



Form and Structure in Poetry

“lesson of the moth”
by Don Marquis

Essential Question

How can a poem's form and structure affect its meaning?

As part of the poet's style, a poem's form and structure can help a reader understand the poem, help reinforce the meaning, and help determine the pace of the reading.

About the Author

Don Marquis

- 1878-1937
- Considered one of America's finest humorists
- Created a comic strip featuring archy—the philosophical cockroach poet
- Newspaper columnist, novelist, playwright, and poet



“lesson of the moth”

What do you know about Dale Earnhardt, Sr.?

Create a wordsplash and list what you know about him.



archy and the moth

This poem is a conversation between archy, the cockroach, and a moth—two very different characters.

Archy is a very cautious soul who is not willing to take any risks. He always “plays it safe.”

The moth is a risk-taker. He loves life and wants to live it to the fullest—even if it means he risks his life.

Which character is more like you?

Before Reading...

Open your “green” textbooks to page 250.

Before reading the poem, *physically* look at it.

What can you tell about the poet’s style simply by looking at the poem?

After Reading...

Draw the following chart in your notes and complete after you read.

Character	Archy	Moth
Attitude toward life		
Conflict		
Theme:		

SOAPS

Title of Poem: "lesson of the moth"

Author & Facts: Don Marquis

- Newspaper columnist
- Considered one of America's finest humorists

Subject: risking your life for happiness versus choosing boredom and safety

Occasion: personal experience

Audience: general audience

Purpose: encourages readers to make sure their life is worth living

Speaker: Archy, the cockroach

Follow-up: Life Lesson

What life lesson did Archy learn from the moth?

In your notes, describe this lesson and summarize the poem. Make sure to list at least two specific examples that support Archy learning this lesson.