

Volunteer State
Community College

Best of
Student Essays

from the
2014-2015 Academic Year

Expository Essays
&
Research Writing

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Introduction

Volunteer State Community College Best Essays is a new incarnation of a previous publication entitled *VSCC English Department's Best Essays*. As the early version has done over the past decade, this publication will continue to showcase some of the best writing being done by students at Volunteer State, and we have just expanded the publication to include examples of excellent writing from a variety of academic disciplines. While much of the work appearing here is nominated by faculty in the Department of English, which publishes this book, faculty from other disciplines are now also invited to nominate student essays for collection. This year, we are pleased to include our first essay from a discipline other than English, "Patriarchy's Roots," written by Amy Leu for History 1110, World Civilization 1.

Each year, instructors at Volunteer State nominate students who have demonstrated excellence in writing and invite them to submit an essay to our selection committee; that committee of Vol State faculty then works collaboratively to choose superior student work for publication. *Best Essays*, then, represents the exemplary writing of student authors, the efforts made by nominating faculty, and hours of hard work the selection committee does in reading and choosing the best of the best submissions.

The purpose of this publication is twofold: first, to showcase exemplary student writing by Vol State students, and second, to provide our faculty with helpful tools for teaching writing and critical thinking skills to our students.

The student essays published here exhibit the elements essential to high-quality, college-level writing. They are separated into three categories, and one student in each category is awarded a prize for his or her work. Prize winners are chosen based on creativity, critical thought, organization, and an awareness of the fundamentals of good writing.

Section 1 focuses on English Composition 1 (English 1010) expository writing, personal responses to topics, and essays which do not typically include formal research. The essays generally rely upon the rhetorical modes of narration, description, and illustration.

Section 2 focuses on researched essays written for English Composition 1. This category gives first semester composition students the chance to show off their beginning collegiate research skills without having to compete with more advanced writers. Good research essays employ rhetorical modes such as comparison and contrast and/or cause and effect as a means of critical analysis. They include research from a limited number of sources.

Section 3 focuses on research essays written by students for English Composition 2 (English 1020) and for other courses. It also may include essays from other disciplines. The arguments are well-developed, and the research for these essays may be substantial.

The student essays appearing in this publication were submitted between the Summer 2014 and Spring 2015 terms. We think they demonstrate both the excellence and diversity of student writing at Volunteer State. We would like to thank all the professors who nominated student essays and encouraged students to submit. We'd also like to extend our sincerest

congratulations to the students whose work appears here. It is our goal to continue to develop this project, and to publish the best student writing at Vol State in a way that is meaningful to both students and faculty alike.

Leslie LaChance, Committee Chair
On behalf of the Best Essays Committee
Fall 2015

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Section 1:
Expository Writing
English 1010

PRIIZE WINNER

First Place Expository Essay winner Jeremy Knight's essay "My Greatest Failure" is a compelling and narrative about how one man is able to find light and joy in his darkest moment. The strong sense of voice, rhythmic prose, and richly detailed descriptions are just a few of the things readers will find appealing in this essay. The author's subject matter is difficult, and the story is raw and emotionally honest, conveyed in artful prose. The essay redefines in a surprising way what it means to fail.

Jeremy W. Knight

Professor Deborah E. Moore, B.S., M.A.

English 1010

7 December 2014

My Greatest Failure

The barrel of the gun was cold against my tongue. The gun oil had a lightly acidic taste. I had reached the end of this path. My past kept pounding me, like giant waves beating against the great rocks of the shore, eventually turning them into sand. I could hear my teeth clatter on the gun as the tears streamed down my face.

I thought back to my earliest memories. I remembered summers over at my grandparents' house. Being awoken in the night by the bedroom door opening, and my grandfather pulling the covers back. I remembered having to work the fields with him, and how he destroyed my love for the outdoors. I remembered the feelings of dread and of shame. I remembered the confusion, not knowing how to tell anyone what was happening.

I remembered how, after I graduated high school, the one person I called friend used the hate and anger I felt to turn me into "muscle" for his "organization." I

remembered the horrible activities I performed in the name of loyalty and friendship. I still have nightmares about some of the things I did; I still hear the screams and pleas from people who did not deserve what happened.

I remembered finding the one bright spot in the darkness of my life, up till that point. She was beautiful, funny, and smart. She believed in me, believed that I was a good person. She even got me thinking that I was a good person, that I mattered. She pulled me off the path of destruction I was on. She was my everything.

I remembered the day I came home early from work. I remembered having knots in the pit of my stomach, and not knowing why. I remembered opening the front door and seeing her naked body intertwined with another man on my living room couch. I remembered the feelings of anger, of hatred, of disappointment. Of betrayal. The thoughts from my old life started to surface. The thoughts of what I could do to them, what I should do to them. Then I remembered feeling sorrow. I never wanted her to see me in the light of my old life, no matter how much she had hurt me. I closed the door.

That was the last straw, what led me to where I was. I was sitting in my truck in the middle of nowhere with a gun in my mouth. I could not take remembering all the bad and evil things that I had done, and that were done to me anymore. I was tired. I was weary. I was worn. I could not walk this path anymore, and the darkness was so thick I could not see any other way out.

I held my breath and pulled the trigger.

Time stopped.

I had always heard of people seeing their lives flash before their eyes, but could not say with any honesty that I believed it. In that moment though, as if on a movie

screen, I saw my life play out. I expected to see the atrocities of my life, but in their stead I was witnessing the good moments, the happy time from my life. I saw our family trip to Florida. The whole family together, laughing and playing in the ocean. I saw me and my dad playing darts. I saw the day my niece was born and holding her in my arms for the first time. As the images kept flashing, I realized the good moments far surpassed the bad. I just could not see it because all the anger, hate, and shame I felt kept those memories pushed down, locked up deep within the dark recesses of my mind.

Then the screen got dark. I saw my mom and dad weeping over my grave. I saw the devastation from my action drive them apart, cause them to become calloused and cold toward each other, and their friends and family. My heart broke at the thought of the pain I was inflicting on them, the two people who were always there for me no matter what. How could I do that to them? I couldn't. I wouldn't. I did not want to hurt them. I did not want them to feel that kind of pain. I did not want to die!

Click

I heard myself whisper, "Oh, Jesus." The gun fell from my hand into the darkness of the floorboard. My mind was still swimming, trying to grasp what had just happened. What was going on? Was I still alive? I had to get out of the truck. I struggled with the seat belt while clawing at the door searching for the handle. I could not get free. I had to get free. I had to get out of this truck.

Finally, the seat belt relinquished its hold and the door flung open. I fell from the seat onto the cold November ground. I was on all fours, vomiting like I was purging myself of the past that had been eating me up from the inside out. I collapsed onto the ground crying and exhausted.

It took me several minutes to realize that the gun had misfired. That gun had never misfired up until that point. I had put thousands of rounds through, and never a misfire. I do not have the arrogance to say I know why I was spared that night, but what I do know is that with a twitch of a finger, my life changed forever; it could have also ended. Then I would not have had all the wonderful experiences I have had since then. I know how deep the darkness goes, and when it gets that dark the only path you can see is suicide; but I promise you if you just stop, take a breath and let your eyes acclimate to the darkness you will see all the wondrous possibilities that stand before you.

Leslie Williams' essay relies heavily on dialogue to weave together a portrait and about her father's experiences in the Vietnam War. The work recounts the difficult and tragic circumstances faced by many military personnel, but Williams renders the voice of her father with such authenticity, the story becomes intensely personal. The skillful pacing of the essay, as it moves from detail to detail and moment to moment, keeps the reader engaged. The piece is a terrific example of how description and dialogue can work together to create an empathy-evoking portrait.

Leslie Williams

Professor Kevin Yeargin

English 1010

7 Feb. 2015

Pale Blue Eyes

The air was so thick with anticipation that I was having trouble breathing. He sat there wringing his hands as he struggled to speak the words that had haunted him for forty years. My father had never struggled to hold a conversation, and proudly declared on several occasions that he had “never met a stranger,” but on this gloomy Sunday afternoon he grimaced as though he were in pain trying to seek out the words to describe the nightmare that he had lived for three years. Although my father had never been a large man, he had always been stout and strong. I had always worried for days when I had to introduce a boy that I was dating for fear that my father would intimidate him, as he often did. Now, however, I almost didn’t recognize the small, frightened figure that I stared at in apprehension. His emotional frailty at this moment broke my heart. Finally, after waiting what seemed an eternity, he finally looked at me, a skinny girl of only twenty years old holding a newborn baby, and smiled weakly.

“Go lay the boy in his bed, Pooh”, he said. “I’m as ready as I’ll ever be.”

I opened my mouth to tell him that everything was okay, and that he didn't need to tell me these things that weighed so heavily on him if he wasn't ready, but he just smiled weakly and held up his hand to quiet my objections. I did as he asked and put my dreaming baby boy in his crib to sleep, then I sat on the couch near my father's chair so that I could be close to him as he spoke.

"I've never spoken to anyone about my time in Vietnam," he said. "I'm not ashamed of the choices that I made because we did our best given our situation, but I need you to know that there were things that we had to do in order to survive."

He paused to take a breath. His chest filled with so much air that I thought he might take in all of the air in the room before he continued.

"There were decisions made that no man should ever have to make, but we were still boys, and we were fighting an army that wasn't there."

My father's sky blue eyes glazed over with tears as he continued. "Your granddad expected me to join the service when I turned eighteen, and I never wanted to do anything to disappoint that man. You know how he was".

I thought back to the old sepia photograph that my grandmother kept next to her bed. The cheap wooden frame only helped to lend severity to the gaunt, handsome man in the picture. He was dressed in his army BDU's (Battle Dress Uniform) waiting for wartime, and my grandfather's signature half smile could still be seen despite the picture being nearly sixty years old. He would have, himself, fought in World War I if he had not been born with flat feet, a condition which at the time, was not compatible with warfare. "You never got to see the side of that man that I saw", my father continued. He was right. The man that I remembered worked hard, but he laughed often. He was never seen in his garden overalls without a lanky

little blonde girl by his side. I worshipped my grandfather, but I knew the sternness with which he treated my father. The elder Leslie immediately called me his “boy,” claiming that this way he would finally have a son.

As all of these memories came flooding back, I looked at the man that I will forever call “Daddy.” His strong hands had grown callused and dry from hard labor, and I knew the lengths that he went to in order to give me the life that he never had.

“I knew I was going to get drafted sooner or later, but I also knew how drafted men were treated. Dad would have never forgiven me if I were drafted. So I enlisted.”

He wet his lips, and paused as he continued. I knew that he was trying to prepare himself, more than me, for the story that he was about to tell.

“It was 1966, and I was with the 101st Airborne. They called us the Screamin’ Eagles. I’m not sure who came up with that name, but we liked it okay. We bragged to the other units that we had jumped out of more airplanes than they would ever fly on. We thought that we were on top of the world, but we didn’t stay there for long.”

His voice cracked as he delivered this last line, and he suppressed the urge to cry in front of his little girl. I hardened myself, and tried to pretend not to notice that he was falling apart. Inside I was shattering.

“Most of us were only eighteen or nineteen, but we pretended to be men. We pretended not to be bothered by the stories coming out of the jungle: the children with bombs strapped to them, the men that were dying, the countless that disappeared. We tricked ourselves into believing that could never happen to us.”

He looked up at me now, but his eyes were vacant. He saw his platoon, his men.

“What we ‘Screamin’ Eagles’ didn’t realize was that our job was to get dropped into the middle of battles while they were at their worst. We got dropped right in the middle of the hail of gunfire coming from both sides. When we dropped down we immediately started firing our weapons and running. What we didn’t know was that the Vietcong had built underground tunnels and bunkers that their small bodies could fit through. They would come up out of nowhere and grab you, or worse.”

His breathing had become to get rapid, and the tears were flowing freely now. He made no attempt to wipe away the streams that poured from his pale blue eyes.

“We were babies, Leslie. Could you imagine sending an eighteen year old boy to a place like that?”

My daddy composed himself and continued.

“We had raffles over there where a guy could win a ticket to go see The Bob Hope Show live. It was a way for us to get off that God forsaken piece of dirt, and remember what it’s like to live for a few days. A friend of mine had won the raffle, but would be going home during the time that he would be travelling, so he gave the ticket to me.”

I looked to my father’s calloused hands. They were shaking so badly now that even his constant twisting of them couldn’t keep me from noticing.

“The show was fine, but I remember that it was the first time that I realized how much people hated the war. Not only the war, but us. They threw things in my face, and called me a ‘baby killer’. God knows that I had to make some tough choices while I was in ‘Nam, but I never killed anyone that wasn’t trying to kill me first.”

The tears continued to flow, but the sadness in his eyes had been replaced with anger.

“I returned to Vietnam after four days, ready to tell my platoon about the labels that we were being stuck with, but my CO met me when I stepped off the chopper. I remember how grim he looked, but I tried to muster a smile. Being over there takes its toll on a man, and I always tried to keep spirits up. Until he told me that while I was gone my entire platoon had been wiped out.”

His eyes widened as if this was the first time he was hearing the news. His mouth agape, he choked on the sob that had been lodged in his throat. I slid onto the floor, and crawled over to his chair. I now sat on the aged, itchy, tan carpet in front of my father. I wanted to hold him, to sit in his lap, to tell him to stop thinking of these ghastly things, but I knew that he needed to tell someone. How could he have kept these horrors a secret for forty years? Even as my heart broke for him and his companions, it swelled with pride knowing that I had to have the strongest, most resilient man in the world as a father. I took his dry, beaten hand in mine, and murmured softly for him to continue.

“The fighting never stopped, Pooh. A week felt like a year. We rode in on planes, jumped out of planes into gunfire, ran, shot, and got shot at. We either won the battle we were in, or more often than not we had to hide out until they sent choppers in to pick us up. I can remember on several occasions, we had to run to get out of the jungle before they napalmed the whole place.”

Again his face hardened, and his pale blue eyes grew vacant as his mind took him back forty years.

“Running was the scary part. There were landmines and booby traps everywhere. You never knew if you were going to get your leg blown off or fall in a trap with spikes. I saw it every day.”

He stopped abruptly as if he was done with his story and began to wipe his face. I squeezed his hand, and reluctantly let it slip away so that he could take off his round, wire rimmed glasses to clean them.

“Pooh, do you know why I keep that?” He gestured to the black POW flag that had hung in our living room for as long as I could remember.

“No, Daddy”, I whispered softly, “Why?”

“After one of the times that I ran from a napalm strike, I was caught. They beat me up pretty badly, and took me to one of their ‘camps’ if you could call it that.”

I know that the expression on my face was pure shock and disbelief. My mouth fell ajar, and my eyes widened in surprise. A faint smile crept across my father’s tan, sun worn face as he continued,

“They tortured us in ways that I would never tell you or anyone. The cruelty that we endured at their hands was unimaginable. Out of the five of us that were in that camp, only two of us left alive.”

A deep sadness filled my father so completely that it radiated from him. I could feel the heartbreak in the marrow of my bones. He slid his rough hands back into mine, and gripped it ever so slightly to reassure me that he was okay.

“I always wondered why I was the lucky one. I asked God every day why I was allowed to survive when these other men had so much more to live for.”

He paused, and shifted his hand to my chin so that our faces were inches from each other. His pale blue eyes sparkled as he looked at me. They were the same as mine, and the same as my son’s. Pale eyes that had been passed down through what my dad liked to call the “onlys” since we were all only children.

He ended his story with a whisper, “And then you came along.”

This essay by Tracy Brewington recounts two journeys, one physical and the other emotional, as the author tells the story of a trip from Tennessee to Chicago, looking for answers to an important question. The narrative essay makes excellent use of figurative language in describing the passengers on the northbound bus, and it offers some important insights about what it means to say goodbye.

Tracy D. Brewington

Kathy Halbrooks

English 1010

28 October, 2014

Closure

I started packing a week ahead of time. I bought my bus ticket a month before the day I planned to leave. The first trip I had ever taken by myself turned out to be one of the most enlightening. I knew this trip would close a chapter in my life. I just didn't know how it would happen.

My mother and her husband pulled in the driveway to pick me up and take me to catch my bus to Chicago. We arrived at the pickup spot and as other passengers arrived, I started to wonder what I had gotten myself into. This group of people looked like an accurate sampling of Baskin Robbins ice cream. There were people of every kind. The little blonde college girl in tan pants and a plain white tee-shirt was a vanilla cone. The African American man in his wide ill-fitting pants and black shirt was a chocolate cone. The woman, who appeared to be from India or some other bright foreign place I have never visited, was a blend of all the flavors. Her hair was as black as asphalt, her jewelry gold, turquoise and red, and it sparkled like sugar sprinkles. Her clothes were as colorful as the mouth of a sailor on leave, too many

colors to describe, so many colors she looked like a sampling of every flavor of ice cream ever made. She had a red barrette in the crown of her head like a cherry on top of a sundae. The entire bus was a mix of people like this.

It was finally time to board the bus, I said goodbye and got settled in for a nine hour ride. I got lucky and scored a seat in the top of this double-decker bus right by a window. Wouldn't ya know, vanilla ice cream cone came and sat next to me. We chatted while waiting to pull out; she seemed nice enough.

Not long after pulling out everyone shut off their overhead lights and tried to get comfortable enough to sleep for a while. I am not a person who can sleep in a moving vehicle, so I played games on my cell phone, checked Facebook, and just stared out the window at the dark highway rolling out in front of us until we stopped. After about four hours the driver pulled into a truck stop. Everyone on the bus was shaken awake as the air brakes hissed and brought the twenty-foot tall people-mover to a stop. Thankfully, little vanilla ice cream woke up too, and we started chatting again on our way into the truck stop for a potty break and something to eat.

Just as we walked in the door, we were finally introducing ourselves; her name was Casey. She looked as if she had never seen a truck stop before. Casey was amazed at all of the trinkets for sale. The place had that truck stop smell too, that dirty man smell mixed with a just-showered man, diesel fuel and a mix of various air fresheners and whatever fast food joint that happened to be attached to give drivers variety.

Casey found all the knickknacks! She found bells, magnets, spoons and tee-shirts, all with Indiana blazoned across them, as that was the state we were in. She had to buy trinkets for her mom and dad back in Tennessee. She spent so much time shopping, she almost missed

the bus when the driver was ready to pull out, but she made it just in time with a bag full of tchotchkies and a bubbly statement, "My parents love knickknacks."

Apparently, after pulling away from the truck stop, the hum of the engine and the vibration of tires against the road must have allowed me drift off to sleep for a couple hours because the next thing I remember was the driver coming across the loudspeaker announcing, "We will be pulling into Chicago's Union Station in approximately thirty-five minutes. Please gather all of your items and be sure you don't leave anything on the bus. Thank you for traveling with Megabus."

I was there, Chicago, where he lived now, and I just had to come. I retrieved my bag from the cargo area and started looking for the subway. This, I was excited about. I had never been on a subway train and couldn't wait. I asked a police officer where to go, and he told me exactly what train to catch and what stop to get off at for the street I needed to get to my rental car.

Two hours after arriving in this city I was finally at my hotel. After sitting on a bus all night, I wanted nothing more than to take a shower, put on clean clothes, get a bite to eat, and then, I would make the call.

Riiing, Riiing, Riiing...I was praying he wouldn't answer, and I would get his voicemail so I could prolong this. We had so much fun in Tennessee. Then his job moved him to Chicago. I guess I knew it wouldn't work as soon as he told me, but I thought I would try. Rii...hello? It was him.

We talked about my trip and how his job was going. He asked about our friends in Tennessee and about the latest gossip around our building. It came like I knew it would. I asked him if he was going to be able to make it over that night. Surprisingly, he said yes. You

can feel it when the conversations aren't the same anymore and a person isn't excited to see you, but this wasn't the case with him. He seemed to be excited to see me.

He arrived around six o'clock that evening smelling as good as ever, like a man, woodsy smelling cologne but a hint of sweat from working hard that day. He asked if I had eaten dinner, and I told him no, so we went next door to Bob Evans and had dinner. After dinner I knew it was going to happen. We would end it or drag this on longer, but I could tell by his half smile and faraway looks during our dinner what was about to happen. We talked more about our families and how our lives were going, skirting around the issue until I finally asked, "So what are we going to do about this?" There it was, the look on his face, like that of a child caught with their hand in the cookie jar right before dinner.

He explained he met up with an old flame from when he lived there before and things were going well. While it felt like a hard slap across the face, like when I back talked my parents as a child, at least I wasn't surprised. We stood there another hour talking about the weather up there and in Tennessee and every other subject you can think of. It was ten o'clock. I had had a long bus ride, and now that I knew we were done, I planned to spend the rest of my time in Chicago as a tourist, so we kissed one last time, hugged longer than necessary, and said our goodbyes.

The next two days I shopped, went to the casinos, visited landmarks, and enjoyed time for me. Monday was another long bus ride home, home to my son, home to my family and home to a man I had met through friends before I left who said he knew my trip was not going to work and that he would be waiting for me to get back.

Closure is an important thing in some folk's lives. It is in mine. I knew Chicago and I were meant to be, but I also knew when he moved, that was the end. I had to go close that

door. To close the door on that chapter so I could start the next with the man who waited on me. The man I proudly now call my husband.

Vernesser Ausley addresses one of our most difficult and pernicious social issues: the effects of racism on African American children. Ausley develops the essay through examples and illustrations of the problem drawn from her and her children's experiences as well as from current events. Her writing illuminates sensitive issues from the perspective of someone dealing directly with these problems, and it does so in frank and honest language.

Vernesser Ausley

Professor Renee Eades

English 1010

16 February 2015

The Challenges of an African American Mother

As a mother, when my children were small, I would always talk to them about safety. I taught them never talk to or take anything from strangers, never wander too far from the safety of the front yard, and always look before crossing the road. I made sure to cover as many rules of safety with my children as possible to create awareness. However, as an African American mother of teen age and adult children and because of the constant fear of harassment by law enforcement of African American youth, racism from peers in the public school system, and the importance of maintaining a positive cultural identity, I am pressured to talk to my children about how to cope with racism and the internalized oppression that it causes.

Because of the constant fear of harassment by law enforcement of African American youth, I continually speak with my children about what to do or how to react if they are stopped by a white police officer. It's no secret that young African American youth are more likely stopped, profiled, and sometimes murdered by white police officers than any other race of people. I've always respected and regarded law enforcement to be noble men and protectors of the community, but as an African American, especially an African American mother, I

question the integrity of white police officers with a great dilemma. I've witnessed via social media, news broadcasts, Internet, and cell phone recordings many unarmed African American youth with their hands lifted in the air, posing no threat of endangerment to the white police officers who shoot them down like animals and murder them with no repercussion or indictment from the law. As a mother concerned for the safety and protection of my children, I don't trust that the law provides protection without discrimination to children of color and to the communities of our youth as they do the communities of their white counterparts.

Because most school personnel are not typically trained to be culturally sensitive to the complex needs of African American students, often African American students are misunderstood, unfairly treated, and given harsher discipline than other students. Talking to my children about how to deal with racism from school administrators and some of their white peers in public schools is a prevalent conversation, among others, that I discuss with my children. There are times when my children have come home from school very distraught because of disciplinary measures taken with them by school personnel that seemed to be more reflective of their race than their character. Seventy-one percent of all suspended minority students are suspended for nonviolent offenses and things such as breaking school policies.

For instance, my daughter attended her first year of high school at Lebanon High School in Wilson County, Tennessee. The first couple of weeks she came home from school in tears every day. My daughter had always been a respectful outstanding student who had never been in trouble before. She was given ISS (In School Suspension) for breaking the school's dress code for wearing a skirt a little above her knee with stretch pants. A white teacher standing in the hallway while she was changing class wrote her up for breaking dress code policy. My daughter made sure she was conscious of what she wore from then on; however,

she was aware of the same teacher allowing several white students to break the same dress code or worse. Sometimes she noticed that some white students dressed in a very provocative way with very short skirts and scantily clad spaghetti strap tops, which was clearly against the school's dress code policy, and walked pass that same teacher every day without any disciplinary actions being made. My daughter clearly felt a sense of bias coming from that teacher. After witnessing this situation go on for weeks, she and a couple of her African American friends who had similar experiences, deliberately broke the dress code to see what would happen. They all received write-ups from that teacher and received ISS.

Racism can cause African American children to become internally suppressed. Of all the disparities in the African American communities, discrimination has caused far more complex issues; therefore, I feel the need to teach my children the importance of maintaining a positive cultural identity. Helping them to understand their roots will help them to be proud of who they are. Slavery was an evil enforced upon African Americans that stripped them of their identity and the family structure that they were so familiar with. Being forced to survive in a new world so unfamiliar, diminished to believing they were inferior, and treated with less regard than animals, the African American culture has suffered a brutality that has caused disaster to the structural foundation of family and values.

In conclusion, as an African American mother concerned for the safety and well-being of my children, it's important to me to talk with my children and help them deal with racism whether from law enforcement, peers, or administration in public schools. I also teach them the importance of a positive cultural identity since they all are factors that have affected the lives of my children, as well as the lives of many other African American children.

Hanna Carr's narrative of her father's year-long struggle with cancer is a strong example of descriptive narrative writing. Carr not only details her father's treatment; she shows how a grave illness can affect an entire family. The essay moves from descriptions of medical procedures and treatments to a concluding metaphor inspired by the work of author Annie Dillard. Carr does a good job incorporating a quotation from Dillard's work and showing how it fits the circumstances of caring for someone who is gravely ill.

Hanna Carr

Professor Marjorie Lloyd

English 1010

21 April 2015

The Sudden Leap Out of Childhood

It is a disease that can affect anyone in a monumental, colossal way. It is a disease that many people devote their lives to, either battling through it or striving for a cure. It is a disease that can be curable, but many unfortunate souls lose their lives battling it. It is cancer.

