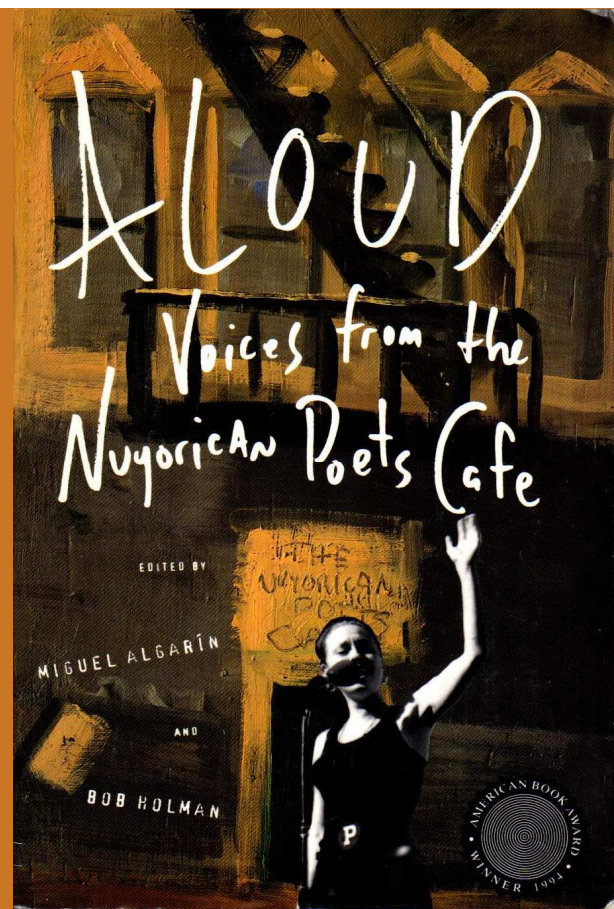


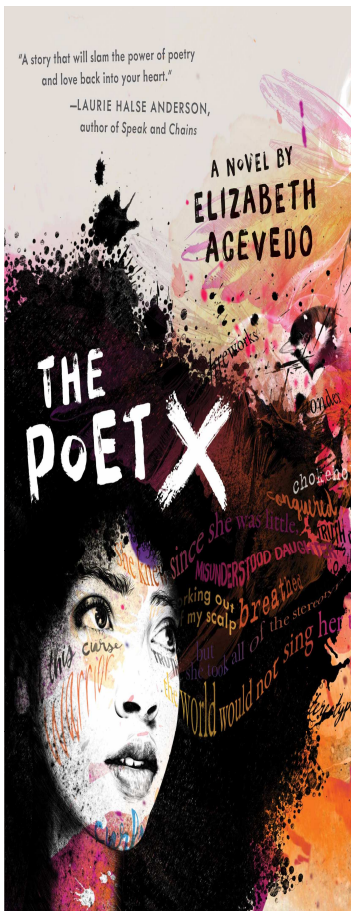




Compiled by poets who have been at the center of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City, *Aloud!* showcases the work of the most innovative and accomplished word artists from around America.







Chris and Isabelle have their memorized but Stephan reads from his notebook. My hands are shaking even before it's my turn and I just keep hoping somehow I'll be skipped.

Stephan's poetry is filled with the most colorful images. Each line a visual, landing on target. (I don't always understand every line but love the pictures being painted behind my eyelids.)

Chris Hodges is loud, a mile-a-minute talker, a comment for every poem, everything is "Deep" and "Wow," his poem using words like *abyss* and *effervescent* (I think he's studying for the SAT).

And then there's Isabelle Pedemonte-Riley. Her piece rhymes and she sounds like a straight-up rapper. You can tell she loves Nicki Minaj, too. That girl's a storyteller writing a world you're invited to walk into.

I sit wondering how writing can bring such strangers into the same room.

And then it's my turn to read.

Become a slam poet in five steps:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=9f8VcV8v2LE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f8VcV8v2LE)



## Once Upon a Slam—Storytelling

The traditional structure of narrative requires the basic beginning, middle, and end, but other ingredients contribute to making stories memorable, especially at a slam:

- Character
  - Can be anybody or anything
- Time and place
- Action
  - Covers movement, purpose, and direction
  - Audience needs to know why the character is struggling, where the character is headed, or what the character wants early on
- Obstacles and conflict
- Point of view
- Crisis
- A bull's eye
  - The story has to finally hit a target and fulfill the audience's expectations or cut those expectations off at the knees



## What's Your Point—Oratory, Poetics, or a Laundry List of Love?

- Commenting on society, celebrities, politics or anything else we find interesting or controversial
- Write from experience
  - “write what you know”



## Seeing is Believing—Concrete vs. Abstract Language

- Basic to all good writing is concrete language: words and phrases that project on the minds of the audience vivid pictures, sounds, actions, and other sensations
- If your writing is rich with imagery (piles of gold doubloons), your audience will see, smell, taste (eyeball sniffin' slobber) what you're telling (squawk twitter howl) them
- Avoid the overuse of abstract language—words and phrases humans have concocted and coined to identify, interpret, and generalize the world and human behavior
  - Words like “liberty,” “conservatism,” and “greed” are abstract words



## Flaccid Phrasing

Both prose and poetry are stronger when they're active.

