# **Writing Workshop: Baca’s Culture**

**Step 1-** Read Baca’s poems “Ancestor,” “It Would Be Neat If With New Year,” and “Sanctuary”

**Step 2-** Annotate.

**Step 3-** Answer these questions:  How does Baca define and describe (use the Norton Field Guide pages 388-407 as part of your response) his culture? What might you model from Baker’s essay about Baca and his poems when you write Essay 2?

Baca defines and describes his culture by exhibiting his life experiences in poetry. Baca’s poems are very personal and describe his family life, feelings of loneliness, and time in prison. These poems offer a glimpse into Baca’s perspective by vividly describing the fear, hardship, and perseverance that has shaped who he is. The poems also feature other characters who share many of Baca’s issues, showing that he is part of a larger social group. This allows readers to understand Baca’s culture through the common experiences shared by members of his community.

When writing Essay 2, I will make note of Baker’s use of a personal profile. Baker describes Baca and his life in detail, using the story as a demonstration of poetry’s ability to change people’s lives. I think this use of a personal narrative is a handy literary device because it provides interesting details and engages readers with a character that they care about. Therefore, I will incorporate the stories of influential figures within my discourse community into my essay.

Another cue that I will take from Baker is the engaging introduction to his essay, which begins with the memorable line, “Chicano poet Jimmy Santiago Baca was born with rattlesnake poison in his blood” (Baker). I will try to include an unexpected, interesting introduction to my own essay.

**Step 4-** Write your own culture poem based on your Essay 2 topic. Use vocabulary/phrasing unique to the culture, describe a ritual, define the culture’s rules, and/or show a sense of community. Try to write **twelve** lines for your poem.

The digital world

Should offer freedom for all.

Don’t lock it away

In proprietary software.

Creativity

Sparks awesome innovation

So share the source code

And when everyone contributes

Community will

Work together to create

Something amazing.

Ideas just won’t abate.