Mischiefously playful, The Museum by Wislawa Szymborska, juxtaposes capturing elements of past and present in order to emphasize the changing nature of the individual in the historical prism of "eternity." The narrator's repeated use of rhetorical questions, "where are the rosy cheeks?" and shifting of focus from the animate to inanimate, "the hand has lost out to the rope," highlights the fragility of human life: the race. This consciousness of mortality discussed in such a teasing tone, reveals Szymborska's sanguine celebration of the impermanence of human life. Listing the "assembled" "old things," the narrator presents the nenus of the poem, that not "the race" but the "dress," will be remembered. Hence, Szymborska questions whether history is a manifestation of the human spirit, and argues life ought to be lived true to the individual to make the most of our existence, since all that will remain behind will be our "old things.

The museum is symbolic of the exclusive nature of society, Szymborska exposes those overlooked, but in the "ten thousand" other "things," arguing the impermanence, and at the same time, the importance of the individual, almost the mass. Szymborska suggests that all objects, animate a) "the foot," inanimate as the "lute" or as natural as "metals," or "a birdy feather," have a story or individual purpose, ratified by the personification of "the giggle of a sweet thing's rain from ancient Egypt." This playful spirit, alluding to human "giggling," shows much gentleness, care, and compassion for those long deceased, even though the only evidence of their existence is their "old thing." They have left behind. By encompassing many factions of earthy objects, Szymborska challenges the definition of what constitutes the whole gamut of human experience. Perhaps, Szymborska is highlighting the importance of all those within a communist regime, offering hope to those simply "assembled" like objects, as she upholds their importance and celebrates their individuality.

This poem is a discussion of mortality, by referring to human life as a "van" Szymborska hints at the inescapable fate of all humanity. Ascribing metaphor to objects, Szymborska presents the historical context, shifting from "ancient Egypt," and feudalistic times, "the crown," to the present, represented by the plain communist "dress." The narrator: "nor does the lute throng at dusk" and repetition of lost, "outlasted," "lost out,"
"No love returned" is a constant reminder that the body and soul will die, stressing that our mortality and fragility cannot be saved by the "things" we may create to lengthen our time alive. It is these objects however, that will remain and represent that time in history in the realm of "eternity." "Having sweet dreams" The "rosy cheeks" seem unaware of his own mortality, which is perhaps a suggestion by Szymborska that we all forget to self-examine to ensure we make the most of our existence. She suggests that the choice of ignorance is tantamount to an acceptance of the human condition, that the "rival" will "triumph." In the last stanza, the poem shifts to the particular as the narrator self-examines, however ironically, the poem grows far more universal and directly poses the difficult truth, that death will "outlast" each and every individual. Despite this, the narrator playfully begs "please believe me", dismissing the threat of the "rival" and instead celebrates life and living, "the race with my dear is still on.

By juxtaposing the grim subject of the poem with a playful tone, Szymborska suggests by not running "The race" with "a will to win", one is not living at all. The sense that the "race" is less frail than the body becomes blatantly clear as they are juxtaposed against one another, and it is here at this climax, that Szymborska acknowledges, that her poetry will "outlast" and her and remain to represent her.

Undermining those in power who wish to be remembered for their achievement as individuals, Szymborska argues history is not a manifestation of the human spirit. The concrete, "plate" and "snood" will be "assembled", but the abstract, "appetite" and "anger", forgotten, paralleling the nature of the communist regime where humans are "assembled" but their hope and dreams forgotten. Szymborska argues that is no way to live, ratified by the pleading "I am alive, please believe me!". She suggests that all should manifest a "will" to follow their "sweet dreams", just as Szymborska is able to achieve with her poetry, in order to live and not simply exist. Through uniting experiences of the past and present, "there are swords - where is the anger?", Szymborska creates a back and forward rhythm, mimicking the movement of life, enhancing her argument. Paradoxically, that which is no longer attainable is concrete "rosy cheeks", while that which could be achieved is abstract "appetite", this clear delimitation between concrete images of the past and abstract images of the present.
presents the notion that life is uncertain, highlighted by the suspenseful and playful conclusion of the poem, "and how much is would nice to outlast me!". Although death will ultimately "triumph in time", Szymborska concludes the poem with optimism in order to inspire all to run "the race", and leave "things" behind to remain that truly represent them as individuals.