Cancer had made a home in my father's tonsil in the summer of 2011. Initially, we all thought this protruding lump on the side of his neck was just a swollen gland. It began to grow larger throughout the summer, and it started to cause pain. Daddy, being the stubborn man he is, would not go to the doctor. In March, he finally went to the doctor for a check-up. They gave him antibiotics. He was on the medicine for a few months. However, it failed to help. He was then referred to an ear, nose and throat doctor, who did a needle biopsy and an X-ray that proved negative for cancer. This doctor thought it was a congenital cyst. Numerous tests were run, and we were told the life-changing news. "I'm sorry to inform you. You have tonsil cancer."

Tonsils are two oval-shaped pads in the back of the mouth that are part of the body's germ-fighting immune system. Tonsil cancer often causes difficulty swallowing and a

sensation that something is caught in one's throat. The doctor's first step of action was to remove the affected tonsil. This procedure is called tonsillectomy. Undergoing such a procedure at the age of forty-nine was extremely difficult. During the surgery, Daddy's throat collapsed. The doctors had taken the affected tonsil out, but there was still one tonsil in his throat that needed to be removed. After his throat collapsed, the doctors medically paralyzed Daddy to get the muscles to relax in order to intubate him. However, they would not take the risk of getting the one tonsil he had left.

The next step of action was chemotherapy and radiation. During the treatments, I witnessed my father lose hair, weight, muscle mass, strength, and himself. For three months, Daddy was "chair-ridden." He could not lay back in a bed because there was too much pressure on his throat; therefore he had to sit up in his recliner. He lived in that chair, besides the trips to and from the doctors. Because of the intensity of the chemo and radiation treatments, Daddy could not eat through his throat. He had to get a feeding tube put in his stomach. That made the food go directly into the stomach. The only thing that could go in this feeding tube was a liquid substance. My mom, my sister, and I all took turns putting the substance in his feeding tube eight times a day. However, during the times when we were at school or work, Daddy had to do it. He would say he did fill his feeding tube, but he did not, which made him lose one hundred pounds.

After they put the feeding tube in his stomach, they put a power port in his chest. He received his chemotherapy treatments through this port. Within the same doctor visit, two life-impacting procedures had occurred. Throughout the treatments, Daddy was in extreme pain. The pain was caused by the cancer itself, but mostly from the radiation; the raw skin that was around his neck burned. Because of the pain, Daddy took several amounts of pain medication,

mostly Oxycontin and Morphine. Due to the pain and the medication, Daddy would be blacked out for days. The only way to try to escape the pain was to sleep.

Cancer had a chain around my family for one long year. One long year of agony. Cancer not only pierced my dad's life, but affected me as well. I learned at a young age that life is not filled with rainbows and butterflies, but rather pain and suffering. Witnessing such a devastating event for such a long period of time can make one insane. I wanted to get away from it all. I did not want to see the strong, fearless man that I looked up to, to become so weak. However, I had nowhere to go. Like the young girl in Annie Dillard's autobiographical story, "The Chase," as she was running for her life, she felt like there was nowhere to go: "Mikey and I had nowhere to go, in our own neighborhood or out of it." The angry man kept chasing her. It did not matter where she went, he would always be behind her, gaining on her. Cancer was the angry man chasing me, gaining on me. It did not matter where I went, it would always be with me. For one long year, it was always with me.

Section 2: English 1010 Researched Argument

PRIZE WINNER

First Place Researched Argument winner Jason Gammon's essay is an excellent example of an original, well-focused argument that is supported by solid research. Gammon considers how decisions by two U.S. presidential administrations likely contributed to the rise of terrorist organizations in the Middle East and Africa in recent years. To support his claim that the U.S. is, in part, to blame for the current proliferation of terrorist groups, Gammon incorporates research from a good variety of reliable sources. The research he has chosen to include demonstrates that Gammon's position on the Iraq War, and the rise of terrorism after it, is well-informed and credible.

Jason Gammon

Professor Deborah Moore, B.S., M.A.

English 1010

22 April 2015

The Inadvertent Architects:

How U.S. Politics Built The Islamic State

In April 2003, U.S. coalition forces captured the city of Fallujah in central Iraq.

Fallujah marked a crucial gain for the coalition, as its central position and placid residents

provided a fulcrum for the panoptical invasion into Saddam Hussein's urban strongholds.

Unfortunately, Fallujah and the wider Anbar province to which it belonged would quickly devolve into a crucible of sectarian violence. So when the new year dawned in 2014, Fallujah and its strategic advantages had been captured once more, this time by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Considering the vast measure of military resources in the area, how was control so quickly wrested from the coalition? Can undulating domestic political pressures explain such wild swings in operational results? The externalities generated by complex geopolitical statecraft dictate that there are no simple answers to such questions. Nonetheless, sufficient evidence exists to make at least one decisive inference concerning the Iraq War: Western

foreign policy decisions have accelerated the destabilization of the Middle East by inadvertently facilitating the rise of ISIS.

The desire to liberate Iraq from the autocratic Saddam was paramount in the early decisions that culminated in the emergence of ISIS. The Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998, signed into law by President Bill Clinton, clearly states "...that it should be the policy of the United States to seek to remove the Saddam Hussein regime...and to replace it with a democratic government." ("H.R. 4655"). The calls to expel Hussein reached their apex after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 when intelligence suggested that the Iraqi government was actively involved with Al-Qaeda - the radical Islamic group responsible for the attacks. Ancillary intelligence also indicated that Saddam may have been purchasing and developing components for use in military-grade "weapons of mass destruction" ("Iraq's Weapons"). In response to these allegations, the Bush administration spearheaded a full-scale invasion of Iraq in 2003, resulting in the fall of Saddam and his Baathist government. Unfortunately, these seemingly positive developments were attenuated by the unexpected convergence of hostile entities into the region who attempted to fill the vacuum created by the sudden expulsion of Hussein. Chief among these insurgents were operational cells from Al-Qaeda itself, later to be rechristened Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I).

Consequently, the attempt to prevent the AQ-I insurgency from gaining control of the Iraqi power structure forced the western coalition to evolve their initial strategy of invasion into a complete occupation. Domestic political divisions were exacerbated among western leaders because of these new strategic developments, and the resolve of the coalition was weakened considerably. Member-nations began to carefully withdraw operational personnel from Iraq as early as 2006, forcing the U.S. to assume a majority of both the administrative and

engagement responsibilities for the remainder of the war. Intelligence gathered from captured insurgents further compounded tensions among the allies when it was revealed that there was never an alliance between Saddam's government and Al-Qaeda ("Postwar Findings" 108).

In an attempt to mitigate the negative political effects of these revelations, U.S. leadership began to transfer operational directives to the newly established pro-western government of Iraq. The young Iraqi military proved largely incapable of the task however, and AQ-I swiftly regrouped and expanded as a result of decreased western military presence in the region. George W. Bush carried these adverse developments into the apogee of his presidency, and both his diplomatic influence and the influence of the U.S. military in the Middle East were softened as a result. In what would prove to be a final act however, the Bush administration engineered the "troop surge" of 2007, which was largely successful in expelling AQ-I from many critical urban areas. According to former Army Intelligence Officer Jessica D. Lewis:

[AQ-I] reached its apex of territorial control and destructive capability in late 2006 and early 2007, before the Surge and the Awakening removed the organization from its safe havens in and around Baghdad...degrading the organization over the course of 2007-2008 such that only a fraction of its capabilities remained...(Lewis 7)

It is evident that a capricious western foreign policy had began to stabilize by 2007, but that equanimity would not endure. Lewis further explains, "As of August 2013, [AQ-I] has regrouped, regained capabilities, and expanded into areas from which it was expelled during the Surge" (7). Throughout the period between 2008 and 2013, the convulsive nature of U.S.

foreign policy in the Middle East would again render a path for AQ-I's advancement. The results were consistent, but the names had changed.

Cratering support for the Iraq War was an almost singular factor in the ascension of Barack Obama to the U.S. Presidency in 2008. Positioning himself as the "anti-Bush", Obama introduced a new strategy for Iraq as Commander-in-Chief. The Bush administration's intrepid venture to bring democracy to the Middle East was replaced by a more passive counter-reactionary foreign policy. The Obama administration quickly began to curtail U.S. military operations in the region, preferring to cede engagement responsibilities to the fledgling Iraq government. Predictably, the Iraqis were again incapable of interrupting AQ-I advancement, and the insurgency began yet another phase of rapid growth. Simultaneously, Al-Qaeda in Iraq expanded their roster to include thousands more Sunni fighters by supplying vital military assistance to rebel factions during the eruption of the Syrian Civil War. These developments were crucial to the evolution of AQ-I. After gaining control of important strategic areas in Iraq and Syria, antipathy between AQ-I and traditional Al-Qaeda leadership resulted in the metamorphosis of AQ-I into ISIS - The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Bunzel 17).

In a strange reversal of fate, the Obama administration was compelled by domestic political pressures to surge back into Iraq to prevent the fall of the Iraqi government to the newly-emboldened ISIS. President Obama was also forced to publicly abandon planned military support for rebel factions in the Syrian Civil War when it was discovered that many rebels were defecting to ISIS (Catalucci). The Obama administration then changed course and offered military support to the Syrian regime, initiating a precision air offensive against the rebels. Obama and U.S. military commanders were forced into a lengthy state of deliberation after finding themselves in such an impossible political situation, and ultimately responded by

ordering another large withdrawal of forces in the region. Top Al-Qaeda commander Dr. Ayman al-Zawahir curtly defined the U.S. predicament - “The Americans are between two fires. If they remain [in Iraq] they will bleed to death, and if they withdraw they will have lost everything.” (qtd. in Byman and Pollack 55).

Inevitably, these military reductions precipitated an expansion of ISIS operations into Africa. After the Obama State Department engineered the overthrow of the militant dictator Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, ISIS satellites rushed in to fill the vacancy in much the same manner as when Hussein was felled in Iraq by the Bush coalition. Journalist Catherine Herridge recently reported on, “One of the alleged ISIS leaders in [Libya] is Abdelhakim Belhadj, an al-Qaeda-linked [Libyan] who was considered...a willing partner in the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi...”(Mora). Adding to these vexatious circumstances was the reticence of western nations to involve themselves in central African affairs. This protraction has allowed numerous terror groups (such as Boko Haram) to proliferate and pledge their loyalties to the Islamic State (“ISIS Expands”). As a result, the deathly scope of ISIS has expanded beyond Iraq and into the Eastern Mediterranean region, a mere two-hundred miles from Europe.

Ultimately, history is the only laboratory in which we may accurately calculate the “rights” and “wrongs” of Middle Eastern foreign policy, and even then the results will surely be rife with contention. Despite these eventualities, we must never undervalue the irrepressible evidence that the United States and her allies, however inadvertently, aided the Islamic State in its rise to prominence. We may never know if the alternatives were preferable, but we can be sure that the erratic push and pull of internal politics helped clear the way for this barbarous new enemy. Though recent gains against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria are encouraging, the pragmatism of history should temper any confidence. Once again, Fallujah belongs to pro-

western forces, but according to Byman and Pollak, "...it is far too soon to count [ISIS] out. History is littered with the corpses of countries who believed that they had eliminated an insurgency, only to have it come roaring back when they prematurely shifted their focus" (57). Viewed through that prism, Fallujah hardly seems to belong to anyone.

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Preston Neal's essay "Alzheimer's Costs" examines the economic impacts of this terrible disease and offers numerous insights about how national and global health care policy can impact funding for medical research in this field. The author believes that more substantial funding is needed for real advances in Alzheimer's research, and the essay argues that governments need to make this funding more of a priority. Neal supports this position using a variety of sources, including those from specialized health care periodicals.

Preston Neal

Professor Cynthia Wyatt

English 1010

1 December 2014

Alzheimer's Costs

Alzheimer's disease is a radical form of dementia that plagues the elderly all over the world. To contextualize the current state of medical research, it is currently unknown what directly causes the disease, and how it can be prevented. Furthermore, there are many theories relating to what causes the disease and how it can be avoided, none of which are concrete. Although public awareness of Alzheimer's has increased in recent years, research funding has mostly dwindled. This is a worldwide and highly relevant issue in regards to not only the lives of the afflicted, but the economic ramifications that stem from the copious amounts of money spent on long-term care and treatment. Millions of people all over the world suffer from dementia and Alzheimer's, which costs billions in treatment and care, and this issue doesn't seem to be moving towards a solution, at any pace. The fact of the matter is that while Alzheimer's disease has gained considerable public awareness, it doesn't receive the research funding it deserves and requires.

According to Scott Hannaford of *The Sydney Morning Herald* in Sydney, Australia; Alzheimer's Disease accounts for a staggering 60% of dementia cases, and costs a minimum of

\$4.9 billion dollars every year for treatment and care in Australia. Today's Alzheimer's tests are very expensive, and seem to be losing funding, because the results don't justify the cost of research. It seems prudent for governments in developed countries to relinquish the funds needed for Alzheimer's research, because the cost of care and treatment monumentally outweighs the amount of funds necessary for research many times over. It seems wiser to pursue research now, rather than have such a drain on the economy, but with countless other demanding issues across the globe, Alzheimer's disease research funding is not very high on the priority list. In today's world, this is understandable. However, from an economic standpoint, the \$156 billion that goes into treatment annually across the globe is unacceptable. We simply cannot afford to perpetuate the problem as we have so far.

In John O'Connor's article that covers a recent study, he highlights some of the faults in how this issue of Alzheimer's disease is being addressed in the U.S. O'Connor states that "The annual costs of dementia care could more than double by 2040 if the age-specific prevalence rate of the disease remains constant as the nation's population grows older" (O'Connor, *Assisted Living*). This statement reinforces the claim that if Alzheimer's disease research doesn't receive the funding it needs to move forward in the near future, costs of care will continue to grow exponentially, further increasing the financial drain on the economy. In other words, this debilitating disease doesn't receive the attention and funding it needs in order to decrease the massive amount of money that is spent annually for long-term care of those who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. This claim of fact is supported by Regina A. Shih, the lead author of the study covered by O'Connor, who states that "The majority of Americans' cost-burden for dementia is caused by long-term care." (O'Connor, *Assisted Living*)

The number of people affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia across the globe (according to Karger, a medical and scientific publishing site) is an estimated 27.7 million, and based on that figure, 156 billion dollars is being spent annually worldwide. While these numbers may not be 100% accurate, they prove that this disease is one of the most expensive medical conditions in the world. As stated in the article "Economic Considerations in Alzheimer's Disease", here in the United States, Alzheimer's disease is the third most costly disease. It is said to be costing our country \$100 billion every year, with roughly 4.5 million people diagnosed. In correlation, this statistic is a remarkable two-thirds of the worldwide cost, possibly due to a higher awareness and increased number of diagnoses in the United States, compared to other nations.

Suffice it to say that this disease is not only robbing many elderly people of their quality of life, but it's also an incredibly expensive drain on not only the economy of America, but of the entire world. This fact has clearly been recognized by many journalists and researchers; however, very little is being done to solve the issue. This is possibly due to the fact that although Alzheimer's has been a known form of dementia for over 30 years, a minuscule amount of progress has been made towards developing a cure. However, the science and medical community is aware of the tremendous cost of treatment and care, which is the first step in finding a solution.

Why do dementia and Alzheimer's receive such a minuscule amount of research funding? If so many senior citizens across the world are suffering from this terrible affliction, why has there been so little progress? Some may speculate that the reason is because treatment and care for these conditions brings in massive amounts of money, and that if it was cured, that income would dissipate. However, that is an entirely different topic altogether. I prefer to

believe that, in truth, the actual reason is far less sinister in nature. Although projects and experiments have been put into effect, such few advancements have been made that it is difficult to justify the billions required for research.

According to freelance journalist Beth Baker, one such project that was initiated in 2010 is known as the National Alzheimer's Project Act, which was passed by Congress. (Baker) The goal of this act was to “implement a national strategy to fight the disease and improve support of patients and families.” (Baker) The reason for this act to be passed by Congress is because of the massive amounts of funds spent on long-term care. (Baker) Furthermore, scientist and policy makers are very keen on finding a solution because of all this money that’s spent annually. (Baker) Baker goes on to write: “In 2010, health care for dementia patients — including long-term and hospice care — was expected to cost \$172 billion, including \$123 billion paid by Medicare and Medicaid.” It is also estimated by the Alzheimer’s Organization that by the year 2050, the number of people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease may reach 13.5 million, with the amount of money being spent in care costs an astounding \$1 trillion annually. (Baker) This is what’s causing the sudden economic worries of the science and medicine communities, and understandably so.

Adriel Bettelheim of the *CQ Researcher* contends that “...Alzheimer's still suffers from the image of being an old person's disease.” Bettelheim supports this claim of cause by providing the example: “Even former President Ronald Reagan's 1994 announcement that he had the early stages of the disease didn't prompt a flood of new money for finding a cure.” Bettelheim also writes that this may have a hand in the lack of concern that is sometimes exhibited by society in relation to this disease. Some may think the research funds it needs aren’t justifiable in comparison to other more common and malicious diseases, such as cancer.

Although people may not voice this particular opinion, it's still a common one: that even if cured of Alzheimer's, the elderly only have a handful of years to live, regardless. (Bettelheim)

According to Sharon Wallace Stark, Ph.D., another cause for the seeming reluctance to devote the research funds necessary for progress may be that after years of meticulous research, there has yet to be a method identified of halting or reversing the effects of Alzheimer's disease. There have been various drugs that help to slow the progress, but they remain equally ineffective at stopping the development of the disease (Stark). In regards to those who are making the effort to discover a solution to this problem, Stark states that "The NIA Alzheimer's Disease Prevention Initiative seeks to accelerate the rate of new drug discovery and development." Also, "The Alzheimer's Association is a national organization that provides patient advocacy and funding for research of potential new therapies." (Stark)

The cause of Alzheimer's disease itself remains a mystery, but there are several theories on how it develops and what can be done to prevent it, although none of these theories are definitive, or help to develop a cure. However, the cause of the colossal amount of funds that go into direct-care of the diagnosed is evident. The amount of money that's required to attempt to provide the afflicted with the best quality of life possible is incredibly expensive, and is a massive drain on Medicare and Medicaid. If we can't find a solution to this economic crisis, Alzheimer's disease will continue to be a growing burden on societies worldwide.

It is blatantly evident that Alzheimer's disease is a malicious illness that is costing the world billions of dollars every year, due to the excessive treatment and care costs. However, thanks to organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, public and private awareness has risen substantially over the years, although awareness can only accomplish so much. Now that we as a nation are more aware of the problem, and what is causing it, it is past time to find a

solution to this drain on the economy and health care system. What should be done to remedy this issue that is plaguing developed nations worldwide? What changes to policy need to be made in order to make progress?

As stated by an entry on the Health and Wellness Resource Center database, some previous changes to national policy for Alzheimer's disease patients had been put into effect in regards to Medicare in 2001. (Gale Cengage Learning) The entry claims "The White House has quietly authorized Medicare coverage for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease (AD). The policy change, initiated late last year, means that Medicare beneficiaries cannot be denied reimbursement for the costs of mental health services, hospice care or home health care because they have the disease." ("Medicare Coverage Authorized for Alzheimer's Disease") The reason why they made this change to policy is because doctors and other licensed parties in the medical community had developed the ability to diagnose the disease while it was still in its early stages, at a time when patients are able to gain benefits from medical services. ("Medicare Coverage Authorized for Alzheimer's Disease"). This was an important step that may have led to some of the more recent policy changes, and will undoubtedly lead to even more beneficial changes in the future.

As stated by the previously mentioned Alzheimer's Association, the most detrimental change to policy that needs to be made is research funding (Alz.org). It is imperative to persuade Congress that Alzheimer's disease doesn't receive the funding it deserves and requires, and in order to make this happen the Association seeks to educate those with the power and influence to make these changes a reality (alz.org). There are various reasons Alzheimer's disease desperately needs more research funding, and the Association aims to help expedite changes to policy by providing an annually updated collection of statistics, titled

Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, to illuminate just how pressing this issue really is (alz.org).

The Association has several legislative proposals they are advocating, such as the Alzheimer's Accountability Act, the HOPE for Alzheimer's Act, and the National Alzheimer's Project (alz.org). The Accountability Act "...represents a bipartisan effort to ensure that Congress is equipped with the best possible information to set funding priorities and reach the goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease — effectively preventing and treating Alzheimer's by 2025" (alz.org). This will be a difficult goal to achieve, but the Association is confident it can be done. The goal of the HOPE (Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education) for Alzheimer's Act is to increase early diagnosis rates, provide exceptional information and services to diagnosed patients and their relatives, and implement a requirement for a diagnosis to be added to the medical record of patients (alz.org). Finally, the Association recently implemented the National Alzheimer's Project Act, which was passed unanimously by Congress and signed by President Obama due to recognition of the enormous strain on healthcare and the federal budget caused by the disease (alz.org). Furthermore, the Alzheimer's Association website states "Now, the Secretary of Health and Human Services must thoroughly and expeditiously implement this law by creating a plan to comprehensively address the federal government's efforts on Alzheimer's research, care, institutional services, and home- and community-based programs" (alz.org). This was a monumental step forward, and has the potential to begin the process of lowering the exorbitant amounts of funds spent on patient care and treatment.

David Hoffman, Bureau Director for the New York State Department of Health, writes that "The initial foray into the federal policy arena, the National Alzheimer's Project Act, is a

good first step but remains limited in scope and resources” (Hoffman). Furthermore, Hoffman believes that in order for this policy change to be as effective as possible, a degree of cooperation, coordination, communication in every state is required (Hoffman). Most of the United States has already begun to answer the call, as Hoffman says “seeing the need for greater effort, thirty-three states have convened advisory groups and published their own plans for coordinating state-level activity to address Alzheimer's disease across service systems” (Hoffman). Hoffman is of the opinion that although hope should remain for developing a cure or preventative treatment, we should keep in mind the full scale of the issue while working towards a solution.

In conclusion, although several encouraging changes in policy have been made, we must continue to treat Alzheimer's as the economically, emotionally damaging, and malevolent disease that it is. Further policy changes regarding research funding must be made to find a solution in order to remove this heavy financial burden from our country, and the world in general. This financial drain is only going to grow exponentially, as the heavily populated baby-boomer generation continues to age (alz.org). Essentially, more changes to policy must be made, and the ones that have already been made must be implemented in the most effective way possible.

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Melody Johnson examines the factors which contribute to the unique challenges faced by ethnic minority students when they arrive at college. By incorporating research from a mixture of scholarly journals and general periodicals, Johnson illuminates the cause and effect relationship between poverty and low academic achievement faced by minority communities in poor urban public school districts. With the help of these sources, Johnson's essay successfully argues that the struggles of ethnic minority students at the college level can be addressed and alleviated, in part, by better funding of inner-city K-12 public schools.

Melody Johnson

Professor Renee Eades

English 1010

May 2015

The Plight of Ethnic Minority Students in America

In America, going to college is considered the best path, as Americans firmly believe education is the key to success and that it can take an individual anywhere he or she wants to go. However, ethnic minority students are at a disadvantage in comparison to non-ethnic students in regard to having the financial means and academic skills needed to succeed in college and ultimately in life. Research suggests that “African-American and Hispanic students require more time to complete an undergraduate degree than their Caucasian peers” (Ward, Strambler, and Linke 312). With that information, one can concur that ethnic minority students face additional challenges in college that delay their ability to attain their degree more so than non-ethnic students. Ethnic minority students do not have much success in college due to the continuing rise of college tuition, receiving a poor quality of education from inner-city secondary schools, and having low academic self –esteem, which increases the dropout rate and causes them to continue on in the repetitious cycle of minorities having underprivileged

lives. The problems that ethnic minority students face in college prohibit them from succeeding in life; however, the problems could be significantly reduced, or eliminated, if legislation increased educational funding for inner-city secondary schools.

The cost of attending college is steadily increasing, and since most ethnic minority students come from low-income households, they often have to take on the responsibility of paying their own way through college. According to Ralph Becker, a college counselor and columnist, “Since the early 1980’s tuition has increased [by] more than 1,000% while the consumer price index has risen [by only] 240%” (1). In essence, the cost of college tuition supersedes the financial means of most ethnic minority students. Renee Mitchell, a reporter for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, postulates that “minorities are being priced out of … colleges and are … dropping out because they can’t [pay] tuition [and fees]” (par.14). There are some ethnic minority students who attempt to pay their own way through college by working long and strenuous hours. Though their drive is commendable, working long hours does not leave much time for one to put the required energy and time into studying and completing assignments, thus, contributing to their lack of success in college.

In addition to the financial burdens that cause ethnic minority students not to succeed in college, many ethnic minority students have a difficult time adjusting to the academic demands that are associated with college due to the poor quality of education they received during secondary school. Many are ill-prepared for college-level coursework because inner-city secondary schools are not provided the funds that are necessary to ensure that its students are being provided the academic resources and tools that help to prepare its students for college. A chart entitled “Minority Funding Gaps by State”, a nation-wide analysis on educational funding, showed that “[i]n 28 states, school districts with high- minority

enrollments received less per-pupil funding . . . than districts with low minority levels”

(Clemmitt 364). In turn, many ethnic minority students feel unprepared and burdened by college-level coursework; this cripples their chances of succeeding in college.

