

# Verse Novel Comparison Chart

Complete parts A, B, and C and submit before moving on to your next novel.

## A. Summary

<b>Title</b>	<i>Little Green</i> This is the name of the main character. In chinese, her name is <i>Xiao</i>	<i>In and Out and Back Again</i> I think this is the name of the book because Ha's life was uplifted, and this name seems to fit.
<b>Author's name</b>	Chun Yu	Thanhha Lai
<b>Genre</b> (historical, realistic, mystery, fantasy)	Autobiography/Memorie This is because the book goes in to Little Green's life during the Great Proletarian Revolution in China, and is in great detail. It also discusses details about the revolution, and ends with Mao's death.	Autobiography/Memorie This book is about the journey of Ha from her home in Vietnam to the United States. The events in the book are based off of Thanhha Lai's own experiences.
Number of <b>pages</b>	106	260
<b>Setting</b> , time period, season, year	1966-1976 These are the years in which the Cultural Revolution occurred. Little Green was born in 1966, when the revolution began.	During the Vietnam war. The book lasts about a year. These are the years of the communist takeover of South Vietnam.
<b>Setting</b> , place, city, country	China; in between the country and the city Rural and urban.	Vietnam, the boat, Florida, Alabama.
<b>Subjects</b>	Chinese Cultural Revolution, The Revolution is constantly referenced, and is the main focus of the entire book.	Vietnam war, racism, Racism is at the heart of this story, as many of the people in Alabama are being racist against Ha and her family.
<b>Narrator</b> (first, third)	First person-Little Green	First Person-Ha
Narrator ( <b>reliable or unreliable</b> -- emotional, too young, innocent, trustworthy)	Reliable and unreliable Evidence: Her perspective is a first-hand account of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.  Evidence: She was pretty young during the entire revolution, and she may have been corrupted by Chairman Mao's ideology of the revolution.	Reliable Evidence: She is at an age where most of her perspective is fairly accurate, and she is a tough person, so her memories aren't flooded with emotion.  Evidence: The whole event was very real, and all of her first-hand accounts seemed very true, and not at all corrupted.
<b>Main character's</b>	Little Green	Ha

<b>name</b>	( <i>Xiao Qing</i> ) Not much is revealed about Little Green because a majority of the book is her perspective of the Cultural Revolution.	Ha's feelings are engraved deeply into the poems, and her perspective is very important. Her name also has a cometic side as when she's trying to tell people her name, they think she's saying, "ha-ha" instead of Ha, her name.
<b>Details about the main character</b> (age, appearance, personality, action, how other feel about him/her, family, culture)	Age 0 to age 10. Her perspective changed when she began to get older. The author is telling her first-hand accounts of the Cultural Revolution through the character <i>Xiao Qing</i> .	Age 10-11 Her perspective stays the same throughout the book as she generally stays the same age. In America, some people like her, and some people do not. Mrs. Washington, the Cowboy, and her family loves her, but many others do not.
<b>Supporting</b> characters' names and how they are connected to the main character	Mama, Baba, Gege, Sansan, Nainai	Mom, Brother Khoi, Brother Quang, Brother Vu, Mrs. Washington, Cowboy, Uncle Son, Some of these characters are her family members, while others are neighbors and the people who helped her escape Vietnam.
<b>Antagonist</b> or "bad" or opposing force (war, weather, trauma, person, social issue)	Capitalism, Rightists, Counterrevolutionaries, Landlords, Teachers, anyone with lots of money, the Four Olds, American Imperialists, Japan, Red Guards.  Most of these were bad because Mao's ideology corrupted the population and made them think down on these subjects, except for the Red Guards. I could tell that Xiao Qing was sceptical of May Seventh Cadre Schools, and the destroying of the Four Olds and capitalistic thought.  For Little Green's antagonists, they include: Red guards, destroying the four olds, and other things that affected her emotions, and made her sad.	Communist, North Vietnam, Pink-Boy, racism,  Communism is bad because it, along with North Vietnam, were the driving forces that caused her dad to disappear and for her to have to leave her country.  Pink-Boy is a bully. He has made it difficult for Ha to transition into America, and she does not like him. If he was not

## B. Analysis with Evidence

Choose three (3) criteria of what makes a "good" verse novel that you want to discuss regarding the two verse novels you read. (Delete the other rows.)  
Write a response and include specific poems from the book to support your point. Take a picture of the poems you will use for your evidence (in case the book is not available when you write).

