

Death of a Naturalist

Look at the statements below which are all possible summaries of the poem. Decide which you think is the most appropriate to the poem and which is the least appropriate and rank the ones in between.

The poem is about:

Frogs
A child understanding the idea of sex
The beauty of the natural world
The ugliness of the natural world
Frogs getting revenge on someone
A child's recognition of how frogs reproduce
Tadpoles
A child reaching puberty
Growing up
Frogs reproducing

Discuss the rank order you have chosen (there is no 'right' answer) and give reasons for your choice: make sure you find evidence from the poem to substantiate (back up) your claims.

Some points to consider about the structure of the poem:

There is a big change between the first and the second stanza; what do you think the change is?

In what ways do the actions in the first verse seem safe or contained? Think about words and phrases such as 'shelves at school' and 'window-sills at home'.

Compare the tone of the first stanza and the last sentence of the second stanza; what differences do you notice?