

METAPHOR

Metaphor = a statement that one thing *is* something else, which, in a literal sense, it is not.

- “the ability to see similarity in dissimilars” (Aristotle)
- “to see one thing in the terms of another” (Frost)

METAPHOR

A linguistic break-down:

- Tenor = the actual topic under examination
- Vehicle = the term(s) by which that topic is explored

Specimen: “My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose”
by Robert Burns

Note: *Simile* draws attention to the comparison using a connective (i.e. like or as)

METAPHOR

Benefits of an effective metaphor:

- Pleasure
- Concision
- Scope expansion
- Greater depth

Limits of metaphor:

Since one thing, in actuality, is really *not* like another, every metaphor eventually disintegrates – at some point it stops giving pleasure and/or stops adding layers of texture, color, meaning

METAPHOR

Extended Metaphor: After the essential comparison is made, the poet “plays” with it, expanding the properties of the vehicle in a continuous way, implying expansion of the tenor’s locus of meaning

Specimens:

- “The Silken Tent” by Robert Frost
- Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare

METAPHOR

Local Metaphor: The establishment of more than one comparison, ideally all relating to the unifying theme of the poem.

Specimen: “The Suitor” by Jane Kenyon

METAPHOR

Checklist on Metaphor:

- Identify a poem's key comparisons, whether metaphor or simile, stated or implied.
- How are the tenor and vehicle alike (i.e. what is the basis of the comparison)?
- In what ways are they essentially unlike (in other words, where or when does the metaphor break-down)?
- If the poem uses an extended metaphor, how is the comparison extended? If the poem uses local metaphor, how do the vehicles create a unified pattern of meaning (a motif)?
- In what ways does the use of metaphor expand or enrich the meaning of the poem?

METAPHOR

Journal Exercise, Part Two:

Using the words you created to describe the pinecone, now write a poem about your best friend (or your mother).

In other words, indulge yourself in comparison!