

Center 1: Simile

Definition: A comparison between 2 things using the words “like” or “as”.

We take what we know about one thing and apply it to the other to learn what it is like.

Example: “Her hair was like the sun.”

This simile compares a girl’s hair to the sun.

We know that the sun is golden, therefore we can infer that her hair is also golden.

Poem: Willow and Ginkgo by Eve Merriam

The willow is like an etching,
Fine-lined against the sky.
The ginkgo is like a crude sketch,
Hardly worthy to be signed.
The willow’s music is like a soprano,
Delicate and thin.
The ginkgo’s tune is like a chorus
With everyone joining in.
The willow is sleek as a velvet-nosed calf,
The ginkgo is leathery as an old bull.
The willow’s branches are like silken thread;
The ginkgo’s like stubby rough wool.



The willow is like a nymph with streaming hair;
Wherever it grows, there is green and gold and fair.
The willow dips to the water,
Protected and precious, like the king’s favorite daughter.

The ginkgo forces its way through gray concrete;
Like a city child, it grows up in the street.
Thrust against the metal sky,
Somehow it survives and even thrives.

My eyes feast upon the willow,
But my heart goes to the ginkgo.



Center 2: Metaphor

Definition: A comparison between 2 things without using the word “like” or “as”.

Examples:

She was an angel.

- This compares a girl to an angel. Angels are thought to be beautiful, pure, and innocent. We can infer that the girl is either beautiful or very well behaved.
- This is a **DIRECT METAPHOR** because the line directly states that one thing IS another.

The moonlight floats upon the waves.

- This compares the moonlight to a boat on the water. The moon’s reflection in the water seems to be floating on the water like a boat would.
- This is an **INDIRECT METAPHOR**. The line doesn’t explicitly say that the moonlight IS a boat, but it implies that they are similar by giving the moonlight qualities of a boat, or something else that can float.

Poem: “Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow