

Module 5 Assignment

Poem + Reflection

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Poem – “Have You Tried”

Have you tried tasting phở early in the morning, steam rising like memory?

Have you tried listening to your parents switch between Vietnamese and English at the dinner table?

Have you tried carrying stories of a country you’ve never lived in, but still call home?

Have you tried walking into class knowing you are both student and family translator?

Have you tried hearing the laughter of cousins packed into one room during Tết, red envelopes waiting in our hands?

Have you tried explaining traditions to friends who only see fireworks, not the ancestors behind them?

Have you tried writing code while the smell of jasmine tea drifts in from the kitchen?

Have you tried feeling proud and tired at once, knowing how much was sacrificed for you to sit here now?

Have you tried holding on to every language, every recipe, every memory, so none of it disappears?

Have you tried dreaming in two languages, only to wake up not sure which one carried the meaning?

Have you tried realizing that every step you take is someone else’s hope fulfilled?

Reflection Questions

- 1. Were you able to stick to your creative routine this week? If not, why?

I couldn't fully stick to my creative routine this week. I felt burnt out and realized I needed to relax instead of pushing myself to always be productive. Taking a break felt necessary, and even though I wasn't working on creative tasks the whole time, giving myself space helped me recharge a little.

- 2. Did you experiment with intuition? Embracing something you didn't quite understand, but tried to articulate?

Yes — when I wrote about silence feeling heavier than noise, it came from intuition more than logic. I wasn't sure exactly what I meant at first, but the image stuck with me, so I kept it. Writing it down helped me realize it was a way to describe the tension in moments when nothing is said, but everything is felt.

- 3. What was your overall experience writing a poem? Was it helpful to have the repetitive phrase to work off of?

My overall experience was positive. At first, I wasn't sure how to start, but once I began with "Have you tried," the memories kept flowing. The repetitive phrase gave me something solid to hold on to, almost like a rhythm, so I didn't overthink what I was writing. It was also helpful because it made writing feel less pressured, more like recalling fragments of memory than producing something perfect.