As a result of being ill-prepared for college-level coursework, most ethnic minority students have low self-esteem which negatively impacts their academic performance; often times, this decreases the likelihood of college completion for most ethnic minority students. Research suggests that “students who are academically unprepared for the rigors of college-level coursework . . . are placed at an increased risk of dropout at the postsecondary level” (Ward, Strambler, and Linke 313). Ethnic minority students often times are unprepared for college and this causes them to suffer from low self-esteem as it is likely they feel left behind or incompetent which causes them to drop out of college. This would explain why, “[i]n 2011 [only] 20% of African American [students] and 13% of Hispanic [students] . . . completed a bachelor’s degree or higher” (Ward, Strambler, and Linke 313). The correlation between low self-esteem and college completion rates among ethnic minority students is evident. In essence, the decline in college completion amongst ethnic minority students is due to low academic self-esteem.

Ultimately, the lack of success ethnic minority students have in college eventually leads to them having underprivileged lifestyles: a cycle that many adult minorities are caught in. According to C. Feliciano and M. Ashtiani, “[p]ersistently low academic performance, graduation rates, college enrollment and completion rates among African American students negatively impact their ability to successfully transition into the world of work” (qtd. in Ward, Strambler, and Linke 313). It used to be that if a person did not have a college education, he or she could still possibly land a fair-paying job. Contrarily, in this “new, global, technical

economy” a college degree is essential in order for one to be able to compete in the job market (Clemmitt 9). With the expansion of global businesses, a college degree helps to set one apart in the job market. In short, ethnic minority students who are unable to attain a degree often times have to get jobs that are unfulfilling and require very little skills, which is not conducive to achieving a privileged lifestyle.

Ethnic minority students are not succeeding in college due to being bogged down by the rising cost of college tuition, by not having the necessary academic skills needed to thrive in college, and having a lack of motivation to finish school produced by low self-esteem, which ultimately causes them to repeat the cycle of having underprivileged lifestyles. Ethnic minority students are born into this cycle, and many struggle to get out of it with very few resources. Everyone should be able to build a better life for themselves, especially, those who are going about doing so legally. However, most ethnic minority students are simply in situations where the odds are stacked against them.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways to bring an end to this travesty that has become the social norm. Many experts argue that increasing educational funding for inner-city secondary schools is the most ideal and practical solution to closing the educational gap between ethnic students and non-ethnic students. This would level the playing field by enabling ethnic minority students to be able to have just as much of a chance as non-ethnic students in regard to being able to succeed in both college and, ultimately, life. Research shows that increasing educational funding “eliminate[s] between two-thirds and all of the gaps in . . . adult outcomes between those raised in poor families and those raised in non-poor families” (qtd. in Yettick). Increasing educational spending for inner-city school districts would benefit ethnic minority students, as they would have access to better teachers, hence, access to quality

education. A majority of critics argue that “ensuring a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is critical to closing achievement gaps and maximizing students learning” (Clemmitt 14). However, many urban schools have a difficult time attracting highly qualified teachers due to the low paying salaries offered to the instructors. Marcia Clemmitt, a veteran social policy reporter, explains this disparity:

Often schools with the greatest needs and, consequently, the most challenging working conditions, have the most difficulty retaining talented teachers . . .

Many hard-to-staff schools are high-poverty inner-city school[s] . . . that, as a consequence of their location in economically depressed or isolated districts, offer comparatively low salaries and lack [the] amenities with which other districts attract teachers. (14)

That is to say, increasing educational funding for inner-city schools would attract more qualified teachers who would be able to prepare for higher learning.

Additionally, students from low-income households, which would mainly be ethnic minority students, would benefit from increased educational spending for life. Those who attended inner-city schools that increased their spending “were 20 percent less likely to fall into poverty . . . their individual wages were 25 percent higher than they would have been without the changes . . . and their family incomes were 52 percent higher” (Yettick par. 7). With this information, one can concur that the amount of funds that is invested into school districts significantly impacts the lives of the students and helps them to escape the cycle of having underprivileged lives.

In order to make educational equity a reality, legislation would need to implement a “fiscal mechanism that achieves equal educational opportunity . . . by eliminating or

substantially reducing the link between local fiscal resources available to a school district and its ability to provide public education” (Reschovsky par. 3). In short, legislation would have to create a new finance plan that significantly increases the amount of money that inner-city school districts receive, because, as of now, “local property tax continues to provide a substantial portion of school district revenues, districts with large amounts of property wealth will spend more on public education and will provide higher quality public education than poorer school districts” (Reschovsky par. 4). Being that inner-city schools are not located in areas that have a lot of wealth, these schools do not receive a decent amount of funding from their communities. According to Joydeep Roy, “a professor at Columbia University and a senior economist at the New York City Independent Budget Office, it is slightly tricky to compare across states when each state’s financing formula might involve many unique features” (qtd. in Yettick par. 29). It would be irrational to suggest that a national fiscal reformation within the school system would be an easy thing to do; however, it could be done if legislation made budget cuts and focused a larger percentage of their spending on education.

Ethnic minority students, for the longest, have not had access to quality education due to not having access to well-educated, high-standard teachers; this has negatively affected the outcome of the lives of many ethnic minority peoples as they often times have to work underpaid and unfulfilling jobs. Ultimately, the problems ethnic minority students face in college leads to them having underprivileged lives. However, an increase in educational funding is indeed the solution to this discrepancy. It is time for a nationwide fiscal reformation that enables every student to receive a quality education that sets him or her on the path to a bright future. Besides, all individuals should be afforded an equal opportunity to create a better life for themselves.

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Dionndra Robinson takes a close look at rap and hip-hop lyrics in her essay, demonstrating how some of today's artists portray women negatively in popular music. Robinson's essay combines analysis of primary texts (song lyrics) with arguments supported by research from scholarly journals to suggest that some of these lyrics may contribute to a poor sense of self-worth, especially among black women. She also points out the work of several artists whose work may be regarded as more positive and empowering, offering a thoughtful contrast to the others, and a more complex picture of this musical genre.

Dionndra Robinson

Professor Cynthia Chanin

English 1010

6 May 2016

Lyrical Destruction

It was 1979 when these words hit the air waves: “I said a hip, hop, the hippie, the hippie/To the hip hip-hop, and you don't stop/ The rock it to the bang-bang, boogie say "up jump"/ The boogie to the rhythm of the boogie, the beat/ Now, what you hear is not a test/ I'm rappin' to the beat/ And me, the groove, and my friends are gonna try to move your feet.” These lyrics sparked the hip-hop era, “a street art form that was largely free of violence or sexual exploitation” (Katel 2007). According to Katel “hip-hop is a cultural movement originally comprised of four elements: MCing (rapping), DJing, graffiti art and breaking (break dancing).” Hip-hop was initially used as empowerment for poverty-stricken black communities. Since this time, hip-hop has evolved from, “hard-driving dance numbers into sex and violence filled “gangsta rap” (Katel 2007). Lyrically, hip- hop affects the way Black women are viewed and view themselves.

There was a time when women were adored and looked at as queens. Rapper Lil Boosie has a song, “Honor Roll,” which talks about his high grade list of women. Sounds positive?

Well, it's anything but that. The hook of this song states, "Check out my honor roll. /Grade A b*****s Grade A Grade A b*****s./Check out my honor roll./ Grade A b*****s./ Put your hands up, if you a Grade A b***h./" Are your hands up? No, they're not. As a woman you want to believe that you are "Grade A" material, but certainly not a female dog. Dr. Johnetta B. Cole, president of Bennett College for Women, believes hip-hop is more disrespectful of women than any other music genre. This is due to the misogynistic nature of the lyrics. These lyrics are prime examples of the type of images women have in this genre.

As hip-hop has strayed away from its origins, it has become a multi-billion dollar industry. Its success is primarily due to the popularity of strip clubs, "many recent hits have revolved entirely around the premise of women as sex workers" (Hunter 2011). Rapper Akon has a song "I Wanna F*** You", that states, "I see you winding and grinding up on that pole./I know you see me lookin' at you when you already know. /I wanna f*** you, you already know/I wanna f*** you, you already know, girl." These types of lyrics give most listeners the illusion that all women are strippers and are only good for having sex. The same can be said about rapper Nelly's "Tip Drill" song. This song basically says, no matter how unattractive a woman is, as long as she has a vagina, a man is willing to have sex. These types of lyrics also impact how some women view themselves. Dr. Cole had this to say about how black women view themselves:

What value can there be in descriptions of Black girls and women as "bitches," "ho's," "skeezers," "freaks," "gold diggers," "chickenheads" and "pigeons"? What could possibly be the value to our communities to have rap music videos functioning as backdrops, props and objects of lust for rap artists who sometimes behave as predators? In the culture at large, including popular culture, White subhuman,

promiscuous, predatory and hypersexual, this has been the burden of Black women since slavery, and hip-hop... is complicit with these stereotypical and damaging depictions of Black girls and women. (94)

She is absolutely correct. This nature of hip-hop has also impacted how female rappers view themselves. For example, rapper Trina's song, "Da Baddest B****," explains in great detail all the sexual favors she's willing to do for money. She constantly refers to herself as a "bitch" and refers to other women as "ho's." These types of lyrics have led Black women to degrade themselves. All too often, Black women go out dressed the part of strippers. They are baring their breasts and butts, which plays right into the stereotype that hip-hop lyrics portray. There are some female rappers with positive messages. Early female rapper, Queen Latifah, focused on uplifting Black women and all women. Her song, "Ladies First," emphasizes all the positive things in women and reminds men that we should be treated as ladies. It also stresses that women were put on earth to be more than sex toys for men.

Hip-hop has truly evolved over its 30 year history. It started with messages of black empowerment. This is evident in early hip-hop songs, such as, Run D.M.C.'s "Proud to Be Black" and Public Enemy's "Fight the Power." Today's hip-hop is based solely on what will sell and get Black women to shake their behinds. It seems as though, no matter what the words say, as long as the beat can make you dance, women are fine with a song. As a result, the generation of upcoming Black women don't have much hope. With all of today's technology and social media, it is very easy to find a video of a Black woman "twerking" in booty shorts for the whole world to see. Hip-hop lyrics have made that "acceptable" in the eyes of many Black women. They have also led many Black women to believe dressing half naked is the only way to gain the attention of the opposite sex. In an industry full of misogyny, it's hard for

a young Black woman to listen to good hip-hop lyrics, lyrics that don't entice them to view themselves as strippers, and dress the part when in public.

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Section 3:

Advanced Researched Argument and Essays from Other Disciplines

PRIIZE WINNER

First Place Advanced Researched Argument winner Samuel Pinzur examines a critical paradox in a short story by American author Jack London. Through a close reading of the original text, coupled with insights afforded by scholarly research, Pinzur carefully analyzes how London's "The Law of Life" reconciles the conflicting themes of life and death. The essay is an excellent example of how a student writer's original critical analysis can enter into a conversation with the work of noted scholars in a field.

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English 2120
21 April 2015

A Reason for Living and Dying:

Conflicting Themes in Jack London's "The Law of Life"

At first glance, Jack London's "The Law of Life" is an entertaining, albeit somewhat depressing account of an Eskimo tribe leaving behind to die an old man who was formerly the chief, Koskoosh. The story consists primarily of a dramatic account of a wolf pack hunting down an old moose, witnessed by the old man when he was just a boy, as well as the blood-curdling death of the old man, who was beset by these same ravenous terrors of the tundra. The tale is fast paced and exciting, but upon more careful examination, two broader, deeper themes come to life beneath the adventure and suspense. London postulates that the forces of nature impose one, and only one purpose on each man and woman, and that purpose is to take part in perpetuating the human race by reproducing. On the other hand, London claims that these same forces of nature drive each and every person to the same inevitable end: death. London subtly, yet masterfully weaves these contradictory themes into a tale of a man and his ongoing encounter with nature. This struggle with the forces and laws of nature is a direct extension of

Charles Darwin's theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest as recognized by Lawrence I. Berkove in his essay "Jack London's 'Second Thoughts.'" Berkove asserts that "If there was a constant concern in London's mind, it was respect for Darwinism. But although London *respected* Darwinism, he hardly celebrated it. London saw it as a law that linked human beings to animals and ultimately controlled and restricted their destiny" (62). This respect for the principles of Darwinism led London to his conclusions regarding man and his destiny as determined by nature. In "The Law of Life," Jack London simultaneously develops two conflicting themes, then masterfully harmonizes them into a resounding conclusion on the power of nature over mankind.

London articulates the theme of man's sole purpose with three different approaches. First, he observes that nature causes each person to reproduce, but neglects all other personal interests of man. Second, he demonstrates that every man and woman is soon forgotten by the succeeding generations despite owing their existence to these men and women. Third, he reasons insightfully that nature determines every woman's worth almost entirely by her ability to bear children.

First, London declares that nature completely disregards the hopes and dreams of man, thus making it apparent that reproduction is man's only purpose. As Koskoosh is left behind, he begins to contemplate life and death and the laws of nature by which these are governed. He ultimately concludes that "Nature was not kindly to the flesh. She had no concern for that concrete thing called the individual" (1044). The reality of each individual is lost on nature. They have no names. They have no faces. Nature's "interest lay in the species, the race" (1044). This is indeed, a sweeping declaration that drastically diminishes the individuality of man.

Other than their ability to reproduce, the individual, his wants, needs, hopes, and dreams, are of no concern to the forces of nature.

In addition, London observes that men, once they have reproduced, are eventually forgotten by the very children they have begotten. Nature requires not that man be remembered, but merely requires that he reproduce. Koskoosh reasons further, "The tribe of Koskoosh was very old. The old men he had known when a boy, had known old men before them. Therefore it was true that the tribe lived, that it stood for the obedience of all its members, way down into the forgotten past, whose very resting places were unremembered" (1044). The only lasting proof, the sole memorial of these ancients is the current existence of the tribe. Furthermore, these men "did not count; they were episodes. They had passed away like clouds from a summer sky. He also was an episode, and would pass away. Nature did not care. To life she set one task....To perpetuate..." (1044). This is an even clearer enunciation of man's insignificance, which is effectively equivocated to the fleeing nature of an August cloud. Men, once they have had children and grandchildren, are ultimately forgotten and consequently erased from the memory and consciousness of their descendants.

Finally, London argues powerfully that the worth of women is determined almost entirely by their ability to reproduce. He paints the scenario of a young girl becoming more desirable and attractive as her body matures until one young man can contain his desire for her no longer. They then marry and have children. "Ever she grew fairer and yet fairer to look upon, till some hunter, able no longer to withhold himself, took her to his lodge...to become the mother of his children" (1044). This is indeed a poetic but, nonetheless, accurate description of youth and its desires. In stark contrast to the women's attractiveness before childbearing is the picture that London so poignantly paints after she has reproduced, the picture of a woman

worn, broken, and undesirable to all excepting the children she has borne. "And with the coming of her offspring, her looks left her. Her limbs dragged and shuffled, her eyes dimmed and bleared, and only the little children found joy against the withered cheek of the old squaw next to the fire. Her task was done" (1044). Nature has such arranged it that a woman is desirable only in terms of her ability to create and then nurture new life. London powerfully argues through this observation that women's sole purpose in existence is reproduction and continuation of the race as a whole.

Nevertheless, as London is so carefully crafting this theme of man and his sole purpose of perpetuating life, he is also simultaneously developing the decidedly contradictory theme of every man's inevitable end: death, as forced upon him by nature. London fashions three distinct lines of reasoning in support of this unavoidable end at the hands of nature. First, he contrasts the vigor of youth to the feebleness of old age, that ever-present foe who overtakes even the stoutest of and hardiest of Earth's sons. Second, London compellingly illustrates that this same pattern is abundantly evident in the animal kingdom also. Third, he argues that since the very basic necessities of man's subsistence, food and water, are available to him merely by the whim of nature, nature must both keep man alive and put him to death.

London first points to every man and every woman's destiny of death by comparing the vibrancy and vitality of youth with the weakened senses and physical capabilities of old age. Koskoosh is contrasted strikingly with his young granddaughter in order to accomplish this comparison. London writes:

Old Koskoosh listened greedily. Though his sight had long since faded...Ah! That was Sit-cum-to-ha, shrilly anathematizing the dogs as she cuffed and beat them into the harnesses. Sit-cum-to-ha was his daughter's daughter, but she was too busy to waste a

thought upon her broken grandfather, sitting alone there in the snow, forlorn and helpless. Life called her, and the duties of life, not death. And he was very close to death now. (1043)

The one unable to see or to care for himself and so left to ponder with what faculties remained his impending doom, Koskoosh is the picture of the end which nature imposes upon all her sons. The other, Sit-cum-to-ha, active and exuberant in the flush of youth and the activities of life, has yet to be touched by nature's impartial hand. But her time will come; decline knows no partiality. The onset of death, whether sudden and in the prime of life, or slowly and ploddingly, will come as the forces of nature continually bear their offspring away.

London further symbolizes this inevitable onset of death by taking note of the same pattern in nature of the ultimate triumph of death over life among even the plants and animals. Leaves blossom and bloom in the brilliant colors of life, only to wither and fade as winter wields its deadly sickle of cold. The most majestic of beasts grow weary and weak and worn, ultimately to fall prey to those who will but briefly usurp their reign atop the animal kingdom before being overtaken and discarded themselves. Koskoosh's vivid childhood memory of the moose and his valiant fight against and surrender to the wolves is London's prime example of this. Koskoosh recalls:

The trail was red now, and the clean stride of the great beast had grown short and slovenly. Then they heard the first signs of battle—not the full-throated chorus of the chase, but the short, snappy bark which spoke of close quarters and teeth to flesh....Together they shoved aside the under branches of a young spruce and peered forth. It was the end they saw. (1046)

Even the mighty and magnificent moose, a grand specimen of nature indeed, finds himself helpless against the forces of nature bringing about his impending death.

Finally, London closes his case for the control of nature over man's final fate by ingeniously illuminating every man and every woman's complete dependence on nature for survival. Basic to human subsistence are food, water, and temperatures moderate enough to nurture life; without these three necessities, mankind cannot and will not survive. Each of these vital factors, furthermore, is made available only through workings of the natural world. London relates another of Koskoosh's memories in order to reveal this reality:

Koskoosh placed another stick on the fire and harked back deeper into the past. There was the time of the Great Famine, when the old men crouched empty-bellied to the fire...He had lost his mother in that famine. In the summer the salmon run had failed, and the tribe looked forward to the winter and the coming of the caribou. Then the winter came, but with it there were no caribou. Never had the like been known, not even in the lives of the old men. But the caribou did not come, and it was the seventh year, and the rabbits had not been replenished...And through the long darkness the children wailed and died, and the women, and the old men; and not one in ten of the tribe lived to meet the sun when it came back in the spring. (1045)

Simply put, humankind will live as long as nature provides food, and will die upon nature's removal thereof. In addition to this example, Koskoosh's dependence on the small pile of sticks left him by his granddaughter, whose heat upon burning would provide him with a barrier against the cold of the frozen tundra, is yet another instance displaying man's reliance on supplies of nature to survive the forces of nature. As Koskoosh contemplates, "At last the measure of his life was a handful of fagots....When the last stick had surrendered up its heat,

the frost would begin to gather up its strength....His head would fall forward upon his knees, and he would rest.... All men must die" (1044). The length of every man's life then, and its end, are determined by nature. Surely nature's control over man and his fate is revealed in man's utter dependence on the whims of nature for the most basic necessities of life.

London has now clearly established the theme of man's sole purpose, to reproduce, and the theme of his unavoidable end, death. These two themes, however, appear to pose a paradox, a conflict. Nature dictates man's sole and unequivocal purpose, to perpetuate life, and also determines man's ultimate and unequivocal destiny, death. Nature nourishes life with one hand, yet snuffs it out with the other. London is well aware of this contradiction, as he makes clear through two examples. First is Koskoosh's account of the death of his childhood friend and a skillful hunter, Zing-ha, who freezes to death in the icy grip of nature's winter (1045). Surely the premature death of a hunter in his prime, who could provide food in abundance to the tribe, is counter-productive to the sustaining of life. Second is the case of Koo-tee, a small child who is weak and sickly (10430. Regarding Koot-tee Koskoosh surmises, "It would die soon, perhaps, and they would burn a hole through the frozen tundra and pile rocks above to keep the wolverines away" (1043). This conflict between life and death is drawn out more sharply in the likely death of a sickly child long before he reaches his prime and is able to reproduce.

This question then remains: How can mankind carry out their duty when they have no control over their destiny? London's answer is simple and succinct. Death wins. Nature seeks to perpetuate life, but when push comes to shove, death triumphs, and nature cares not. Xiaofen Zhang reveals tellingly in his article "On the Influence of Naturalism on American Literature" that "Often, a naturalist author will lead the reader to believe that a character's fate

has been pre-determined, usually by heredity and environmental factors, that the destiny of humanity is misery in life and oblivion in death and that he/she can do nothing about it” (Zhang, par. 2.1). This is most certainly an accurate assessment of London’s viewpoint as espoused in “The Law of Life.” London openly establishes this viewpoint through Koskoosh’s musings on both the child Koo-tee’s predicament and the child’s worth, or lack thereof, to the tribe. Koskoosh reasons, “A few years at best, and as many an empty belly as a full one. And in the end, Death waited, ever-hungry and hungriest of them all” (1043). This indeed is somber statement revealing the chilling reality of imminent death. The forces of nature hold the final judgment and determine man’s end, whether premature, as in the case of Zing-ha, or timely, as in Koskoosh’s death. Man is ultimately powerless against nature, and is subject to nature’s every whim, whether pleasant or painful.

There is, nevertheless, a silver lining to this dark and foreboding realization. In his article “Loving Life While Accepting Death,” Vivekanand Palavali reveals his interpretation of and response to “The Law of Life” asserting that “[Koskoosh] accepts death as the ‘law of life’ and that his time has come. That short but dramatic story made me accept death as an inescapable reality....It is hard to go on with daily life thinking about the reality that, in the end, it won’t matter. But it does matter, right now....Instead I think about life—the beauty, pleasure, wonder, and magnificence of it” (39). Here is offered an alternative to the despair that is wont to set in upon contemplation of mankind’s inevitable end and powerlessness against nature. London subtly suggests this alternative in old Koskoosh’s willing acceptance of his imminent death, which is made increasingly evident throughout the story. Koskoosh ultimately believes that life, whether long or short, and then death is the way of all things. Therefore, while no man, woman or child can control his destiny, every person can control his or her outlook on

life while it lasts, choosing to appreciate the happiness life affords rather than to resent the hopelessness death brings.

In conclusion, London seamlessly crafts two apparently contradictory themes within the same story. He postulates that nature has but one purpose for man: perpetuation of life, yet, in opposition to this first theme, he clearly claims that nature has one and only one unavoidable end in store for every man: death. London creates this apparent dichotomy, however, merely to establish his final conclusion all the more powerfully, a conclusion that he weaves very subtly beneath the more apparent themes of life and death. London harmonizes these opposing themes by concluding that nature rules, both in life and in death. Nature has the first say and the last. Man has but to accept his destiny at the hands of this awful and beautiful force. This is the law of life.

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Angela Hendry's research essay focuses on a complicated and specialized healthcare issue, the treatment of patients with psychiatric needs in hospital emergency departments. Hendry begins her essay with a short narrative depicting the plight of a patient confronting a mental health crisis, illustrating just how complex and difficult the situation can be for such individuals and the staff who treat them. Using the story as to build the reader's empathy and awareness, Hendry goes on to examine the multiple causes of the many problems faced by patients in crisis and their caregivers. In her discussion, she incorporates original research conducted at a local facility, as well as information gathered from professional sources documenting treatment models elsewhere. Hendry also uses section headings as an organizational strategy to guide the reader through the complexities of the discussion. Notice also how the essay proposes solutions to the problem and how Hendry's critically astute suggestions are based on demonstrated models of effectiveness documented by current research.

Angela Hendry

Professor Leslie LaChance

English 1020

6 November 2013

Underfunded: America's Mental Health Crisis

It is 0700 in the emergency room. Amy (name has been changed for privacy purposes) has been here since 1400 hours yesterday. When she first arrived the nurse drew her blood, asked for a urine sample and demanded she change into paper scrubs. Her belongings were quickly gathered and taken. Then she was placed in a room with multiple beds separated by curtains. She has had very little sleep due to the constant chaos of this environment. She is exhausted, lonely, and scared. The feelings of isolation are beginning to exacerbate her depression and thoughts of wanting to simply end her life. Everything she brought with her has been removed by the nurse, and she has been given these scratchy paper scrubs to wear. There is no TV, no radio, and nothing to do but lie here and think. The voices in her head grow

louder with each passing minute. Hospital security sits outside her door and the police officer who brought her in sits near her bed playing games on his phone. There is also a hospital employee monitoring her every move. “Why are they here?” she thinks. “I am not a criminal.” Amy has been denied visitors and any ability to make phone calls. Everything feels cold and robotic. No one seems to care. She is overwhelmed with the feelings of unworthiness, abandonment, and the denial of her rights.

Amy is not alone. According to Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a shocking 12 million emergency room visits in 2007 were related to mental health and substance abuse, or in many cases both. This means that one of every eight emergency department (ED) visits is psychiatric in nature (Mental Disorders). Emergency Departments are ill-equipped to give adequate psychological care to mental health patients, yet this number is rapidly growing as resources for our mentally ill patients are declining (Butcher). They simply have nowhere else to go.

How did we get here?

Our sociological viewpoints of the mentally ill have drastically changed over the years, yet in many ways we in the US are heading right back to where we started. During the 1800’s, the creation of residential institutions for our psychiatric population stemmed from a woman who saw a need for better care of our mentally-ill and fought hard for it. Realizing that many mentally-ill people were lost in prisons or were homeless, Dorothea Dix spent over 40 years convincing the U.S. government to build 32 psychiatric hospitals across the country to house and manage this population (Unite for Sight). In theory these institutions were meant for the betterment of a lost and uncared for subculture. Unfortunately, the reality of underfunding as well as uneducated staff led to abuse and unethical medical treatments within these facilities

(Novella). As these realities became known, the fight for deinstitutionalization began. The theory of deinstitutionalization is that our mentally ill should be better served within local communities, supported by community-based mental health programs than they are locked away in insane asylums (Unite for Sight).