Literally and figuratively, Szymborska uses The Museum to emphasize the importance of the individual amidst the mass, celebrating individuality of all "old things", animate and inanimate, and argues that all have a purpose and place in this world, even if left "assimilated for three hundred years". The fragile mortality of humanity is acknowledged but dismissed, as Szymborska claims in order to live, one must run "the race" with a "will to win". The poet acknowledges her poetry will "outlast" her, however, despite this, she declares herself willing to make the most of her existence, "the race with my dress is still on". In the poet's present, it will be the communist "dress" that reflects the nature of communist society. However, Szymborska argues, these "old things", concrete history, are not a manifestation of the human spirit, it is an abstract, such as "anger". This furthers Szymborska's argument that one must preserve their "sweet dreams" and run "the race" with a want and "appetite" to "win".

Excellent - still some ideas that you haven't quite worked through with clarity but going well... really well!!
"The Museum" questions the significance of human morality as Szymborska reiterates that inanimate objects will always inevitably outlive human from the specific "The room" to the abstract. "Eternity ten thousand" imagery illustrates the fragility of human life in comparison to the "earthenware components of a museum. Despite the focus of "The Museum" centered on mortality, Szymborska celebrates the endurance of humanity through an ironically vivacious tone that they life as a "race" and inanimate objects as the "rival". - brilliant, talk to me!

The concept of time, whether "three hundred years" or an "eternity ten thousand" is used to address the fact that the inanimate "will always quietly triumph in time". Szymborska juxtaposes the "dust against the living to emphasize that the "father" will outlive the "bird". However, despite these contrasts, the poem does not necessarily imply a fear of mortality - rather it openly addresses the inevitability of death. The sentience of the narrator persists "As for me, I'm alive" when Szymborska's language encourages the "will to win!". The final verse evokes life's longing to "outlive" the objects that last in a museum as the narrator invites the reader elegantly to "please believe me". The use of the word "believe" provokes a sense of assurance that despite the inevitability of demise, Szymborska still maintains a strong will to stay "alive". Szymborska rejoices in her existence without losing sight of her own pre-ordained, yet somewhat insignificant mortality.
"The Museum" - Szymoska

"The Museum" is a thought-provoking reflection on being alive through a comparison of the living and the non-living. As there are "plates but no appetite", "swordy but no anger", Szymoska separates the permanent from the temporary, initially without an endorsement of either. However, through the repetition of a structure that consists of questions demanding an answer as to the location of "where" the spirit is within an object, the poem questions whether lifeless "eternity" is really superior to the "sweetly and short-lived nature of human life. The questioning is subtly reiterated as Szymoska attractsively illustrates the animate with language such as "sweet", "love", "giggles", "racy cheeks," and even references the fleeting "twang at dusk."

Szymoska's poem is her existence without losing sight of her own precociously yet somehow insignificant mortality ("just the ant"). Unlike the royal "Symbol of a Crown", the common "head" will not be exhibited in a museum. The animate "Crow" however is not glorified or deified by something to be desired any more than the "head" of the "hand" or the "foot" is in a Szymoska expresses a contentment in the ephemeral nature of human life. "The Museum" is seemingly nostalgic ("where are the rosy cheeks") so until the very final verse in an enigmatic manner by the narrator's determination to win "the race" against change.

A very good start to your thinking about this poem. As the year progresses your response will become more complex.
THE MUSEUM

Wislawa Szymborska's poem, The Museum, uses a wistful and pragmatic tone to capture the fragility of mankind in its mortality and the perpetual dispersion of personal material memorabilia. Whilst the narrative voice rejoices in the prospects of life, underpinning such enthusiasm is the acute awareness of mankind's susceptibility to an insignificant death. Szymborska focuses on elements of the body: a 'hand', a 'foot' and a 'head' to explore the transience of life, for a 'glove', a 'right shoe' and a 'crown' will outline their wearer.

