

**POETRY GROUP MEETING**  
**Saturday May 13<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
**Prayer Room. The Uniting Church. Sketty.**

The first meeting of the poetry group went well. It opened with the playing of a recording of W. B. Yeats reading The Lake Isle of Innisfree. His broad Irish accent shocked many listeners.

An interesting discussion on Imagist Poetry followed based on information previously provided (*see below*).

Group Members then read their own poems and those of other poets, positive comments and feedback being provided by other Members.

Mark Cainen then set the difficult task of writing non-religious eulogies for the next meeting, it being hard to avoid clichés and becoming trite.

Coffee, Tea and Biscuits were much appreciated by everyone!

The next meeting is on Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> at the same time and place.

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**Imagist Poetry**

Imagism was a movement in early-20th-century that favoured precision of imagery and clear, sharp language. It was the first organized modernist literary movement in the English language. Imagists rejected the sentiment and discursiveness typical of Romantic and Victorian poetry and called for a return to more Classical values, such as directness of presentation, economy of language, and a willingness to experiment with non-traditional verse forms; Imagists used free verse. A characteristic feature of the form is its attempt to isolate a single image to reveal its essence. This mirrors Cubism in art. Ezra Pound called the method of isolating objects as "luminous details". His method of juxtaposing concrete instances to express an abstraction is again similar to Cubism's manner of synthesizing multiple perspectives into a single image.

Imagist publications appearing between 1914 and 1917 featured works by many of the most prominent modernist figures in poetry and other fields, including Pound, Hilda Doolittle, Amy Lowell, Ford Madox Ford, William Carlos Williams, F. S. Flint, and T. E. Hulme. Even D.H. Lawrence, the Georgian poet, participated in the Imagist movement.

Literary scholars trace the origins of Imagism to the poetry of T.E. Hulme. For example, "A City Sunset":

Alluring, Earth seducing, with high conceits  
is the sunset that reigns  
at the end of westward streets. ...  
A sudden flaring sky  
troubling strangely the passer by  
with visions, alien to long streets, of Cytharea  
or the smooth flesh of Lady Castlemaine. ...  
A frolic of crimson  
is the spreading glory of the sky,  
heaven's jocund maid  
flaunting a trailed red robe  
along the fretted city roofs  
about the time of homeward going crowds  
— a vain maid, lingering, loth to go. ...

Hulme's verse bridges the divide between the expansive, sentimental poetry of nineteenth century Victorian and Romantic traditions with the more terse, spare style that would come to define the twentieth century.

Imagist poetry is defined by directness, economy of language, avoidance of generalities, and a hierarchy of precise phrasing over adherence to poetic meter. Pound laid out the following ground rules for what an Imagist poem contains:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

Pound had a gift for being succinct, as is evidenced by his two-line poem "In a Station of the Metro":

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

More reminiscent of a haiku than of Pound's Anglo-American poetic forebears, this poem packs enormous meaning into a mere fourteen words. In just two lines, Pound describes both a setting and an unspoken mood, as well as a speaker's perspective.

The following are some tips for anyone thinking of writing in the Imagist style:

- 1- Use the language of common speech.
- 2- Embrace free verse not blank verse. Blank verse does not rhyme, but it contains precise iambic pentameter. Free verse doesn't worry about poetic meter but focuses on the rhythm of the phrases called "new rhythms."
- 3- The choice of subject should reflect real life.

Despite the movement's short life, Imagism deeply influenced the course of modernist poetry in English. Particularly in the work of T. S. Eliot. For better or worse the rejection of conventional verse forms in the nineteen-twenties owed much to the Imagists' repudiation of the Georgian Poetry style.

On the other hand, the American poet Wallace Stevens found shortcomings in the Imagist approach saying: "Not all objects are equal. The vice of imagism was that it did not recognize this."

Imagism and free verse also influenced a number of poetry circles and movements, for example the Objectivist poets of the 1930s. Charles Olson, the theorist of the Black Mountain poets, wrote, "One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception" which derives directly from and supplements the Imagists.

Lastly among the Beat Poets of the 1950s, Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg were influenced by the Imagist emphasis on Chinese and Japanese poetry.