

Poetry

Consider the following when Reading it and/or Writing it

The Speaker

- The person, place, or thing speaking the poem has an impact on the reader's experience.

Word Choice

- The words you choose could be slang or formal, angry or caring, English or foreign, but they have an effect on your reader. Words create a certain tone or feeling in the poem. **Choose them carefully.**
- Be clear and effective with your words (don't use words like "a lot" or "kind of" that are vague).

Imagery

- Pictures are powerful....try to paint a picture with words.
- Describe what you see in your mind: color, texture, size, smell, taste, sounds.

Figurative Language

- Compare one thing to another to give new insights into what the reader sees and feels while reading the poem.
- Use "like" or "as" when comparing (simile)
- Try to avoid clichés like "hungry as a bear" or "small as a mouse."
- Use some stronger comparison too (metaphors) that say the one thing is the other.

Sound Patters

- Rhyme words (at the end or within lines).
- Make the words imitate a natural sound ("Pop" or "Crackle")

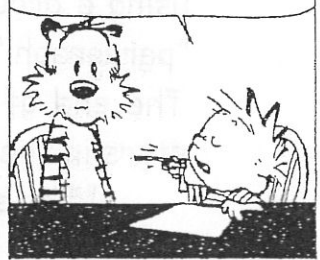
Form

- Consider using a structured poetic form (limerick, cinquain, haiku...) or free verse.
- Be creative with the "look" of the poem if you choose free verse; consider making the poem's look or form match its topic or purpose or theme

I USED TO HATE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS, BUT NOW I ENJOY THEM.



I REALIZED THAT THE PURPOSE OF WRITING IS TO INFLATE WEAK IDEAS, OBSCURE POOR REASONING, AND INHIBIT CLARITY.



WITH A LITTLE PRACTICE, WRITING CAN BE AN INTIMIDATING AND IMPENETRABLE FOG! WANT TO SEE MY BOOK REPORT?



"THE DYNAMICS OF INTERBEING AND MONOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES IN DICK AND JANE: A STUDY IN PSYCHIC TRANSRELATIONAL GENDER MODES."



What Makes Poetry Different?

- ❖ It's Short - usually much shorter than other forms of literature.
More ideas are communicated with fewer words.
- ❖ Rhyme - How much of modern poetry is written using rhyme or a free-verse structure? (95%) of poetry written in the last 25 years does not rhyme.
- ❖ Feelings and Emotions - Poetry is known for focusing on feelings.
- ❖ Punctuation/Capitalization - The first word of each line is usually capitalized. Punctuation varies, according to the poem and author.
- ❖ Line Structures/Stanzas - An author's ideas are usually organized using a group of lines, called a stanza, with each stanza acting like a "paragraph." Poems can have multiple stanzas, but some have just one. The end of a line also marks the end of an idea. for example; "The stars in the sky" would be on a single line written like:
 "The stars in the sky"
- It would not be written on a page like:
 "The stars in the
 Sky"
- ❖ Simile/Metaphor/Personification - Poems usually contain many examples of these three literary devices.

Introduction To Poetry By Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

On Turning Ten

By Billy Collins

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light--
a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

A synonym for litany is list; In this case it is a list of comparisons (metaphors)

Litany by Billy Collins

You are the bread and the knife,
the crystal goblet and the wine.
You are the dew on the morning grass
and the burning wheel of the sun.
You are the white apron of the baker,
and the marsh birds suddenly in flight.

However, you are not the wind in the orchard,
the plums on the counter,
or the house of cards.
And you are certainly not the pine-scented air.
There is just no way that you are the pine-scented air.

It is possible that you are the fish under the bridge,
maybe even the pigeon on the general's head,
but you are not even close
to being the field of cornflowers at dusk.

And a quick look in the mirror will show
that you are neither the boots in the corner
nor the boat asleep in its boathouse.

It might interest you to know,
speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,
that I am the sound of rain on the roof.

I also happen to be the shooting star,
the evening paper blowing down an alley
and the basket of chestnuts on the kitchen table.

I am also the moon in the trees
and the blind woman's tea cup.
But don't worry, I'm not the bread and the knife.
You are still the bread and the knife.
You will always be the bread and the knife,
not to mention the crystal goblet and--somehow--the wine.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

-Robert Frost

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;--
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.
She was a child and I was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love--
I and my Annabel Lee--
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud by night
Chilling my Annabel Lee;
So that her high-born kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me:--
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of a cloud, chilling
And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we--
Of many far wiser than we--
And neither the angels in Heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:--

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
In her sepulcher there by the sea--
In her tomb by the side of the sea.

