

Narrative Poetry & Prose

Additional notes & examples on the Narrative component of the Speech & Drama Syllabus

Narrative: - in prose, novels, poetry and drama

- A recording of events (in present or past tense) or a story, or part of a story or series of events.
- The narrator's voice may be omniscient and/or may assume the voices of other characters in the process of recording events.
- A character or characters may be used to narrate a series of events or story or part of a story without an obvious, independent narrator present.

Some will want to distinguish between EXPOSITION – DIALOGUE:

Exposition – the interpretation, explanation, or a look back to muse on past events.

Dialogue – employed to develop character and plot (character in action). The focus may be on the present but may also reflect on what has taken place and point to what may be about to happen.

Both Exposition and Dialogue can have a narrative function. One or both may be employed by the narrator.

Examples of Narrative Prose and Poetry

ANGEL WINGS by Brian Patten

In the morning I opened the cupboard
And found inside it a pair of wings,
A pair of angel's wings.
I was not naïve enough to believe them real.
I wondered who had left them there.

I took them out the cupboard,
brought them over to the light by the window
and examined them.
You sat in the bed in the light by the window grinning.

"They are mine," you said;
You said that when we met
you'd left them there.

I thought you were crazy.
Your joke embarrassed me.
Nowadays even the mention of the word angel
embarrasses me.

I looked to see how you'd stuck the wings together.
Looking for glue, I plucked out the feathers.
One by one I plucked them till the bed was littered.

"They are real," you insisted,
your smile vanishing.
And on the pillow your face grew paler.
Your hands reached to stop me but
for some time now I have been embarrassed by the word angel.

For some time in polite or conservative company
I have checked myself from believing
anything so untouched and yet so touchable
had a chance of existing.

I plucked then
till your face grew even paler;
intent on proving them false
I plucked
and your body grew thinner.
I plucked till you all but vanished.

Soon beside me in the light,
beside the bed I which you were lying
was a mass of torn feathers;
glueless, unstitched, brilliant,
reminiscent of some vague disaster.

In the evening I go out alone now.
You say you can no longer join me.
You say
without wings it is not possible.
You say
Ignorance has ruined us,
disbelief has slaughtered.

You stay at home
listening on the radio
to sad and peculiar music,
who fed on belief,
who fed on the light I'd stolen.

Next morning when I opened the cupboard
out stepped a creature,
blank, dull, and too briefly sensual
it brushed out the feather gloating.
I must review my disbelief in angels.