Deinstitutionalization of our mentally ill began in the 1960's. Across our nation, the amount of residential beds for our psychiatric patients fell from nearly 400,000 in 1970 to a mere 50,000 in 2006 (Alakeson et al.). More recently states made a massive cut in funding of \$5 billion in mental health services between 2009 and 2012 (Szabo). This has created a massive shortage of bed space for our growing population of severely mentally ill patients. The Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963 was created in an attempt to replace these inpatient facilities with community mental health centers. Unfortunately, these centers have been given inadequate funding and staffing which creates an inability to satisfy the demands placed on them (Alakeson et al.). Due to this lack of funding and limited resources, we as a society are miserably failing to properly care for our mentally ill.

While deinstitutionalization seems as common sense as abolishing slavery, the consequences are just as complex. The National Institute of Mental Health explains this dilemma as such:

The institutionalization of severely mentally ill people, particularly in hospital back wards, constituted a form of societal paternalism in which many persons suffered bleak, meaningless lives. With deinstitutionalization and the lack of community support system, many former patients and others with severe mental illness have been given nearly absolute liberty but with a very high price. Now that patients can

be committed to treatment services only if they are extremely and imminently dangerous to themselves or society, our society allows individuals incapable of realistic planning to struggle through life and wander the streets. Like ships without rudders, homeless people with severe mental illness are free, but at significant risk to life and without much hope of happiness. (Simpson, chapter 1)

Many of the mentally ill are uninsured and therefore have fewer treatment choices. Those who have received past treatment are often non-compliant with taking their medications or unable to afford them. In a recent *USA Today* article, we are told that a shocking 60% of adults with any form of mental illness were left untreated (Szabo). According to a study cited by Lisa Hefflefinger, approximately 1 out of 4 Americans have had mental health problems during 2009 alone (Hefflefinger). When rock-bottom hits for many of these patients, they end up in their local emergency rooms seeking help for their mental health emergency.

Why the Emergency Room?

Although some of the patients who come to the ER do so of their own accord, many more are brought in by the local law enforcement or family members. Some have sought help through a mobile crisis unit or crisis help line where they are often sent to the ED for medical clearance. Some 24%-50% of all psychiatric patients also suffer medical illnesses. Due to the lack of psychiatric facilities which can address both mental and physical health issues, many psychiatric patients are forced to undergo a process called medical clearance prior to placement in a psychiatric facility (Olshaker). This process is basically a physical of sorts performed by emergency room physicians in an ER setting. Once cleared, the patients then wait for assessment by mental health professionals who determine the best next step. Often, uninsured

patients will wait as long as 8-24 hours for an open bed in a psychiatric facility after being medically cleared.

Emergency Departments all across the nation are feeling the effects of this mental health crisis. According to Judge David L. Bazelon, founder of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, mental health related ED visits increased 75% between 1992 and 2003. Bazelon also states that those with psychiatric illnesses have a higher rate of ED visits compared to those in the general population (Bazelon). For example, in 2014 Nashville General Hospital, reported drastic increases in their number of psychiatric cases medically cleared through their ED each year. In 2011 psychiatric patients required approximately 4,326 nursing hours. By 2013 this had nearly doubled to 7,790 nursing hours, creating as well increased bed occupancy or boarding (Hawley page 1). This increase in numbers is costly for the hospital and divides the attention of the ED staff from more critically ill patients.

There are many problems with this model of care, not only for the hospitals themselves, but the patients as well. During their long waits, these patients are often left to soak in the cesspools of their minds, instead of receiving the help they desperately need. The ED staff are poorly trained, if trained at all, to meet the needs of these patients. ED physicians are prepared for life-threatening medical emergencies, not psychological ones. The environment is noisy, chaotic, and often overwhelming for those who are likely experiencing chaos of their own inside their heads. (Alakeson et al.)

Is there a better way?

The real question is: how can we do better? The first priority of treatment for those experiencing a mental health crisis is caring for their physical safety. However, shouldn't we consider their mental health just as important? If we created a more holistic approach in our

care model, these patients would have much better continuity of care. Currently, we are simply right back where we were well over 100 years ago when Dorothea Dix sought change.

The process of medically clearing most psychiatric patients has been created to rule out and/or treat any existing medical needs. The evaluation of this process is a critical first step. A study done by Dr. Jonathan Olshaker, et al. revealed that only 19% of those with psychiatric complaints had coexisting acute medical conditions. These commonly consisted of lacerations, chest pain, hypertension, hyperglycemia, and bronchitis. Of these 19%, acute medical conditions were discovered through patient history 94% of the time (Olshaker). These statistics hardly warrant costly routine lab work on every psychiatric patient regardless of how thorough their self-reported history or how recently they have been seen in the ED. Hospitals could develop better triage systems for these patients and cut costs by being more selective of who receives full work-ups. The money saved could be used towards revamping the ED to better treatment for these patients.

Another major government expense is the often overlapping excessive resources provided to restrain many mentally-ill patients against their will. Each governmental entity has its own policies to secure the safety of patients who have either the desire to harm themselves or the inability to protect themselves. Often this begins with the local police department (PD) or a local mobile crisis unit. If the patient is not already in police custody, the mobile crisis unit will contact the PD to transfer the patient to the ED for medical clearance. For example, in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, it is the policy of the Metro Nashville Police Department for the officer to remain with the patient until discharge or transfer is complete. This creates a shortage for the already short-staffed patrol unit of the PD, plus the expenses of that officer's salary during that time frame. These officers are also required to remain solely with the patient they

bring in, even if there are already 4 or 5 other officers in the ED for the same reason. Yet, it is also the policy of a city hospital in Nashville, that hospital security as well as a sitter monitor and stay with the patient at all times. Often there can be as many as 3 people monitoring one patient. Since few of these patients are insured and these are all government entities, this becomes a huge cost to the city. I propose that these separate agencies come together and create a policy that lessens the strain on any one agency. One possible plan could be that the hospital security increases staffing and takes over the securing of the patient from PD, allowing them to get back to duty. The main problem with this plan is that while these are all government agencies, they all have separate budgets. Unless the changes were made within the city budget, this plan would become more costly to the hospital while saving money for the police department. Re-arranging the budget along with this policy change could allow for a larger allocation of funds to the hospital to better their psychiatric care.

For most hospitals, it seems that length of stay (LOS) and boarding psychiatric patients are the greatest expenses and problems. Lisa Hefflefinger cites research that the average LOS for psychiatric patients is 8.6 hours for those who get discharged and 15 hours for those being transferred to another facility. For those patients who present to the ED intoxicated, this time increases by an additional 6.2 hours for a total LOS averaging nearly 24 hours (Hefflefinger). According to Vidhaya Alakeson et al. these boarded patients do not receive the quality of care they need. In addition, the presence of these long-term ED patients exhaust the staff's ability to fully focus on their more critically-ill patients (Alakeson et al.). One hospital in New Mexico began to relieve this problem in 2005. Hefflefinger explains their impressive multi-phase approach which took many years to fully implement. The hospital recognized that they lacked a safe location to house their growing psychiatric population, so in their first phase they created

one. This 7-bed Critical Decision Unit (CDU) is a locked area with video surveillance, panic alarms, and safe rooms. The other key factors include a calming environment and well-trained staff to care for the patients in this area. Because their CDU has its own set of protocols, it is easier for the staff to focus solely on the needs of these patients (Heffelfinger). Although this has cost the hospital money up front, it has cut costs in other areas of psychiatric care while providing better care to the psychiatric patients. Many hospitals could learn from this development model, while also understanding it was developed internally. It is important for individual hospitals to utilize their own resources in order to suit their particular population needs.

An example of how this could be feasible for a hospital like Nashville General would be to utilize their relationship with Meharry Medical College. Meharry residents of all specialties, with the exception of psychiatry, currently see patients in the ED. Mobile Crisis, or even their own trained assessment staff, if developed on site, could quickly assess potential mental health patients then refer to psychiatry as needed. A certain percentage of the psychiatric patients would benefit from being seen by and initially treated by a psychiatrist within the ED. Nashville General currently has unused hospital floor space as well. It would be prudent for this hospital to consider the development of its own CDU or even its own psychiatric floor, allowing these patients to be treated in house as opposed to waiting long transfer times for other facilities that are already overcrowded. These steps could drastically reduce the LOS for mental health patients in the ED.

This crisis is clearly one of national proportion. Despite all of the current discussion of healthcare reform, there is very little discussion about reforming our mental health practices. Consequently, the federal government is spending more than \$30 billion in social security

payments for the mentally disabled alone (Zipple). It is critical that we begin to put funding in place on the front end before people end up in such a dependent state. In a review of the book, *Healing the Broken Mind: Transforming America's Failed Mental Health System* by Timothy Kelly, Anthony Zipple summarizes the author's primary points he deems necessary for reform as follows:

1. Developing a system that is results oriented and focused on the use of evidence-based practices.
2. Developing a system that is innovative, abolishes state mental health system monopolies, and increases provider competition.
3. Developing a system that is adequately funded and implementing broad policy and insurance parity for mental health services.
4. Developing a system that is consumer friendly and empowers persons with severe mental illness and their families to have a strong voice in services and policy.
5. Developing a system that is committed to change. (Zipple)

The government needs to understand just how critical reform is in this overlooked arena of healthcare. City hospitals need funding in order to revamp and create a new standard of care that treats mentally ill patients rather than simply sifting them through our current broken system. We as a society need to realize just how many lives mental illness affects. As Americans we are ethically and morally bound to address this growing concern and stop sweeping it under the rug in attempts to ignore it. The reality is that almost half of all Americans will suffer some form of mental illness during the course of their lives (Butcher). No longer can we afford to treat those with mental illness as outcasts in our society. The need

for funding is clear as well as more facilities which are properly trained to aid the special needs of these patients.

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In the essay below, Tony Maxfield addresses a serious problem facing rural communities in Tennessee: lack of access to emergency medical services. The author incorporates research which documents the significant differences in response time between urban and rural services and shows dire effects lengthy rural response times can have on trauma patients. Maxfield uses this research to build an argument in favor of the establishment of more EMS substations in rural communities. Notice how the author incorporates research from professional medical publications as well as excerpts from an interview with a professional working in the field.

Tony Maxfield

Professor David Johnson

English 1020

Emergency Services in Rural Communities

Individuals in most urban communities take for granted the fact they have quick access to emergency care. Furthermore, in these urban areas, most citizens have come to expect a quick response by emergency services in the event of an emergency (NEMSIS, 2015). However, this is not the case in some rural areas of Tennessee, especially the neighborhood where I live. The Willow Grove community—located in the Southeast corner of Clay County—has only one way in, and requires emergency responders to travel into Overton County to access the citizens in this area. In Willow Grove, this is a problem when police or emergency medical services (EMS) respond to an emergency. On the other hand, most counties in the Upper Cumberland Region have placed substations in the rural areas where extended response times are an issue (UCEMSDA). In order to provide the citizens of Willow Grove with the same standard of care, we must provide them with an ambulance substation to reduce response times.

Celina—where the ambulance service is located—is separated from the southeast corner of Clay County by Dale Hollow Lake. The response time from Celina is approximately thirty minutes; for this reason, Overton County EMS makes all emergency calls to southeast Clay County; however, this does not solve the problem of providing sick and injured taxpayers in southeast Clay County with appropriate care. For example, Overton County EMS response times can be as much as twenty-five minutes; in either case, neither of these response times are acceptable when dealing with patients who suffer a traumatic injury, myocardial infarction (MI), or stroke. According to the National EMS Information System, the national average EMS response time is six minutes. The extended response times in the Willow Grove community, which can be as much as twenty minutes over national average, puts the citizens of this community at great risk.

In 2013, the Trauma Care Advisory Council of Tennessee reported 23,641 trauma patients who received care in trauma centers or Comprehensive Regional Pediatric Centers. Ground transports were responsible for about 80 percent of patients taken to trauma centers, while air transports accounted for about 20 percent (Guillamondegui, Seesholtz, Booker, & Love, 2014). When dealing with trauma patients, the goal is to deliver the patient to a trauma center within sixty minutes post injury. When patients receive definitive care within the “golden hour”, morbidity and mortality decrease significantly (Rogers & Rittenhouse, 2014). In short, when dealing with trauma patients, delay equals death.

Stroke is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States; moreover, Tennessee ranks fourth-worst in the United States for deaths caused by strokes. In Tennessee sixty-three out of ninety-five counties have no designated stroke center for EMS to transport patients who suffer an acute stroke. In addition, 38 percent of the population is twenty to fifty

miles away from a stroke center (Hern, Swafford, Winters, & Aldrich). For this reason, transporting stroke patients to a comprehensive stroke center within three hours can prevent major damage to the brain (McFarland, 2011). A fast response along with proper treatment and transport to an appropriate hospital will improve the outcome of an individual suffering from a stroke. Time is critical in saving brain tissue when an individual is having a stroke (Antevy, McTaggart, & Jayaraman, 2015). As Dr. David French stated in an article in *JEMS*, “Early EMS activation, identification, management, and rapid transport and triage to the most appropriate stroke center will give the patient the best chance to make a full recovery (French, 2015).”

One of the most time-critical calls that EMS encounters is an individual complaining of chest pain. Additionally, EMS receives a high volume of chest pain calls that continue to grow every year. Individuals who activate EMS in the event of an MI have a much better outcome than those who opt to be transported by personal vehicle (Maziar Zafari, 2015). EMS personnel are trained to provide life-saving interventions in the event an individual develops cardiac arrest. In an article on Medscape, “Myocardial Infarction Treatment & Management”; Zafari Maziar, MD, PhD, explains:

Approximately 1 in every 300 patients with chest pain transported to the ED by private vehicle goes into cardiac arrest en-route. Several studies have confirmed that patients with STEMI [S-T segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction] usually do not call 911; in one study, only 23 percent of patients with a confirmed coronary event used EMS (Maziar Zafari, 2015).

In some situations, emergency services can be the difference between life and death; for example, chances of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest decrease for every second treatment is delayed. Consequently, 65 percent of deaths caused by MI occur within the first sixty minutes; however, we can prevent most of these deaths with early defibrillation (Maziar Zafari, 2015). Additionally, quick response times will minimize damage to the heart muscle and possibly save the patient's life.

Increases in public safety budgets are always met with resistance, especially when requesting money to cover raises or equipment. Secondly, a common argument to refute ambulance substations is a lack of call volume compared to cost of operation; however, according to Chris Masiongale, Overton County EMA/911 Director, in 2014, 1261 calls were made by fire, police, and EMS in the Willow Grove area (Masiongale, 2015). Additionally, numerous grants are available to assist small communities with funds to improve public safety. With available grants and call volumes that increase from year to year, providing the Willow Grove Community with an ambulance substation is the right thing to do.

People who need emergency pre-hospital care depend on well-trained personnel reaching them quickly, identifying the treatment needed, and in life-threatening situations—such as multiple trauma, stroke, or cardiac arrest—administering the life-saving treatment needed. It is our responsibility as public servants to supply each community with access to emergency services that they require, and respond to everyone in need as fast as possible.

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In the literary analysis below, Honey-Rae Swann presents a comparison of characters and attitudes toward them in two American novels. Her study of women characters, their wealth, and male characters' responses to both show how two different authors addressed similar concerns about the so-called American Dream. Swann relies on a close reading of primary literary texts and smoothly incorporates quotations from each to support her thesis that the wealth, status, and decisions of two main women characters lead admiring male characters to disillusionment. The essay is a good example of how an original argument can be developed through comparative critical analysis of literary texts.

Honey-Rae Swan

Professor Laura Black

English 2030

28 February 2015

A Marian Mirage and Daisy Delusion:

A Comparison of Women's Roles in *A Lost Lady* and *The Great Gatsby*

In 1923, Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* depicts a disillusioned Niel Herbert who becomes more aware of his world through his observance and changing opinions of the married aristocrat, Mrs. Marian Forrester. Two years later, F. Scott Fitzgerald, an admirer of Cather's, published *The Great Gatsby*, in which a starry-eyed Nick Carraway observes the happenings of the elite class in New York. Through his observance, we bear witness to the difficulties Jay Gatsby has in obtaining class, money, and the American dream. Although the main characters and narrative structures are very similar, the most striking similarities of the two novels occur in Marian Forrester and Daisy Buchanan, observed to be so similar that, in 1925, Fitzgerald admitted to an "apparent plagiarism" of Daisy's description to the love object in Cather's novel (Corrigan 1453). The women in the novel are symbols of wealth and class, inspiring the

illusions and revealing the atrocities of their stature, made apparent in their appeals, relationships, and their decisions or actions within the novels.

As both novels separate and define two distinct social classes, the ladies owe much of their appeal to their placement in the social elite. In *A Lost Lady*, the prairie states are divided with the homesteaders and hard-workers, and the bankers and gentlemen ranchers looking to invest money to develop the West (Cather 3). *The Great Gatsby*, distinguishes East Egg from West Egg as old money and new money, respectively. These “eggs” echo Niel’s wish to not return to his “frail egg-shell house [...] where people of no consequence lived” (21). In *A Lost Lady* and in *The Great Gatsby*, much of the story is based on observing the women and their class, with and through those deemed lesser observers. In Niel’s introduction to this class through the Forresters, the young boy sees Mrs. Forrester as “one of the great and rich world” (13). This distinction was the same Jay Gatsby made with Daisy when he was a poor, young soldier. Daisy even makes it a point to emphasize her own superiority with, “I’ve been everywhere and seen everything and done everything [...] God, I’m so sophisticated!” and Nick observes her smirk as “she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished society” (Fitzgerald 22). Niel and Gatsby are especially disillusioned by the women and their elevated status.

Although these characters do not have a clear view of the women in the beginning of the novel, they are not alone or absurd in their lack of insight. Nick says Daisy’s eyes were “impersonal [...] in the absence of all desire” but when she “looked up into [his] face” she was “promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was the way she had” (17, 13). Correspondingly, Mrs. Forrester’s eyes are described with obvious contradictions. While having the ability to constitute an intimate and personal relation, her eyes

were “nearly always a little mocking” (Cather 26-27). The women had the ability to be both mocking and charming as a result of their status and wealth. They could be or do almost anything because of it. Cather and Fitzgerald make the women’s appeals universal to parallel the widespread charm of wealth and status. Similarly, physical descriptions could have been largely omitted for the same reason. Opinion varies on what constitutes beauty, but anyone can be made desirable when they are inextricably connected to money or an elite society and, though physical descriptions are slim, Cather and Fitzgerald consistently connect them directly to the women’s class. While Mrs. Forrester treats Niel’s injury, he notes only her paleness and softness, which gives a testament to her distinction from the homesteaders and hard-workers, before briefly noting her fine clothes or jewelry, and then observes the extravagance of her home (20-21). Likewise, Nick feels uncivilized around Daisy, and Gatsby reassesses everything in his home based on Daisy’s approval (Fitzgerald 96-97). Mrs. Forrester and Daisy embodied the symbols to the men outside their marriage, but were often only a means of expressing it for their husbands. It would be silly to say Mrs. Forrester and Daisy were not cared for by their husbands, but Captain Forrester and Tom Buchanan often objectified their wives. Captain and Tom buy their women jewelry and, Captain especially, takes pleasure in seeing his wife wear them. Consequentially, Tom views his wife as a testament to his success and stature, seeking sexual gratification in Mrs. Wilson. Both women have affairs, too, mostly satisfied in accepting materials from their husbands and pleasure from others, the most offensive part to Tom being that “Mr. Nobody from nowhere” was with his wife (137). These relationships provide foreshadowing to their decisions at the end of the novels. Mrs. Forrester marries again, reclaiming parts of herself Niel thought she lost after her husband’s death, the “right man” had “saved her” (Cather 143). After she “realized at last what she was doing,”

Daisy stays with Tom in order not to lose her reputation by marrying Gatsby (Fitzgerald 139).

Both women knew that “money was a very important thing,” “realize[d] it from the beginning” and “[were not] ridiculous about it” in their decisions (Cather 96). With their inextricable connections to wealth and status, provided by their husbands, they would be nothing without them, losing all their charm and appeal in the absence of money or reputation.

As symbols of wealth and status and in their relationships and actions, the women serve as objects revealing the misconceptions of wealth, status, and the American dream to the novels’ narrators. Niel became thankful that Mrs. Forrester, “his long-lost lady,” “had a hand in breaking him into life” (147). Nick, too, recognizes that Gatsby’s dream was “already behind him” (Fitzgerald 189). Cather and Fitzgerald succeed in illustrating that these ideals and dreams were “already gone” and “nothing could ever bring [them] back” (Cather 145). “It eluded us then, but that’s no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further” for the nonexistent American dream that “was nothing, and yet it was everything” (Fitzgerald 189, Cather 145). These women represented these dreams and, like them, their value was not diminished though they were forever lost.

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Amy Leu's essay, written for a World Civilization course, is a thoughtful synthesis of historical and anthropological discussions of patriarchy. It offers well-organized, original analysis of patriarchal society's possible origins, incorporating research and presenting information in such a way that it creates a chronological historical narrative. Through her research, Leu shows us how, as a sense of private property ownership grew, regard for the status and contribution of women to society diminished. Her essay is a good example of how strong critical writing skills can be deployed across academic disciplines.

Amy Leu

Professor Merritt McKinney

History 1110

18 February 2015

Patriarchy's Roots

Prestige has, for millennia, captured the human imagination. What an idea, that some people, like some jewels, are more precious and differently sought after. The elite have seemingly emulated the gods in position and influence for time immemorial. But what places people in their matrix? Why are some due more respect based on their names, or more curiously, their genders? In studying history, such questions of origins arise. The nearly global institution of patriarchy raises an interesting case with its fuzzy roots. By the time written records became prominent, male dominance was widely accepted and unquestioned. But ideas of prestige are just as adaptable as humans themselves, and patriarchy was once just a seed. Based on current interpretations, the Paleolithic Age had greater equality, with gender roles widening in the Neolithic, and women's dependent status seemingly cemented in the beginnings of the Urban Age.

First, we must retreat to a time when there were no influences and preconceived notions about gender roles, in order to consider the most basic societal setup. Obviously, none of these individuals left accounts; otherwise, they would not have lived prehistorically. But from observations of modern forager societies, a pattern emerges. In *Women in Prehistory*, anthropologist Margaret Ehrenberg states, “[Women] probably collected as much, if not more, of the food eaten by the community and derived equal status from their contribution” (19). If we can avoid imagining the stereotypical cave woman dressed in animal skins and cowed by the macho wooly mammoth hunters, we might understand that equal status would have made practical sense when uninterrupted by preconceptions. There may have been some division of labor, where males were mainly concerned with hunting, and women with gathering, but such a division would have made no plea for superior or inferior status. Both jobs contributed to the stores of food and wealth, and thus both sexes contributed to the group’s quality of life.

In fact, women in prehistoric times may have been making more fiscal contribution than previously imagined. Venus figurines, which are found across Eurasia and dated as the oldest carved figurines, may have been more than fertility charms. They exhibit woven items of clothing, and may have been used as models to immortalize and advertise such crafts, according to *Furs for Evening, But Cloth Was the Stone Age Standby* by science writer Natalie Angier. What scholars had previously interpreted as body art may be evidence of caps, skirts, and bandeaux woven by women, the plant-gathering experts. Such skilled craftsmanship could easily open the door for baskets, slings, and nets. This means that “women’s work” may have been a remarkable advancement, and an acclaimed credit to any clan, even though these woven items were not as durable as the arrowheads and other stone tools for which the age is named. As Angier puts it, “while vast changes in manufacturing took the luster off the textile business

long ago, with the result that such ‘women’s work’ is now accorded low status and sweatshop wages, the researchers argue that weaving and other forms of fiber craft once commanded great prestige” (8).

However, things began to change in the Neolithic Age. According to Ehrenberg, most current horticultural societies assign gardening or farming tasks to women, while men continue to hunt, which is supported by archeological evidence from the Neolithic period. Specifically, out of 104 existing horticultural societies, half exhibit agriculture managed by women, with another third showing shared farming responsibilities (20). It is most likely that women led the switch to farming the land, thus eventually leading the majority of the human race to settlement. This leads us to believe that women were still a significant contribution to the economy and of significant influence within society – even groundbreaking technological innovators in the Neolithic. Ehrenberg asserts that there was a matrilineal system of inheritance in place as well, as the skills and equipment for farming, the element of livelihood that now kept societies in place, would be passed down from mother to daughter (24). This potentially put the trust for continued fortune for all in the hands of the women.

Nevertheless, the gender roles continued changing, and made a drastic switch. Horticulture became plow agriculture as beasts of burden were tamed and harnessed, and more yields were required for the growing population. As authors Catherine Clay, Chandrika Paul, and Christine Senecal state in *Women in the First Urban Communities*, “Women of plow-using cultures may have preferred and chosen to work around the house and to perform lighter agricultural work. This scenario resulted in a gradual loss of women’s social power and prestige – sometimes through their own choices that made sense to them at the time, but that accelerated men’s control over economic activity and social resources” (27). Basically,

women's and men's physical differences became more consequential, as a focus on child rearing grew, and agriculture that required upper-body strength and less distance from home took root. Also, as men manned the fields and the herds of domesticated animals – the element of livelihood that kept societies in place – patrilineal descent and inheritance became of interest. More equipment was owned by plow agriculturalists, and concrete land ownership also became prominent during this age, so the more tangible patrilineage attracted more focus than matrilineage had (Ehrenberg 24). Since these patrilineal systems were so precious, it became imperative for men to “keep tabs” on their wives’ and daughters’ fidelity or virginity so as to ensure legitimate inheritance (Clay et al. 28).

