

The Devil's Wife

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1. Read through the sixteen cut-up stanzas of the above poem.
2. Firstly, decide what you think the poem might be about (you obviously need to do more than say, 'It's about the devil's wife'). Bear in mind that this poem is about a real woman in the UK in the 1960s.
3. Next, see if you can identify any recurring images, symbols or ideas in the stanzas.
4. Put the poem in the order in which you think it reads best. Think carefully, as you will need to share your reading with the rest of the class and explain why you think it reads well this way.
5. Divide up the poem into the following sections; these are in the correct order so the first three stanzas of your version will come under the sub-title 'Dirt'.

1. DIRT (Three stanzas)
2. MEDUSA (Four stanzas)
3. BIBLE (Four stanzas)
4. NIGHT (Three stanzas)
5. APPEAL (Two stanzas)

6. Do you still think your version reads well now you have put the stanzas under the sub-headings?
7. Why do you think Duffy has used sub-headings in this poem? What difference do they make to the poem?
8. Rehearse both your reading of the poem and your explanation as to who you think the poem is about and why you have put the poem in this order, with your partner.