

## Rosetti: (f) *Winter: My Secret*

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☞ refers to links on [www.crossref-it.info](http://www.crossref-it.info)

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the poem and its possible meanings.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Ask students about secrets
  - What kind of secrets are there?
  - Why do people have secrets?
  - Are secrets good, or bad, things?
  - What effect can secrets have?
    - ☞ Rossetti > *Winter: My Secret* > Synopsis and commentary > Investigating *Winter: My Secret*
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Read the poem aloud
  - The teacher could do this, or, if the class is suitable, in pairs- one reader and one listener
  - Aim for a conversational, slightly teasing, style - the key is to pay great attention to the punctuation.
    - ☞ Rossetti > *Winter: My Secret* > Language, tone and structure > Punctuation
  - Copy, cut up and distribute the possible interpretations of the poem from **f)i Worksheet**, allocating one each to small groups, or individuals
  - Each group needs to look for
    - Evidence to support their interpretation
    - Evidence against and reports back.
    - ☞ Rossetti > *Winter: My Secret* > Synopsis and commentary > Commentary > Different interpretations
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Discuss the ideas which arise from the possible interpretations
  - Is it necessary to come up with one meaning?
  - Can a poem contain multiple meanings at the same time?
  - What is the narrative voice? (AQA exam focus.)
  - Now discuss the poem's
    - Form
    - Structure
    - Language
- and how this informs the possible interpretations
  - Think about:
    - The use of questions
    - The use of rhyme and metre
    - The significance of the seasons
    - Any other symbolism.
    - ☞ Rossetti > *Winter: My Secret* > Language, tone and structure & Imagery, symbolism and themes
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Write the listener's response, based on your views of the possible interpretations.
  - Ideally, this would be a poem in similar style, perhaps called *Winter: Your Secret*.
- ❖ **Critical task:** How does Rossetti present the theme of secrecy in *Winter: My Secret*?
  - Give students copies of the worked essay outline
    - ☞ Rossetti > Approaching essays and exams > A worked example and allocate the paragraphs around the class
  - When students have written their paragraphs, *either*
    - Read them aloud and discuss (as a whole class or in groups)

*or*

    - The teacher takes in the paragraphs and photocopies one complete set, which is then given out and discussed in terms of essay style and approach
    - Keep this as an example.
- ❖ **Extension task:** The working title for this poem was *Nonsense*
  - Research the notion of nonsense poetry, particularly in the Victorian era.
    - ☞ Rossetti > *Winter: My Secret* > Imagery, symbolism and themes > Themes
  - Would this have been a suitable title for the poem?
  - Does the poem fit into the nonsense genre?