**Poetry Explication**

* Short analysis
* Describes meanings and relationships of words, images, and other small units
* Connects plot and conflicts with structural features

**How to do it:**

THE LARGER ISSUES

1. Read the poem silently.
2. Read the poem out loud.
3. Identify the plot. What is happening in the poem?
4. Identify the specific conflicts and how they are introduced, sustained, and resolved.
5. Identify the theme.
6. Identify and describe the speaker.
7. Identify and describe the audience.
8. Identify any other characters.
9. Where or under what circumstances does the action occur?
10. Why does the speaker feel compelled to speak at this moment? What is the speaker’s motivation?

THE DETAILS

1. Analyze the design of the poem.
2. Focus first on the poem’s parts. Look at how the poem uses language to dramatize conflict or ideas.
3. Use what you know about the parts to identify the form and structure.
4. Use what you know about the parts to gather evidence for your interpretations.
5. Identify the form of the poem and notice any variations from the traditional structure of that form.
6. Identify the rhetoric or way the speaker makes particular statements. What does the WAY the speaker says something tell you about the speaker?
7. Look at the syntax and determine the way the order of subjects, verbs, and objects in a sentence convey meaning.
8. Look at vocabulary (diction). Why does the poet choose one word over another?

THE PATTERNS

1. Look for the way certain patterns contribute to meaning.
2. Look for rhetorical patterns or statements that follow the same format.
3. Look for rhyming patterns: look at end words joined by sounds that rhyme or look at the importance of end words in non-rhyming poems.
4. Look for patterns of sound: look for the ways alliteration and assonance create sound effects and often cluster significant words.
5. Look for visual patterns. How does the poem look on the page?
6. Look for patterns of rhythm and meter that influence our perception of the speaker and his/her language.