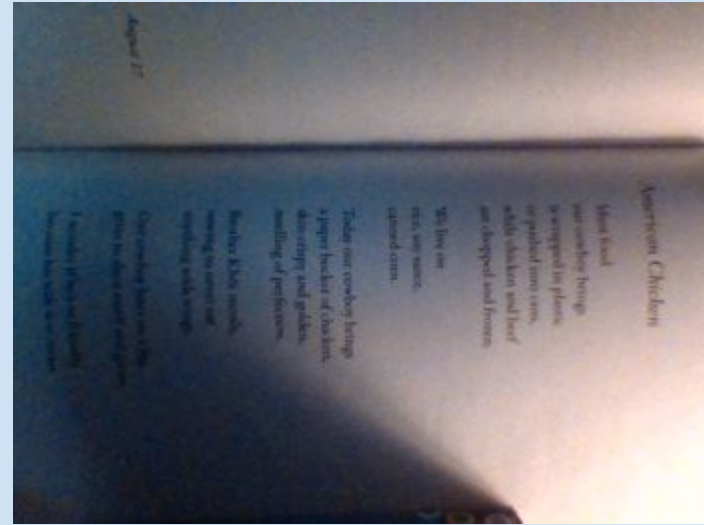
<b>Is the subject matter "right" for poetry?:</b> Some topics lend themselves more easily to poetry than others. Some subjects refuse to be written as prose. Many times an	Yes, definitely. I believe this because something as abstract as the Chinese Cultural Revolution is a perfect topic for poetry, and I thought that every element couldn't have been expressed the same way in prose. This story would have	Yes. I believe that the subject of a family moving from their country because of war is the perfect topic for poetry. While this book could've worked in prose, I found the poems an elegant solution to some problems that could have arised.
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<p>author will use verse to mimic the rhythm of the story. (movement, confusion, musical, chaos, mixed voices, place is beautiful, confusion, in chaos)</p>	<p>been difficult to read if it was not in verse form.</p> <p>This is definitely a good story for poetry.</p> <p>“Just after the spring festival/Taiye became very ill./A bed was set close to the floor so he could move to the ground easily./But he lay there quietly,/most of the time with his eyes shut,/as if he needed a long time to rest.”</p> <p>If this quote here was to be described through prose, it would lose some of its meaning. All of the poems in this book are jam-packed with meaning, and if this book was not written in verse form, it would have been weird and awkward. This quote in particular shows this because of the feeling of sadness found in this poem. I simply believe that if written in prose, it wouldn't have spoken to me in the same way.</p>	<p>“Water, water, water/everywhere/making me think/land is just something/I once knew (82).”</p> <p>This line is full of hidden meaning, that could be lost in prose. I simply feel like this book in verse form makes the story feel more complete than if it were in prose.</p>
<p>Is the protagonists “right” for poetry? Often (though not always) verse novels are told from a very close first-person point of view. Such writing calls for a lot of introspection on the protagonist's part. Other times verse is used as a way for multiple voices to be heard, almost like a Greek chorus.</p>	<p>Yes. This story is in first person, and contains many secrets about Little Green. As the world she lives in does not allow for free speech, Little Green gives us an insight on her world that I do not believe possible in prose.</p> <p>“When I went home, Nainai was cooking in the kitchen./The air was filled with the scent of stewed pork/and stir-fried vegetables./I told her the story from school,/and asked her,/‘Why were the landlords so bad?’/She didn't answer my question for a while;/instead she put a few pieces of pork/on a small dish for me to have before the meal./She said,/‘In the old time the poor did suffer a lot,/but some rich people were nice too,/helped poor people without asking anything back./I was surprised by her answer./From the stories told in school,/I couldn't picture a good rich person./It would have been called/feudalistic backward thinking in school./But I knew my Nainai would not lie to me,/although I should not repeat what she had just said (77).”</p> <p>This quote shows that protagonists (and main character) are right for poetry because of the deep connection to the</p>	<p>Kind of.</p> <p>While the main character, Ha, is very complex, I feel like she could be portrayed in prose in a similar way.</p> <p>“I, the youngest,/get to celebrate/my actual birthday/even though I turned/a year older/like everyone else/at Tet. I, the only daughter,/usually get roasted chicken,/dried bamboo soup,/and all-I-can-eat pudding (26).”</p> <p>In this line, you can see that while Ha is a special character, whose thoughts fit well into poetry, I think that if this story was written in prose, there would be no noticeable difference. In verse novels, there is usually something very special about the narrator. While I believe Ha is very special, her perspective isn't overly different, or unique.</p>

