

Principles of Literary Study

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Office hours: Thursdays 11:45–12:45 in MU 040A or by appt.

March 5, 2025. Writing workshop; Shahid (2).

The troops left our haven hanging in the night
And said the child's skeleton was made of militant bones.

("Bones")

supplementary exhortation: the view from psychology

Surface-level use of AI may mean less cognitive burden in the moment, but this is akin to letting a robot do your gym workout for you. It ultimately leads to poorer thinking skills....Offloading can be useful once foundations are in place. But those foundations can't be formed unless your brain does the initial work necessary to encode, connect and understand the issues you're trying to master.

But what we know about learning tells us that deep knowledge and mastery of a skill will always require a genuine cognitive workout—with or without AI.

Brian W. Stone, “How Does AI Affect How We Learn? A Cognitive Psychologist Explains Why You Learn When the Work is Hard,” *The Conversation*, September 10, 2025, theconversation.com.

introductory workshop

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- ▶ rephrase the writer's **topic** in your own words
- ▶ underline the writer's explanation of **motive**
 - ▶ what is the interest of the topic? why does it need an analysis?
- ▶ underline the writer's **thesis**
 - ▶ how would an analytical essay to prove it?
- ▶ give **gifts** of evidence
 - ▶ what could the writer discuss in the poem in question?

review

- ▶ watch your language

They ask me to tell them what *Shahid* means: Listen, listen:
It means “The Beloved” in Persian, “witness” in Arabic. (“In Arabic”)

- ▶ form informs
 - ▶ *aa ba ca...* rhyme (monorhyme)
 - ▶ every couplet has repeated final word (Farsi *radīf*) after rhyme
 - ▶ includes pen-name or *takhalluṣ* in last couplet
 - ▶ (usually) every line has the same syllable count
 - ▶ couplets are end-stopped, almost independent

“Beyond English” (68–69)

No language is old—or young—beyond English.
So what of a common tongue beyond English?

I know some words for war, all of them sharp,
but the sharpest one is *jung*—beyond English!

- What does this poem do to the English language? Find four things in four different couplets!

If someone asks where Shahid has disappeared,
he's waging a war (no, *jung*) beyond English.

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he's waging a war (no, *jung*) beyond English.

Writes Shammas: Memory, no longer confused, now is a homeland—
his two languages a Hebrew caress in Arabic. (“In Arabic”)

next

- ▶ reread and prepare to be cold-called to discuss a ghazal of your choice
- ▶ reread “Tonight” and consult annotations