waking hour. And the experience of being immersed in or carried away by a book seems to confirm the sense that reading is something that can happen more or less automatically, something about which you hardly need to think.

Most of the time, then, reading just happens. You are reading a newspaper, a cereal packet, a road sign, an advertising leaflet, a menu, and scarcely give it a moment's thought. You want the information, and you want it now. But you should never read a poem – just as you should never read a novel, play, literary essay or short story – for information, for information only, and arguably indeed not for information at all. All sorts of other questions come into play as well. You find that you are reading for a voice, tone or texture, for intriguing effects of language, for the way that the writer does things with words and the way that a text seems to foreground the very experience of reading – the question of what reading is and how it works (and perhaps sometimes fails to work), how it baffles or delights, what it is *about* (not always obvious) and what it is trying to do to you, what it prompts or even forces you to think about, even if in spite of yourself.

It is this rather special kind of reading that we are interested in here. Our intention is to offer practical tips, as well as to suggest new ways of **thinking** about the familiar but also oddly unpredictable

activity of reading. In particular, we want to explore the idea of 'close reading' – reading, as the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche idiosyncratically puts it, 'with delicate eyes and fingers'. In the Preface to his book *Daybreak* (1881), Nietzsche defines the philologist (from the ancient Greek *philo* (love) *logos* (word)). 'Philologist' is another word for 'literary critic', a lover of language and literature, someone concerned to read well: to read well, Nietzsche declares, one should read 'slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers' (Nietzsche 1997, 5). Extensive reading and even skim-reading is an essential dimension of studying literature, and our advice would be to read as much and (when necessary) as fast as possible. But 'close reading', reading carefully, slowly, 'with delicate eyes and fingers', really is what matters. Of course, you might ask how close is close or how slow is slow. As the French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal observes in his *Pensées* (1670), 'When we read too quickly or too slowly we do not understand anything' (Pascal 1995, 16).

You can't win, it seems. So what would it mean to read well, to read closely or to read creatively? In the first place, it means to read with attention not only to what the text says but to *how* it is saying it, to the linguistic and rhetorical features of a work, to its literary 'form', as well as to its sense. It is this double reading or dividing of attention, indeed, that characterizes literary study. When you read a novel or poem or play, for example, it is all about the way images and ideas are articulated, all about language, about the way words work.

We can try to illustrate this by turning to a poem. W.H. Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' (1938) is, as its title suggests, a poem about looking at pictures in a museum, and about the relationship between art and suffering. Here it is:

About suffering they were never wrong,  
 The Old Masters: how well they understood  
 Its human position: how it takes place  
 While someone else is eating or opening a window or just  
 walking dully along;  
 How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting  
 For the miraculous birth, there always must be

Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating  
 On a pond at the edge of the wood:  
 They never forgot  
 That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course  
 Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot  
 Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's  
 horse  
 Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away  
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may  
 Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,  
 But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone  
 As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green  
 Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen  
 Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,  
 Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

(Auden 1979, 79–80)

The language of Auden's poem seems very straightforward, indeed almost *un-poetical*. The poem does not include many of the kinds of metaphors, specialized or 'poetic' diction, regular rhythm and other rhetorical effects that one tends to associate with poetry. Although the word-order is inverted in lines 1–2 ('The Old Masters were never wrong about suffering' would be more usual in everyday speech), you could almost mistake the poem for a version of someone speaking, informally commenting on some paintings in a museum. Look, for example, at the way that the subject of the poem, 'The Old Masters', is introduced as if as an afterthought, parenthetically, in line 2; or at the way that the extended fourth line strolls rather casually, even quite dully, from one everyday action to another ('eating or opening a window or just walking dully along'). Like much modernist verse, the poem strives for a certain ordinariness or 'naturalness' of language, evoking everyday speech patterns, while being, at the same time, highly crafted. And perhaps that is no surprise: after all, the poem is itself *about* ordinariness, about the way that life just carries on, even if a calamitous or momentous or amazing event is occurring nearby. You can get a sense of this odd combination of the ordinary and the amazing by looking at how the rhymes