-Edgar Allen Poe

NIKKI GIOVANNI

(1943-)

Nikki-Rosa

childhood remembrances are always a drag
if you're Black
you always remember things like living in Woodlawn
with no inside toilet
and if you become famous or something
they never talk about how happy you were to have your mother
all to yourself and
how good the water felt when you got your bath from one of those
big tubs that folk in Chicago barbecue in
and somehow when you talk about home
it never gets across how much you
understood their feelings
as the whole family attended meetings about Hollydale
and even though you remember
your biographers never understand
your father's pain as he sells his stock
and another dream goes
and though you're poor it isn't poverty that
concerns you
and though they fought a lot
it isn't your father's drinking that makes any difference
but only that everybody is together and you
and your sister have happy birthdays and very good christmasses
and I really hope no white person ever has cause to write about me
because they never understand Black love is Black wealth and they'll
probably talk about my hard childhood and never understand that
all the while I was quite happy

I Hear America Singing

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear.
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-hand singing
on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon
intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl
sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else.
The day what belongs to the day – at night the party of young fellows, robust,
friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Walt Whitman

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed –

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes





“next to of course god america i”

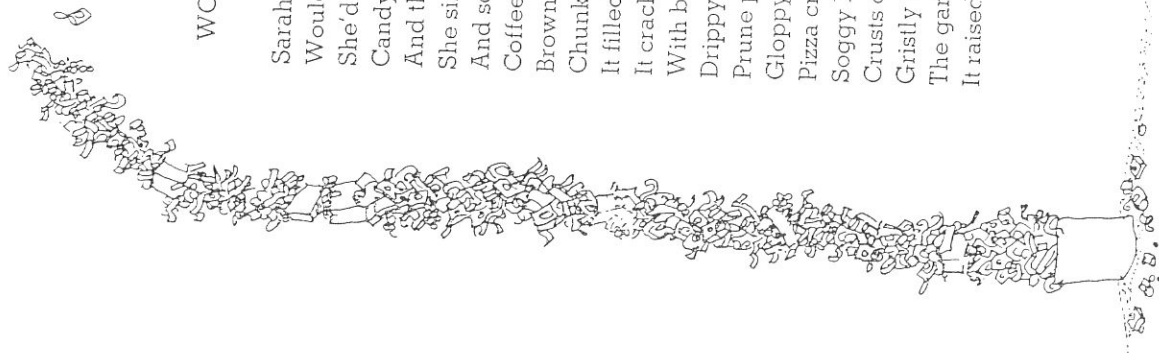
“next to of course god america i
 love you land of the pilgrims’ and so forth oh
 say can you see by the dawn’s early my
 country ’tis of centuries come and go
 and are no more what of it we should worry
 in every language even deafanddumb
 thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry
 by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
 why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-
 iful than these heroic happy dead
 who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
 they did not stop to think they died instead
 then shall the voice of liberty be mute?”

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

e.e. cummings

SARAH CYNTHIA SYLVIA STOUT
WOULD NOT TAKE THE GARBAGE OUT

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She'd scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones,
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crusts and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned buttered toast,
Gristly bits of beefy roasts . . .
The garbage rolled on down the hall,
It raised the roof, it broke the wall . . .



Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,
Globs of gooey bubble gum,
Cellophane from green baloney,
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,
Peanut butter, caked and dry,
Curled milk and crusts of pie,
Moldy melons, dried-up mustard,
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,
Cold french fries and rancid meat,
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.
At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky.
And all the neighbors moved away,
And none of her friends would come to play.
And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,
"OK, I'll take the garbage out!"
But then, of course, it was too late . . .
The garbage reached across the state,
From New York to the Golden Gate.
And there, in the garbage she did hate,
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!



What is Poetry? Trying to define poetry is like trying to catch the wind.

There are as many definitions of poetry as there are poets. Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings;" Emily Dickinson said, "If I read a book and it makes my body so cold no fire ever can warm me, I know that is poetry;" and Dylan Thomas defined poetry this way: "Poetry is what makes me laugh or cry or yawn, what makes my toenails twinkle, what makes me want to do this or that or nothing."

So what is poetry?

Perhaps the characteristic most central to the definition of poetry is its unwillingness to be defined, labeled, or nailed down. But let's not let that stop us, shall we? It's about time someone wrestled poetry to the ground and slapped a sign on its back reading, "I'm poetry. Kick me here."

Poetry is the chiseled marble of language; it's a paint-spattered canvas - but the poet uses words instead of paint, and the canvas is you. Poetic definitions of poetry kind of spiral in on themselves, however, like a dog eating itself from the tail up. Let's get nitty. Let's, in fact, get gritty. I believe we can render an accessible definition of poetry by simply looking at its form and its purpose:

One of the most definable characteristics of the poetic form is economy of language. Poets are miserly and unrelentingly critical in the way they dole out words to a page. Carefully selecting words for conciseness and clarity is standard, even for writers of prose, but poets go well beyond this, considering a word's emotive qualities, its musical value, its spacing, and yes, even its spacial relationship to the page. The poet, through innovation in both word choice and form, seemingly rends significance from thin air.