Through a myriad of images, Szymborska explores the insignificance of life after death, as all that remains to symbolize the journey of existence is a mere material fragment. Szymborska adopts a sympathetic and melancholic tone to reflect upon those who have died, leaving behind an array of objects to define their existence: 'a sweet thing' is characterized by her 'pin from Ancient Egypt'. Through the use of onomatopoeia, Szymborska generates a powerful visual image of the 'late' and its 'twang at dusk' to enhance the atmosphere of nostalgia and a yearning for previous life.

By shifting from the abstract imagery of 'sweet dreams' to concrete conceptions, Szymborska interweaves the past and present to reinforce the immediacy of the narrator's perilous situation. Ironically, the voice claims that 'I'm alive' and suggests that 'the race with my chisel is competitive, yet death is an entirely inevitable factor. The voice adopts a whimsical and playful tone to examine its own fate, reflecting upon the ways listed but suggesting its own invincibility. Satirically, the rival will win, thus celebrating the fragile nature of mankind and its desire to establish a sense of eternal legacy.
Symborska further intertwines the concrete with the abstract to create a paradoxical reality. An existence that is entirely attainable is created by an abstract allusion, as the 'mousy mouse' has 'sweet dreams.' However, objects that are symbolic of the past, are set in concrete to highlight their unattainable and yet ephemeral nature. Thus, Symborska questions the essence of existence through the juxtaposition of reality and fantasy.

This is going really well – could you add a political angle – governments will fiddle if you had this against an obviously political poem.
In her poem "The Museum", Wystawa Szymkoska looks at the idea of time, and its emphasis on human mortality. She looks at both the past and present through imagery, using concrete and abstract images respectively, looking at the insignificance of the individual to eternity, and creating a comparison between objects and their owners, past and present, to capture death's immensity and open up an examination of our approach to the idea of death.

Szymkoska uses both concrete and abstract imagery, focusing on the concrete on the past and its objects, and the abstract on the present and the possible. The four of the six verses that look directly at the past are three lines long, and focus on the particular, which is felt immediately in the titular labelling of "The Museum". The objects are listed in each verse, a technique that would create a clinical mood if it were not for the poetic linking of many of the images to relatable human feelings and experiences, such as "plaster" linked to human "appetite", and the visual image of "a people of a sweet thing". These links immediately connect us to the people who originally owned and used the "old things" displayed in "a show-case". These verses are juxtaposed with the verses of four lines, which paradoxically focus on an abstract reflection on the present, and that which is still attainable. In the third verse, the commentary becomes much more universal than the previous two, tying in with the idea of "eternity" and time, but very quickly shifting to the ephemeral "dreams" of "a heavy guard". This quick transition between the eternal and the brief helps to convey the idea of how quickly time moves past the individual, leaving "a thousand old things" behind, but一辈子 the people to whom they once belonged, and how incomprehensible they are as separate entities. The last verse also explores the idea of how an individual "feeling[ing] out" to their possessions, but additionally lends the speaker's voice and "vocal" a "well" rather than it being just a passive surmise of time. This "well" triggers a comparison between the objects and their owners, and highlights the mortality present potential for death. But also the m[oor]city of the past as a city.

This comparison opens up an exploration of the immensity of death, and the speaker's examination of the human attitude for death. This immensity is illustrated clearly in the fifth verse, where "the head", "hand" and "feet" have all "lost out" to their counterparts of "crown", "glove" and "shoe", moving down the body, and encompassing all to illustrate human mortality. The references to "the crown", "glove" and "shoe" "outlast[ing]" the body parallel the speaker's "m[oor] with [her] dress", and the juxtaposition of the "dress" and the "me" clearly gives the sense that the body cannot "outlast" the dress. Despite this apparently
The speaker maintains an essence of playfulness, seemingly accepting the idea of impending death in light of its unavoidability. As well as looking at people "[as] theirs," to their possessions, the last verse is a reflection on the speaker's own thoughts. Despite the speaker's personification, there is actually no way that the speaker can know that their "rival" has any "well to win." This labelling of objects as "rival" suggests that despite our belief that we and the object are trying to "outlast" each other, it is actually us who create a competition with impossible "old things in an attempt to "triumph" over the one "rival" we can never best. 

This is great - the ultimately is this also a celebration? Of so many lives and their variety, as well as an acknowledgement of life's fleetingness, fragile nature?