	<p>mind. I feel like this passage, in prose, would not give me the same look into Little Green's mind. It would be similar, but not the same.</p>	
<p>Can the individual poems stand alone? Each poem in a verse novel must capture one moment, scene, idea, mark of change in your character's life. Poems should also be able to function separately from the rest of the story.</p>	<p>Yes. A majority of the poems can stand on their own and give an empowering message without reading the many others. Here are two different poems, on different pages;</p> <p><b>“First Lessons in the Elementary School</b>  Fall 1973  I started school in the autumn./After the class saluted the picture of Chairman Mao,/the teacher sat us down at our desks and stools./Then we learned the following together./‘Ten Thousand Years Chairman Mao! Ten Thousand YEars the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!’/We were also taught:/cabbage, radish, and one plus two;/singing, dancing,/and drawing pictures (61).”</p> <p><b>“A Big Mourning Hall</b>  The whole country became a big mourning hall;/wherever there were people, there was crying./We were summoned back to school/immediately after Chairman Mao died./There were no classes./Teachers were crying, students were crying./This went on for days./Sometimes it was unclear to me what I was crying for./I had only seen Chairman Mao's pictures and statues,/but I guess it was supposed to be sad/that he didn't live for ten thousand years,/and people who knew him/would never be able to see him again./Then I thought of my nainai and taitait:/Image if this dying happened to one of them./I would never see them again,/just like I never saw my taiye again after he died./Life is strange. I have no control over it!/The thoughts made me very sad,/and I cried for a long time after that./But then I ran out of reasons to cry again,/while some others were still crying./I started to worry,/wondering if they had deeper feelings/for Chairman Mao than I did.”</p> <p>As you can see, these two poems are both independant, and could stand on their own.</p>	<p>Slightly. Because most of the poems are very short, it is difficult to understand some of the references if you don't start from the beginning.</p> <p>For example:  “<i>At the port/we find out/there's no such thing/as a secret/among the Vietnamese./Thousands/found out/about the navy ships/ready to abandon the navy./Uncle Son flares elbows into wings,/lunges forward,/protecting his children./But our family sticks together like wet pages./I see nothing but backs/sour and sweaty./Brother Vu steps up,/placing Mother in front of him/and lifting me/onto his shoulders./His palms press/Brothers Quang and Khoi/forward./I promise myself/to never again/make fun of/Bruce Lee (61-62).</i>”</p> <p>“<i>I wish/Brother Khoi wouldn't/keep inside/how he endures/the hours in school,/that mother wouldn't/hide her bleeding fingers,/that Brother Quang wouldn't/be so angry after work./I wish/our cowboy could be persuaded/to buy a horse,/that I could be invisible/until I can talk back,/that English could be learned/without so many rules./I wish/Father would appear/in my class/speaking beautiful English/as he does French and Chinese/and hold out his hand/for mine./Mostly/I wish/I were/still/smart (158-159).</i>”</p>

