

Feelings and Emotions

Poetry workshop with

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These resources can be used in conjunction with my feelings and emotions poetry workshop which will be available on the Shakespeare Week website from Tuesday 25th March 2025.

You can read the extracts from the plays that I quote in the workshop in this resource pack. There are also lots of ideas for ways that you can write creatively too.

It's also a good idea to read a short version of the plays, such as versions by Marcia Williams. Alternatively there are some short versions written by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust which are available in the resources section of the Shakespeare Week website. I hope you have fun!



Love and heartbreak

Extract One

Come, night. Come, Romeo... Romeo and Juliet, Act 3 Scene 2

By this part of the play, Romeo and Juliet have fallen in love and are secretly married. In this speech, Juliet is wishing for night to come so she can see him.

*Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night,
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.
Come, gentle night; come, loving black-browed night,
Give me my Romeo, and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possessed it, and, though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,
And she brings news, and every tongue that speaks
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.*

Extract One

English

Have a go at writing something like this about someone you have strong feelings for. It could be a friend, a parent, grandparent or even a pet! Then think about...

- Who are you going to talk to? The night, like Juliet? The sun? The wind?
- What are you going to beg them to do? You could ask the sun to shine on your grandmother for example.

In Juliet's speech, even though it is about love, there is a hint that something bad will happen to Romeo.

- Can you hint at a fear or a dread even when imagining something beautiful?

Here's my example where I'm wishing my person was something we can see around us — the sea:

***I wish you were the sea,
and I wish that your waves
(which sometimes can be so fierce
that they can sink ships)
would turn to ripples
running towards me up the beach.'***

What will you write?

Sorrow and mourning

Extract Two

Grief fills up the room... King John, Act 3 Scene 4

Constance, the mother of a young boy called Arthur thinks that he should be king. No one supports him and Arthur is taken prisoner. King John then orders one of his followers to kill him. At this point, Constance doesn't know if he is dead and in this speech she is fearing the worst.

*Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief?
Fare you well. Had you such a loss as I,
I could give better comfort than you do.
I will not keep this form upon my head,
When there is such disorder in my wit.
O Lord! My boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
My widow-comfort and my sorrows' cure!*

Extract Two

Shakespeare pretended to be Constance and concentrated on what she would imagine about Arthur and what it feels like to think that he is dead. Think about someone you know who has suffered loss; this can be someone in your life or a character from a book or film. Pretend to be that person and imagine the person who has died. Think about:

- Where the person usually sat or stood.
- What the person usually did.
- What the person usually says.
- What the person wore.
- What the person's face looked like.

Here is an example about my own son (I borrowed line one):

***Grief fills the room up of my absent lad
standing in goal, in the American football shirt
I brought back from New York,
like a great statue guarding the gate.
Other times with his book of jokes
scribbling down the latest one he had heard
like the one about the man who had an orange
for a head.
And I see his face
that time he went off and got lost at Center Parcs
and he tried so hard to be brave
not crying that he couldn't find the way back
and now it's me who's lost
it's me who can't find the way back to him.***

Now have a go at writing your own version.

Jealousy, Greed and Anger
Extract Three

English

These are the forgeries of jealousy...

A Midsummer Night's Dream Act 2 Scene 1

Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the Fairies, are arguing because Oberon wants to keep a 'changeling boy' as a servant. Titania won't let him and so Oberon accuses her of being unfaithful to him. She angrily stands up for herself.