work. Although it is easy to miss, the poem does mostly rhyme: in fact, only line 3 is unrhymed (no word rhymes with 'place'). But the rhyme-scheme is so complex and irregular that you could easily overlook this aspect of the poem. The rhyme-scheme of the first section runs: abcadedbfgfge (where the 'a'-rhyme is 'wrong'/'along', the 'b'-rhyme 'understood'/'would', and so on). Through its rhymes, the text both acknowledges and conceals its specialness. The poem does rhyme, but irregularly (line 1 rhymes with line 4, but line 2 has to wait until line 8 for its rhyme, and so on). We might also note the easy, apparently casual rhythm of the language and the variation in stressed and unstressed rhyme-words. Crucial to all these effects is the marvellously quirky enjambment – lines that end without punctuation or pause, where the sense runs on ('how it takes place / While ...'). Along with their casualness, there is an artfulness about the line-endings that ramifies the hazards and coincidences of life that the poem is contemplating. Part of Auden's achievement in constructing this poem, in other words, has to do with the intricate and subtle ways in which he exploits the sound-effects of verse to suggest that things are a matter at once of chance and device, that the world and the poem are at once poetic and prosaic – both amazing and unremarkable.

And that is what the poem is about: paying attention – finding things remarkable or not. The poem is in the venerable tradition of 'ekphrastic' poems – poems that try to evoke paintings, sculptures or other visual works. ('Ekphrasis' is a technical word that originates in the Greek for 'description' and is used for the attempt by a work in one medium to represent a work in another.) The poem asserts that the 'Old Masters' alert us to something important about humanity – that a momentous event for one individual (his birth, for example, or his death) may not be of much consequence to unrelated bystanders. Something remarkable, tragic, appalling happens to someone while for others in the vicinity life just goes on, unperturbed. But how does painting, or art more generally, relate to this? In the first section of the poem, the speaker describes two unnamed (and perhaps fictitious) paintings from the *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts* in Brussels, one of which seems to depict the birth of Christ (the 'miraculous birth') and the other his crucifixion (the 'dreadful martyrdom'). The speaker is struck by the way that these world-changing events happen against the background of children

blithely skating, dogs doing what dogs do, and the torturer's horse being more concerned with an itch on its backside than about what its master might be up to. These animals and children don't care, and why should they? The second part of the poem more specifically concerns a painting in the same museum thought to be by the sixteenth-century Dutch painter Pieter Brueghel (c.1527–69), entitled *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1569).

The painting depicts the death of the mythological figure of Icarus, whose father, Daedalus, had made his son wings of feathers bound together with wax. Although his father had warned him not to fly too near the sun for fear that the wax would melt, Icarus does so and, his wings disintegrating, falls into the sea. In Auden's poem, the speaker comments on the way that in Brueghel's painting a ship sails 'calmly on', ignoring this momentous event (momentous for Icarus, since he dies, but not of much consequence to anyone else, it seems).

As critics have pointed out, one of the interesting dimensions of Auden's poem is that, unlike the Old Masters, the speaker is wrong – wrong in particular about the Old Masters (see Heffernan

