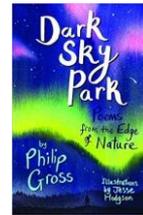


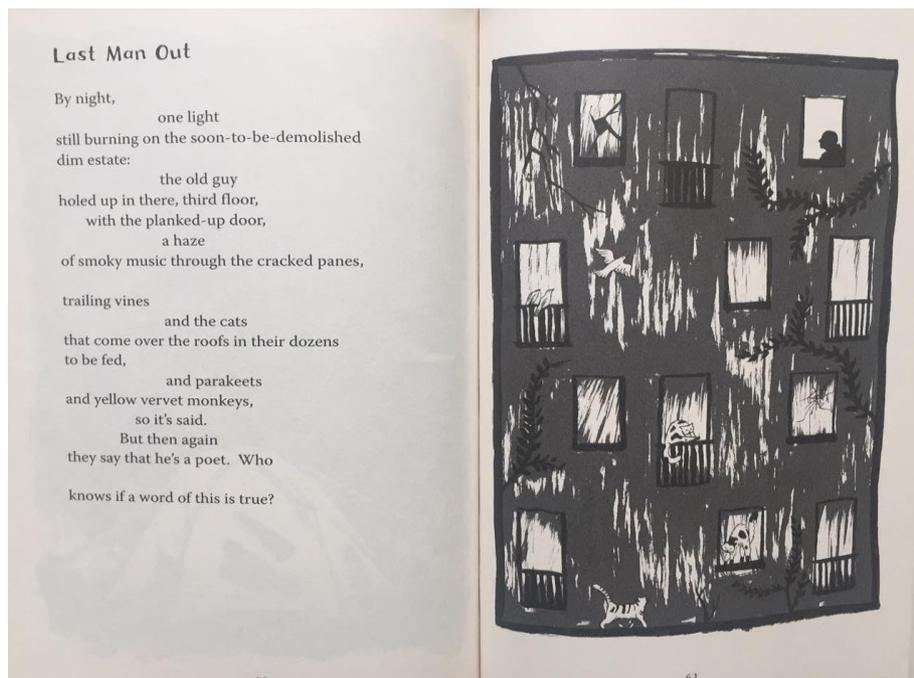
Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

Dark Sky Park by Philip Gross, illustrated by Jesse Hodgson (Otter-Barry Books)



1. Explore it

Read the poem below, look carefully at the illustration and think about what this poem means to you:



Think back to what you read. What does the poem make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you think these things or feel this way?

Think about the **old guy** that you have read about. We don't see details of him in the illustration, only his silhouette framed in the window, but what picture do you have of him from the way he is described in the text? What is the impact of using the phrase **old guy**, instead of old man?

Now think about the estate he lives on. Do you know what an estate is? Clarify your understanding of this word by looking it up in a dictionary. You will find alternative definitions for this word. Which do you think is the one the poet is referring to here? What makes you think this? What thoughts and feelings do you have about the estate after reading the poem? Do you think it is a nice place to be living in? Would you like to live there? Why do you think the **old guy** is still there?

Re-read the poem, and think about which parts speak to you or create feelings within you. What words, phrases or parts make most impact on you? Why? Use a highlighter or pen to identify these.

2. Illustrate it

Look carefully at the way Jesse Hodgson, the illustrator, has depicted the block of flats on the estate. How do you know they are in a state of disrepair? How has she used lines, shades and tones to show this? Why do you think she has chosen to only show the **old guy** as a silhouette? The poem takes us to the last days of

the block before it is demolished, but what do you think the block might have been like when it was first built and residents first moved in? Can you imagine the difference?

When you have a clear picture in your head, take a pencil and a piece of paper and start to draw out your ideas. You can follow the same shape of the block as the illustration, placing the windows in the same way, but how will you show the difference between its last days and its first? Will the **old guy** still be the lone resident? If you have coloured pencils, felt tips or crayons at home, you could think about how to use colour to bring life to the block. When you have completed your drawing, place it next to the original illustration. Can you see why the old man might not want to leave now?

3. Talk about it

- Why do you think the block is **soon-to-be-demolished**? Do you think this is the right thing to do?
- Think about the **old guy holed up in there**. Why do you think he hasn't left yet? What might make him the **Last Man Out**? What might have happened to the other residents?
- Think about the descriptive language that the poet has used to describe the block. How does he create a sense of beauty in this place that is not seen as beautiful by those wanting to destroy it?

4. Imagine it

What do you think will happen when the estate is demolished? What will happen to the **old guy**? Where will he go? How do you think he will feel on the day he eventually does have to move out? What do you think the inside of his home is like? How will he feel packing up his things? Think about your own experiences in relation to this. Have you ever moved house before, or helped a relative or friend to move? Perhaps you have moved schools?

Write a piece in role as the old man on his last day in his old home. Think about the opposing feelings he would be likely to have between leaving somewhere he has loved and starting anew somewhere else. Think back to how Philip Gross, the poet showed the opposition in the destruction and beauty of the old estate, how could you show similar opposition in your own writing?

5. Create it

Think about what will actually happen after the **old guy** leaves. How do old estates get demolished? Why does this happen? What will be left behind after the estate is demolished?

Think about what you would do with the land after the estate is torn down if you were a city planner. What do residents of a city need? Would you build new homes? Would you build a park, library, gardens or another communal area that all residents of the area could benefit from? Would you do a mixture of these things to make the area a multi-purpose area?

Consider what you think would be of most benefit to the community and put together a proposal to present to the city council. You can include drawings, photographs and text and should also prepare a speech to present alongside. You could do this physically on a mood-board style plan or you could prepare some presentation slides to illustrate your ideas as you talk. Think about the kinds of language you will need to use to describe your ideas to the council to engage them in the potential of your plans and the formality of the tone you will need to use to speak to officials. Try your presentation out on someone at home. Are they persuaded to take on your ideas?