

Understanding Poetry By Cleanth Brooks Houseman is one of these and follows Tennyson's Ulysses in the book's ordering of supplemental poems after the chapter on dramatic situation and rhythm and meter.

I read this book not because I had the faintest hope for ever understanding such a complicated matter as poetry but because I thought that the selection of poems in the book would be sufficiently interesting and beautiful to enjoy some reading without having to dig it out too much. I am not totally disappointed by the author's selection but I recon now that this book is more intended for students and teachers of serious literary matters rather than for an amateur poetry reader. Shakespeare: In time of need by William Stafford: Lucifer in Starlight by George Meredith A I said and I repeat it now: I really tried to understand and I think I did a little. The joy of this book is in the authors' deep understanding of the way language - and poetry in particular - is critical to understanding the world and the human mind and heart. I received a lot of pleasure from their teaching chapters most especially How Poems Come About: Intention and Meaning (Appendix A) Metrics (Appendix B) and Poetry As a Way of Saying. Houseman Onward led the road again Through the sad uncolored plain Under twilight brooding dim And along the utmost rim Wall and rampart risen to sight Cast a shadow not of night And beyond them seemed to glow Bonfires lighted long ago. In addition to improving my reading comprehension skills the book caused me to reflect on many larger topics such as the purpose of art the relationship of humans to their world and even the meaning of life. As a result of adding irony and paradox to a work instead of simply applying an ordinary meaning to a particular linguistic statement irony opens the gateway to a variety of interpretations to the statement and it is this which makes poetry and tragedy enjoyable to the reader. Contemplating the complexities of an ambiguous meaning in an ironical statement found in a text leads to a heightened perception of how it is shaped by the context as well as how it affects the whole work. Brooks implies that there is no point in tragedy if there is no irony which to decipher in the same way that there is no point to a puzzle if it is already put together. Why then doesn't he say it directly and forthrightly? Why is he willing to say it only through his metaphors? Through his metaphors he risks saying it partially and obscurely and risks saying nothing at all. The poet could have adopted the alternative path and say what he needs to say in a direct manner rather than in a manner embellished by metaphors and irony but that would have literally squeezed the artfulness of the poem. It is the co-existence of two opposing forces that are metaphorically represented that exist in such a way that they create harmony like the ying and the yang in the popular harmonizing symbol. No matter how disparate or fragmented is its language and its surface meaning there is an unstated layer of meaning concealing itself beneath the former which holds the work of art together and gives it the sense and coherence of a literary masterpiece. Given the arcane nature of the ideal poem the double entendre of its metaphors and the irony of its manifold situations there may be no other alternative but to employ analytical methods and explication tactics. Yet despite all of the intricacies of an ideal work Brooks would claim that if it were not for the balance of its seeming opposites and metaphors which to decipher there simply would be no greatness to the so-called "great" work of art:

These authors/editors often provided commentary and insight to help the student understand the poems more deeply. Perrine's Sound & Sense is another anthology that does this but only in the teacher's edition and not with the same intellectual sharpness: I have not read every poem in this book; I'm still working my way through them (there are 594 pages here), So far I've been pleased to read poems I've never read before by authors I know: Here are the cover editorial info and the first page of the preface from the book I read. This is a thick volume but it is printed in thin paper with soft cardboard covers so you can easily keep with you in your student's backpack: Here you can see that the contents is much more dense than the intended reader I was: Some of the first works of the book: A long and full-of-words poem by R, I think this book will work better if I take the accompanying class. com Criticism This textbook was around the house as I used other textbooks

