

**The Personal Poems are:**

- **Honest, reflective insights into formative experiences**
- **A celebration of 'ordinary' people**
- **A recognition of the value of the individual**

Her poems are filled with vivid **Pen-Portraits**

- 1) The Winkle seller (BW)
- 2) Auntie Cora (CA)
- 3) Mother (HL)
- 4) Father (HL), (FPF)
- 5) Young drug addicts (PCL)

The **personal poems** reflect the **reality of struggle, poverty and the challenges** of life without ever becoming sentimental or mawkish.

1. *'Cora, maiden, from the Greek κόρη, promising blossom, summer, the scent of thyme...'* (CA)
2. *'...a perfect vision of St Francis, made whole, made young again, in a Finglas garden...'* (FPF)
3. *'She'd be sitting outside the Rosebowl Bar on an orange-crate, a pram loaded with pails of winkles before her.'* (BW)

**Paula Meehan**

Poems feature **vivid setting description & meticulous attention to detail**

**Poems Studied**

- 1) *Buying Winkles* (BW)
- 2) *My Father Perceived as a Statue of St Francis* (FPF)
- 3) *Death of a Field* (DF)
- 4) *Cora, Auntie* (CA)
- 5) *Hearth Lesson* (HL)
- 6) *Prayer for the Children of Longing* (PCL)

**Most important aspects of this poet's work:**

1. She writes **Memory Poems**
2. She has a **Narrative Style**
3. She addresses both **Personal & Social Concerns**

1. *'I am crouched by the fire in the flat in Sean McDermott Street / while Zeus and Hera battle it out...'* (HL)
2. *'It's not enough,' she stated simply. / And we all knew it wasn't.'* (HL)
3. *'As her body withered and her eyes grew darker and stranger / as her hair grew back after chemo...'* (CA)
4. *My mother would spare me sixpence and say, / 'Hurry up now and don't be talking to strange men on the way.'* (BW)

1. *'I'd wave to the women at sills or those / lingering in doorways and weave a glad path through / men heading out for the night.'* (BW)
2. *in a split in the sofa, / in a tear in the armchair /in the home of a shy mouse.* (CA)
3. *It was the piebald horse in next door's garden /frightened me out of a dream / with her dawn whinny.* (FPF)

The social commentary poems address issues that are relevant to the modern world:

- 1) Humanity's relationship with the environment
- 2) Drug addiction
- 3) Social exclusion and the role of the Catholic Church in society

- 1) 'And the end of the field is the end of the hidey-holes / Where first smokes, first takes, first gropes...' (DF)
- 2) 'The end of dandelion is the start of Flash / The end of dock is the start of Pledge...' (DF)
- 3) 'The scream, the siren, the knock on the door / The needel in its track, the knife in the back.' (PCL)
- 4) 'The streets that couldn't shelter them / That spellbound them in alleyways...' (PCL)
- 5) 'And though she cried out to me in extremis, / I did not move / I didn't lift a finger to help her...' (The Statue of the Virgin at Granard Speaks)

**Symbolism**

- 1) St Francis (FPF)
- 2) The juxtaposition of the natural with the artificial (DF)
- 3) The Sequins (CA)
- 4) Zeus and Hera (HL)
- 5) Buying Winkles (BW)
- 6) The Christmas Tree (PCL)

Paula Meehan is a poet whose work is filled with evidence of her **command over language**. She employs all of the following **literary techniques** effectively:

- 1) Symbolism / Metaphor
- 2) Simile
- 3) Repetition & Anaphora
- 4) Enjambment
- 5) Sibilance
- 6) Rhyming

**Simile**

- 1) 'The magpies sound like flying castanets' (DF)
- 2) 'Sequins red as berries, / red as the lips of maidens, / red as blood on the snow...' (CA)
- 3) 'I'd bear the newspaper twists / bulging fat with winkles / proudly home, like torches.' (BW)
- 4) 'The flames sheared from cinder to chimney breast / like trapped exotic birds...' (HL)

**Repetition / Anaphora**

- 1) 'The end of...' x 8 (DF)
- 2) Here at the heart of winter / Here at the heart of the city' x 2 (PCL)
- 3) 'Let their names be' x 3 (PCL)