**ELA A30**

**Mrs. McLeod**

**Poetry: “The Lonely Land”**

**by A. J. M. Smith (1902-1980) Born in Montreal**

**“The Lonely Land”**

**-A. J. M. Smith-**

Smith’s poem “The Lonely Land “was first sub-titled ‘The Group of Seven”.

The Group of Seven is a group of Canadian artists that were instrumental in the beginnings of a new movement of Canadian art. The group began to form before the First World War and worked and grew together until about 1930. Members of the group travelled across Canada and painted Canadian landscapes. They travelled to many remote and un-travelled or less travelled places in Canada so that they could illustrate the true spirit of the Canadian Landscape.

YOUTUBE- Heritage Minutes

YOUTUBE- Group of 7 - A Musical Showcase of Great Paintings

# YOUTUBE- The Jack Pine (Tom Thomson) - National Gallery of Canada

After watching the YOUTUBE videos, with a group of 2-3 people, read the poem and complete the questions that follow.

“The Lonely Land”

*--A.J.M. Smith*

Cedar and jagged fir

uplift sharp barbs

against the gray

and cloud-piled sky;

and in the bay

blown spume and windrift

and thin, bitter spray

snap

at the whirling sky;

and the pine trees

lean one way.

A wild duck calls

to her mate,

and the ragged

and passionate tones

stagger and fall,

and recover,

and stagger and fall,

on these stones -

are lost

in the lapping of water

on smooth, flat stones.

This is a beauty

of dissonance,

this resonance

of stony strand,

this smoky cry

curled over a black pine

like a broken

and wind-battered branch

when the wind

bends the tops of the pines

and curdles the sky

from the north.

This is the beauty

of strength

broken by strength

and still strong.

Questions:

Poets use various literary techniques to convey their ideas and feelings. These techniques include the choice of speaker (the poet or character or thing created by the poet which acts as the voice of the poem), form (free verse, sonnet, ...), sound devices (rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia, alliteration, consonance, assonance), imagery, and figurative language. Although images can appeal to any of the five senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch - the majority of images are visual, stimulating pictures in the reader’s mind.

As you read the poem, record the images and your impressions on the poem.

1. How is the image in Thomson’s painting, Jack Pine similar to those in Smith’s poem?
2. What features of the Canadian landscape make it different from landscapes outside of Canada?
3. What thoughts and feelings about Canada and the land does this poem elicit?
4. What is the predominant quality that Smith has presented in this, ”lonely land”?
5. What mood of nature do the words of the poem describe?
6. How do the verbs and images in the first two stanzas contribute to the impression of strength?
7. Go back through the poem and identify a passage that is rich with imagery.

Example:

passage: Cedar and jagged fir uplift sharp bargs

Senses appealed to: sight and touch

Feelings evoked: rugged, lonely, unfriendly

1. What does Smith mean in the following lines:

There is the beauty

of strength

broken by strength

and still strong?

1. What does he mean by, ”a beauty of dissonance”?
2. What qualities of human character does the poem define in terms of the landscape? Is this truly Canadian? To what extent, if at all, does the statement in the last stanza apply to Canada or the majority of Canadians?
3. Is Canada really a lonely land?
4. What might be more successful in creating a statement on Canada?

11. Consider the use of imagery in the poem. How would the impact of this poem be different if the poet directly stated his position on the subject?