

2.3 A modern poem: Language (pp.42–43)

b) Take a look at "Rice will grow again" and fill in the gaps with the corresponding information. Answer the questions by quoting from the text. Try to explain the function/the effect of what you have found out.

Language of the poem	Function/effect
1. simple, concrete, sometimes informal, e.g. "damn" (l.3, l.37) or "muck!" (l.11, l.15)	makes the situation that is presented appear more realistic, the speaker (soldier) becomes more authentic
2. word field 'war': "dud rounds" (l.4), "shoot" (l.20), "ripped" (l.25), "a burst of sixteen" (l.26), "blood" (l.32) word field 'landscape/farming': "dike" (l.2), "farmer" (l.6), "rice shoots" (l.12), "water" (l.14), "to plant" (l.16), "grow" (l.39) word field 'parts of the body': "hand" (l.12), "knees" (l.10), "the middle" (l.25), "mouth" (l.33)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – realistic description of a situation in the war – strong contrast between the word fields: life versus death – two 'positive' word fields – one 'negative' word field
3. several repetitions: farmer (6 times) hand (4 times)	The most meaningful words are repeated: Mitch kills the farmer, but he returns. Farmer's hand: plants new life, Mitch's hand (not mentioned explicitly): plants death.
4. several contrasts: "(never came) up" (l.22) – "down" (l.18) (cf. also word fields) contrasting points of view: "he saw" (l.6) – "I saw" (l.29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – positive movement – negative movement: "down" suggests killing, destruction – The two soldiers react differently to the situation: Mitch sees a potential enemy, the speaker sees a farmer.
5. key word "shoot" is a homonym, i.e. two words with different meanings but the same sound: "shoot" – "rice shoots" "shoot" – "act of shooting"	Life (plant, food) and death (killing with an automatic rifle) are close.
6. syntax: The sentences appear long because they extend over several lines, but they are not complex. The longest sentence begins in l.17 and ends in l.26. There are only two temporal clauses (l.6, l.28).	Dramatic effect: breaks in between parts of sentences underlines the process of Mitch killing the farmer
7. statements: one exclamation (ll.37–39): the farmer's curse or prophesy "Damn you/The rice will/Grow again!"	The exclamation is the only expression of feeling, it is uttered by the dying farmer. The speaker and Mitch (soldiers) show no emotions.