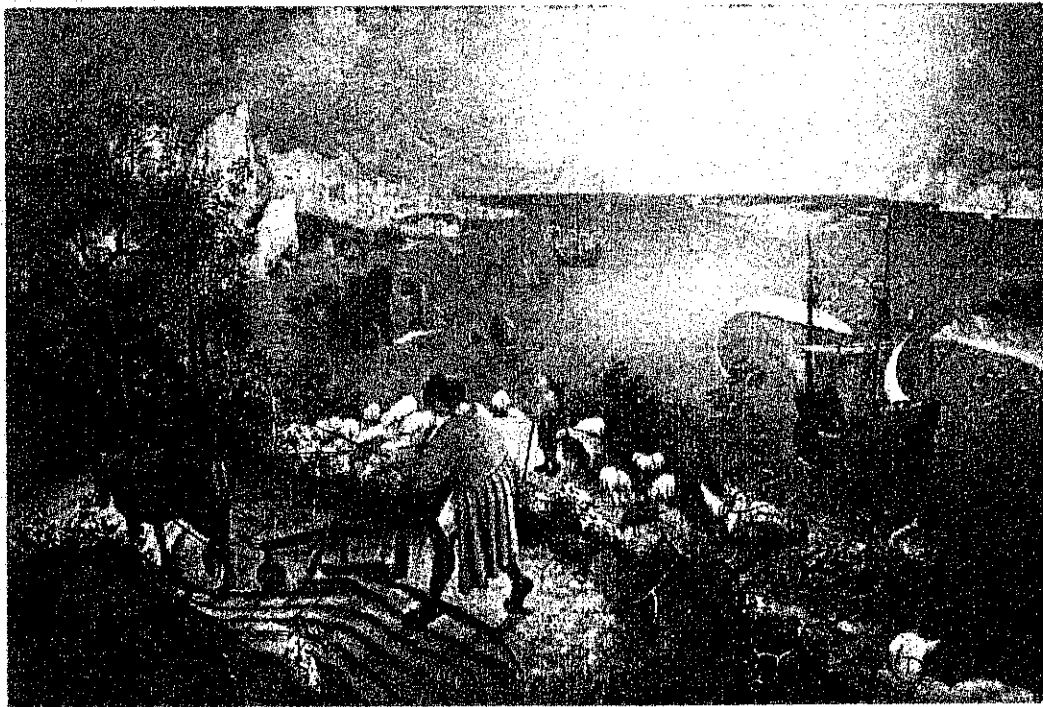


Figure 2.1 Pieter Brueghel (c.1527–69), *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1569): the legs of Icarus can be seen disappearing into the water in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture.

2004, 147). While Brueghel's painting does indeed build on Ovid's account in the *Metamorphoses* (8 AD) to highlight the way in which the death of Icarus has minimal impact on the rest of the world, there are plenty of paintings by Old Masters in which suffering is put centre-stage and made the focus of general attention. You might think, for example, about the way that the Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746–1828) is explicitly concerned with what it means to suffer, with the horrors of the brutality of war, and with what it means to come across or to be a spectator at another's suffering. There is no sense that anyone is looking away from the suffering individuals in his 'Disasters of War' series (1810–20), paintings in which the combination of inhuman brutality and human suffering is the central and even sole topic.

Auden's poem also intersects with other traditions. In particular, it is possible to link 'Musée des Beaux Arts' with the tradition of elegy. There is a moment in the Mike Newell film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) when John Hannah, playing Matthew, recites another famous Auden poem, 'Stop all the clocks' (aka 'Funeral Blues') (1936). The poem figures mourning as the impotent desire for the whole world to stop because the person one loves has died. 'Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone, / Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone', the poem begins, 'Silence the pianos and with muffled drum / Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come' (Auden 1979 141). This is no doubt an experience many of us have shared and will share – the sense of being appalled that the world simply goes on regardless when someone close to you has died. 'What is wrong with people that they can just go on with their ordinary, unremarkable lives, in the face of this catastrophe?', we might find ourselves wondering, in incredulity. And this indeed is one of the foci of the elegiac tradition – the tradition of poems of mourning. Because his friend and fellow poet Edward King has died, Milton argues, even nature itself is in mourning: '... thee the woods, and desert caves, / With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, / And all their echoes mourn' ('Lycidas' (1638), ll.39–41) (Milton 2003, 40). In 'Adonais' (1821), Shelley's speaker laments the fact that his grief 'returns with the revolving year' even while 'The amorous birds now pair in every brake' and while 'A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst / As it has ever done' ('Adonais', ll.155, 159, 164–65) (Shelley 1977, 396). In a more domestic vein, Alfred Tennyson

asks in *In Memoriam* (1850) 'How dare we keep our Christmas-eve[?]', when he has 'such compelling cause to grieve' the death of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam (section 29) (Tennyson 1989, 372).

The tradition of remarking on the disjunction between our own grief and the insouciance of others, even of nature, is also alluded to in Derek Walcott's sequence of elegies for his mother in his 1997 collection *The Bounty*. There is 'the traffic of insects going to work anyway' – anyway, despite his mother's death – and there is a sense of 'astonishment' even 'that earth rejoices / in the middle of our agony' (Walcott 1997, 3, 14). And there is also something perhaps still harder to bear: our tendency to forget our grief just as and even just because we try to memorialize it in a formal elegy: 'pardon me', Walcott demands plaintively and self-reflexively, 'as I watch these lines grow and the art of poetry harden me // into sorrow as measured as this' (5). The desire to stop all the clocks can also be a form of narcissism, a troubled realization that the world does not revolve around your existence and therefore around your grief or suffering. So 'Musée des Beaux Arts' connects with 'Funeral Blues' and with the elegiac tradition more generally by highlighting and putting into question a narcissistic fantasy about being at the centre of the world, about the desire for the world to take note, to notice you. In Auden's poem, the speaker's (erroneous) idea about the profundity of the Old Masters' understanding of the human predicament, their understanding, always, that human suffering goes unnoticed, can then be seen as part of a concern about being and not being noticed.