A woman’s reputation also became increasingly significant perhaps because her talent or contribution to the economy was increasingly insignificant. As people settled down and began to accumulate wealth, it could stay in the family, and create a gap between the prestige held by the rich and the poor. Thus people began to be seen as items of tradable monetary value, where slavery also developed in early urban societies (Ehrenberg 25). Where a man’s monetary value may have resulted from his ability to contribute to the economy in terms of labor, a woman’s monetary value generally consisted of her reproductive capacity, since women had largely exited the major industries with the forfeit of agriculture. According to Clay, Paul and Senecal, “Some have argued that men’s control and exchange of women’s sexuality and reproductive capacity generally became the basis of private property in Mesopotamia between 3100 and 600 B.C.E.” (26). Basically, a woman’s value or prestige was now attributed to how well she was protected or controlled. This idea spread across the entire spectrum of class and status, as evidenced by the first known law codes. The ancient *Assyrian Law* details whether women should veil themselves or cover their heads, depending on whether

she was slave, free, wife, or concubine. The women did not have any choice in their head covering, as any women caught in public in a misidentifying garb was dealt harsh punishments, such as 50 blows with rods or the amputation of her ears. Men were dealt similar harsh punishments for failing to report a woman dressed incorrectly (70). Status must have been imperative to this society, where social hierarchy was rigidly addressed and upheld, and had much to do with a woman's potential sexuality, as opposed to her talent or contribution. Similarly, the "Family and Marriage" section of *Hammurabi's Code* is concerned mainly with protecting virginity and punishing infidelity mostly with death by drowning. Interestingly, if a woman refused her husband, her case was investigated. Depending on their findings, the woman was allowed to return to her father's house, or was drowned. No punishment is mentioned for the man (55). Perhaps the rules were executed fairly, and the authorities were precise and accurate in their investigations. But in an imperfect world, it seems unlikely anyone would gamble with such consequences. And so we see male dominance fully sprouted, and yielding nearly complete control in matters of state and home. Individuals were no longer judged only by their contribution to society, but oftentimes only by their status.

In conclusion, a slew of cause-and-effect events led to the eventual loss of prestige for women in society. There may have always been some division of labor, but in matters of influence and regard, it might easily have been inconsequential for centuries, even millennia. During the Neolithic Age, that division of labor is thought to have grown into widening gender roles. In the Urban Age, patriarchy fully took root, exhibiting itself in new camps of thought, an emphasis on physical differences, social stratification, and law codes. Prestige was no longer based on an individual evaluation of gifts to society, but on labels. But there is hope in

that the biases constituting patriarchy had a historical beginning: we can see them wilt away in the sun of a bright new age.

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Rose-Colored Glasses

Leaves of ivy dance with the wind outside, tapping on the window, shadows waltzing on the floor. Blurred rays of early-morning sun dim the courtroom, casting a ghostly iridescence amongst the melancholy eyes of the jury, all trying to analyze my demeanor.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury! Do I strike you as a gentle artist who admires impressionist paintings in museums on rainy days? The prosecution asks you to paint my face at the brutal crime scene they describe, but you just can't seem to. I see the confusion on your faces: *just how on earth did this man find himself in this room?*

As clouds obscure the remaining sun, the prosecutor steps towards the bench and lays before the palpable minds of the jury a final piece of evidence to chew on, *Exhibit #3*: A myriad of photographs showing my fingerprints at the scene of the crime.

Amidst the echoing pitter-patter of sudden rain, some of you steal a glance at me; I wonder, what do you see? Do your despondent eyes look upon my screaming orange jumpsuit and see a handsome, falsely incriminated man, or do they see the bloodlusts of my alleged crimes?

Interrupting my monologue, the prosecutor's knife-like tongue cuts up my daze with his closing argument, slicing cleanly their final statements before the court:

"Your Honor, members of the jury, not only was the defendant's DNA found at the scene of crime, witness testaments further prove that he was in the vicinity at the estimated time of death of the victim Rose Clark."

"Rose." Hearing your name pours petrol on my burning heart, my thoughts in a smoky haze of *you*, again.

Swiftly, the prosecution continues: "The evidence presented here today prove the twisted mental state of this man" (look at the way they're looking at me, Rose. Such disbelief! *How could this man be so cruel?* Inconceivable!) "-a fact shown by his lack of remorse and responsibility for his crime. Ladies and

gentlemen, may these photos of Miss Clark's marred body sway your verdict towards justice. Due to the nature of this crime, I implore you to find this man guilty of murder in the first degree."

Solemnly sent away, the jury shuffle past. I return their passing gazes, thinking: I dare you, feel the cunning of my smirk in your bones; look upon my thorned lungs and breathe the sweet poison of my darling, painted red, Rose; see her manufactured tempest raging in my mind – raging, raging, raging. Only then would you understand the excitement I feel, the anticipation!

The sun peaks through the clouds for just a moment as my attorney approaches me.

My Rose, my perfect day I owe all to you: I'll be acquitted of the law, yet never acquitted of *you*. But don't fret, my darling Rose. My perfect day starts here, and will end with the end of *you*.

Golden hands of the clock melt away as my attorney attempts to enlighten me on the vantage points of my case; their droning voice blocks out the rest of the courtroom, building stairs for my imagination to climb up, elevating my mind out of the commotion – higher and higher, passing clouds, vividly dreaming up my latest reality, floating into the stratosphere. It is here, between infinite space and crashing waves that I find myself gouging out the miscalculations of my perfect day's schedule: the trial ended late, but soon enough my verdict should reveal itself from the mouths of the jury - that is the beginning of our new love story, Rose.

Amidst my bubbling concoction of ideas, a few of my attorney's silky words manage to streamline through my ears, rippling in my head; some heavier stones, like "loophole" and "definite win" disturb the waters of my mind with greater force, creating a waterfall, rushing water in my veins. My excitement burns like a flame I dare not grasp, not yet. Is it improper to smile at a murder trial?

The judge calls my attorney aside, and her scuttle brings me back to the courtroom's desolate hearts, beating in sync with the tedious tick of the clock.

Waiting. My eyes flicker like candlelight to the roman numerals on the clock, following the stride of the minute hand: Rose should be here soon.

Silent melancholia slowly morphs into reticent gossip, accompanied by the murmurs of wind outside, increasing in velocity: a storm is coming. Reclining in my chair, I return to my wonderland, not focusing on the echoes of background chatter. Instead, Rose ambles about in the corridors of my mind, stumbling into obscure rooms of my brain: every luminous thought of her taking over my train of thought, steering it off of its tracks; reclaiming what she had tried so hard to do away with.

Eventually I slip into the rabbit hole of my memories: the acute heartache, the moment I walked into Rose's room that night, how it seemed that all sound had left the room with my breath; my heart stopped as I grabbed her hand, soft, still warm. The disfigured corpse held me as I sobbed into what was left of her chest. You would have fooled me, Rose, if it wasn't for the tattoo.

Abruptly seizing me from my thoughts is the ear-piercing screech of the courtroom's great wooden doors being driven open: a frail hand appears, followed by their owner, advancing towards the front bench – she glances at me, holding me hostage with her eyes, smirking - within moments a tangle of thorned vines slither across the courtroom, writhing up the defendant's stand, twisting and squeezing and weaving around my neck – with my last breath: "Rose."

Rose! You expect me to be surprised, of course. When will you realise you couldn't fool me? You pretend you don't notice me watching you take a seat in the front bench, gracefully folding your legs one over the other, tilting your face up just enough so I can glimpse at your honey eyes, analyzing the scene from under the hat you've decided to wear today; smooth curls dangle out from underneath the hat, a newly dyed shade of blonde, shining the way Amanda's did. The hat, I now realise, covers your brown roots.

Someone is talking to Rose, offering his condolences. I can't help but contort myself around my seat to listen in: words float about me, some out of reach, others land in my hands:

He spoke in broken pieces of glass: “-he stalked her, I heard? Relentlessly pursued-“

Rose spoke convincingly, too sure of herself, not realizing her mistake: “-so irreversibly mad about her, it has to be him, the DNA evidence-.”

A thought (I am willing to sacrifice a few words of their conversation to express): I am truly so irreversibly mad about you – but you, you turned mad because of me.

“-it is truly an awful loss, Miss Clark.”

Rose lifts her eyes to him for just a moment, long enough to imitate emotional torment, speaking in a voice close to tears: “Please, call me Amanda.”

Realizing my eyes are on her, she turns my way, meeting my gaze with her honey eyes, overflowing, drowning me in their thick intensity – for a moment, I can see it: Rose’s golden, calculating eyes stealing the last glimpse of light of Amanda’s, enclosing them in darkness forever; Rose’s soft hands carving, sculpting my crime scene.

Throwing my words strategically, “You thought I didn’t know.”

She catches them without anyone noticing, and whispers,

“You wouldn’t leave me alone. I had to.”

You turn away from me, leaving me tangled in threads. You think you’ve gotten the better of me – your demise is yet to come.

“Rose- “

You don’t look back, but a jerk of your shoulder tells me I have your attention.

“-this is *my* perfect day.”

A minute, or two, or three, or forty pass before the jury returns, and the head juror hands the judge that fateful piece of paper – Rose sits up, watching me. Waiting to see my reaction. Waiting to see me rot. A few calls to order and the

room is silenced: everyone too scared to breathe, unsure of what to anticipate. The thunder booms again as the judge speaks, roaring throughout the courtroom.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the court, the jury has concluded the verdict of the defendant John Mason."

My head throbs – just wait Rose, just a moment, then you're mine. Just wait. You're yet to see you shouldn't have killed Amanda; you couldn't throw away your identity to get rid of me.

"After hours of debate and discussion, the jury has concluded that defendant John Mason is guilty of the atrocious first-degree murder of Rose Clark, and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole."

Ruins, my world disintegrates to ruins; crumbling pieces of my shattered world slip through my hands. Before the guards seize me, Rose leans over, smiling slyly, cunningly and coldly whispering:

"It's *my* perfect day now."

Magic

On the perfect day, there will be no green, faux-leather chairs or stiff blue beds wrapped in wax-like paper. There won't be any flimsy plastic cups of too-sweet grape juice, sealed with foil lids that I struggle to remove, nor will there be any medications that I use the grape juice to wash down. There won't be any fluorescent lights to reflect off the nonexistent beige tile floors. I will not awake to the pain of a needle in my arm and there won't be an inch wide mark where a bracelet squeezed my wrist too tight. When I do, eventually, open my eyes, I will not be greeted by a drab color pallet of sterile white and teal, but by a multihued world of oranges, and pinks, and yellows so bright even the sun would be envious. I won't struggle to swallow thick barium, and its synthetically sweet taste will be replaced with equally artificial but immensely more jolly maple syrup, and for the first time in a long time, I will feel ready for the day.

I won't hear the thunder of an MRI, but instead the howling music of a subtle wind, a gust too shy to show its full strength. Instead of smelling the piercing metal of a head CT, I will smell the perfumes of flowers that will not mind when the wind brushes against their cheeks, and neither will I as it knocks my hair from side to side. It will carry with it a certain chill, but not the kind that makes the world seem impossibly cold, the kind that makes one feel awake and fresh. It will be a chill like the one on the days where the air is just cold enough so that only half a river freezes, and if one is fortunate enough, they can see the reflection of the sun not once but twice. One time in cold, hard, solidity, and a second among the liquid uncertainty of water. On those days, I wonder how my reflection would look, and if I too would be able to maintain such steady brightness amongst the constant turbulence of a running river, but for the time I will rejoice with the leaves as they skip about a ground that is shining with the reflection of the sun in its fresh puddles, adding their own percussion to the symphony of the sky.

I will not have the false joy of watching the sunset from a window that refuses to open. Instead, I will watch from a tree as the sun bleeds like a rogue drop of watercolor paint, spreading infectiously across the papered sky until, with a certain remorse, the last glimpse of day surrenders to the emerging kaleidoscope. It will be exactly the tree sat in the day before I was diagnosed, but this time I will have no diagnosis to anticipate, and for the first time, I will be able to enjoy it only as it is. I will take the time to notice how its branches are uneven and rough, and how they leave my hands stained brown so that my sister will ask me if I've been playing in mud, and I will be able to do nothing but laugh, taking small pleasure in the fact that not she, nor anyone else on Earth, will be able to understand the beauty the beauty I'd witnessed. Even if some daring clouds attempt to impinge upon my perfect day, I will always find beauty in a sunset on a cloudy night. The vibrancy of a color was only meant for the birds and the sky would be reflected by the stubborn clouds, which would be like mirrors, amplifying the hues for all the words to see, and what would I do but stare in silent awe as the world is painted purple before my eyes. The spectacle would move swiftly, with a purpose; it will not have my newfound luxury of simply stopping and marveling at its grace, and I will wonder if, maybe, I am like that too.

On the perfect day, I will be an adventurer. It will be like my salad days when the whole world seemed to be a mystery, like a geode just waiting for me to crack it open and discover the magic within. It is this magic that I will adventure for, and when I am able to see in the plain, partially cloudy day, that even the thickest grey wisps cannot conceal the light of the sun nor the blue of the sky, I will realize that perhaps it is these simple things that were meant to be the magic all along. I will see it in the leaves that danced across the pavement, which twinkled the sun reflection in its large, weepy puddles, and in those flimsy, grape juice cups and in the dreaded green faux-leather chairs, and I will realize that even in the most indistinct, shadowy places, the depths of that once terrifying liquid uncertainty, there is always some magic. It is these moments of magic that will remind me of how complete and consistent nature is, and I will take some comfort in this consistency, knowing that the moon does not hide simply because the sun can no longer be seen, and on the rare occasion that it does duck its head, we are left with the stars as promises that eventually day will shine again.

At night, I will climb down from my tree and surrender to the grass to gaze up into the sky, studying the promises above my head. I'll find one that's brighter than the others and wonder if it's a planet or just an exceptional star. I'll think about how far away it is and how it's possible that the speck of light could no longer exist, and I'd have no idea. I'll feel a sudden awareness of time like it is both frozen and fleeting, and at once, I'll realize that even the stubborn, sunset-hiding clouds had departed, knowing that even they had no chance at concealing the power of a night sky. I will try to fall asleep, feeling the earth's coolness under my back, but I won't be able to. I'll hear the whispers of the weeds as they gossip amongst themselves, communicating some secret that, even on the perfect day, I can't understand, but I'll be ok with that unknowingness, appreciating that the secrets of magic are never revealed. I'll feel the bugs, busy about their lives beneath the surface of the dirt. They won't make me squeamish, but instead, I will be absorbed by their energy, unable to find a moment of rest in the presence of such monumental life. I'll think about how, at night, in the car, the streetlights fly by like streaks, and though I only pass them for a moment they shine so bright it seems as though they go on forever, and I'll wonder if somewhere, amongst the monumental life, I will be able to find my own exceptional star, and then I too will shine forever. As I lay

there, the night sky smiling back at me, I'll feel sorry for the people who manage to fall asleep under the stars. I think if ever I were able to close my eyes while in the presence of all that beauty, it would surely be that I had lost my mind.

A Monster, Grown

I first spit out a tooth after lunch one cloudless day, when I'm getting ready to go to class. A lump had risen in my throat, blistering and sudden, and I panickedly thought I was going to puke.

I did not.

The first thing I notice is that it is not mine. My teeth are straight and white and do not come from the chest. This tooth, though, is yellowing, and sharp enough to cut. Before I remember disgust, a feeling darker than excitement curls deep in my gut. It looks like a tiny golden dagger, and there is something inexplicably fascinating about the thought. Of strangeness resting under my skin, just waiting to be called forward.

Then my friend Bethany asks, "What is *that*?" with a tone that bites. Her gaze is tilting. She is a predator ready to pounce in a pleated skirt and headband. Fear seizes me.

I tell her, "Nothing." I throw the pretty thing in the nearest trash can, and it disappears under a sea of half-eaten apples and empty milk cartons.

A scale comes next. It nudges its way from under my skin and shines on my wrist, looking like a beautiful, intricate tattoo. When my mother sees it, her eyes go cold, and she ushers me to confession.

"I didn't do anything wrong," I plead through the confessional wall. Still, I am compelled to hang my head until my hair falls in my face and lace my hands together until my knuckles are bloodless, bones jutting out. Utterly devout.

I have known Father John for a long time. He attended my Baptism and my First Communion. My grandfather's funeral and my aunt's wedding. And now, the mere thought of his torpid, unchanging eyes suffocates me more than my wooden surroundings ever could. "No one is without sin," he says, not

unkindly, and I wonder if he's right. If the guilt that darkens my chest is the human birthright and the sin —*could it really be sin?*—that marks my body is our legacy.

I learned shame before love.

My earliest memory is being made to sit on a stool in my dining room, not allowed dinner as punishment for something I'd done. I don't remember what, but I remember the tears burning down my cheeks like fire to skin, wondering if my parents would forget about me. Wondering if I would stay there, a portrait of pigtails and despair, for the rest of my life.

Since then, I have done my best to avoid punishment. I do not speak more than I need to in my classes. I keep my hair straight and my nails tidy. My clothes, modest, skirts never cutting above my knee.

This is how I keep them from noticing.

A wing sprouts from my back in the middle of a math test. I glance around to see if anyone has noticed the tent in my shirt and when I don't pick out anyone looking back, I smooth my hand over it. It is soft and warm and feels like it belongs to a bat. I am almost proud.

When I arrive home from school, my father rips it from my back the same way he pulls weeds in our backyard, his thick fingers steady and hand fisted. He has always hated imperfection, both in gardens and daughters. The wing flutters weakly when he first touches it, resistant, and I try to move away, but that does not deter him.

The pain is like nothing I've felt before, overtaking my senses for a few seconds as I scream and scream and *scream* until he yells at me to stop. He tells me to be grateful that he has fixed me. He is saying: *All of this is your fault.* I desperately tug on the memories I have of him, happy and loving, and find myself looking at a stranger.

Afterward, he does not apologize. His mouth is set. My mother watches on with her lips parted. Does she wish he would soften? Or has she come to terms with the self-righteousness sown in his planted feet and hard eyes?

Does she too bear scars from wings clipped, from too-strange limbs amputated?

Will I look at my husband the same?

I am still breathing through my mouth, heaving, the ache from the attack not yet subsided. A quiet kind of terror filling me when I realize the moisture sticking my clothes to my skin isn't sweat, but red-hot *blood*.

The look on my father's face tells me to leave, so I don't say anything. I just go.

I tell myself this is a thing *he* learned from his father, and his grandfather, and it is a thing he never unlearned. It is a thing I cannot teach him: how to look past his ideals and see me, how to loosen his jaw and ungrind his teeth.

I do not doubt he loves me, but when the bleeding starts up again near midnight and I have to venture to the bathroom to rebandage the wound, I doubt he understands me. And, looking at myself, with dark circles like spilled ink, I wonder if I understand me either, or if that is another impossible thing.

There is a girl in my English class who is like me.

Her name is Jude, but I doubt she remembers my name. We've only spoken a few times and from these instances I didn't discern any desire in her to converse further. I don't blame her. She bursts out her answers in class with such passion you can't help but believe her, even when the words spill from her mouth scrambled with enthusiasm. She wears bold eye-makeup but leaves her freckles showing. The tips of her hair are dyed.

And atop her head are two beige horns. They're symmetrical and unmistakable. She wears them like they are another arresting accessory to behold. I think they look like a crown. Bethany and the others call her, *freak*.

I run into her after school while I'm trying to find my way to somewhere private, where I can figure out what to do with the talons that have sprouted from my left hand. Distracted, we bump into each other, and I reel back.

“Sorry,” I mutter, curling my hand in front of my chest to hide the irregularities. My cheeks are warming.

Jude shakes her head, unconcerned. “It’s all good,” she says. Her smile is small, a first-quarter moon, and I notice a chip on her front tooth. She moves to go past me at the same time I do, but we choose the same direction and find ourselves facing each other once more.

She laughs. “We’re dancing,” she tells me, and I allow myself to relax a little. Then, her gaze drifts down and she gasps. I follow her eyes.

She’s looking at my suddenly lax hand. I realize my talons are visible.

Reason leaves me. In its place, there is panic. “It’s nothing,” I rush, loudly, because if she sees she will know, and if she knows I will be *knowable*. “I—”

“Hey, it’s alright,” Jude interrupts, all overly-familiar and overly-concerned. It does not help. There is shame in the fact of her comprehension and there is elation in her kindness because she is looking at me and she is not scared. She is peeling back my skin and peering at my ghastly bones. She is preparing to pick her own out, hold them together, and show that we are the same.

And she is not the only one who is already too comfortable— Afterall, she is *Jude* in my mind and not *classmate*, nor *freak*—I notice her and I know I should scorn how she wears what she’s been given proudly, because I should know stories about curving horns, hoofed feet, and temptation more than anyone.

But I don’t. I admire her, despite everything.

My mind betrays me. My shoulder throbs. My wrist aches.

So I leave. She shouts something after me, and I ignore her. When I am safe in my room, I become a storm of talons fisted in pillows, cheeks wet, and I imagine flooding the whole world in my sadness and starting something anew.

I do not usually take baths, but today I do. I imagine my scaled wrist feeling at home as I lean back until my hair fans out in the water around me and I am weightless.

Listen: I am no *Sleeping Venus*. I am no soft-faced Mary with a halo of gold behind her head. I let thorns grow up my legs and roses bloom at the creases of my hips. Leaves cluster around my face.

It feels more natural than breathing.

I cannot hide, laid bare like this. The truth is, if I could be the very best at anything, it would be at this, at acceptance, at washing my mind clean of purity and allowing myself to be imperfect. Monstrous. *Free*.

A Fearless Smile

"We hereby declare that, from now on, women with hijabs or men with any religious indications on their bodies, will not be permitted to renew their university records. Any attempt will be considered a protest and will face a penalty."

The nauseatingly cheerful voice of the announcer flowing from the radio's speakers filled Fatma's ears. As the speaker uttered these horrendous words, the sounds of a few uneasy steps arrived from the kitchen; Fatma loomed from the living room entrance with detergent stains on her hands. She glanced at the radio, and then she turned towards her weary mother sitting in front of the radio, presenting a face of nothing but sheer shock. As their eyes met in the dim light, her mother wondered why a simple fabric would violently rip the right to education from the sole person in their family ever to achieve a university education. Neither Fatma nor her mother could bring themselves to utter a single word. A stinging stillness merged their anguish as if they were a single individual.

Until dusk, not even a drop of sleep visited Fatma's eyes. Instead, she watched the blank ceiling with a dazed expression. After a while, the thoughts that twisted her head became excruciating. She slowly got out of bed and

wore the hijab her mom gifted her. The harmony of the lime green and the golden engravings always stunned her; it was her absolute favorite. She prayed in the dark to free herself from the weight of what she had heard on the radio. Just as she finished praying and got into bed again with a lighter heart, her mother knocked on the door. She sat on the edge of Fatma's bed. "Please don't go to school tomorrow," she whispered, "I don't know what they would do to you." Fatma shook her head and wearily uttered four mere words "I must face it."

It was a sunny, warm day at the university. The guards were coated with shiny silver shields with matching pistols clutched tightly in their hands, eyes looking around as if they were guarding a shrine. Fatma approached the place which she previously deemed safe; her university.

As her steps brought her closer to the gate, she straightened her shoulders, fixed her hijab with her face held high, and attempted to pass through the gate. In the blink of an eye, the soldiers with their silver armor broke their noble stance and struck her like hungry vultures, preventing her from entering the university. The familiar breeze collided with the tip of the lime green hijab and moved through the golden engravings.

They knocked her to the ground; she could not fight back as she endeavored to keep her hijab steady. She tried to stand up, but they knocked her down with sheer hostility as if that soothing lime green was a menace to them. The chaos stirred inside her head and made the world spin.

"The new rector of the Istanbul University invites students with hijabs to sit down for a friendly talk!" read the freshly printed, meticulously edited newspaper with giant, happy letters that struck Fatma's eyes like bullets.

After two months of limiting her contact with the university after they brutally prevented her entrance, Fatma finally built the courage to pick up the newspaper her mom brought that morning. But the moment she read this news; she quickly crumpled the newspaper. No matter what they called it, she knew there was nothing friendly about those interactions. So many of Fatma's

friends told her about what they experienced in, as they called it, "the persuasion rooms." Dimmed lights, emotional mobbing, and fierce pressure to remove the hijab. "Look at your bright and gorgeous hair. You cannot hide this beautiful aspect of yours under a piece of fabric; it would be a shame!" said the woman who maintained the "friendly talks" on behalf of the rector. Many of those women didn't take their hijabs off, but they left the rooms with emotional traumas.

No matter the damage those rooms have caused, those students originated protests and initiated movements to eradicate the consequences of the post-modern coup in Turkey with sheer diligence. People from the right, the left, communists and liberals, anyone with a genuine heart attended these rallies to go against this violation.

Once the valedictorian students with hijabs started protesting, the movement gained momentum. They weren't allowed to attend their graduation ceremony, to give their valedictorian toasts, their parents couldn't see their daughters graduate with honor. However, one dear friend of Fatma disregarded this rule. She was the valedictorian, she had earned her degree, and her hijab was going to shine while she was giving her toast. She ran up to the stage during the ceremony, but they closed her mouth. "You have no right to speak!" they screamed. They dragged her from the stage.

Fatma knew what her friend would say. She would scream her pain; she would lament how easy it is to steal the future of a generation. Even though she couldn't physically articulate those words, Fatma and many others comprehended the message she tried to convey by going up to that stage with a hijab on her head. "You have no right to speak" echoed throughout Turkey for years.