*These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs, which falling in the land,
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard.
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock.
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable.
The human mortals want their winter here.
No night is now with hymn or carol blest.
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound.*

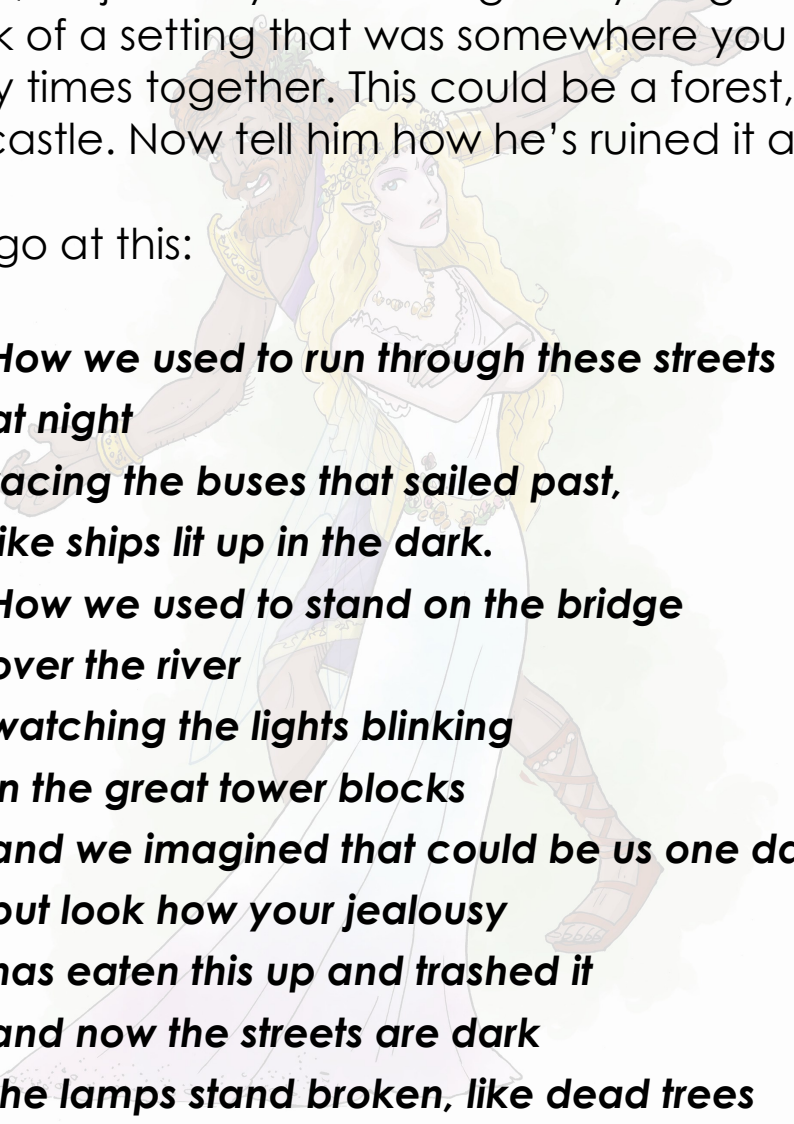
Extract Three

English

Titania tells Oberon that his jealousy is ruining everything — even the seasons!

Imagine you are a character in a fantasy book, where all sorts of weird and wonderful things can happen. You are talking to a powerful magician who is jealous of you and, like Oberon, his jealousy is wrecking everything in the real world. Think of a setting that was somewhere you used to have lovely times together. This could be a forest, the beach, a castle. Now tell him how he's ruined it all!

Here's my go at this:



***How we used to run through these streets
at night
racing the buses that sailed past,
like ships lit up in the dark.
How we used to stand on the bridge
over the river
watching the lights blinking
in the great tower blocks
and we imagined that could be us one day
but look how your jealousy
has eaten this up and trashed it
and now the streets are dark
the lamps stand broken, like dead trees
cars crash, a bus lies on its side
like a beached whale
the doors are its mouth***

Jealousy, Greed and Anger
Extract Four

English

O serpent heart...

Romeo and Juliet Act 3 Scene 2

Juliet is waiting for Romeo to come and see her. However, her Nurse (a loyal servant who has looked after her since she was a baby) has just told her that Romeo has killed Juliet's cousin Tybalt. Very angry, Juliet is now trying to cope with loving and hating Romeo at the same time.

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!

Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?

Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!

