Below is a poem with the reader’s annotations. You can see their thinking as they read and re-read the text. On the back, you’ll see these notes organized into a literary analysis observation chart, where the reader also makes connections to the effects and/or possible meaning of each detail. Under that chart, you’ll find the reader’s notes on what stands out, what new understanding is formed through this process. Those thoughts are the beginnings of potential thesis statements.

One Art - Elizabeth Bishop

**POETRY:**

"The art of losing isn't hard to master"

"so many things seem filled with the intent to be lost that their loss is no disaster"

"Lose something every day. Accept the cluster of lost door keys, the hour badly spent."

"The art of losing isn't hard to master."

"Then practice losing farther, losing faster"

"places, and names, and where it was you meant to travel. None of these will bring disaster."

"I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or next-to-last, of three loved houses went."

"The art of losing isn't hard to master."

"I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, violent"

"some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent."

"I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster."

"Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture"

"I love) I didn't have any. It's evident"

"the art of losing isn't too hard to master"

"though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster"
### Observations

#### Structure
- Villanelle form: six verse poem with two repeating lines; last verse has an extra line
- Repetition:
  - “the art of losing isn’t hard to master”
  - “loss is no disaster”
- Parentheses interrupts, italics: “(Write it!)”

#### Effects/Meaning
- Repeated lines feel like the narrator trying to convince themselves/the reader.
- Emphasizes the difficulty of writing about this “disaster” — coping with loss is difficult!

#### Style
- Tone is Conversational, confident at first
- Tone turns instructional later

#### Effects/Meaning
- Tone feels very loose, suggests the topic is not serious.
- Instructional tone = implies the narrator is experienced with loss

#### Sound
- Lots of slippery “s” and “l” sounds and breathy “f” sounds: losing, things seem, next to last, miss
- Repeated words: master, disaster

#### Effects/Meaning
- Soft hissing sounds, uncomfortable and uncontrollable, like something is slipping away.
- Repetition, trying to hold on to the words and their meanings.

#### Imagery
- Poem describes many objects/things, each verse tackles something different:
  - Ordinary objects (“door keys”)
  - Sentimental objects (“my mother’s watch”)
  - Abstract things (“realms”)
  - Sentimental things (“a gesture I love”)

#### Effects/Meaning
- Progression of “things” equates ordinary objects with precious concepts = seems to get more and more difficult to accept as the things get more significant.

#### Themes
- Loss
- Transience

#### Effects/Meaning
- Nothing is permanent! Losing things is unavoidable.
- Dealing with loss is most difficult and not all losses are equal.

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Possible thesis ideas:
- The rhyme structure is very strict, which contrasts with the loose tone. This makes the narrator’s voice feel forced and implies they might be trying to deceive themselves.
- Irony is created throughout the poem: Ordinary objects are not the same as loved ones. Losing something is not difficult, but coping with our feelings after is.
- Loss is a natural part of life therefore we should not get too obsessed with it. But it is just as bad to ignore or lie about how meaningful a loss is to ourselves. After all, loss can become a personal disaster.