and I would page through it though I did not read it cover to cover, I always liked Penn Warren and I liked this: I would like to find it again: Criticism I was greatly challenged by the exercises in this book especially the later ones which I balked at exhausted by the earlier chapters. It takes patience and focus; reading poetry is like the opposite of reading the cant and slop that we rip through on our screens: Learning to love poetry is a bit like growing up and realizing that fresh fruit actually tastes better than McDonalds once you have repaired your frayed nerves and blown out senses. It is a difficult pleasure in Harold Bloom's phrase but quite worth the effort, There are certain artistic feats of illumination of communication that are only possible in poetry: I look forward to returning to this book one day and one hopes giving it a wiser reading, Criticism I knew this in an earlier edition co-edited with Robert Penn Warren which was used in my high school English class, Good on the bookshelf for its application of New Criticism in the 1960s. If you just want an anthology of American and English poetry this has less poetry per page than one and more commentary, Criticism For a person who really knows nothing about poetry, It was exactly what I was looking for in trying to explain the inner workings of poems, Originally written in 1938 it may be a little outdated but I wouldn't know the difference and it all seemed reasonable to me. I was constantly stumped by the exercises that coincide with the various poems presented in the text, I would read the poem and would be at loss as to what the choice was about, Then I would read the analysis and occasionally the light would go on and I would reread the poem with new insight: Ouch! But that was a personal failing and not the book's fault. I highly recommend this book for anyone who is looking for instruction on the art of poetry. Criticism The fourth edition of Understanding Poetry is a re-inspection of poetry: Keeping it teachable and flexible the material allows for full and innocent immersion as well as raising inductive questions to develop critical and analytical skills: Students will be led to understand poetry as a means of imaginatively extending their own experience and indeed probing the possibilities of the self: This latest incarnation of the landmark text facilitates a thorough study of poetry: Understanding Poetry I ordered this book from my library and ended up loving it so much that I dropped 38 bucks on a used copy. First realize that the fourth and latest edition of this book was published in 1976. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren are no longer alive and the selection of poetry in the book obviously excludes the work of the last 40 years. Like a standard school anthology Brooks and Penn Warren include questions after most of the poems: It's so beautiful so old-fashioned that buying the book is worth the price just for this poem. And my dark conductor broke Silence at my side and spoke Saying You conjecture well: Yonder is the gate of hell. Criticism I decided to read this book because I generally claim to dislike poetry, I had a sneaking suspicion that my dislike of poetry was due more to a deficiency in myself rather than a deficiency in the entire genre of poetry. I thought this book might help me develop a deeper appreciation. After reading this book I still can't say I'm a huge fan of poetry. I was able to identify my main barrier to appreciating poetry namely that I read too fast: When reading novels I tend to barrel through sentences and paragraphs absorbing the main ideas character descriptions and plot without lingering over every sentence. However this does not work with poetry because the characters and plots are worth nothing if you don't pay attention to the style and form, Once I slowed down a little reading each sentence and digesting it before moving on I got a lot more from the poems. It's a revelation that has also increased my appreciation for the novels I read and helped me absorb more information from scientific journal articles: I did not expect to get all of that from a poetry textbook, The book also contains many wonderful poems that I'd never heard of before. I've always been a huge fan of Thomas Hardy's novels but I didn't realize he was an amazing poet as well, After I return my library book I plan to invest in a personal copy and continue to re-read it for years to come, Criticism Cleanth Brooks is famous for making the interesting claim that the structure of a poem or tragedy is similar to the structure of a kite. In order for a kite to function properly it must include its tail, One would imagine that the tail of a kite would weigh the kite down but paradoxically it is a requirement that allows the kite to rise to unprecedented heights. The same is true for a work of literature as shall be henceforth explained, Irony in literature works in the same manner as the tail to the kite: Therefore it is irony that is the main structuring principle in literature and poetry

because it is irony which gives life and flavor to a work of art: Likewise the irony of the kite is that its tail is supposed to weigh it down but does not. In fact it is what gives it support and even serves to propel the kite even higher just as the “counterthrust” that Brooks talks about gives more force to the “thrust: ” It is the harmonization of opposites that composes the organic whole. Contradictions only remain as such until the reader applies his critical thinking and explication skills and can then understand them as parts of the organic whole. Every unit of the literary work is crucial in finding the text's meaning in assisting the text's growth and in balancing the text's tensions: Brooks utilizes this metaphor to exemplify that which illustrates the substance of organic units in a text, He illustrates this organic unity of literature by focusing on the function of irony in its structure as is implied by the appropriate title of his essay, Irony paradoxes contradictions and “counterthrusts to the thrust” create literary situation that set up a certain tone and mood for the reader, It is irony which makes a work of art delectable to its consumer and metaphors which paint a agreeable picture in the reader's mind to make the work more interesting. But the risk must be taken for direct statement leads to abstraction and threatens to take us out of poetry altogether” (758), Irony focuses on what is real and what is believed to be real. An ironical and even paradoxical level of meaning produces the wholeness and integrity of a literary work, As with verbal irony the stated and the unstated meanings may conflict only initially but ultimately they combine to produce an integrated and meaningful whole, Given the complexity of the ideal literary work that Brooks prescribes it is not surprising that he was such a strong proponent of close readings critical thinking and explications: The tail of the kite does not bring the kite down in fact it propels it. Just like the kite paradoxically cannot do without its tail neither can a literary masterpiece do without its dose of irony. Criticism Originally published in 1938 it's no longer in print but it is a valuable text if you find one: You can learn so much from reading just two chapters on narrative and descriptive poems. Brooks and Warren include plenty of examples AND include their commentary on how poems work and what they mean. I realize that the chapters on metrics and structure mature into graduate college work: However the skill with which Brooks and Warren chose the poems and craft the homework questions and explications are some of the best I've read. Hell Gate by A.E. A fraction of the contents. Kipling: Elegy by Thomas Gray (I tried hard. I really did. I promise) Cleopatra's Lament by W. a teeny tiny little. I also have a blog! Link here: <http://lunairereadings.blogspot>. I am slowly building up my ability to read poetry. This book was quite a revelation. The result from the reading however was less accomplished. Alas I am apparently of a non-poetical nature. But all too often I would end up going riiiiight. I'm still waiting for it. This is not a problem for me. Poems aren't vegetables to go bad over time. Unlike many of those anthologies part I. Here's the first stanza: Hell Gate - A.E. However I got more from this book than instruction. Brooks claims that “The poet wants to ‘say’ something. So does irony and contradiction to a literary work. Criticism Şiiri anlamak ne kolay ya. Ehe. So so helpful to learn from their wealth of experience. No dumb-downs no PC driven rhetoric. Solid instruction for any teacher or student. Criticism