"We regret to inform you that your record to our university is terminated upon three unsuccessful renewals. We wish you success with your future endeavors." Fatma stared at the letter she just got, hoping that the wording would spontaneously change in a matter of days, and she wouldn't have to confront this brutal note. Nothing happened. Those months-long intensive

protests and rallies hadn't changed a thing. After the new academic year, the government took profound precautions to prevent the protestors. Under no circumstances was the hijab acceptable.

At this point, like every student with a hijab, Fatma ought to decide. She could remove it and carry on with her education, but she refused. So instead, she tossed the letter to the back of a drawer and promised herself to never open that drawer ever again. She knew she had to move on; no matter how heartbreakingly it was, this chapter of her life had come to a sorrowful end.

Three years of university had matured her emotionally and intellectually. She was eager to find new jobs and grounds to develop herself without a diploma but with her hijab. So, she wrote a book about contemporary Muslim leaders to inspire many. It was her first work, but definitely not the last.

Years passed, and not only did she raise a modest career, but she also raised three beautiful children and became an outstanding mother who met her kids' expectations. Along with being the best mother her kids could ever want, she preserved her desire to contribute to people intellectually. For that, she kept on writing and producing. But she also planted the importance of maintaining one's identity in her kids' heads. Her biggest wish was to share her productions with her kids when they grow old.

After eleven years, while she was rising in her editorial career, the government issued a new law allowing people with hijabs to enroll in universities. Even though she was five months pregnant, she renewed her record the day after the government's announcement. She was 32 when she graduated with honor.

After Fatma graduated, she wrote an article on the 20th anniversary of the 28 of February 1997. This was the first time Fatma could ever cry about the post-modern coup and her stolen eleven years; drops of tears soared through her face as she pressed the keyboard. This was a catharsis for her. She acknowledged that someone out there is listening to her voice, is inspired by her, and most importantly, believes none of it was her fault.

The word inspiration has many equivalents in many languages. But to me, it can only be associated with a feeling; the pride I felt when I placed my mother's pictures when she earned her Ph.D. into our family albums. When she smiled fearlessly, wearing the lime green hijab with golden engravings on her head, holding her degree, she was no longer Fatma; but Dr. Fatma.

It has been 25 years since the 28 of February 1997, the post-modern coup announcement. For these 25 years, no one could grasp why the people with hijabs were targeted. Yet, my mother showed incredible resilience and courage to an unfairness she couldn't thoroughly understand throughout the years. No matter how hard it was, my mother preserved her identity and taught her son to never give up, just like she never did. Growing up with her stories and anecdotes, I recognized that a figure, a mother, in my life showed me what strength is.

The smile that she wore as she fought for everything she believed in throughout the years never ceases to fill me with mere inspiration along with the will and courage to fight for others—my mother's fearless smile.

LOVE POEMS
Of Frederick Douglas Harper

By

Frederick Douglas Harper

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ROMANTIC POEMS

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

THE RIGHT TIME, THE RIGHT WAY

I needed someone—

 I needed someone special;

My eyes lay upon your face—

 In anticipation but doubt;

I was so touched by the softness of your eyes,

 The grace of your stance,

 The peacefulness of your temperament;

Your presence responded to my need and wish;

You came to me,

 At the right time;

You came to me,

 In the right way.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

SPEAK TO ME OF LOVE AND MORE

When I first looked at you,
I saw something special;
I saw something special
With you, in you, and between us.
When I first looked at you, I felt something special;
When I first looked at you, I was special—
We were special.
So answer me and strip free
The truth of your presence coming;
Is your image the echo of my ideal?
Speak to me of such and more:
Through eyes bright like candles' glow
And unarming smiles of coy around the
Tenderness of lips so virgin and pure;
Through natural beauty untouched by
False disguise and spiritual energy so
Flowing to the talents of your future's call;
Through the life of movement so confident
Yet modestly unartificial and true.
Speak to me of such by more:
Is this first parting's sweetness a passing
Dream to keep?
Is it the inspiration of the Inspirer's design
To know you once in passing, or will privilege
Be destiny's desire to look once more upon the

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

Light of your lovely face aglow and budding
Energy in flow?

Speak to me sweet flower, and pray
By chance to smell once more the fragrance
Of your presence, and feel once more the
Vibrancy of your natural way.

Be it friendship or more;
Or a spiritual passing of two destined souls
Who love the world so much so as to want so
Much to give of ourselves to that world
Through the gift of ourselves to each other.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I FEEL I'VE KNOWN YOU

Sometimes I feel I've been in another world;
Sometimes I feel I know there's a world beyond;
Sometimes I feel I've stood in this space with you;
This space and moment of today in our first
Meeting of eyes—
Without a word, I knew I knew you as I had before;
I knew I wanted you as I did before;
I knew I wanted you and had to have you
As much as I fought my feelings for you,
And you—yours for me.
So come quietly to me in peace and burning
Desire, and let me receive you around me as one;
I've waited long across lifetimes for your face
In the parade of many—
Come let us savor the souls of our many lives
Before, and fulfill the destiny of our
Long-lasting desires;
Come to our dining to feast first upon the spirit
Of each other's energy;
Face your face to mine in sweet teasing of
Dessert's patient waiting;
Rush not the sacred sensuality of our prolonged
Romance asleep;
Come, come, come my love.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

FIRST GLIMPSE, FIRST DANCE

The first glimpse of your face
Took the light of my eyes deep to
The core of your countenance;
To know as you knew that we both
Were made and sent for each other.

At first touch of you, I knew you were
Sculpted to my arms' embrace as we
Glided as one in musical magic's
Movement to the body's call of our
Bemused spirits' wish.

So effortlessly and pleasurable we
Danced as playful birds suspended in
Flight and to life's breathing of our
Energies real and memories sealed.

Thanks for the dance sweet lady,
And permit me to hold you once more
To our own spiritual rhythm and to
A music that is unending.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WILL YOU COME WITH ME?

I have sought your image
Without knowledge of your existence,
My ideal woman you are;
So come with me please—
Be with me and share your life;

Create life we will, and together
We'll be trustees of another;
Come with me and I will pick a red hibiscus
For your hair and the sweet magnolia flower
As your perfume's fragrance;

I'll promise nothing except to be with you
And be for you as long as we live
Under the watchful eyes of the stars.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

ROMANTICA

Again, we meet in the common air of
Our private space—to breathe, I hope, the
Anticipation of love's possible excitement
From this serene peace; your fresh flower
Has sprung from youth's tender bud, so
Luring to the patience of my long wait and
The wisdom of my awaited patience.

With face to the light of you, I fix my
Energy to the spirit of your field; so
Wanting to be with you, to touch with eyes
And arms but not too soon so as to spoil
The pleasure of our precious urgings and
Restrained glee.

Let not your presentation of reservation
Betray future's life of a whole love of two—
Of a spiritual union destined for the divine
Creation of love's life from our shared bond,
Our priceless oneness, our future hopes,
Our sensual moments of untempered desire.

Come with me, be with me, romance with me,
And let our eternal love be an unending evening
Of special things shared—of sparkling drink with
Rhythrical dance, of musical tunes under many

Frederick Douglas Harper

Full moons, of colorful flowers and pastel towels,
Of tender touch and vacations much.

Come with me to the sacred temple, or simply
Stand with me under God's old oak tree;
Allow me to veil your face under the purest
Lace to the slight peek of your shining eyes
And the sweet gentle reach of your life's breath—
Yes, be my wife, be with me in this special
Moment of ceremony, and touch tenderly and
Ever slowly your lips upon mine; to seal
Evermore the energy of our romantic union
And precious love.

Go patiently we will in the wind of destiny's call
And with sweet memories of dreams made true;
Create we will a life of two or more—
With shared fortunes and misfortunes, with
Cherished joys and borne pains, and with a
Love unyielding to life's tests of time and a
Romance that will never die.

Let me come with you, be with you, and
Stay with you my lady; let our love anew grow
And pierce deep within our souls an untarnished
Commitment and an unbroken peace;
Let our lasting love scream forth in silent truth
Our romance forevermore to all the universe
In the sacred message of:
ROMANTICA, ROMANTICA, ROMANTICA!

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

A WEDDING PLEDGE

In this, my left hand, I take you as my wife/husband
And hold sacred your life and welfare as long as we
Choose and hold each other;
With my right hand, I promise to work for you,
With you, and for life we may create as one;
In both hands, I cup and nourish the trust we place
In each other as persons and in ourselves as a
Partnership in life.

With this heart, I set forth my allegiance to a sensitivity
For your feelings, and pledge to put no other person's
Needs or wants before your own;
With will and determination, I shall do my best to remain
Patient with your weaknesses as well as your personal
Changes over the years, and I will hold in confidence that
You will do likewise with me;
With this, my head, I will think of you wherever I am
And whenever I can as thoughts of concern for you and
Shared experiences with you.

I pledge at this moment to do all I can:
To help minimize your pains and maximize your happiness,
To forgive you for inadvertent errors of human frailty,
To respect you as a person and as my wife/husband,
To be open with you about my thoughts and feelings,

Frederick Douglas Harper

To touch you each morning and kiss you each night,

To trust in your words and actions,

To be kind, courteous, and considerate to you,

To respect your right to freedom, solitude, and

Individuality,

To commit myself totally to you and our relationship.

Furthermore,

I will try my best not to hurt you in any way or discredit

You before peers or yourself;

I will encourage your personal growth and internal peace,

I will allow no person to conspire to alienate my love for you;

Neither will I allow myself to be blinded by false

Feelings for another or life's many luring excitements;

I will talk with you, walk with you, and persevere with you

Through tests of time and condition;

I will pray with you, hope with you, struggle with you,

And suffer with you in your hardships;

Most of all, I will love you, without condition, for as long

As I can and as long as you want me to—

Hoping and trusting it will be forever.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

OUR HOLIDAY

‘Tis a cultural holiday of celebration;
But it matters not the differences
Of our worlds apart;
For celebrate we must on this
Merry day of glee—our love,
Ourselves;
‘Tis not your holiday,
‘Tis not my holiday,
But our holiday—
‘Tis a special time for special people
To love and celebrate happiness.

Reprinted: Harper’s *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LET US WRITE A SCRIPT IN OUR HEARTS

Let us write a script in our hearts,
And let us play it out from
 Moment to moment in spontaneity;

Let our needs be felt and realized,
 Our drives reduced,
 Our anxieties subdued,
 Our depression minimized;

Let us enjoy our others and
 The worlds around us as we encounter;
Let us enjoy our own selves;
Let us eat, rest, explore, and talk
 In the presence of each other's
 Comfort, good company, and security;

Let us write a script from moment to moment
 In our hearts and
 In our lives.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

WE SAW WITHIN EACH OTHER'S EYES

We sat alone,
We drank wine,
We intellectualized about nothing.

Then we saw within each other's eyes
The nature of our true being,
Then we realized our gender,
Then we communicated our nonverbal
Desire to move toward our other.

Our instruments of vision touched in softness
Suppressing our eagerness,
Our tools of manipulation searched
The pleasures of our curiosities,
We slowly lost the control of our rational
Being to the passion of our desires,
We shed ourselves of that which hid our
True selves from the honey of each other's fruits.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

CAN I BE FREE WITH YOU?

Can I be free with you—
And not have to rush anything,
And not have to prove anything,
And not have to be anything?
Can I be me, and you be you?
Can we be we, can we be one,
Can we be free?

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LET ME LOVE YOU IN THE MORNING OF YOUR WOMANHOOD

If you let me come into your heart,
I will do wonders with the clay of your
Parents' making;
Let me touch you in the morning years
Of your womanhood, and make you
The better lady you must eventually be;
As I must, let me hold your heart next to
Mine and stroke your contour to fineness;
Let the warmth of your deepest breath
Massage the perceptiveness of my ear,
That I may feel your life grow in my arms,
And that I may live again through the
Life of your love;
Let me love you in the morning of your
Womanhood, that you may become the
Lady of my night for all occasions
And all times.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

FINE WOMAN

Fine woman of svelte neck, straight back,
And sturdy hips—let me
Watch your stance and poised presence
Among others; let me breathe the energy
Of your elegant space.

Fine woman of creamy texture and
Tanned hue, I secretly watch you—and
Patiently await my turn of acquaintance,
To feel the peace of your calm temperament
And visualize up close the form of your
Lovely essence.

Speak to me, speak with me, and let my
Total attention for you be yours on this
Special night of ours. Let us dine under
The stars of this resort and smile for each
Other as night grows old to morning's birth;
Let us breathe of each other's air, and be
One in the moment of our private selves
And space.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

MEANING OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Romantic love is two dynamos that turn on and
Feed into each other;
It is total energy directed toward another that
 Makes one oblivious to time and space;
Romantic love is that emotion that contradicts and
 Obfuscates rationality, reality, and responsibility;
It is that acted-out fantasy realized for the moment
 And hoped for forever;
Romantic love is two persons alone in the universe
 Who prize each other's presence and consume
 Each other's essence for every moment and in
 Every good way;
It is the visceral excitement that compels the
 Fulfillment of one's capacity for sensuality,
 Sensitivity, and possibility;
Romantic love is that ecstatic, good feeling that
 Provides a secure feeling, enhances worldly
 Appreciation, promotes confidence, and overhauls
 Physical and psychological health;
It is the force that drives people out of their skin,
 Pushes them to a higher level of emotional
 Realization, and overpowers human control;
Romantic love is giving for the joy of giving, sharing
 For the sake of sharing, and enjoying each other
 For the pleasure of each other.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A PHONE CALL'S WAIT

I've lived today in wake—
From morn to night this date,
Just to hear your voice once more
 Across the miles;
I've anticipated the breath of
Your energy's space to make my
Day by phone, to complete my
Night hitherto alone—with exciting
 Thoughts of you;
I've lived this day in wait for
Your call of tone's ring of phone
 Here alone;
I've lived all day just to hear the
Breath and sigh of your sweet
 Voice for me;
I've lived all day, in my patient
Way, just to hear you say,
 “I love you.”

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.



NOSTALGIC LOVE POEMS



OUR LAST NIGHT TOGETHER

On a moonlit night, we stood
Under the privacy of a backyard tree,
Never once with the courage to explore the pit
Of our youthful volcanic desires on this last night;

We stood and stood in caress on the eve
Of the moving truck's coming, and counted
So painfully our last minutes of evening,
Ever together;

She placed her miniature cross and chain in my hand
As a symbol of remembrance; only to watch me
Clutch passionately before losing it to my jeans's pocket;

One last hug, one last fumbling kiss
As her father called, "bedtime";
Reluctantly, she walked away, shielding
The treacherous door from the night light's torment;

I remember dearly, her back showed well in the moonlight
As she turned to give me the last image of her face.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WE WALKED

Our shoes powdered themselves
In the sun-beaten earth along the
Side of the road, as we strolled so
Closely to ourselves while oblivious
To school peers.

She 13 and I 15, as innocent and shy,
Yet so aware but resisting of feelings
Awakened by maturity and our own
Simple attraction to the sweetness
Of each other's flower.

Not yet a kiss or thought of else as
We touched our other's voice and face
With ears so tuned and eyes so focused
Within the range of our own youthful
Company.

Parted we daily did to sweet evening
Memories of an afternoon walk so
Much anticipated upon each morning's
Wakening.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LOVE ME NOT WITH WORDS ONLY

Great, how sweet the sound of your voice
In accolade and promise,
The twinkle and glitter of your mirror's eye
Complement the timbre of your utterance,
Your vibrations bring warm news to my ear,
Good news I like to hear,
But oh how transient the sounds, though sweet;

Love me not with words only,
But with your good deeds;
Let me know that you care for me—
Through action, effort, and sacrifice;

Let us share time, let us eat—
Eat under the shade of a summer's tree,
Dance in the spotlight of the public's eye,
Hold hands in strides of step and time;

Let us care for our lives and even that of another;
Let us work together, plan together, play together,
Laugh together, meditate together, sacrifice
Together, hurt together, and feel good together;

Love me with your complete feelings, actions, and
Thoughts,
And love me not with words only.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I'M GLAD I MET YOU

Gee, I'm glad I met you;
Together, we have made each other better;

We have shared each other,
And have realized our sensations;
We have experienced reality,
And have grown together in knowledge;
We have encountered each other's worlds,
And have mutually shared our feelings;

Our joys have been increased and our pain
Minimized by the mere presence of our other;

Gee, I'm glad I met you;
Let us remember all the good and pleasant things
We have shared together,
And let us reserve a space in each other's
Heart for all those special moments and memories.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LET US MAKE MEMORIES

Let us make memories that we
Can prize forever;
Let us make them in our minds
Of spontaneous and planned
Experiences of ourselves—
In all Earth's seasons and glorious
Splendor.

In spring or fall, in the park or
By the waterfront, let us breathe
Our existence within the energy of
Romantic thoughts, feelings, and
Surrounding.

Let us make memories that we
Can appreciate now but treasure
Always in our minds and hearts.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WILL YOU ROW IN MY BOAT?

Come sit in my boat at morn
When the mist of fog shields the
Privacy of precious romances, and the
Coolness of dawn preserves the
Goodness and innocence of virgin loves.

Come sit with your face to mine
And let the bashful, gleaming sun's light
Reveal the pristine beauty of your
Lovely eyes and skin aglow.

Come sit with me and row with me,
And let our love afloat gently disturb
My favorite flowered dress of our
First acquaintance.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

I LONG FOR YOU

Please, relax now,
I long not for the revelation
Of the privacy of your temple,
But for the company of the
Whole of you; to be with you,
Anytime and anywhere.

I long for your respect, for the
Energy of your existence to make
Me the better for your most
Worthy appreciation and happiness.

Please now, know my cause and motive,
For they are true to you;
Sincerely, I long for your heart,
Your soul, your inspiration, your
Presence, your natural warmth.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

NOSTALGIA I

When the night light was bright,
We stood underneath looking at our feet;
You touched me—oh so gently with your breath,
And I felt within me a leap of warmth
Corralled by my own tremor of shyness.

When the night light was bright,
Oh how I remember the cool breeze
Of midnight air that swept us homeward;
You touched my hand with your fingers,
And there we clutched in stride—
Onward, homeward, yet so slowly we paced.

When the night light was bright,
Our youth tormented us without
Conscious thought of time passing.

When the night light was bright,
We were in the dark privacy
Of each other's world;
Nothing beyond penetrated our attention
Thereof fixed.

When the night light was bright,
We thought it would shine forever,
For us.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

NOSTALGIA IV

It was a time to remember,
Of romance galore and unforgettable
Memories of adult images in the eye of a child;

It was a time of Black shoes shined,
And quality hats so fine;
Of men's coat and tie,
And women's stockings up high;
Of romantic touch dance,
And navy-blue gabardine pants;
It was a time of hard work at less pay
And nightly prayers of appreciation each day;

It was a time to remember in June and
December, when things were quite simple;
A time when people had time and mind
To love much more;
A time when people had time and mind
To be at peace with themselves.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

QUINTINA

There was a young girl
Named Quintina you see;
A bright child of 8 with
A smile of glee;

After years of my absence
She grew up to be
A beautiful woman and
Fine lady;

With courage, class, and grace
From Thee,
She exuded a countenance
Of sweet femininity;

Quintina, smile for the world to see;
Quintina, please smile again for me.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LIE DOWN

Lie down and feel yourself in our presence;
Let the ocean roar in the peacefulness of
 Your ear;
Let the sand tickle your back and the sun
 Wash your face.

Let us think of nothing except our feelings
 For ourselves and this little world's
 Moment.

Lie and let life's air bring meaning to our
Souls that we may breathe such
 Memories forever.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WEAR A WHITE DRESS FOR ME

In the sunset of your womanhood,
Wear it for me;
Memories of innocence and coy,
Of private moments of our genuineness,
Spontaneity, and naive joy.

Wear it for me in my mind's eye,
Of images in the sunlight and
Unrestrained freedom in the shade
Of the old oak tree.

Wear a white dress for me in the sunset
Of your womanhood—so I will know the
Purest image of my greatest love;
That I will always know you as the sacred
Temple of my life-long and devoted trust.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

SENSUAL LOVE POEMS

BEFORE WE LOVE

Before we love to love's height,
Wash each other's image we must
In sensual grace of our eyes' sight;
Breathe each other's natural scent
We should in the blow of evening air;
Touch we must with gentle care;
Hear we can of our other's breath
Upon the softness of a neck's rest;
Before we love to love's height,
Romance we must the other's self.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

SHE CAME AT 5

She washed herself in his image at noon
And brought herself to him at five;

The natural scent of her told of a day's work
Under the shroud of cream and perfume;
A mixture that aroused the privacy of his
Heaven so patiently anticipated;

Four walls and one wait for the appearance of
Love's greeting; to see, to touch, to embrace
The energy and essence of his sweetest hope,
His sustaining thought, his fondest dream,
His greatest love, his sole source of life;
His woman, his lady.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE HAS COME

He came into her so gently, as he did
To her;
Her presence was with courage but deep
Exhilaration of an experience
Never felt;
They were one in ecstasy atop a mountain,
Together, they realized a shyness and the
Downhill awkwardness of separation;
However, a deep fulfillment of a dream
Anticipated and complete;
They relaxed, she on his arm and he against
The softness of her;
Her breath whispered to his ear,
“I love you”; and he replied,
“I love you too.”

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

TOUCH ME, WILL YOU?

It's been long, too long;
So will you touch me with the
Tender tips of your fingers aglow,
And let the heat of love's past
Set free the spirit of our fiery
Passion's remains?

Touch me now, in the privacy of
This day's secret love and space,
That we may live life's life as
We so once did.

Come to me so slowly and walk
Your image so larger into my eyes' view
And the whole of you into my arms'
Embrace.

It's been long, too long,
So will you touch and we touch
As we once loved before?

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

POETICA SENSEROTICA

And she spoke of love's passion:
“Come with me dear love;
Come within me as one,
And let my warmth for you alone
Puncture deeply to the tip of your
Soul's yearning for me; and, as you wish,
Allow me to come so tenderly
And peacefully as a lamb to the gentle
Thrust of your lion's passionate
Growl and groan of sweet sensual
Satisfaction;
Let me touch, breathe, and sense
Completely the acclamation and
Celebration of this our romantic love.”

And he replied:

“I will come to you my lone love awaiting,
And into love's chamber of your
Sensual pleasures so as to pay in burning
Passion our time's debt of love come due;
Trust me to lay upon you my long-held
Desire and set free the tension of love to
Bloom forth your hidden orchids asleep;
Let me come with the rhythm of your
Sweet kitten's purr and as a lion's gentle
Touch to your loin's tender flank—

Frederick Douglas Harper

Such as to set our hearts and souls afire,
Forever, in this life of our love,
And in this love of our life's remain."

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

MY PLEASURE IS YOUR PLEASURE

Dear love, my pleasure is to give you
Pleasure,

For that is the light of my life.

The sharing of the desire you evoke in me,
I trust, will burn free the shackled joys
Of your most precious and priceless reservoir
Of sensations longing.

So timely now, so fervently now,
Let us come into each other's gentle arms,
And set aloft and aflame the honey of our
Ripened fruits.

In this natural and spiritual attraction of ourselves,
Let us trust our future hopes and happiness
Untold to our romantic desires' yearning.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I WANT YOU

We sat juxtaposed for a purpose other
Than the unforeseen;
Our eyes touched out of courtesy, but
Quickly locked from the magnetism
Of our own sensual vibrations;
We trembled and struggled to control and
Sequester our feelings for the other;
Our bodies filled each other's eyes in
Subtlety and brevity between interludes
Of trying to look unassuming;
Our gender's scent betrayed the truth of each
Other's desire to our deep breath's yearning;
Our skin flinched and our muscles tensed
As we waited for separate buses,
Hoping they would, this time, be late;
We parted so painfully, knowing that
We must see each other again, but
Wondering so desperately
“How” and “when.”

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE BONE'S WISH

Let me touch you with the tender
Tip of a love bone and explore sites
Of honey along the darkest chamber
Of your hidden love asleep;

Let me awaken the deepest senses
Of life's heights of two, connected in
A whole thought of this love's moment;

Let my love bone embrace my bones
To your bones' embrace for this timely
Moment and experience of our irresistible
Love.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

POEMS ON LOVE LOST

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

TO SAY “HELLO” IS TO SAY “GOOD-BYE”

To say “hello” is to say “good-bye,”
For that’s the orderly way in which things are;
Faces appear in winter to be lost in spring,
Doors open to be closed,
The sun rises and sets,
Babies come and old folks die,
And all people must laugh and cry;

Night naturally follows day,
As moon the sun;
Boredom steals from life’s excitement,
As hatred from love’s promise;

Say “hello” with enjoyment, excitement,
And appreciation;
Say “good-bye” without anger, grief, or sorrow;

To say “hello” is to say “good-bye,”
Remember, that’s just the way things are.

Reprinted: Harper’s *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE KNOCKED

Love knocked once,
You refused;
Love knocked twice,
You opened the door;
You opened your heart;
Feelings awry in joy and agony;
Tension and conflict of pleasure
And pain—and peaks and
Valleys of sweet sensuality;
You called once,
Love closed the door;
You called twice,
Love said, “No more.”

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

DON'T PASS ON LOVE

A love passed up can be a
Love lost forever;
A choice delayed, can be a
Love unmade;
Think too long about love, and
You often think wrong about the
Opportunity for a love that could
Have been;
Grieve long about a loved one lost, and
You will suffer daily at your own
Precious cost;
Wait too long for the ideal prince or
Princess unfound, and life will find you
Empty-hearted and dead in the ground;
Nevertheless, don't rush into a false love's
Net, but, to the converse, don't run
From an opportunity that can be lost
In regret;
Go with your heart's feelings
And less so with your thoughts,
Because a passed-up love that's caught
Will only be your fault;
A passed up love lost, will be your
Remorse.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOSS

To lose is to have had;
One cannot lose a loved one
Without falling in love,
Or lose a spouse without the experience
Of marriage, or a child without
The creation or adoption of life.