- *Passive voice* places no one in charge of the action: “The apple was shot off Johnny’s head.” Who did the shooting? Active voice fingers the perpetrator: “Susie blasted the apple off Johnny’s head.”
- *Feeble verbs* such as “is” and “are” lay on the beach like pale weaklings waiting for Mr. Universe to kick sand in their faces. Instead use verbs with muscle. “There are thirteen ghosts in the house.” Yeah, so? What are they doing, just floating there namby-pamby? “Thirteen ghosts pillaged the house like an L.A. mob.” Now we’re getting somewhere.



## It's Gotta Sound Good, Too

Sound in poetry is as color is to visual art. Good poetry compels the human ear to listen: that is, it's sonically rich. To make your words *bing, ting, zip, grip, rattle, and bong*, you must employ a variety of sonic devices.

- *Alliteration*
- *Hidden alliteration* is the repetition of sounds *within* two or more words in a line or series of lines, such as “*Long ago regal glory regaled* at the tables set by the poor.”
- *Assonance*
- *Consonance*
- *Onomatopoeia*



## Rock to the Rhythm

One characteristic that sets poetry apart from other forms of writing is rhythm—patterns formed by the almighty line and stanzas peppered with recurring poetic devices.

Fixed line forms and meter are not prevalent in the slam world . . . The strength of the performance poetry lies in its willingness to stitch together a variety of line lengths, meters, and rhythmic patterns into a unified whole.



## If You Must Rhyme...

- *End rhyme*
- *Cross rhyme*
- *Interlaced rhyme*
- *Internal rhyme*
- *Linked rhyme*
- *Slant-rhyme*
- *Wrenched rhyme*



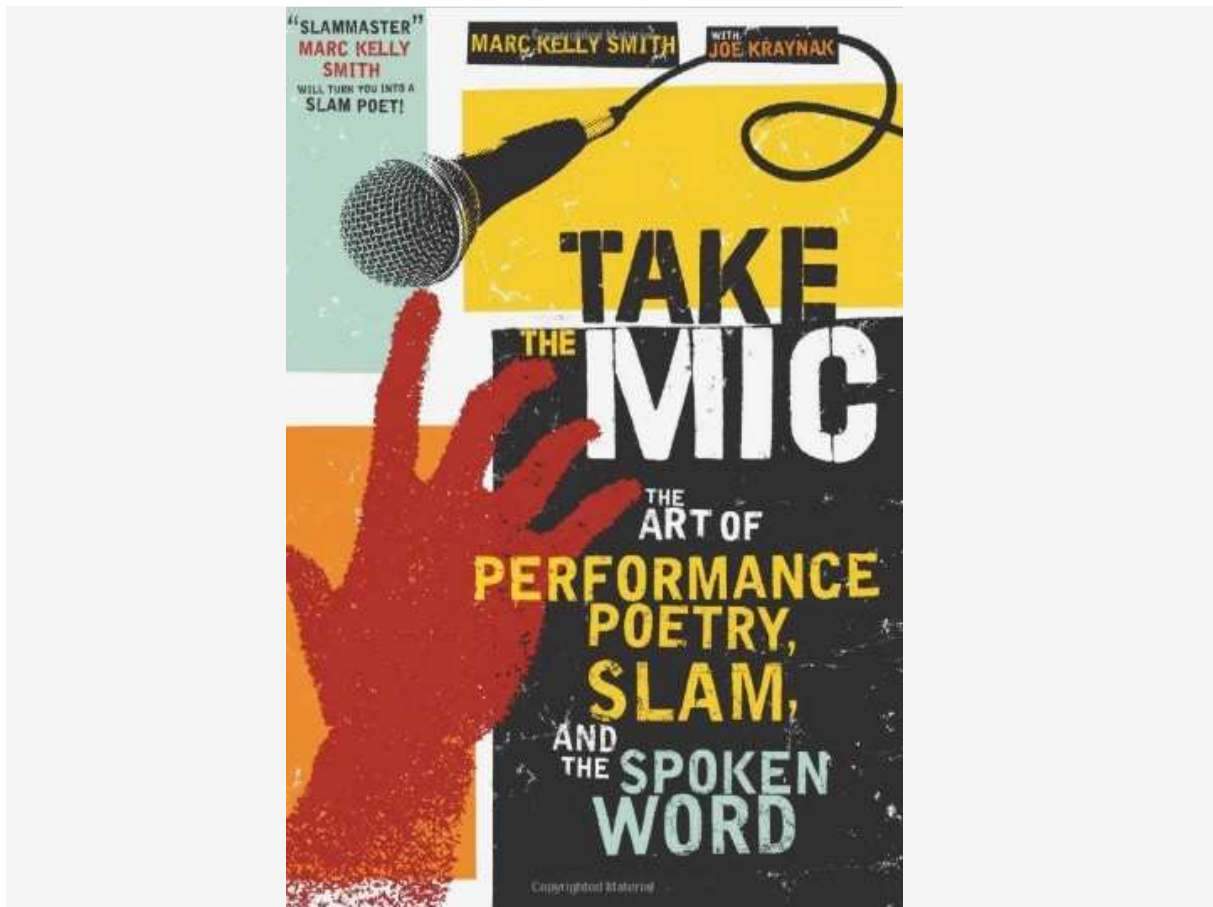
## No Sermons, But If You Must Preach...