<p><b>Does each poem contribute to the whole?</b>When I worked through my own verse novel, MAY B., I kept a quilt in mind, treating each poem like its own square of fabric. Each patch had to be able to function separately while at the same time move the story forward. I trusted that if certain patterns and shades in my story quilt were repeated (think themes or story strands), eventually the interconnectedness would surface — a much more organic approach than is normally taken with prose</p>	<p>Yes. They all tell a story, and without one, the story does not seem to be complete.</p> <p>I cannot really show this, as you would need to see the book, but if you take a look at the poems that I have been using in examples, you can see that they are all intertwined, like a quilt.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>I cannot show this without you seeing the book and reading it, yet I still believe that each poem contributes to the whole of the book. Without one of the poems, while it still would make sense, it may be a bit confusing to the reader. Thus, every poem and detail and thoughtfully intertwined together to make this book.</p>
<p><b>Do the poems vary in length:</b> Some scenes flow, some end abruptly. Some thoughts wander, some jab. Without the structure of chapters, verse novels are simultaneously abrupt and fluid — poem lengths can be jagged yet aide the plot in moving through scenes swiftly. It is often difficult to find a place to stop reading, as one poem often bleeds into the next.</p>	<p>Definitely. Some of the poems were pages long, while others were much shorter.</p> <p>For example, the poems that I have used in examples are generally short, though there are poems that are multiple pages long.</p> <p>Here is an example of the beginning, middle, and ending of a “wandering poem”:</p> <p>“There was a movie called <i>The White-Haired Girl</i>,/one of the “model plays”/developed by Chairman Mao’s wife,/one of the only few movies allowed to be played./It was about a peasant girl named Little Happy/who lived with her widowed baba.”</p> <p>“A group of landlord’s “dog legs” rushed in,/led by the ugly young son of the landlord./They asked for the field rent/that the old man couldn’t afford./They beat him to death in front of his daughter/The villagers and a neighbor boy came,/and they fought the “dog legs” bravely,/but the young master pulled out a gun,/and they helplessly watched as Little happy was snatched away./She ran away from the landlord’s house/to a cave in the mountains,/and her hair turned all white./Finally, her sweetheart,/the neighbor boy,/who had joined the</p>	<p>Very much so. While most of the poems are short, there are some longer ones.</p> <p>In the longer ones, I found that thoughts didn’t wonder, but instead the poet just elaborated on a topic that in itself was longer.</p> <p>Shorter poems simply left out more words, and found ways to explain the same topic in less words.</p> <p>Here is a picture of a longer poem:</p>

Communist Party's army,/came to the cave to save her./The army liberated the village/and captured the landlord's family."  
 "I had never performed in front of such a big group of people./When they announced the White-Haired Girl(41)



This is only the first page; there are two other pages. As you can see, in comparison with some of the poems that I have already used, there is definitely a variety when it comes to length of poem in this book.

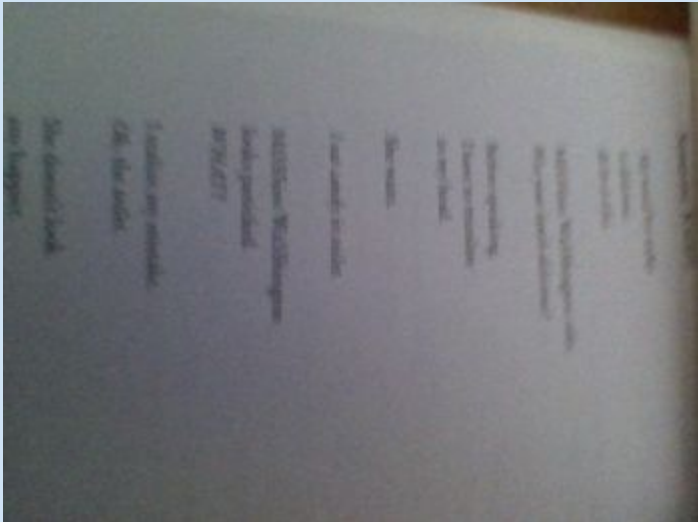
**Do the lines vary in length and spacing on the page?**  
 Verse novelists play with key phrases or words they want to bring to their reader's attention by the way they arrange words on the page. Line breaks can be used to slow down reading, to draw the eye to important phrases, and to best "speak" the poem.

