

**Introduction**

Download the LearnEnglish stories and poems podcast. You'll find more information on this page:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-stories-poems.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- The poem that you can listen to in the podcast
- A comprehension activity based on the poem

**Read the poem****Embankment at Night, before the War: Charity**

by D.H. Lawrence

By the river  
In the black wet night as the furtive rain slinks down,  
Dropping and starting from sleep  
Alone on a seat  
A woman crouches.

I must go back to her.

I want to give her  
Some money. Her hand slips out of the breast of her gown  
Asleep. My fingers creep  
Carefully over the sweet  
Thumb-mound, into the palm's deep pouches.

So, the gift!

God, how she starts!  
And looks at me, and looks in the palm of her hand!  
And again at me!  
I turn and run  
Down the Embankment, run for my life.

But why?— why?

Because of my heart's  
Beating like sobs, I come to myself, and stand  
In the street spilled over splendidly  
With wet, flat lights. What I've done  
I know not, my soul is in strife.

The touch was on the quick. I want to forget.

**After reading****Exercise 1**

Decide if each of the 9 statements about the poem are True or False.

1. The weather is nice on the night the poem is set.
2. The author walks past the woman who is sleeping.
3. The author gives the woman a pouch full of money.
4. The woman is surprised.
5. The author does not speak to the woman.
6. The author leaves the scene in a hurry.
7. The author knows why he is running away.
8. The author's heart is beating fast.
9. The author regrets what he did.

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**Answers**

**Exercise 1:** 1. False (F); 2. True (T); 3. F; 4. T; 5. T; 6. T; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T