

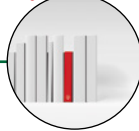
Ezra Pound, *In a Station of the Metro*

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) was an American poet. In Venice he wrote his first volume of verse, *A Lume Spento* (1908). Later he moved to London, where he joined a small group of poets called Imagist. These poets described single images with a pointillist exactness, in a way reminiscent of Chinese and Japanese verse.

In 1925 Pound settled in Rapallo where he lived till 1945. He supported the Fascist regime, and for this reason he was arrested by the American army and taken to the USA, where he was judged insane and confined in a mental hospital. In 1958 he was released from hospital and returned to Italy. His most famous work, *The Cantos*, is a collection of one hundred poems which show the influence of French Symbolists, the Italian verse of the Middle Ages, the Japanese Noh plays, and the Chinese ideograms. The following is entitled *In a Station of the Metro*.

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.*

activities



↓ TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Where do you think the poet was standing when this poem came to his mind?
- 2 The poem presents two images, one in each line. Can you describe them in your own words?
- 3 When do we generally use the word 'apparition'? Why do you think Pound used this word instead of 'appearance'?
- 4 Which rhetorical figure does the poet employ to describe the faces of the people in the metro station?
- 5 What does the poem suggest about life in the modern world?

↓ CLOZE EXERCISE

Complete this short summary with the words below: urban – beings – revelation – ghostly – beauty – short – message – view.

A Moment of Revelation

This **1** poem deals with images alone. It is not complex at all, though it conveys a deep **2** about the beauty of human **3**.
A keyword in the poem is 'apparition', which generally refers to a **4** figure, something strange or unusual that suddenly comes into **5**. Here the poet employs this word to describe a moment of sudden **6** and intense emotion he felt at the metro station La Concorde, in

Paris, where he experienced the presence of unexpected beauty in an **7** environment.

The word 'petals' in the second line embodies an idea of delicate **8** which seems to contrast with the bleakness of the 'wet, black bough'.

Pound stated that his intention was to try and record "the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself ... into a thing inward and subjective".

↓ WRITING

The poem *In a Station of the Metro* was first published in 1913. It is considered one of the main poems of the Imagist tradition, and it is written in a Japanese haiku style.

Haikus are short poems of three lines, containing five, seven, and five syllables respectively.

Try to complete the haiku below (1), then try and write your own haiku about a plant, an animal or an object around you, following the given guidelines (2).

- 1 Birds fly high and free
They never look sad or blue
.....
.....

- 2 Title
Five syllables
Seven syllables
Five syllables