We can lose one's presence,
But never the images of or
Experiences with that one;
We can lose a loved one's presence,
But not our memories of that one—
Not until we lose ourselves.

To lose is to have had;
To lose is still to have.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

Happy today,
Sad tomorrow;
Loved today,
Rejected tomorrow;
Hello today,
Good-bye tomorrow;
Here today,
Gone tomorrow;
Thus is life.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

POETIC LETTER TO MY LOVE

If I never see you again,
Remember our good times
Together;
If I must go today or tomorrow,
Remember my love for you
And things we shared;
I have not deferred your call
In times of need;
I have not promised the
Unfulfillable;
If it is God's will that I not
See you again in this world,
Just remember:
I loved you then,
I love you now, and
I will love you forever.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE IS LIKE A CANDLE LIT

Love is like a candle lit
And burning;
Sometimes bright and light,
Sometimes dull and dim,
Sometimes flickering and unsteady—
Pacing its way into the dark.

Love is like a candle lit
And glowing;
Spewing its brilliance toward the heavens,
Casting its warmth with gentle wind,
Buttressing confidences with hopes of joy.

Love is like a candle lit
And burning;
And though love's precious candle may
One day burn cold, its memories
Must be savored and cherished always.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

SICK LOVE

I tell you,
There is no love
In the slavery of another;
There is no love in death
From love, as with
Romeo and Juliet or
Othello and Desdemona;
There is no love
In a love not loved,
Or a love betrayed,
Or a love paid;
There is no love
In the love of a body's pleasure
Alone, or a love of repeated
Anger and destruction atoned;
There is no love
In a love that is sick.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

WHEN PIECES FALL APART

When pieces fall apart,
Away from the whole—
Hurt it does, but go on
We must with a love of those
Remains and priceless memories
Of past's parts, people, and places;
Cry we should of tears that
Do dry.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

DEAR LOVE

And it was said:

“Dear love,
Please know I will not
Call you or call upon you again;
I want nothing and need nothing
From you; and what I shared
With you was unappreciated
But with no regret on my part;
Please know you can rest in
The privacy of my absence,
And go both we our separate ways
In search of our own happiness.”

Reprinted: Harper’s *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

TO HAVE

To have is to miss,
To know is to miss,
To experience the ecstasy of
Sensuality is to suffer the pain
Of absence.

Love comes and love goes,
Choosing carefully in couplets its
Beneficiaries and victims of joy
And pain, of happiness and shame.

But, such is the beauty of things
That come and go; of flowers,
Stars, and theatre lights.

Love comes and love goes;
To have is to hold it precious.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE WHAT YOU HAVE

If you can,
 Love what you have;
For once lost, you may
 Not be able to love it again.

 Love what you have;
For once lost, you may
 Not be able to love it the same.

 Love what you have;
For once lost, you may
 Not be able to love another—
 You may not be able to love
 At all.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

WILL YOU LOVE ME IF...?

Will you love me if I'm not,
Or will you just love me if I am;

Will you love me if I should have,
Or will you just love me if I do?

Will you love me if I fail or if
I diminish size in your eyes,
Or will you just love me as I was;
Will you love me if I'm paralyzed,
Damaged, lessened, or embarrassing;
Or will you just love me no more?

Will you love me if I change;
Will you love me if I am changed—
Changed from your ideal of the lovable;
Will you love me if...?

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LIVE AGAIN

Don't die with another's death;
Don't die with the loss of love
 Or a dream gone sour;
Don't grieve, or complain, or look
 Back in regret;
Look to the future, act in the
 Present, plan for you, and
 Live again;
Live again for yourself and for those
 Who must depend upon you;
Live now or you will not live well;
Live now or you will not live long.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

DIVORCE

Pain from love's death, unlike that from the
Death of a love one; pain from love's death,
A prolonged pain that goes not away with buried
Tears of time; images recalled from the candles'
Glow of a wedding cake's reflection and the warmth
Of a child's eye from a shared creation; love astray
In smithereens of shattered glass; a crushed crystal
Of life's love's image blown off course by time's
Changes.

Loss of affection, physical separation, and divorce;
A cruel turn of events of lost love and loyalty;
A rare admixture of compassion, care, indifference
And hatred; a cauldron of a million reflective
Thoughts, driven by repeated pain that sucks the
Blood of past investments in contributions of time
And energy; sacrifices of sleep and eat and conscious
Hopes for sweet revenge in defense of hurt feelings
For the sake of nothing but self-content.

Loss of affection, physical separation, and divorce;
Smiles turned to frowns, promises to naught, and
Pleasures to pain; yesterday's toast of wine glasses
Broken and cut and wet all over, and love's honey

Frederick Douglas Harper

Turned vinegar sour to wine's wasted mess among
Hopes scribbled on a white table cloth.

Loss of affection, physical separation, and divorce;
Doubts about identity, trust, and self-pride;
Love still, love nil—confused thoughts and hopes of
Minds now vetoed by twisted hearts.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

POEMS ON LOVE RESTORED

LOVE AGAIN

Yes, as you fell in love once,
You so can again, and with
Greater feeling and care;
Burn the bush of past pains,
But not the roots of pleasure and
Learned memories;
If you open your heart and cap grief,
You can love again with belief;
As long as you breathe air and hold
The heat of romantic yearning,
You can love again;
You can love another;
As long as you love yourself.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

CAN WE WAIT FOR THOSE WE LOVE?

I'm not complaining, so why are you explaining;
You are late, and I mind not the wait;
We all wait to die,
So why can't we wait for those we love.

I'm not explaining, since you are not complaining;
I am late, and you seemingly mind not the wait;
We all wait to die,
So why can't we wait for those we love.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

WHAT IS LOVE...?

What is love,
If not for a season
Or a lifetime?

What is love,
If not for a season—
Or a reason felt?

What is love without
The excitement of it;
Without casting a spell
Of spirit, and mind, and heart
Upon one who casts upon you?
What is love without God's
Spiritual sanction of a divine
Union of two meant to be as one?

Frederick Douglas Harper

HUG YOUR LOVE

When there is anger and rage,
 Hug your love;
When there is anxiety and fear,
 Hug your love;
When there is disappointment and failure,
 Hug your love;
When there is reservation and doubt,
 Hug your love;
When there is pain and hurt,
 Hug your love;
When there is mutual grief or mutual joy,
 Or just simply a time for celebration
 Of life, hug your love;
At morning's rising and night's bedtime,
 Hug your love; hug each other.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LIVING AND LOVING ARE ARTS

Living is an art, loving is an art;
Both take thoughtfulness and not just thought,
 Learning and not just performance,
 Compassion and not just passion,
 Care and not just concern.

To live is to love life; to love is to live life
 With patience, respect, appreciation,
 Excitement, energy, and good feeling.

Living is loving self, loving others, and loving life;
Loving is living with self, living with others, and
 Living life in great appreciation.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

WE LAY

We lay, back first, with eyes toward
The stars; thinking of nothing
Except the moment of our appreciation.

The grass beneath cushioned our relaxation,
While darkness of the night shielded
Us in anonymity.

The cool air of evening helped our shared
Presence to erase regrets of the past
And worries of the future.

We lay calmly, serenaded by our own
Breaths of life and comforted by our
Selfish thoughts of each other.

We lay alone as two; but really as one—
Together for each other,
Together in the world,
Together against the world.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

HELLO, I LIKE YOU

Person 1 speaks:

“Excuse me please;
Hello,
I saw you;
I like you;
Would you care to talk?”

Person 2 speaks:

“You are excused,
But not from my presence;
Hello, too;
I also saw you;
And, sure, I would like to
Talk to you too,
Because, I too like you.”

Reprinted: Harper’s *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE'S CLAIM

Let us forget the images of old
And the attitudes we hold
Of pasts;
Let us start anew,
For I come to claim the
Woman I love—
The heart of my youth's
Nurture and the soul of
My manhood years;
I come to claim her claim
On the remainder of my life's
Time and the blood of my life's
Remains;
Make easy my return and our return
To each other's task of romance
Anew and love of two;
Pluck thoughts of ill from the brow
Of times gone, and claim again
That which was and can be.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

A LOVE UNLOVED

There is nothing more painful than being
With one you don't love, and being deprived
Of happiness thereof;

There is nothing more painful than "loving
One" with whom you don't want to be,
And hoping that one day you can make
Yourself free;

There is nothing more unromantic than to
Live a myth from kiss to kiss, or weeks to
Months to years to tears in boring times and
A hopeless mind, smiling when you wanted to
Cry and crying when you wanted to smile;

Fill your empty life with something meaningful
For you;
Fill your empty life with love regained anew,
Or seek a new love in earnest truth.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

OH WOMAN, OH MAN

“Oh woman,” he asked—
“How can I satisfy you?
Your suspicions are too great,
Your anger is too deep;
Remove thoughts’ blocks from
Our past romance longing;
For I stand tired of your displeasure,
While wanting deeply the sweet
Touch of our yesteryear’s memories’ call;
Spit forth your bitter venom once and
For all, and lie bare to my bed of roses
Waiting, that I may lay upon you the
Pleasures remain of your unconscious
Yearning.”

“Oh man,” she replied—
“How can I trust you?
Give peace to my mind’s assurance
Of you to me, and put still my doubt
And rage from thoughts of another;
Bring peace to my soul by you,
Your act, and self—that I, as you wish,
Can lie upon your bed of roses,
So warm and sensual to your true touch
To lay me bare in yesteryear’s rousing
Ecstasy for today’s calm peace to our
Enlightened romance anew.”

Reprinted: Harper’s *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE'S HOPE RENEWED

It is said:

“There is no pain and shame like
The hurt and embarrassment of
Love rejected;
There is nothing more confusing than a
Love flaunted and then unwanted;
There is no cruelty like the destruction
Of the spirit of a love gone bad or
A love once had;
There is nothing more lonely than the
Wish for the return of a love lost.”

However, with love’s new romance’s
Seeding, its blossoms and fruits
Will lay dormant the thoughts of past
Harvests gone.

Reprinted: Harper’s *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A LOVE TO WALK WITH ME

And he said,

“In my transition from a love lost,
I need a woman to walk
Behind me to encourage me to
Become all I can;
I need a woman to walk
Beside me when I’m honored
For what she has helped me to
Become;
And, certainly, I need a woman
To walk *ahead* of me,
As I help her to become
All that she can become.
I simply need and pray for a
Good woman to walk God’s path in love
With me and me with her.”

YOU HAVE AND I HAVE YOU

You have class and you don't
 Have to lie;
You have natural beauty and don't
 Have to try;
You have bright eyes like a supernova
 Starlight in the night's sky;
You have security and don't
 Have to deny;
You have mental health and you don't
 Have to get high;
You have happiness and peace and don't
 Have to cry;
You have a pleasurable sweetness
 Like sugared apple pie;
You have me and don't ever say
 Good-bye;
I have you and that is why—
 I write this poem.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

MATHEMATICAL LOVE

Sincere love is a true number,
A whole number;
Never divided, subtracted, or diminished
In quantity or quality;
Never zero, never negative;
Always positive and increasing in
Weight and geometric size;
Sincere love is an infinite whole of
Two intersecting human sets;
Sincere love multiplies itself by itself,
And adds to itself over time.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

SITTING IN A CHAIR WITH A TEDDY BEAR

You say you sat in a chair
With your favorite teddy bear
Tucked beneath your hair;
Yes, you relaxed in your chair,
So you now tell, by the fireplace's
Glare—hugging, soothing, and stroking
A warmed teddy bear with gentle
Care and a pleasurable stare;
So you tell, you breathed holiday
Air in the cuddly care of your
Designated bear;
Now you recall of a night with
Christmas tree lights and a lovable
Bear in the romantic embrace of your care;
You tell, I see, of sitting in a chair
With this special teddy bear;
Now you have told of a night, I see;
A night I recall that you spent with me.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

TRUE LOVE LASTS

True love like gold
Will not rust with time;
And like fine silver, its
 Tarnish can be polished to
 Original brilliance or
 A greater luster;
True love seeks not fault nor
 Excuse for escape;
True love seeks itself;
True love endures all times
 And circumstance;
True love shines forever.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

A GIFT TO YOU

A gift to you

For what you've done,
Not for what I expect of you;

A gift to you,

For what you are,
Not for what I want you to be;

A gift to you,

For what we have shared,
And not for what we give
To each other.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I WILL NOT PROMISE

I will not promise that
 I will love you tomorrow
 Or that I will love you tonight;
I will not promise that
 I can love you tomorrow
 Or that I can love you tonight;
I will only say that I love you now,
 And I trust that now will
 Last forever.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

I LOVE YOU

Can we say, “I love you,”
If we mean it and feel it?

Can we say, “I love you,”
Without hesitating, hedging,
Stammering, or lowering our
Voices to a fade?

Can we say, “I love you,”
Without biting our tongue
Or fearing regret or else?

Can we say the words
“I LOVE YOU”;
Can we say these three words
Often and clearly,
Loudly and surely?
Say them now; say them often.

Reprinted: Harper’s *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

***POEMS ON LOVE OF FAMILY,
CHILDREN, FRIENDS, AND
NATURE***

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE YOUR CHAIN

Love the links in your chain,
For a broken chain has no purpose;
Love your parents, love your children;
For they are strong links of proximity.

Love your grandparents,
Love your grandchildren,
Love your sibling too;
For they are also important links
To a strong chain.

Most of all, love your link;
Love yourself—
Love all links in your chain
For a broken chain has no purpose.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THANKS MOTHER

There is nothing you can say,
That is enough to thank your mother;
There is nothing you can do,
That is enough to thank your mother.

A mother is a trustee of God's seed,
A sacred temple of life;
A mother's touch cannot be duplicated,
Her comforting voice is never replicated.

A mother's greatest gift is the gift of life,
Her highest status is that of motherhood.
No matter what else a mother might be,
No matter what a mother does—
A mother is a mother.

Thanks Mom; I love you.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

ADVICE TO YOU MY CHILD

Be true to your eyes, ears, thoughts, and feelings;
Listen to your heart but yield to your mind's best
Judgment;
Be kind and wise in spoken words, for surely your
Words will follow you;
Be not afraid of risks but be cautious of actions
Driven by emotion, confusion, and false friends;
Avoid jealousy of others' achievements and possessions;
Don't live with an insatiable greed for more than
You can appreciate or use;
Don't eat more than your hunger's call or
Drink beyond your thirst's needs;
Listen to spirits that favor you and offend not
Those that oppose you;
Absorb yourself in an activity worthy of your unique
Talent, and develop as many common
Potentialities as you desire and can;
Whatever you do, do it as well as you can;
Live comfortably with your conscience,
And be at peace with your soul;
Be courageous in life, while always respecting
Death's luring and lurking;
Rest when tired and think when you are uncertain;
Be kind to the sacredness of life and respect the
Natural order of the universe;

Frederick Douglas Harper

Follow no one or no thing except your own judgment
And your own God's wish;
Love and respect yourself and your family;
Be all you can by developing yourself;
Do all you can in helping worthy others;
And live a quality and meaningful life.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

NOSTALGIA III

He was big, I little;
But both men in our sights;
We worked together and played together,
At day and night.

I remember, and will forever, his
Kindness and love, though only a small child;
Together, we shared time:
Walking in the corn field,
Feeding chickens and the hog,
Driving a mule-driven wagon.

I watched him pray in church, drive his car,
Work at two jobs, plant and harvest,
Make old-fashioned wine, and care for
His wife and offspring of eight.

I, a child of seven, was by his side when he
Died so peacefully, so courageously on a small
Bed alongside a sun-lighted, open window.
Granddad, I will always miss you;
Granddad, I will always love you.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

LOVE IS...

“L” is for laughter shared, lament
Endured, and a life cared;
“O” is for obedience to another,
Offering of self, overindulgence of
Time spent, and okay’s and ought’s;
“V” is for the value of sacrifice, vibrations
In common, verification of feelings, and
Vivid joyful experiences;
“E” is for eagerness, excitement, and
Energy given and received through
Time and effort.

LOVE is—

“L”oving
“O”thers with
“V”erse, vitality, and vow; and with
“E”nthusiasm, expressiveness, and exhaustion.

LOVE is without condition, expectation, or
Anticipation.

LOVE is...

Reprinted: Harper’s *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

A FRIEND

A friend is
Special for you
And not against you;
Being a friend is in
One's state of mind,
One's state of action—
That special one who thinks and acts
For another's happiness,
For another's welfare;
Being a friend is giving of self
With joy;
Being a friend is receiving from another
With appreciation;
Being a friend is wanting to be a friend.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

A POET'S POEM TO A FRIEND'S FRIEND

You ask me to write a poem
For a friend not near;
Though miles away, one you have known
Closely over the years;
An unusual request to me I must tell;
But one not denied since it seems
You so care.

A small price of time to give such precious
Thought, for a long-lasting bond
On each part sought;
With nostalgic memories of childhood years;
Remain close you have, yet seldom as near;
It's been years and miles of telephone talk,
Between movies, theatres, and city-park walks.

So the essence of friendship, it seems
Two have learned,
Out of much shared experience and
Mutual concern;
And thus this poet closes with good thoughts
Of my task,
In trust that your dear friendship
Will continue to last.

LET US LOVE CHILD

Let us love child
As a precious and impressionable life;
Not as an object of selfishness,
Not as an object of frustration,
Not as an object of sensuality;
Let us love children
As the future, our future—
And even more their future;

Let us love children by preventing
Their undo suffering;
Let us wipe horrid images from view
Of their little minds, and
Harsh words from their ear's reach;
Let us block unnatural pain and trauma
From their tender little souls, while
Teaching them the natural way,
The healthy way, the realistic way of life;

Let us love child
As we have been loved;
Let us love child
As we should have been loved;
Let us love child
As we ought to love ourselves.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

Frederick Douglas Harper

I'M IN LOVE

I'm in love,
I'm in love,
I'm in love
With my son.

Oh gift of God,
How sweet,
How joyful,
How refreshing.

Oh light of God,
My son,
I'm in love.

To hold him,
Is to hold Thy holy trust;
To kiss his little lips,
Is to feel the creation of
Thy gift.

Oh light of day of night,
Oh light of my life,
My son, my love.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

I NEVER SAW

I never saw a woman who
Loved her baby son so much;
I never saw a man who
Loved his baby son so much;
I never saw parents who
Loved their baby son so much;
I never saw—until I saw ourselves.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

THE SENSES OF MY LOVE

What I can see, I have often loved;
What I can hear, I have often loved;
What I can touch, I have often loved;
What I can smell, I have often loved.

I have known the beauty of flowers,
Music, birds, foods, people, trees,
Rivers, oceans, mountains, and other
Artistic creations of God and humankind.

Things of beauty I have known,
I have often loved—
Especially when I have paid
Attention to sense their world around me.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

A FLOWER

A flower—

How temporal its beauty,
How delicate its petals,
How variegated in colors of
Red, yellow, pink, purple, and white.

A flower—

How simple, how sweet the smell;
A thing of adorability in bloom,
A thing that expresses our
Thought, care, and love.

A flower—

To touch, to share,
To wear in one's hair,
For holidays and special occasions everywhere.

A flower—

That graces our surrounding
And brings happiness and joy
To the sick, the grieved, and the well.

A flower—

To see, to smell, to hold;
A flower, to love
In the moment of our presence.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

Frederick Douglas Harper

ODE TO A FLOWER

Oh flower, in the light of sunshine
And the secrecy of night's cover;
Show your beauty—
Show your beauty through the moisture
Of dawn's dew and the teardrops
Of April's rain;

Oh flower, the source of a florist's
Dream to create your gift for
The giver's gift of love and
Compassion;

Oh flower, a flower;
The repeated miracle of God's grace
Through the arms of plants so green
With outreached branches of life's
Touch;

Oh flower, smile for me;
Oh flower, smile that we
Might see the love of Thee.

Reprinted: Harper's *Romantica: On Peace and Romance*, 1988.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

TREES OF MAINE

Elegant they stand in Maine of the USA;

Tall and straight they grow

In pine, fir, and spruce;

Welcome and farewell they bid, through branches

So broad and orderly in symmetry,

So robust and serene in character;

Trees, trees, and more trees,

Carpeting great acreage in a mosaic

Of variant shades of green;

Trees, trees, and more trees,

Against God's glistening sun, rolling clouds,

And calm blue skies;

Trees of Maine, I accept your heartening

Presence and message;

Trees of Maine, I wish you a happy

And long stay.

Reprinted: Harper's *Poems on Love and Life*, 1985.

***THOUGHTS ON LOVE AND
RELATIONSHIPS***

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

**The following thoughts are reprinted from Frederick
Douglas Harper's
*Romantica: On Peace and Romance, 1988.***

We give to and share with those we love and are not taken by those who profess to love us.

«««

We can often end up loving most, those who need us most.

«««

Romance often develops like a rose, that is, budding, blooming, and eventually dying.

«««

Your love has made me stronger, and, even in your absence, you are present.

«««

Romantic love frequently turns out to be everything hoped for, everything forbidden, everything gained, and everything lost.

«««

Frederick Douglas Harper

You cannot be hot unless someone lights your fire.

«««

I can never be you, and you can never be me. But we can be we; we can be one.

«««

For those we love the most, we do our best.

«««

It takes a special person to think and feel of love; it takes a special person to reveal such things.

«««

Often, if a person is in love with you, no matter what you do wrong, “you are right.” By the same token, if a person hates you, no matter what you do right, “you are wrong.”

«««

Never accept gifts from one who wants to claim ownership of the receiver.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

«««

Women *tend* to believe in anything that sounds good, and men *often* believe in anything that looks good.

«««

We can often hate those we know best, and we can often admire those we know the least.

«««

The aftermath of lost love involves not just putting pieces back together; it is also the salvaging of old pieces and the creating of new pieces.

«««

Love is a complicated thing that never stays the same; because love hangs on the vine.

«««

Love's parting is always sweet sorrow, except when there is no sorrow.

«««

Frederick Douglas Harper

Romance has a life, and sometimes a lifetime.

~~~~~

One who loves too much can one day hate as much.

~~~~~

Beauty is born; glamour is acquired.

~~~~~

There are those who want to get married, but who don't want to be married.

~~~~~

Beauty is to appreciate, not necessarily to consume.

~~~~~

Romantic gifts of appreciation are much better than gifts of obligation or manipulation.

~~~~~

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

We very often expect too much and tolerate too little from those we profess to love.

~~~~~

Love is the a priori to creation, and it is the antithesis of war and destruction.

~~~~~

One of the great anxieties of romance is “rejecting or being rejected.”

~~~~~

In romance, the “right person” is the one about whom you feel excited and around whom you feel comfortable, complete, and at peace.

~~~~~

There are those who are desperately in love with those who are not ready to be loved.

~~~~~

To love, unrestrained, one has to *feel* free and *be* free.

~~~~~

Frederick Douglas Harper

True romance is free from and not fraught with maybe's, might's, and may's. True romance rests on quality time shared and not on empty words.

~~~~~

The test of romance is one of mutual infatuation; however, the test of love is a test of lasting commitment to each other.

~~~~~

Love is the willingness of two persons to *let* things happen that are meant to be, and not to *make* things happen unnaturally.

~~~~~

There are times in people's lives when they should do nothing except think about things about which they have not taken the time to think.

~~~~~

In a relationship, when a person learns to lie as habit, it is difficult for that person to know and tell the truth.

~~~~~

One who tends to lie is likely to believe anything that seems to be true.

*LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper*

«««

There is no need to control others when you can control yourself. There is no need to manipulate others when you can manipulate your own behavior.

«««

Anger has no virtue in the destruction of sacred things.

«««

Many a person very often forget the living, once the living is dead.

«««

In some relationships, people can get angry for nothing and stay angry forever.

«««

You have to know what you want and you have to go get it; you have to know what you don't want, and you have to keep it from getting you.

«««

*Frederick Douglas Harper*

A major difference between boys and men is that boys like to play too much and men like to work too much.

~~~~~

Many times, true answers come not with words but with time and actions.

~~~~~

Users tend to be losers; they use other people, and, in their greed, they tend to get used.

~~~~~

Man cannot be greater than woman, because he comes from woman.

~~~~~

A person who *has not* learned to love a child is one who has not learned to love self.

~~~~~

You'll never know what you are missing if you don't realize what you are missing, and you'll never know what you have or could have if you don't appreciate its value.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

~~~~

You never can tell where the spirit of God might lead two loving souls or one; however, don't look to the past except to appreciate and evaluate; concentrate on and live in the present, and seldom look forward except to plan.

**The following thoughts are reprinted from Frederick  
Douglas Harper's  
*Poems on Love and Life, 1985.***

Treat true love with kindness although caution, for it seldom visits your doorstep.

~~~~

The goal of marriage is not to have a happy marriage, necessarily, but to be happy in marriage.

~~~~

In planning marriage, it is wise to know your mate's pedigree and history.

~~~~

Frederick Douglas Harper

Jealousy is the mother of hatred, and hatred is the mother of destruction.

«««

Nobody can be truly used in so-called love unless that person submits to being used.

«««

Loss of love and affection is not just a personal experience, it is a human experience.

«««

People don't make love; love makes people—or at least it should.

«««

There are many lovable qualities in people besides their physical attributes.

«««

The greatest love is the love of a lost love—so take not for granted those whom you profess to love.

LOVE POEMS of Frederick Douglas Harper

«««

A woman is God's most sacred trustee and temple of life.

