

## **Difficult poems: meaning and reading otherwise**

When it comes to much contemporary poetry, many readers retreat in bafflement. They may wonder, where is the story, what is the take-home message? Why do I understand all the words but the content escapes me? Is there even a content proper? No matter how many books of other genres one may have read, or how well-educated he or she is, it appears that without specific training to poetry reading there is little to be enjoyed. But often all is required is a radically different approach, and a different sets of expectations – more akin to those of the visual and plastic arts, considering the word as medium rather than a straight means of communication.

In this first meeting of the 'Mind sharpener' series, I draw on my scholarly research in this area, combining literary theory and the cognition of reading, to tackle the issue. The meeting will be informal, with many engaging tasks interspersed amidst the theoretical stuff. You will have the chance to experience surprise, confusion, bafflement, struggle, enlightenment perhaps – witnessing in real time how both poetry and your mind work.