

Name: _____

Date: _____

Poetry Worksheet

Read the poem below before answering the following questions.

To Flush, My Dog - Elizabeth Barrett Browning

LOVING friend, the gift of one,
Who, her own true faith, hath run,
Through thy lower nature ;
Be my benediction said
With my hand upon thy head,
Gentle fellow-creature !

Like a lady's ringlets brown,
Flow thy silken ears adown
Either side demurely,
Of thy silver-suited breast
Shining out from all the rest
Of thy body purely.

Darkly brown thy body is,
Till the sunshine, striking this,
Alchemize its dulness, —
When the sleek curls manifold
Flash all over into gold,
With a burnished fulness.

Underneath my stroking hand,
Startled eyes of hazel bland
Kindling, growing larger, —
Up thou leapest with a spring,
Full of prank and curvetting,
Leaping like a charger.

Leap ! thy broad tail waves a light ;
Leap ! thy slender feet are bright,
Canopied in fringes.
Leap — those tasselled ears of thine
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,
Down their golden inches

Yet, my pretty sportive friend,
Little is 't to such an end
That I praise thy rareness !
Other dogs may be thy peers
Haply in these drooping ears,
And this glossy fairness.

But of thee it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
Day and night unwearied, —
Watched within a curtained room,
Where no sunbeam broke the gloom
Round the sick and dreary.

Roses, gathered for a vase,
In that chamber died apace,
Beam and breeze resigning —
This dog only, waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone,
Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dew
Tracked the hares and followed through
Sunny moor or meadow —
This dog only, crept and crept
Next a languid cheek that slept,
Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer
Bounded at the whistle clear,
Up the woodside hieing —
This dog only, watched in reach
Of a faintly uttered speech,

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Or a louder sighing.

And if one or two quick tears
Dropped upon his glossy ears,
Or a sigh came double, —
Up he sprang in eager haste,
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,
In a tender trouble.

And this dog was satisfied,
If a pale thin hand would glide,
Down his dewlaps sloping, —
Which he pushed his nose within,
After, — platforming his chin
On the palm left open.

This dog, if a friendly voice
Call him now to blyther choice
Than such chamber-keeping,
Come out ! ' praying from the door, —
Presseth backward as before,
Up against me leaping.

Therefore to this dog will I,
Tenderly not scornfully,
Render praise and favour !
With my hand upon his head,
Is my benediction said
Therefore, and for ever.

And because he loves me so,
Better than his kind will do
Often, man or woman,
Give I back more love again
Than dogs often take of men, —
Leaning from my Human.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,
Pretty collars make thee fine,
Sugared milk make fat thee !
Pleasures wag on in thy tail —
Hands of gentle motion fail
Nevermore, to pat thee !

Downy pillow take thy head,
Silken coverlid bestead,
Sunshine help thy sleeping !
No fly 's buzzing wake thee up —
No man break thy purple cup,
Set for drinking deep in.

Whiskered cats aointed flee —
Sturdy stoppers keep from thee
Cologne distillations ;
Nuts lie in thy path for stones,
And thy feast-day macaroons
Turn to daily rations !

Mock I thee, in wishing weal ? —
Tears are in my eyes to feel
Thou art made so straightly,
Blessing needs must straighten too, —
Little canst thou joy or do,
Thou who lovest greatly.

Yet be blessed to the height
Of all good and all delight
Pervious to thy nature, —
Only loved beyond that line,
With a love that answers thine,
Loving fellow-creature!

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Questions:

A. Read to understand

Complete the summary of the poem below. Fill the space with a word from the list below.

List: canine, companion, devotion, food, moments, thankful, wishes

The poem “*To Flush, my Dog*” is an a poem about the love for a _____ companion. The poet expresses her deep _____ and love towards her pet dog, Flush. She is also _____ to have had him in her life as a good _____, especially during _____ of sadness. Above all, the poet _____ her dog a good life with good _____ and companionship always.

B. Literal questions

1. Who wrote this poem?

2. When was the poem written?

3. What is the theme of this poem?

4. What is the name of the poet’s dog?

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5. Why did the poet write this poem?

6. List the traits of the dog?

7. How did the poet come about the dog?

8. How does the dog react to the owners petting?

9. Name two differences and similarities of the pet dog and other dogs as mentioned in the poem.

Differences

Similarities

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

10. What does the poet wishes for the dog?

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Discuss

1. Why do people have pet dogs?

Inferential questions

1. What type of dog is described in this poem?

2. Why does the poet describe the male dog using feminine imagery?

3. What is suggested by the phrase:

“alchemize its dulness”

4. What senses is conveyed in this poem. Quote a line from the poem.



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5. What does the following words mean:

a. benediction _____

b. demurely _____

c. ringlets _____

d. burnished _____

e. languid _____

6. What words are used as symbols for the dog in the poem?

7. What lesson does the poet learn from the dog?

8. Why does the poet compare the dog to other dogs in the poem?

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Read to appreciate

9. How many stanzas are in this poem?

10. In a separate page write the words that rhyme from the poem.

11. What is the rhyming scheme for this poem?

12. What does the following phrases mean:

a. “sportive friend” _____

b. “burnished fullness” _____

c. “full of prank and curvetting” _____

d. “day and night unwearied” _____

13. What is the tone of this poem?

14. What type of figure of speech is demonstrated in line 25, “*Leap! Thy broad tail waves a light*”?
