

Cold Knap Lake

Gillian Clarke

Key

Pre-listening activities

1. Describing the picture.

2. The answers to these questions are all speculation. Some students may wish to build a mini-narrative around the picture they have just described, and others may wish to embark upon a flight of fantasy. There are no right or wrong answers. The idea is to build a sense of anticipation for the content of the poem. Briefly share the ideas before proceeding.

3. The vocabulary may be used simply to pre-teach some of the vocabulary before the students listen to the poem. It can also be used to modify the mini-narratives that have just been formed or, indeed, to build the narratives in the first place though the students would need to be strong language users to do this.

Context

Was I there?

Or is that troubled surface something else
shadowy under the dipped fingers of willows
where satiny mud blooms in cloudiness
after the treading, heavy webs of swans
as their wings beat and whistle on the air?

1. troubled surface; shadowy. Go to <http://www.gillianclarke.co.uk/home.htm> to find out Gillian Clarke's thoughts on this poem.

2. This activity relies on students supplying all the data. It takes as its theme the poet's memory of her young self witnessing an event, but she can't quite work out how much is real memory. Students are being asked to recall an early memory and to share it with others. It can be quite interesting to discover the difference in ages that different people recall earliest memories.