Use the devices in moderation or avoid them completely:

- *Antanagoge*
- *Antiphrasis*
- *Aporia*
- *Apostrophe*
- *Bombast*
- *Ecophonesis*
- *Epiphonema*



# All Forms Can Slam





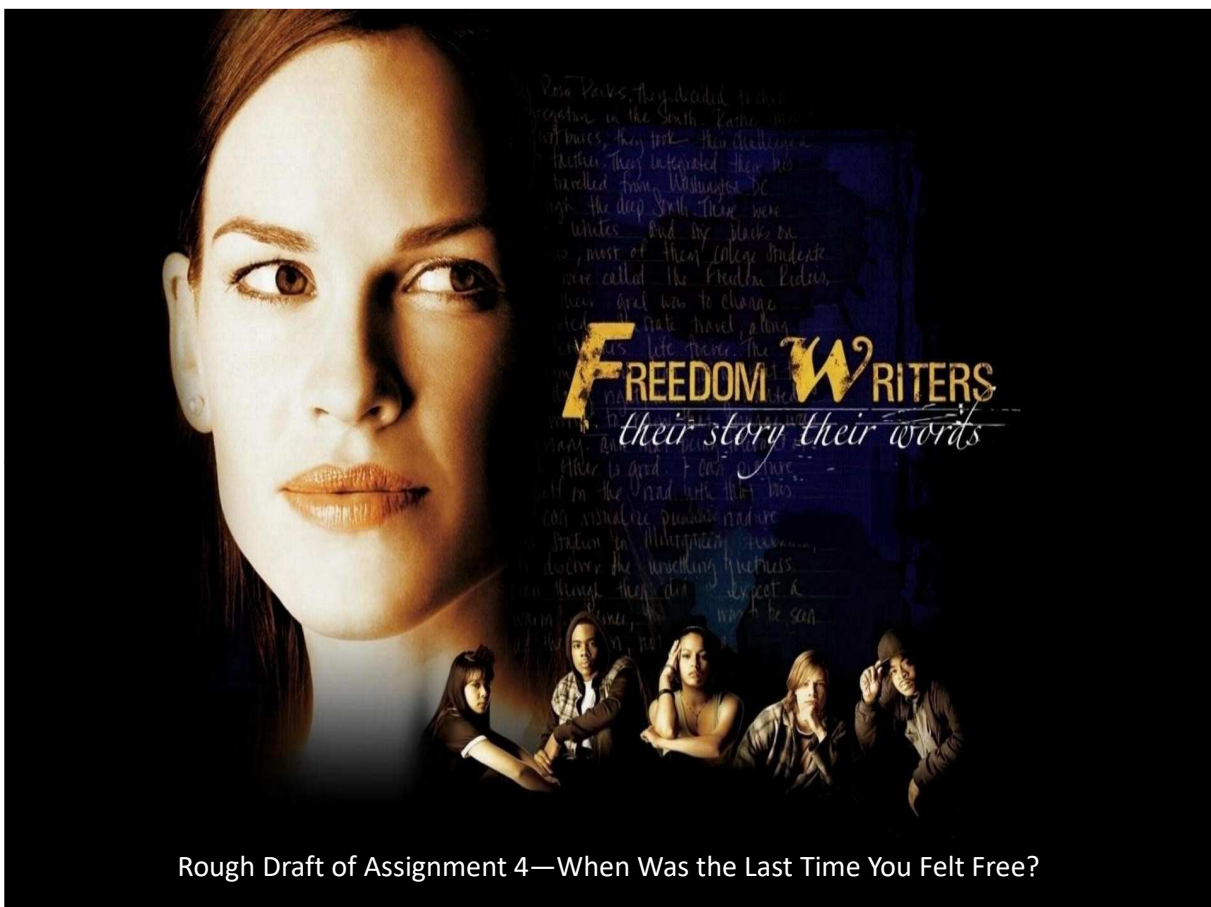
For homework 13,  
you will prepare for a  
slam poetry performance in class 14!



If you do not prepare a spoken word poem to  
perform, you will be tasked with performing a  
random one on the day of! If you choose not  
to do so, you will receive an incomplete mark!



# REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE



Rough Draft of Assignment 4—When Was the Last Time You Felt Free?