This is a way of reading 'Musée des Beaux Arts': we have begun to try to tease out the thematic core of the poem, the poem's 'message' (as it is sometimes crassly called), or its 'theme', what it 'says' or what it is about, and we have remarked on its links with other poems in the elegiac and ekphrastic traditions. And we might join other critics in linking the poem to its historical contexts. A number of critics have suggested that the ignored or disregarded suffering that Auden alludes to in his poem includes the Spanish Civil War, for example, in which he had been personally involved, as well as the rise of Hitler in the 1930s, and other events of what, in his poem '1 September 1939', he calls that 'low dishonest decade' (see Cheeke 2008, 107–8). Considering the question of its historical resonance is one way to pursue a close and creative reading of Auden's poem. The poem is about the nature of examples, but it is more than

merely an example. It points beyond itself. Indeed we could say that one of the most forceful underlying arguments of the poem is that it is always necessary to take context into account but that context is always larger and more complex than the point of view of any single individual.

There is a famous essay by the 'New Critic' Cleanth Brooks called 'The Heresy of Paraphrase' (Brooks 1949), in which Brooks argues powerfully and influentially that a poem should not be understood to have a propositional content in the way that, say, this sentence or a newspaper story does. As Archibald MacLeish famously puts it at the end of his 'Ars Poetica' (1926), 'A poem should not mean / But be' – although as MacLeish also rather less famously says in that poem, 'A poem should be wordless / As the flight of birds', which does rather make you wonder how seriously to take it (for the record, 'Ars Poetica' contains 129 words). Brooks argues that to try to extract the content or meaning from a poem, to attempt simply to paraphrase it, is a kind of 'heresy', a fundamental error, since it is in the very nature of literary texts that *what* they say is bound up with *how* they say it. After all, like translation, strictly speaking, it is impossible. You cannot paraphrase without altering. As Bill Readings memorably puts it, 'paraphrase is a philosophical joke' (Readings 1991, xxi). And even if you could do it, *just* paraphrasing anyway would not get you very far. Paraphrase may be helpful, even necessary, but a reading of a literary text should start rather than stop there.

We have talked about the language and rhetorical structures of Auden's poem, about its linguistic plainness or 'naturalness' – with respect to the syntax and lexical details in particular – and about the way it rhymes but at the same time seems to resist regular and overt rhyming. This is the fundamental premise of close reading: vocabulary, syntax and rhetorical effects cannot be distinguished from a poem's meaning. The rhyme-scheme will tell us very little unless we can link that feature persuasively to a consideration of other aspects of what the poem is doing, and above all to how it makes meaning. What Auden's poem means has to do with the way that the seeming casualness of the apparently un-poetic voice interacts with the poem's veiled poeticalness.

We have suggested that the speaker is wrong to declare that the Old Masters have only one approach to suffering. In the real world, so to speak, and especially if the speaker was, say, an art critic, that



error would be a problem. When art critics make generalizations about paintings or about the Old Masters they are supposed to get their facts right, or at least to speak with a certain authority – that, after all, is their job. But when poets make demonstrably false propositional statements, the erroneousness of their assertions only serves to complicate and enrich the experience of reading. Poems and other literary texts do not, in a sense, make propositional truth claims – or if they do, those claims should themselves be understood as rhetorical tropes. To put it bluntly, it doesn't *matter* whether or not the statement the speaker makes is right, any more than it matters whether Jane Austen's famous generalization at the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) ('It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife') is true (Austen 2006a, 3). Her statement is effective precisely to the extent that it is questionable (particularly as a truth *universally* acknowledged): until Austen wrote this sentence one might think that the sentiment was anything but 'universally acknowledged'. It was perhaps more generally acknowledged afterwards, at least among a certain social class, by certain heterosexual men and women, in a certain historical period. And in that sense, the sentence is 'performative': it performs or produces what it presents itself as only describing. But we are still perhaps enticed and indeed even charmed by the grand, if somewhat complacent authority of the narrator's voice. What Austen is doing at the beginning of her novel is not so much expressing a universal truth as establishing for her narrator a certain voice or claim to authority.

Like Austen's opening, Auden's generalization about the Old Masters provokes a series of questions that are fundamental to reading:

- First, there are questions of voice and authorship: Who is speaking? To what extent are these views the poet's own? Whose voice is this? In what tone or tones are we invited to hear it?
- Second, there are the questions of sincerity and intentionality: Does the speaker mean what he says? Does Auden? What does Auden want to convey?
- Third, there is irony: Should we be alert for the distinction between what is said and what is meant? In other words, does the poem say one thing and mean another?