Yes. The lines were all very different, and the pages were appealing to the eye.  
 For example,  
 "Amidst all the playing in the summer,  
 Baba and Mama gave us things to learn,  
 Things that were not normally taught to at school.  
 One of the books we had was  
*Three Hundred Poems from the Tang Dynasty*  
*From which we recited one poem every day (73).*"

As you can see, the lines vary in length to create a distinct visual pattern across the page.

Slightly.  
 The poem tend to all look the same on the page (to me), and spacing is usually nothing exotic.  
 Here's an image showing this:



		 <p>This poem is fairly close to the normal format, although, it is a little more exotic than usual.</p> <p>Thus, the line variety is fairly consistent throughout the poem.</p>
<p><b>Does the author match emotion and structure?</b> The structure of a poem often communicates to readers a character's emotional state. How might fear look structurally? A verse novelist might use little punctuation or words tightly packed together. Maybe the language of the poem will unfold in short bursts, reminiscent of a child peeking into a darkened room and quickly slamming the door.</p>	<p>There was not much matching of emotion and structure, because Little Green did not show much emotion throughout the entire book.</p> <p>For example, here is a poem that should be emotional, but isn't, "Sometimes it was unclear to me what I was crying for./I had only seen Chairman Mao's pictures and statues,/but I guess it was supposed to be sad (105)."</p> <p>In this quote, it is evident that Little Green is not having as big of an emotional response as the rest of her country is in this situation.</p>	<p>Structure and emotion went hand-in-hand in this book, as most of the book portrayed suffering and sadness. Here is an example:</p> <p>"Mother wants to sell/the amethyst ring/Father brought back/from America,/where he trained/in the navy/before I was born./She wants to buy/needles and thread,/fabric and sandals/from the camp's/black market./I have never seen her/without this purple rock./I can't fall asleep/unless I twist the ring/and count circles (103)."</p> <p>This quote shows that the author matches emotion and structure because the emotion of sadness is at the heart of this poem, and there happens to be less punctuation in this poem. It seems more long, which adds to the sadness.</p>
<p><b>What forms of poetry does the author use, and is it effective?</b> Some verse novelists use a specific form:</p>	<p>I think that the poems were almost all in free verse; I didn't notice any key characteristics of any type of poem. There was no definite rhyme scheme, and no special meter or</p>	<p>The poet uses free verse. I couldn't find any other forms when I was reading the poem-I may be wrong, but I think that free verse serves this book well. It is up-right and doesn't try to be fancy in</p>

<p>sonnet, haiku, quatrain, villanelle, blank verse, free verse, etc; or a variety)</p>	<p>syllable schemes, either.</p> <p>For example, “Sometimes when Baba was out of his sad mood,/he carried Gege and me on his bike,/me in the front, Gege in the back (67).”</p> <p>These lines have no specific rhyme scheme, and is in free verse. The rest of the book is similar to this.</p> <p>I think this is effective because it alludes to the strict rules of the Revolution and to how the government was trying to disconnect people from their culture. During this time, the communists were trying to simplify everything, this gives the reader the same sense, in a very subtle way.</p>	<p>its storytelling abilities. This reminds me of her family-very humble, very simple. While they are trying to improve, it's difficult.</p> <p>Here's a line of free verse:</p> <p>“I know/Pink Boy will get me,/but right now/I feel smart (188).”</p> <p>This line has no rhythmic pattern, and is not a special type of poem, but it portrays the thoughts of Ha very well, and if the poet would've used a fancy technique, I think that the poems would feel washed out, and too expressive for the topic. I like Lai's use of free verse.</p>
<p><b>Do the poems work visually (how it looks on the page) and aurally (how it sounds if you read it)?</b> Poetry should be seen and heard. In seeing, hearing, and saying a poem all at once — the fullness of the poem is discovered this way. If you ever feel stuck with a verse novel, find a private corner and try reading it aloud.</p>	<p>Yes. This book was very easy to read, and even while reading in my head I feel like I got the full message that the poet was trying to portray about the Cultural Revolution.</p> <p>For example, this line, “It must be the bother in his heart/that mama was talking about (66).”</p> <p>This line confused me a little, but after reading it out loud, I understood it a little bit better. Even though I rarely did this, I still got the main gist of the story.</p>	<p>Kind of.</p> <p>As you saw in my previous photographs, the poems all kind of look the same. However, this book was harder to read. Many lines confused me, and now that I am re-reading them, are giving me a different kind of connotation than the first time. Here is an example, “MiSSS SScott/points to me,/then to the letters/of the English alphabet./I say/A B C and so on./She tells the class/to clap (156).”</p> <p>While this line in particular wasn't very confusing to me, it sounded different, and gave me a slightly different perspective. It is also one of the few poems that has an interesting pattern on the page.</p>
<h3>C. Conclusion</h3>		
<p>Which novel better demonstrates the 3 criteria you selected to analyze? Explain with proof.</p>	<p>I believe that <i>Little Green</i> better matched the evidence that I have selected. The three sections I chose, “Is the protagonist right for poetry”, “Can the individual poems stand alone”, and “Do the poems work visually on the page?”. In these three sections, I believe that <i>Little Green</i> does a better job than <i>In and Out and Back Again</i>. For the first one, “Is the protagonist right for poetry”, the protagonist in the both of these novels are very unique. However, I believe that <i>Little Green</i> is a little more complex than <i>Ha</i> because <i>Little Green</i> is different, and very special. For example, “When I went home, Nainai was cooking in the kitchen./The air was filled with the scent of stewed pork/and stir-fried vegetables./I told her the story from school,/and asked her,/“Why were the landlords so bad?"/She didn't answer my question for a while;/instead she put a few pieces of pork/on a small dish for me to have before the meal./She said,/“In the old time the poor did suffer a lot,/but some rich</p>	



