

ALPHABET INDEX



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Introduction

The process of creating this index was enlightening to us, as the creators, in understanding Christensen's alphabet. For example, most of the poem occurs in the present. Many words help the reader orient themselves in the space that Christensen created. Seasonal words, such as *snow* or *bloom*, help the reader understand the time of year being referenced without explicitly stating the season. Additionally, many of the words Christensen uses reference duration of time. Focusing on Christensen's use of time and time-hopping allows for ecological and environmental issues to be highlighted; no matter the time, these issues will always be prevalent. Selecting which words to use and which words to omit proved to be a challenge. Our subject, time, could potentially include most words within the poems, but in order to maintain a focus upon the most relevant examples, we engaged in interesting discussions concerning the degree to which certain words qualified as being within our given category. First, we had to discuss how we, as a group, would define time. For example, we chose to include snow because of the distinctive affiliation with winter, but we chose not to include death as this is more of a metaphysical concept -- not time. Although there was no clear distinction among our group of what would and wouldn't be included, when a word came into question we were open to discussing its viability. While this time index is shorter in length than other topics, it does not show that it has a lack of importance but rather a more intentional and purposeful use. Through the index, our specific focus allows for an enlightening perspective on Christensen's use of time.

Reading Experience

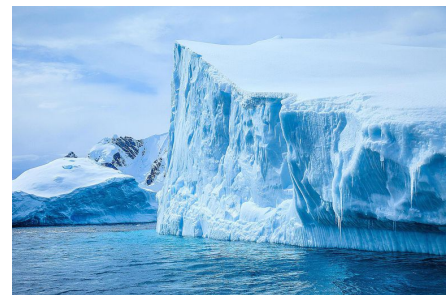
Reading *alphabet* in the context of making an experimental index shifted the reading process into a more tedious but focused endeavor. The task of finding and classifying words caused us to more deeply examine the relationship between the poem and time itself. Further, this narrow lens through which we analyzed the poems caused us to appreciate the specific language the author decided to use when exploring the concept of time. For example, through our work in finding the author's uses of different tenses of exist, we were able to more clearly see how she points out the contrast between what humans assume "will exist" and what science predicts-- that many of these things, including humanity itself, may eventually just "have existed". While a small number of words were questionable, the majority of the words we found on our first reading were intentionally chosen to introduce both time and timelessness within *alphabet* to further emphasize Inger Christensen's thoughts on the relationship between humans and the environment. Admittedly, when we all first read the poem alone, trying to trace and distinguish between multiple broad themes in the poem was confusing. However the focused view we took differentiates our second reading from the original read in that we instead attempted to conceptualize and understand specific uses of language on a small scale, down to the use of single words. Overall, the shift in focus allowed for an exploration of specific uses of poetic language within a singular theme.



Bloom: photo courtesy of Brooke Waller



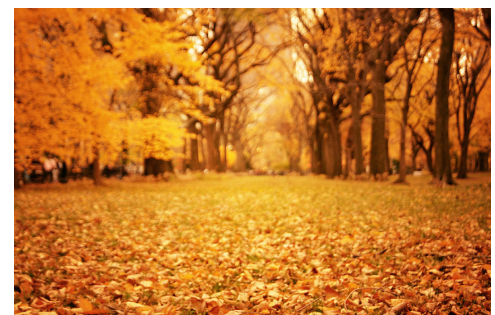
Snow: photo courtesy of Phobia Wiki



ice age: photo courtesy of thoughtco.com



midnight: photo courtesy of fortune.com



autumn: photo courtesy of mhpbooks.com

12th century, 23
afterglow, 15
aftertaste, 15, 22
aftertaste, 22
afterthought, 15, 22
always, 49, 64, 65, 69
at last, 74
August
 August 6th, 1945, 24
 August 9th, 1945, 24
 August eleventh, 75
autumn, 60
beginnings, 43
bloom, 66
 blooms, 52
calendar, 36
centuries, 27
childhood, 37
 childhood's, 76
day, 30, 62, 70
 days, 4, 14, 62
death, 60
deathbed, 51
endless, 27
 endlessly, 52
eternity, 56, 57
evening,
 26, 29, 32, 37, 57, 65, 74
everyday, 70
exist, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16,
 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24,
 26, 30, 40, 44, 54, 58, 62,
 63
 existed, 21, 33
 exists, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18,
 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 33, 44,
 62
 will exist, 20, 21
fall, 15, 22,
 early fall, 15, 22
finally, 24

five o'clock, 66
forever, 24
fossilized, 43
future, 15, 67, 75
future's, 73
half-life, 40, 42
half-lives, 19
Halley's comet, 18
have died, 24
history, 18, 26, 34
hour, 66
hourless, 22
ice ages, 20, 62
intervals, 58
June, 22, 35, 70
 mid-June, 35
 June 24th, 65
 June 26th, 72
 June nights, 22
 June sixteenth, 37, 68
 June twentieth, 46
midnight, 48, 50
moment, 28
morning, 46, 54, 72
nadir, 62
new, 49
night, 62, 76
 nights, 62, 22
November, 30
 mid-November, 34
now, 73
old, 38
 oldest, 44
 Old World, 16, 63
quick, 45
second, 71
simultaneously, 22
slowly, 56
snow, 35, 36, 45, 50, 52, 60
sometimes, 50
soon, 66, 74

spring, 60
springtime, 29
suddenly, 28, 34, 46, 53
summer, 22, 24,
 34, 54, 57, 66
 early summer, 33
ticking, 22, 36
time, 36, 47, 50, 66, 71
today, 70, 75
used to, 30
weekday, 19
when, 28, 73, 76
will call, 16
winter, 60
years, 67
zenith, 62