- Fourth, there is form and content: How do technical factors such as the rhyming, alliteration, enjambment and so on participate in the sense?
- And finally, there is interpretation: How should we construe this poem's sentences? How can we ensure that our reading is accurate, valid, credible?

Careful attention to these questions, and especially to distinctions such as those between poet and speaker or author and persona, is fundamental to effective critical reading.

So we are left with a poem that makes a bold, assertive statement but that is also *about* the act of making bold assertive statements, a poem that raises questions (about voice and intention and meaning and irony, and so on) without necessarily resolving them. Indeed, what we have is a sense of tension or paradox or uncertainty with regard to the poem's meaning or its meaningfulness. The poem seems to be utterly lucid, transparent, interpretatively straightforward. But that very simplicity generates hermeneutic or interpretative problems. There is a fundamental strangeness about the way in which the poem moves between the particular and the general. We need to respond to the ways in which the poem is general (it is about poetry, painting, suffering, and so on). And at the same time we need to acknowledge its particularity or singularity. We need to try to do justice to the fact that 'Musée des Beaux Arts' is untranslatable, unparaphrasable. This relationship between the general and the singular was noted by Aristotle in his *Poetics* more than two thousand years ago. But it is a principle that has been reinvented, rediscovered, restated in different ways down the centuries – most recently, for example, by W.K. Wimsatt (Wimsatt 1954, 69–84) and Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1995, 142–43). Briefly, in the *Poetics* Chapter Nine, Aristotle argues that unlike history, which seeks to record and account for single, individual and essentially unrepeatable events, but also unlike philosophy, which is based on the establishment of universal truths without regard for the singularity of the event, poetry is about *both* the particular or individual or singular *and* the general or universal (Aristotle 2001, 97–98). In this context we might notice, then, the rather strange ways in which Auden's poem involves both very large generalizations (about *all* the Old Masters being right about something *all* of the time) and three very specific

examples. What happens in 'Musée des Beaux Arts' is that a general statement is made and then exemplified. But in exemplifying the statement, the speaker seems to get caught up, lost even, in the detail, in the particularities of the paintings, and especially with respect to Brueghel's painting of the fall of Icarus. We might thus notice, for example, the particularity and queer eroticism of the boy's white legs in the corner of Brueghel's picture as they disappear into the sea.

And this, in a sense, is what happens to us – or what could or should or might happen to us – in reading Auden's poem. Although we start out wondering what it means, what argument or ideas are being conveyed, we quickly get drawn in by the verbal and rhetorical effects, by the language, in short by *how* something is being said rather than simply *what* is being said. We might think here about anaphora, the rhetorical figure for the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines or clauses. Once you have noticed it, for example, it is difficult to ignore how insistently the poem speaks of 'how': 'how well they understood', 'how it takes place', 'How when the aged ...', 'Anyhow in a corner', 'how everything turns away'.

This brings us to our final point about reading a poem. People, including many critics and theorists, often seem to assume that there is a clear and final distinction between the *practice* of reading, close reading in particular, and literary *theory*. Indeed, people often seem to suppose that there is a sense in which close reading and literary theory are mutually exclusive: you can't read closely, carefully, slowly if you are also doing theory, they say; theorizing about literature is obstructed or distorted by reading, by attending to the idiosyncrasies of individual texts, they think. But this overlooks the fact of literature's singularity, its strange mixing of the general and particular. Close reading is necessarily bound up with questions of theory – and theory itself is always a question of reading. As soon as you begin to ask questions about a poem ('What does it mean?', 'What kind of text is it?', 'Was the author male or female?', and so on), you are engaging with theoretical questions and issues.

Here, in summary, are some fundamental points about how to read poems, and about how to read them *well*:

- **Paraphrase**, if you like: it can be helpful. But recognize that a paraphrase is never an end in itself. Saying that Auden's poem is about suffering is just a beginning.