Dove-feather'd raven, wolvis-ravens lamb!

Despised substance of divinest show!

Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,

A damned saint, an honourable villain!

O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell,

When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend

In moral paradise of such sweet flesh?

Was ever book containing such vile matter

So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell

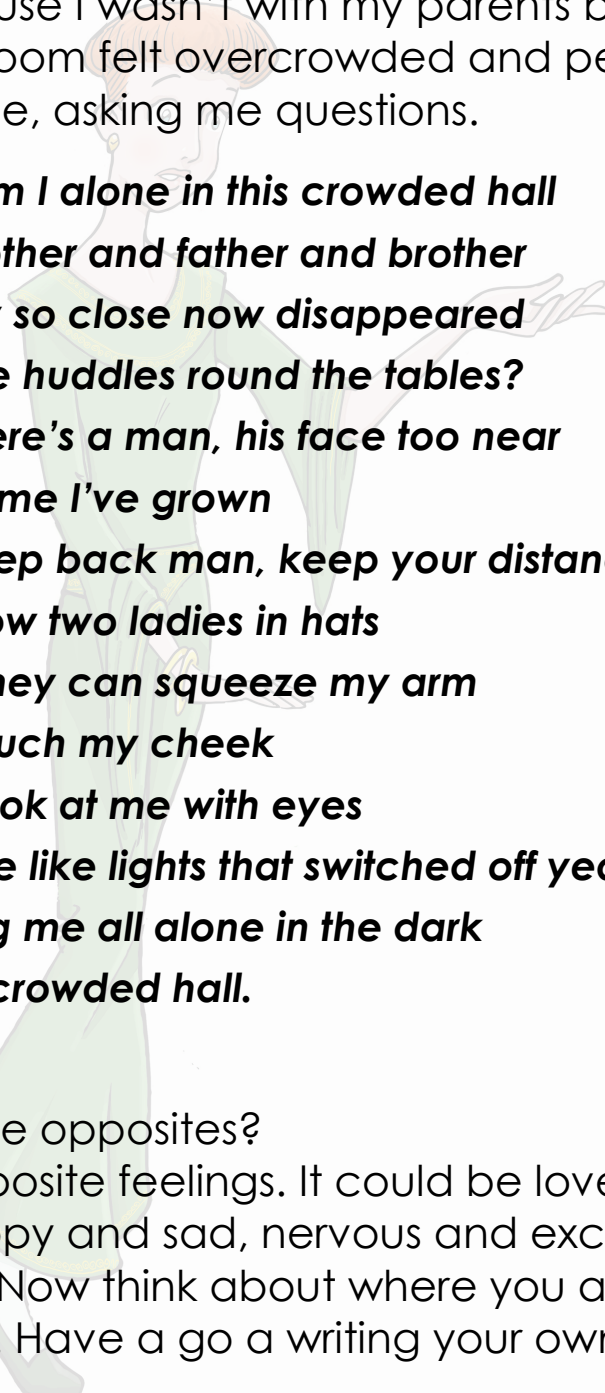
In such a gorgeous palace!

Extract Four

English

Throughout the speech, Juliet is trying to express two opposite feelings.

Here is my poem about when I was young at a wedding. I felt lonely because I wasn't with my parents but at the same time the room felt overcrowded and people kept coming up to me, asking me questions.



***Why am I alone in this crowded hall
my mother and father and brother
usually so close now disappeared
into the huddles round the tables?
And here's a man, his face too near
telling me I've grown
hey, step back man, keep your distance,
and now two ladies in hats
think they can squeeze my arm
and touch my cheek
they look at me with eyes
that are like lights that switched off years ago
leaving me all alone in the dark
in this crowded hall.***

Can you spot the opposites?
Think of two opposite feelings. It could be love and hate like Juliet or happy and sad, nervous and excited - the choice is yours! Now think about where you are that makes you feel like this. Have a go at writing your own opposite feelings poem.