An "image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term "complex" rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

All this, however, some may consider open to debate. The immediate necessity is to tabulate a List of Don'ts for those beginning to write verses. But I cannot put all of them into Mosaic negative.²

To begin with, consider the three rules recorded by Mr. Flint,³... not as dogma—never consider anything as dogma—but as

1. Imagiste: French for Imagist.
2. Mosaic negative: Refers to the ten commandments presented by Moses to the Israelites in the Old Testament of the Bible. Many of the commandments are in the negative and begin with the words "Thou shalt not . . . ."
3. The three rules recorded by Mr. Flint: English Imagist poet Frank Stuart Flint noted that Imagist poets adhered to the following three rules or guidelines.
   1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
   2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
   3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

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¹ Ezra Pound

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²

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³
Critical Viewing. How might an Imagist describe the scene depicted in this portrait of Ezra Pound? [Synthesize]

the result of long contemplation, which, even if it is some one else’s contemplation, may be worth consideration. . . .

LANGUAGE

Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.

Don’t use such an expression as “dim lands of peace.” It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer’s not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol.

Go in fear of abstractions. Don’t retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don’t think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.

Don’t imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music. . . .
While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chakan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you,
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the lookout?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
Over the grass in the West garden;
They hurt me. I grow older.
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang.

Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

By Rihaku

1. Chakan (ch'o' kān'): A suburb of Nanking, a city in the People's Republic of China.
2. Ku-to-yen (ku'dō' tō' yen'): An island in the Yangtze (yâng'tse) River.
3. Cho-fu-Sa (ch'ō' fū' sā'): A beach along the Yangtze River, several hundred miles from Nanking.
Critical Viewing: How does the mood of this drawing mirror the mood of "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter"? [Analyze]

In a Station of the Metro

Ezra Pound

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.


Build Vocabulary

apparition (ap' a rish' on) n.: The act of appearing or becoming visible

Guide for Responding

Literature and Your Life

Reader's Response  Of all the images contained in these two poems, which did you find the most striking? Why?

Thematic Focus  What troubled times does the river-merchant's wife face?

Check Your Comprehension

1. Summarize the events in the life of the river-merchant's wife.
2. Describe in your own words the setting of "In a Station of the Metro."

Critical Thinking

1. (a) How did the river-merchant's wife feel at the time of her marriage? (b) How have her feelings for her husband changed since then? [Analyze]
2. (a) How does she feel about her husband's absence? (b) How do the descriptions of the animals and insects reflect her feelings? [Analyze]
3. What does the comparison Pound makes in "In a Station of the Metro" suggest about how society affects individuality? [Interpret]

Extend

4. Many cultures have practiced the custom of arranged marriages. What are its potential benefits and drawbacks? [Social Studies Link]
so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
5 glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
5 on a red
fire truck
moving
tense
unheeded
10 to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

\[ \text{The Great Figure} \]
William Carlos Williams

\[ \text{Comments:} \quad \text{Critical Viewing } \]
Artist Charles Demuth created this work of art to accompany his friend
Williams's poem. How does his illustration convey the energy and clamor of "gong clangs / siren howls / and wheels rumbling / through the dark city"? [Connect]
I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox:

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast.

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold.

William Carlos Williams

Guide for Responding

♦ Literature and Your Life

Reader's Response Which of these three
poems evokes the strongest emotional response in
you? Why?

Thematic Focus How is everyday life trans­
formed in Williams's poetry?

Journal Writing Choose another food to take
the place of "the plums" in line two of "This Is Just to
Say" and revise the poem accordingly. Is your new
poem more or less effective than the original?

Check Your Comprehension

1. To what sense do the images in "The Red
Wheelbarrow" directly appeal?
2. What detail is the focus of the speaker's ex­
perience of the fire truck?
3. What is the intention of the speaker in "This Is
Just to Say"?

♦ Critical Thinking

INTERPRET
1. In your view, what depends on the red wheelbar­
row? [Speculate]
2. In "The Great Figure," what might Williams be
saying about (a) beauty? (b) modern life?
[Interpret]
3. (a) Why is the incident in "This Is Just to Say" im­
portant to the speaker? (b) How do lines 10–12
reveal its importance? [Infer, Analyze]

APPLY
4. How would you describe the philosophy of life
suggested by "This Is Just to Say"? [Synthesize]

EXTEND
5. Imagine that Williams had been a painter, not a
poet. Describe the kinds of subjects he might
have chosen to paint. [Art Link]
Pear Tree  H. D.

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted,

O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O white pear,
your flower-tufts
thick on the branch
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.
Heat
H. D.

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat—
plow through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

Critical Viewing. Does this
painting capture the oppressive
heat of a humid summer day as
effectively as the poem does?
Explain. [Evaluate]

Guide for Responding

Literature and Your Life

Reader’s Response  How do these two poems
by H. D. make you feel?

Thematic Focus  In the world presented in
“Heat,” are troubles natural or man-made?

Journal Writing  What images do you associate
with summer? Jot down your ideas in a journal entry.

Check Your Comprehension

1. What is the “silver dust” referred to in the first
stanza of “Pear Tree”?

2. According to the speaker of “Heat,” how is wind
potentially stronger than heat?

Critical Thinking

Interpret
1. In “Pear Tree,” in what sense is the silver dust
“lifted from the earth”? [Interpret]

2. (a) What time of year is the speaker describing
in “Pear Tree”? (b) How is this information con­
veyed? [Infer, Analyze]

3. What specific type of heat is the speaker in
“Heat” describing? [Interpret]

4. How does H. D. create the impression that heat is
almost a solid substance? [Analyze]

Apply
5. H. D. uses the color silver several times. What
associations do you have with this color? [Relate]