- Attend to the *way* that a poem says something as well as to *what* it says. Look, for example, at how the intricacies of the rhyme-scheme in Auden's poem help to propound its meanings.
- Think about how the language and rhetorical effects reflect or enact, enhance or nuance a poem's meaning. The plainness, the un-remarkableness of Auden's language reflects his subject, the way that ordinary, everyday life just goes on, oblivious to extraordinary events.
- Be sensitive to issues of authorial intention that your reading brings up and be ready to engage with these as integral to the poem's meaning and significance. Is Auden being ironic, oblique, understated, misleading, playful? What are his intentions here? What weight should we anyway give to authorial intention?
- Be alert to the kinds of allusions (in language or genre) that the text involves. Is there, in this instance, an intertextual relationship between Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' and his 'Funeral Blues'? In what ways does the poem engage with, revise, respond to the ekphrastic tradition of poems on paintings? What is distinctive or singular about *this* poem's painterly qualities?
- Respond to the ways that a poem is itself, in a self-reflexive way, attentive to the question of reading. In Auden's poem, looking at pictures might be taken to be a form of reading and the poem might be understood to be about what Frank Kermode, in a book of that name, calls 'Forms of Attention' (Kermode 1985).
- Consider how the poem moves between the particular and the general. Auden's poem is in part *about* the way that one generalizes from particular examples, but it is also *about* what is stubbornly singular in the particular.
- Tease out the logic of the poem and try above all to explore what is conflictual or paradoxical or ironic. Auden's poem is about paying attention and not paying attention to amazing events, and is itself both amazing and very ordinary – giving the sense that the ordinary may itself *be* extraordinary, and may even be more interesting, in some ways, than what seems extraordinary.
- Remember history: in what ways is this poem embroiled in the historical, cultural, social, economic as well as perhaps personal circumstances in which it was written and published? As we indicated earlier, critics have suggested that Auden's poem should be read in contexts including the Spanish Civil War and

the rise of Hitler in the 1930s. History cannot explain *everything* about a poem, but it does help us to better understand crucial features.

- **Examine details:** get stuck on words, images, rhetorical figures, formal features such as rhyme and rhythm. What is the word 'human', for example, doing in line 3 of Auden's poem? What is its relationship to the dogs and to the torturer's horse later on, and to the non-human ship which is nevertheless anthropomorphized by being given the human attribute of not noticing or stopping to help when it 'sees' Icarus fall to his death? What does the poem tell us about what it means to be 'human'? Well, that might be the beginning of another reading of the poem. Perhaps we should start again ...
- **Note:** the singularity of the poem is something that calls for a singular response to it in turn. Reading well, or creatively, entails not just noticing what other readers might be expected to notice, but also adding something of your own – taking a path or flight across the poem that involves new connections, new resonances, new possibilities.

### Further reading

You are spoilt for choice when it comes to introductions to poetry, most of which pay careful attention to its formal aspects. You might try Michael D. Hurley and Michael O'Neill's brief, lucid and carefully focused *Poetic Form: An Introduction* (2012), or rather more expansive books by John Strachan and Richard Terry, *Poetry* (2nd edn, 2011), by Tom Furniss and Michael Bath, *Reading Poetry: An Introduction* (2007), and by John Lennard, *The Poetry Handbook* (2005). Three brief, readable, thought-provoking and sometimes intentionally provocative recent books on poetry (as a way of writing and as texts to be read) by practising poets are David Constantine's *Poetry* (2013), Glyn Maxwell's *On Poetry* (2012) and James Fenton's *An Introduction to English Poetry* (2003). Jon Cook has edited a generously proportioned and very useful anthology of brief essays by twentieth-century poets and critics on poetry, *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology 1900–2000* (2004). A rather different but also very useful anthology is the collection of prominent examples of 'close reading' edited by Frank Lentricchia and Andrew DuBois, *Close*

*Reading: The Reader* (2003) – the volume includes ‘classic’ essays from the mid-twentieth century as well as more recent essays that take on board developments in race and gender studies, political and historical criticism, and poststructuralism and postcolonialism. Talking of ‘classic’ texts, we might mention William Empson’s amazing *Seven Types of Ambiguity*: now more than eighty years old, Empson’s book set high standards for close reading when it was published in 1930, and still constitutes a remarkable demonstration of just how close you can get to ‘the words on the page’. Ekphrasis (and specifically poems about paintings) is a very lively area of literary studies: see, in particular, Stephen Cheeke’s *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (2008), James A.W. Heffernan’s *The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (2004), and three brilliant books by W.J.T. Mitchell: *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (2005), *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (1994), and *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986). Finally, specifically on the question or problem of paraphrase, it is worth looking at Cleanth Brooks’s classic essay ‘The Heresy of Paraphrase’ (1949).