people were nice too,/helped poor people without asking anything back./I was surprised by her answer./From the stories told in school,/I couldn't picture a good rich person./It would have been called/feudalistic backward thinking in school./But I knew my Nainai would not lie to me,/although I should not repeat what she had just said (77).” This quote shows that Little Green is different because she has this personality that is indescribable. Because she is growing up in this open environment that was China in the 60's, it really shows in her personality. While Ha did show some of this, she is more normal to me than Little Green. It's a small difference, but I believe that it really matters.

For my second criteria, “Do the poems work visually on the page and aurally with sound ?”, I also believe that *Little Green* did a better job at making the poem look very pleasing to the eye and in the formatting of text. While both of these novels didn't have anything exotic when it came to formatting, *Little Green* did have an advantage when it came to sound. In this book, lines were jam-packed full of meaning. For example, in the line, “It must be the bother in his heart/that mama was talking about (66),” it confused me the first time I read it. However, after reading it multiple times, I was able to get a better grasp on the line, and the whole poem. *In and Out and Back Again* wasn't like that. I felt like, while it was a good book, the meaning was very first level, and would've worked fine in prose, too.

For my final criteria, I would like to discuss if the poems can stand on their own. For this section, I believe that hands-down *Little Green* does a better job. The book was just written that way. While *In and Out and Back Again* does a slightly better job at weaving the stories together, I feel like if I randomly took a poem out of *Little Green* and read it to an audience, they wouldn't know it was from a book. For example, here is a poem that was near the end of the book, “**A Big Mourning Hall**  
The whole country became a big mourning hall;/wherever there were people, there was crying./We were summoned back to school/immediately after Chairman Mao died./There were no classes./Teachers were crying, students were crying./This went on for days./Sometimes it was unclear to me what I was crying for./I had only seen Chairman Mao's pictures and statues,/but I guess it was supposed to be sad/that he didn't live for ten thousand years,/and people who knew him/would never be able to see him again./Then I thought of my nainai and taitai:/Image if this dying happened to one of them./I would never see them again,/just like I never saw my taiye again after he died./Life is strange. I have no control over it!/The thoughts made me very sad,/and I cried for a long time after that./But then I ran out of reasons to cry again,/while some others were still crying./I started to worry,/wondering if they had deeper feelings/for Chairman Mao than I did.” Even though I read the entire book, I feel like this poem does a great job at standing out. All of them do. While *In and Out and Back Again* does have some poems like this, it's not nearly to the caliber of litte gree.