A SAMPLE OF POETIC COMMENT: 
The Lonely Street, by William Carlos Williams.

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THE LONELY STREET

School is over. It is too hot
to walk at ease. At ease
in light frocks they walk the streets
to while the time away.
They have grown tall. They hold
pink flames in their right hands.
In white from head to foot,
with sidelong, idle look—
in yellow, floating stuff,
black sash and stockings—
touching their avid mouths
with pink sugar on a stick—
like a carnation each holds in her hand—
they mount the lonely street.

The poet is an observer. In this case Williams is watching a real scene and
afterwards he expresses his perception through poetic words, in such a way that
the real experience has turned out into «his view» of such a simple scene.

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The general tone of the composition suggests peace and quietness. There is also something of loneliness. «The Lonely Street» is almost a pictorial perception where the descriptive elements are beatifully varnished by Williams's expression.

We are introduced to the theme of passing time by a reference to a concrete expresion of time: School is over.

Some period of life has been left behind. Childhood is more or less a past stage of life. Weather is hot:... It is too hot / to walk at ease.

No subject has been introduced up till now. There is only a sort of presentation, a creation of atmosphere. And now, after a pause, Williams makes his subject stand out:... At ease / in light frocks they walk the streets.

Although we have been told that it is too hot, the subjects —plural— of the poem do not care. In fact this contrast is to achieve a clear effect: it contributes to reinforce the idea of loneliness. There is something «sweet» in the way Williams speaks about «they» wearing «light frocks». This idea of gentleness will be developed through the poem. We can guess somehow a feminine connotation, «frock» implies that these «girls» —and we use the word on purpose— are not women, but they are not children any more. Something just in the middle, between childhood and maturity is the element to be remarked. They walk to let time conclude its work: they expect to become women. We know they are near because «they have grown tall». They walk slowly, the softeness of their walking being suggested by the mild sounds of words like:

EASE (twice), FROCKS, STREETS

and by the long and melodic «to while the time away», with clear vocalic sounds, full of gentleness. Nothing seems to be out of the context.

Immediately we are shocked at the opposition between childhood and maturity: they have grown tall; they hold / pink flames in their right hands. If we carry on reading we will know that the pink flames are «pink sugar on a stick». It is a symbol of childhood, but there is also a sort of prologue of the women to be, in the way Williams says that. «Flames» is a word with connotations that make us think of something not revealed. It is then, almost at the end of the poem, that we find the line:

Like a carnation each holds in her hand,

referred to the pink sugar on a stick. We can not doubt that it is a clear allusion to the awakening of sex in the girls who have just left school. However, it is not expressed in a rough way. On the contrary, there are romantic allusions to a symbolic colour: WHITE.
In white from head to foot,

they are like little girls. This suggestive image speaks by itself. But Williams also
makes us realize that this is only the beginning of a «lonely street», not easy to
walk, as he uses the verb «mount».

As we are situated in the present we see what is going on, but we are only
insinuated what will be likely to happen, as it is a natural event. In fact, nothing
happens. Time passes in a very slow way. Descriptive elements such as adjectives
and nouns prove the quietness of the process:

lonely street, hot, light frocks, tall, pink flames, right hands, white,
sidelong/idle look, yellow/floating stuff, black sash, stockings, avid
mouths, pink sugar, like a carnation.

Sexual connotations are expressed by means of «pink flames» (not red yet),
there is still white; «avid mouths», in this case no explanation is necessary as the
mouth is a sexual symbol itself, reinforced by the adjective «avid», compared with
the pleasure of a child eating his pink sugar; and the clue: «like a carnation» - we
do not think it could be a white one, but a red carnation. We know that through
Spanish literature a RED CARNATION appears to be a symbol of love. We can
remember that beautiful sonnet by Góngora, where the woman's lips are
compared to a red canation, or the poems by Darío and his red flowers.

Now life waits for her. We can only add the softness of some other sounds
such as floating, stuff or flames. Alliteration also contributes to the melody of
«The Lonelly Street», a time game which moves from past through present and
towards future. The poem has got thus the magic of the idea of totality and
everlasting vitality.
A sample of poetic comment: The...
Didáctica

4 + 2 = 7
Fue el maestro

L. A.