How am I doing so far?

On to purpose: One may use prose to narrate, describe, argue, or define. There are equally numerous reasons for writing poetry. But poetry, unlike prose, often has an underlying and over-arching purpose that goes beyond the literal. Poetry is evocative. It typically evokes in the reader an intense emotion: joy, sorrow, anger, catharsis, love... Alternatively, poetry has the ability to surprise the reader with an Ah Ha! Experience -- revelation, insight, further understanding of elemental truth and beauty. Like Keats said:

"Beauty is truth. Truth, beauty. That is all ye know on Earth and all ye need to know."

How's that? Do we have a definition yet?

Poetry is artistically rendering words in such a way as to evoke intense emotion or an Ah Ha! experience from the reader.

Pretty unsatisfying, huh?

Kind of leaves you feeling cheap, dirty, all hollow and empty inside . . . Don't do this. Don't shackle poetry with your definitions. Poetry is not a frail and cerebral old woman, you know. Poetry is stronger than you think. Poetry is imagination and will break those chains

To borrow a phrase, poetry is a riddle wrapped in an enigma swathed in a cardigan sweater . . . or something like that. It doesn't like your definitions and will shirk them at every turn. If you really want to know what poetry is, read it. Read it carefully. Pay attention. Read it out loud. Now read it again.

There's your definition of poetry. Because defining poetry is like grasping at the wind - once you catch it, it's no longer wind. ■



EMOTIVE: appealing to or expressing emotion

EVOCATIVE: suggestive, calling forth vivid emotions or images

CEREBRAL: intellectual, brainy

THINK ABOUT IT

What Makes a Poem a Poem?

If a poem doesn't have to rhyme or follow

Any particular structure;

Then how is a poem different

From prose?

Is it simply a matter of how

The lines are

Broken?

Is this a poem?

It looks like

A poem.

If it's not a poem,

Then what is it?

Missing?

Traditional poems follow standard rules of grammar and sentence structure with a regular rhythm and rhyme scheme.

Modern poems, such poems written in free verse, follow no set structure or tradition and seek new ways of expression.

IDEAS FOR POEM "STARTERS"

Use these phrases to give you an idea of how to start a poem, or how to set up the structure of a poem.

1. I used to

But now

2. A small girl

The same girl,

Now twelve

Eighteen years old,

She....

3. Yesterday

Life was

Today

Life is

Tomorrow

Life will be

4. Simile

My life is like a

5. Metaphor

My life is a

6. Maybe....

7. When I

Dream

8. What if....

9. A whisper

can mean....

10. Secrets are

It's Poetry-Writing Time

I would like you to write a poem on a topic that interests you.

Here are the **requirements** for the poem (25 total points possible):

- ❖ The poem should show effort, thought, feeling, and originality
- ❖ Turn in a brainstorm or rough draft; the final draft should be about a page long: That can be one poem, two poems, or at least 8 haikus (on a single topic or theme).
- ❖ Use 3 or more of the following poetry terms: repetition, rhyme, alliteration, allusion, onomatopoeia, simile, metaphor, personification, and/or form.

Here are some **suggestions** for the poem:

- ❖ Try to include a strong voice, a purposeful form or grouping of stanzas, and build in a rhythm like the beat of a song
- ❖ If you're having trouble coming up with a topic or a form, try one of the Poetic Forms in sections 233-236 of the Write Source or look at our wiki page, <http://akabodian7.pbworks.com/Poetry>
- ❖ Think back over the poems we have read or heard in class for topic ideas
- ❖ Balance fun with a bit of seriousness or thoughtfulness
- ❖ Use your Thesaurus to use more of the words you know, but don't use often

Rough Draft or **extensive Brainstorm**, due on Wednesday, Jan. 31st (worth 5 points)
{You'll have part of the hour on Tuesday and Wednesday to write}

Final Draft is due on Tuesday, Feb. 6th on your wiki page --- you'll have time in class that day to type it onto your wiki (worth 15 points).

Writer's Café Presentation on Thursday, Feb. 8th (worth 5 points)

Try to bring a snack or drink to share with the class that day.

Choose one of the following:

1. Read your poem to the class (show it to the class from your wiki)
OR
2. Memorize a poem of at least 5 lines and recite it to the class (Mr. Kabodian will have several to choose from or you can choose your own and get it approved)

You'll have an opportunity to put your poem on the wall, too, if you print it.

Express Yourself