«««

There are some people who want to be in love without falling in love;
there are those who want love without taking the risk to love or be loved.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frederick Douglas Harper has authored more than 300 published poems. As an international scholar and professor of counseling, he has authored more than 100 publications including college textbooks, journal articles, and book chapters. In addition, Harper has served as a professional counselor, university administrator, president of professional associations, and editor of two international scholarly journals. He has conducted numerous workshops on “love and relationships” and has presented hundreds of motivational speeches and scholarly conference presentations throughout the world, including speeches and lectures in Argentina, France, Greece, India, Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Harper’s most popular poem, “A Wedding Pledge,” has been recorded on CD, recited in more than 5,000 weddings, translated into other languages, and reprinted in magazines. His poems have been read on WPFW Radio in

Washington, DC for more than 15 years, alongside the poetry of the famous Langston Hughes. Harper's other poem books, sold throughout the USA and in numerous other countries, include *Poems on Love and Life* (1985), *Romantica: On Peace and Romance* (1988), and *God's Gifts: Spiritual Writings* (2003). Harper has received hundreds of letters of appreciation and commendation on his poetry from readers of his work, including letters from public figures such as Lionel Richie, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Davis, and Renee Poussaint (national network news commentator).

An extraordinary and highly spiritual human being, Frederick Harper has jogged more than 32,000 miles in 119 different cities throughout the world, and he has inspired many people through his writings, teachings, and public speaking.

*A Few
Selections of
Favorite
Poems
(in English,
mostly)*

Featuring (in order):

Willie S.
Blake
Walt
Twain
Banjo
Frost
Kahlil
Gwen
Langston
Jacques
Jack
Lawrence
Allen
R. Hayden
M. Harper
Shel
&
Maya

SONNET XVIII

by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

SONNET LXV

by William Shakespeare

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O! how shall summer's honey breath hold out,
Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O! none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

SONNET CXVI

by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

"Auguries of Innocence"

by William Blake

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.
A dove house fill'd with doves & Pigeons
Shudders Hell thro' all its regions.
A dog starv'd at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
A Horse misus'd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear.
A Skylark wounded in the wing,
A Cherubim does cease to sing.
The Game Cock clipp'd and arm'd for fight
Does the Rising Sun affright.
Every Wolf's & Lion's howl
Raises from Hell a Human Soul.
The wild deer, wand'ring here & there,
Keeps the Human Soul from Care.
The Lamb misus'd breeds public strife
And yet forgives the Butcher's Knife.
The Bat that flits at close of Eve
Has left the Brain that won't believe.
The Owl that calls upon the Night
Speaks the Unbeliever's fright.
He who shall hurt the little Wren
Shall never be belov'd by Men.
He who the Ox to wrath has mov'd
Shall never be by Woman lov'd.
The wanton Boy that kills the Fly
Shall feel the Spider's enmity.
He who torments the Chafer's sprite
Weaves a Bower in endless Night.
The Catterpillar on the Leaf
Repeats to thee thy Mother's grief.
Kill not the Moth nor Butterfly,
For the Last Judgement draweth nigh.
He who shall train the Horse to War
Shall never pass the Polar Bar.
The Beggar's Dog & Widow's Cat,
Feed them & thou wilt grow fat.

The Gnat that sings his Summer's song
Poison gets from Slander's tongue.
The poison of the Snake & Newt
Is the sweat of Envy's Foot.
The poison of the Honey Bee
Is the Artist's Jealousy.
The Prince's Robes & Beggars' Rags
Are Toadstools on the Miser's Bags.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the Lies you can invent.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for Joy & Woe;
And when this we rightly know
Thro' the World we safely go.
Joy & Woe are woven fine,
A Clothing for the Soul divine;
Under every grief & pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
The Babe is more than swaddling Bands;
Throughout all these Human Lands
Tools were made, & born were hands,
Every Farmer Understands.
Every Tear from Every Eye
Becomes a Babe in Eternity.
This is caught by Females bright
And return'd to its own delight.
The Bleat, the Bark, Bellow & Roar
Are Waves that Beat on Heaven's Shore.
The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath
Writes Revenge in realms of death.
The Beggar's Rags, fluttering in Air,
Does to Rags the Heavens tear.
The Soldier arm'd with Sword & Gun,
Palsied strikes the Summer's Sun.
The poor Man's Farthing is worth more
Than all the Gold on Afric's Shore.
One Mite wrung from the Labrer's hands
Shall buy & sell the Miser's lands:
Or, if protected from on high,
Does that whole Nation sell & buy.
He who mocks the Infant's Faith
Shall be mock'd in Age & Death.
He who shall teach the Child to Doubt
The rotting Grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the Infant's faith
Triumph's over Hell & Death.
The Child's Toys & the Old Man's Reasons
Are the Fruits of the Two seasons.

The Questioner, who sits so sly,
Shall never know how to Reply.
He who replies to words of Doubt
Doth put the Light of Knowledge out.
The Strongest Poison ever known
Came from Caesar's Laurel Crown.
Nought can deform the Human Race
Like the Armour's iron brace.
When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow
To peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow.
A Riddle or the Cricket's Cry
Is to Doubt a fit Reply.
The Emmet's Inch & Eagle's Mile
Make Lame Philosophy to smile.
He who Doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe, do what you Please.
If the Sun & Moon should doubt
They'd immediately Go out.
To be in a Passion you Good may do,
But no Good if a Passion is in you.
The Whore & Gambler, by the State
Licenc'd, build that Nation's Fate.
The Harlot's cry from Street to Street
Shall weave Old England's winding Sheet.
The Winner's Shout, the Loser's Curse,
Dance before dead England's Hearse.
Every Night & every Morn
Some to Misery are Born.
Every Morn & every Night
Some are Born to sweet Delight.
Some ar Born to sweet Delight,
Some are born to Endless Night.
We are led to Believe a Lie
When we see not Thro' the Eye
Which was Born in a Night to Perish in a Night
When the Soul Slept in Beams of Light.
God Appears & God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in the Night,
But does a Human Form Display
To those who Dwell in Realms of day.

The_Marriage_of_Heaven_and_Hell
by William Blake

PLATE 14

The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true. as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at the tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite. and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

PLATE 15

A Memorable Fancy

I was in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a caves mouth; within, a number of Dragons were hollowing the cave,

In the second chamber was a Viper folding round the rock & the cave, and others adorning it with gold silver and precious stones.

In the third chamber was an Eagle with wings and feathers of air, he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite, around were numbers of Eagle like men, who built palaces in the immense cliffs.

In the fourth chamber were Lions of flaming fire raging around & melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were Unnam'd forms, which cast the metals into the expanse.

There they were reciev'd by Men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

by Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,

and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with

much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

*

*

*

O Captain! My Captain!

by Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done, The ship has weather'd every rack,
the prize we sought is won, The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring; But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red, Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.
O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells; Rise up- for you the flag is flung- for
you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths- for you the shores
a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

The_War_Prayer
by Mark Twain

It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and sputtering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spreads of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country and invoked the God of Battles, beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpouring of fervid eloquence which moved every listener.

It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety's sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

Sunday morning came - next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their faces alight with material dreams - visions of a stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing sabers, the flight of the foe, the tumult, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! - then home from the war, bronzed heros, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag or, failing, die the noblest of noble deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation -- "God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest, Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!"

Then came the "long" prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its supplication was that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory --

An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy cataract to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher's side and stood there, waiting.

With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, "Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!"

The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside - which the startled minister did - and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said

"I come from the Throne - bearing a message from Almighty God!" The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. "He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd and grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import - that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of - except he pause and think.

"God's servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two - one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of His Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this - keep it in mind. If you beseech a

blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor's crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

"You have heard your servant's prayer - the uttered part of it. I am commissioned by God to put into words the other part of it - that part which the pastor, and also you in your hearts, fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: 'Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!' That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory - must follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God the Father fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words.

Listen!

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle – be Thou near them! With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God,
help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells;
help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead;
help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain;
help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire;
help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief;
help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it -
for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord,
blast their hopes,
blight their lives,
protract their bitter pilgrimage,
make heavy their steps,
water their way with their tears,
stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!
We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is ever - faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts.
Amen."

(After a pause)

"Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits."

It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

Clancy of the Overflow
by A. B. "Banjo" Patterson

I had written him a letter which I had, for want of better
Knowledge, sent to where I met him down the Lachlan, years ago,
He was shearing when I knew him, so I sent the letter to him,
Just on spec, addressed as follows, "Clancy, of The Overflow"

And an answer came directed in a writing unexpected,
(And I think the same was written with a thumb-nail dipped in tar)
Twas his shearing mate who wrote it, and verbatim I will quote it:
"Clancy's gone to Queensland droving, and we don't know where he are."

* * * * *

In my wild erratic fancy visions come to me of Clancy
Gone a-droving "down the Cooper" where the Western drovers go;
As the stock are slowly stringing, Clancy rides behind them singing,
For the drover's life has pleasures that the townsfolk never know.

And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wond'rous glory of the everlasting stars.

* * * * *

I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy
Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall,
And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city
Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all

And in place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish rattle
Of the tramways and the buses making hurry down the street,
And the language uninviting of the gutter children fighting,
Comes fitfully and faintly through the ceaseless tramp of feet.

And the hurrying people daunt me, and their pallid faces haunt me
As they shoulder one another in their rush and nervous haste,
With their eager eyes and greedy, and their stunted forms and weedy,
For townsfolk have no time to grow, they have no time to waste.

And I somehow rather fancy that I'd like to change with Clancy,
Like to take a turn at droving where the seasons come and go,
While he faced the round eternal of the cash-book and the journal --
But I doubt he'd suit the office, Clancy, of The Overflow.

Song of the Artesian Water
by A. B. "Banjo" Paterson

Now the stock have started dying, for the Lord has sent a drought;
But we're sick of prayers and Providence -- we're going to do without;
With the derricks up above us and the solid earth below,
We are waiting at the lever for the word to let her go.
Sinking down, deeper down,
Oh, we'll sink it deeper down:
As the drill is plugging downward at a thousand feet of level,
If the Lord won't send us water, oh, we'll get it from the devil;
Yes, we'll get it from the devil deeper down.

Now, our engine's built in Glasgow by a very canny Scot,
And he marked it twenty horse-power, but he don't know what is what:
When Canadian Bill is firing with the sun-dried gidgee logs,
She can equal thirty horses and a score or so of dogs.
Sinking down, deeper down,
Oh, we're going deeper down:
If we fail to get the water, then it's ruin to the squatter,
For the drought is on the station and the weather's growing hotter,
But we're bound to get the water deeper down.

But the shaft has started caving and the sinking's very slow,
And the yellow rods are bending in the water down below,
And the tubes are always jamming, and they can't be made to shift
Till we nearly burst the engine with a forty horse-power lift.
Sinking down, deeper down,
Oh, we're going deeper down:
Though the shaft is always caving, and the tubes are always jamming,
Yet we'll fight our way to water while the stubborn drill is ramming --
While the stubborn drill is ramming deeper down.

But there's no artesian water, though we've passed three thousand feet,
And the contract price is growing, and the boss is nearly beat.
But it must be down beneath us, and it's down we've got to go,
Though she's bumping on the solid rock four thousand feet below.
Sinking down, deeper down,
Oh, we're going deeper down:
And it's time they heard us knocking on the roof of Satan's dwellin';
But we'll get artesian water if we cave the roof of hell in --
Oh! we'll get artesian water deeper down.

But it's hark! the whistle's blowing with a wild, exultant blast,
And the boys are madly cheering, for they've struck the flow at last;
And it's rushing up the tubing from four thousand feet below,
Till it spouts above the casing in a million-gallon flow.
And it's down, deeper down --
Oh, it comes from deeper down;
It is flowing, ever flowing, in a free, unstinted measure
From the silent hidden places where the old earth hides her treasure --
Where the old earth hides her treasures deeper down.

And it's clear away the timber, and it's let the water run:
How it glimmers in the shadow, how it flashes in the sun!
By the silent bells of timber, by the miles of blazing plain
It is bringing hope and comfort to the thirsty land again.
Flowing down, further down;
It is flowing deeper down
To the tortured thirsty cattle, bringing gladness in its going;
Through the droughty days of summer it is flowing, ever flowing --
It is flowing, ever flowing, further down.

"Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening"
by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

"Fire and Ice"
by Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

Humans are divided
into different clans and tribes,
and belong to countries and towns.

But I find myself a stranger
to all communities
and belong to no settlement.

The universe is my country
and the human family
is my tribe.

-- from A_Tear_&_A_Smile_
by Kahlil Gibran

We Real Cool
by Gwendolyn Brooks

*The Pool Players
Seven at the Golden Shovel*

We real cool. We
Left School. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

The Bean Eaters
by Gwendolyn Brooks

They eat beans mostly, this old yellow pair,
Dinner is a casual affair.
Plain chipware on a plain and creaking wood,
Tin flatware.

Two who are Mostly Good.
Two who have lived their day,
But keep on putting on their clothes
And putting things away.

And remembering...
Remembering, with twinklings and twinges,
As they lean over the beans in their rented back room
that is full of beads and receipts and dolls and
cloths, tobacco crumbs, vases and fringes.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers
by Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Dream Deferred
by Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

Les Feuilles Mortes
by Jacques Prévert
English lyrics by Johnny Mercer

Oh! je voudrais tant que tu te souviennes
Des jours heureux où nous étions amis
En ce temps-là la vie était plus belle,
Et le soleil plus brûlant qu'aujourd'hui
Les feuilles mortes se ramassent à la pelle
Tu vois, je n'ai pas oublié
Les feuilles mortes se ramassent à la pelle,
Les souvenirs et les regrets aussi
Et le vent du nord les emporte
Dans la nuit froide de l'oubli.
Tu vois, je n'ai pas oublié
La chanson que tu me chantais.

C'est une chanson qui nous ressemble
Toi, tu m'aimais et je t'aimais
Et nous vivions tous deux ensemble
Toi qui m'aimais, moi qui t'aimais
Mais la vie sépare ceux qui s'aiment
Tout doucement, sans faire de bruit
Et la mer efface sur le sable
Les pas des amants désunis.

Les feuilles mortes se ramassent à la pelle,
Les souvenirs et les regrets aussi
Mais mon amour silencieux et fidèle
Sourit toujours et remercie la vie
Je t'aimais tant, tu étais si jolie,
Comment veux-tu que je t'oublie?
En ce temps-là, la vie était plus belle
Et le soleil plus brûlant qu'aujourd'hui
Tu étais ma plus douce amie
Mais je n'ai que faire des regrets
Et la chanson que tu chantais
Toujours, toujours je l'entendrai!

The falling leaves drift by the window
The autumn leaves of red and gold
I see your lips, the summer kisses
The sun-burned hands I used to hold
Since you went away the days grow long
And soon I'll hear old winter's song
But I miss you most of all, my darling
When autumn leaves start to fall

Since you went away the days grow long
And soon I'll hear old winter's song
But I miss you most of all, my darling
When autumn leaves start to fall

"Familiale"
by Jacques Prévert

La mère fait du tricot
Le fils fait la guerre
Elle trouve ça tout naturel la mère
Et le père qu'est-ce qu'il fait le père?
Il fait des affaires
Sa femme fait du tricote
Son fils la guerre
Lui des affaires
Il trouve ça tout naturel le père
Et le fils et le fils
Qu'est-ce qu'il trouve le fils?
Il ne trouve rien absolument rien le fils
Le fils sa mère fait du tricot son père des affaires lui la guerre
Quand il aura fini la guerre
Il fera des affaires avec son père
La guerre continue la mère continue elle tricote
Le père continue il fait des affaires
Le fils est tué il ne continue plus
Le père et la mère vont au cimetière
Ils trouvent ça tout naturel le père et la mère
La vie continue la vie avec le tricot la guerre les affaires
Les affaires les affaires et les affaires
La vie avec le cimetière

“Family Life”

The mother knits
The son makes war
She finds this completely natural the mother
And the father what does he do the father?
He does business
His wife knits
His son makes war
Him the business
He finds this completely natural the father
And the son and the son
What does he find the son?
He finds nothing absolutely nothing the son
The son his mother knits his father does business him war
When he has finished with the war
He will do business with his father
The war continues the mother continues she knits
The father continues he does business
The son is killed he continues no longer
The father and the mother go to the cemetery
They find this completely natural the father and the mother
Life goes on life with the knitting the war the business
The business the war the knitting the war
The business the business and the business
Life with the cemetery

-- trans. by J.Tharsen

"Déjeuner du Matin"
by Jacques Prévert

Il a mis le café
Dans la tasse
Il a mis le lait
Dans la tasse de café
Il a mis le sucre
Dans le café au lait
Avec la petite cuiller
Il a tourné
Il a bu le café au lait
Et il a reposé la tasse
Sans me parler
Il a allumé
Une cigarette
Il a fait des ronds
Avec la fumée
Il a mis les cendres
Dans le cendrier
Sans me parler
Sans me regarder
Il s'est levé
Il a mis
Son chapeau sur sa tête
Il a mis
Son manteau de pluie
Parce qu'il pleuvait
Et il est parti
Sous la pluie
Sans une parole
Et moi j'ai pris
Ma tête dans ma main
Et j'ai pleuré.

"Breakfast"
He put the coffee
In the cup
He put the milk
in the cup of coffee
He put the sugar
In the café au lait
With the teaspoon
He stirred
He drank the café au lait
And he replaced the cup
Without speaking to me
He lit
A cigarette
He made rings
With the smoke
He put the ashes
In the ashtray
Without speaking to me
Without looking at me
He got up
He put
His hat on his head
He put on
His raincoat
Because it was raining
And he left
In the rain
Without a word
And me I took
My head in my hands
And I cried.

-- trans. by J.Tharsen

"Charlie Parker"
by Jack Kerouac

Charlie Parker looked like Buddha
Charlie Parker, who recently died
Laughing at a juggler on the TV
After weeks of strain and sickness,
Was called the Perfect Musician.
And his expression on his face
Was as calm, beautiful, and profound
As the image of the Buddha
Represented in the East, the lidded eyes
The expression that says "All Is Well"
This was what Charlie Parker
Said when he played, All is Well.
You had the feeling of early-in-the-morning
Like a hermit's joy, or
Like the perfect cry of some wild gang
At a jam session,
"Wail, Wop"
Charlie burst his lungs to reach the speed
Of what the speedsters wanted
And what they wanted
Was his eternal Slowdown.

Coney Island of the Mind #5
by Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Sometime during eternity
some guys show up
and one of them
who shows up real late
is a kind of carpenter
from some square-type place
like Galilee
and he starts wailing
and claiming he is hep
to who made heaven
and earth
and that the cat
who really laid it on us
is his Dad

And moreover
he adds
Its all writ down
on some scroll-type parchments
which some henchmen
leave lying around the Dead Sea somewhere
a long time ago
and which you won't even find
for a couple thousand years or so
or at least for
nineteen hundred and fortyseven
of them
to be exact
and even then
nobody really believes them
or me
for that matter

You're hot
they tell him
And they cool him

They stretch him on the Tree to cool

And everybody after that
is always making models
of this Tree
with Him hung up
and always crooning His name
and calling him to come down
and sit in
on their combo
as if he is THE king cat
whos got to blow
or they can't quite make it
Only he don't come down
from His tree
Him just hang there
on His Tree
looking real Petered out
and real cool
and also
according to a round-up
of late world news
from the usual unreliable sources
real dead

A Supermarket in California
by Allen Ginsburg

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for I
walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache
self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into
the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at
night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados,
babies in the tomatoes!--and you, Garcia Lorca, what were you
doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber,
poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the
grocery boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the pork
chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans
following you, and followed in my imagination by the store
detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our solitary
fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen delicacy,
and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going Walt Whitman? The doors close in an
hour. Which way does the beard point tonight?

(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the
supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees
add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be
lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past
blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what
America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you
got out on a smoking bank and stood watching the boat
disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

America
by Allen Ginsburg

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
America two dollars and twenty-seven cents January 17, 1956.
I can't stand my own mind.
America when will we end the human war?
Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb
I don't feel good don't bother me.
I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.
America when will you be angelic?
When will you take off your clothes?
When will you look at yourself through the grave?
When will you be worthy of your million Trotskyites?
America why are your libraries full of tears?
America when will you send your eggs to India?
I'm sick of your insane demands.
When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good looks?
America after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next world.
Your machinery is too much for me.
You made me want to be a saint.
There must be some other way to settle this argument.
Burroughs is in Tangiers I don't think he'll come back it's sinister.
Are you being sinister or is this some form of practical joke?
I'm trying to come to the point.
I refuse to give up my obsession.
America stop pushing I know what I'm doing.
America the plum blossoms are falling.
I haven't read the newspapers for months, everyday somebody goes on trial for murder.
America I feel sentimental about the Wobblies.
America I used to be a communist when I was a kid and I'm not sorry.
I smoke marijuana every chance I get.
I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses in the closet.
When I go to Chinatown I get drunk and never get laid.
My mind is made up there's going to be trouble.
You should have seen me reading Marx.
My psychoanalyst thinks I'm perfectly right.
I won't say the Lord's Prayer.
I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations.
America I still haven't told you what you did to Uncle Max after he came over from Russia.

I'm addressing you.
Are you going to let our emotional life be run by Time Magazine?
I'm obsessed by Time Magazine.
I read it every week.
Its cover stares at me every time I slink past the corner candystore.
I read it in the basement of the Berkeley Public Library.
It's always telling me about responsibility. Businessmen are serious. Movie
producers are serious. Everybody's serious but me.
It occurs to me that I am America.
I am talking to myself again.

Asia is rising against me.
I haven't got a chinaman's chance.
I'd better consider my national resources.
My national resources consist of two joints of marijuana millions of genitals
an unpublishable private literature that goes 1400 miles and hour and
twentyfivethousand mental institutions.
I say nothing about my prisons nor the millions of underprivileged who live in
my flowerpots under the light of five hundred suns.
I have abolished the whorehouses of France, Tangiers is the next to go.
My ambition is to be President despite the fact that I'm a Catholic.

America how can I write a holy litany in your silly mood?
I will continue like Henry Ford my strophes are as individual as his
automobiles more so they're all different sexes
America I will sell you strophes \$2500 apiece \$500 down on your old strophe
America free Tom Mooney
America save the Spanish Loyalists
America Sacco & Vanzetti must not die
America I am the Scottsboro boys.
America when I was seven momma took me to Communist Cell meetings they
sold us garbanzos a handful per ticket a ticket costs a nickel and the
speeches were free everybody was angelic and sentimental about the
workers it was all so sincere you have no idea what a good thing the party
was in 1935 Scott Nearing was a grand old man a real mensch Mother
Bloor made me cry I once saw Israel Amter plain. Everybody must have been a spy.
America you don're really want to go to war.
America it's them bad Russians.
Them Russians them Russians and them Chinamen. And them Russians.
The Russia wants to eat us alive. The Russia's power mad. She wants to take
our cars from out our garages.
Her wants to grab Chicago. Her needs a Red Reader's Digest. her wants our
auto plants in Siberia. Him big bureaucracy running our fillingstations.
That no good. Ugh. Him makes Indians learn read. Him need big black niggers.
Hah. Her make us all work sixteen hours a day.
Help.
America this is quite serious.
America this is the impression I get from looking in the television set.
America is this correct?
I'd better get right down to the job.
It's true I don't want to join the Army or turn lathes in precision parts
factories, I'm nearsighted and psychopathic anyway.
America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.

Frederick Douglass
by Robert Hayden

When it is finally ours, this freedom, this liberty, this beautiful and terrible thing, needful to man as air, usable as earth; when it belongs at last to all, when it is truly instinct, brain matter, diastole, systole, reflex action; when it is finally won; when it is more than the gaudy mumbo jumbo of politicians: this man, this Douglass, this former slave, this Negro beaten to his knees, exiled, visioning a world where none is lonely, none hunted, alien, this man, superb in love and logic, this man shall be remembered. Oh, not with statues' rhetoric, not with legends and poems and wreaths of bronze alone, but with the lives grown out of his life, the lives fleshing his dream of the beautiful, needful thing.

American History

by Michael S. Harper

Those four black girls blown up
in that Alabama church
remind me of five hundred
middle passage blacks,
in a net, under water
in Charleston harbor
so redcoats wouldn't find them.
Can't find what you can't see
can you?

Dear John, Dear Coltrane
by Michael S. Harper

*a love supreme, a love supreme
a love supreme, a love supreme*

Sex fingers toes
in the marketplace
near your father's church
in Hamlet, North Carolina--
witness to this love
in this calm fallow
of these minds;
there is no substitute for pain:
genitals gone or going,
seed burned out,
you tuck the roots in the earth,
turn back, and move
by river through the swamps,
singing: *a love supreme, a love supreme;*
what does it all mean?
Loss, so great each black
woman expects your failure
in mute change, the seed gone.
You plod up into the electric city--
your song now crystal and
the blues. You pick up the horn
with some will and blow
into the freezing night:
a love supreme, a love supreme--

Dawn comes and you cook
up the thick sin 'tween
impotence and death, fuel
the tenor sax cannibal
heart, genitals and sweat
that makes you clean--
a love supreme, a love supreme--

*Why you so black?
cause I am
why you so funky?
cause I am
why you so black?
cause I am
why you sweet?
cause I am
why you so black?
cause I am
*a love supreme, a love supreme:**

So sick you couldn't play *Naima*,
so flat we ached
for song you'd concealed
with your own blood,
your diseased liver gave
out its purity,
the inflated heart
pumps out, the tenor kiss,
tenor love:
*a love supreme, a love supreme--
a love supreme, a love supreme--*

The Rock Cries Out to Us Today
by Maya Angelou

A Rock, A River, A Tree
Hosts to species long since departed,
Mark the mastodon.
The dinosaur, who left dry tokens
Of their sojourn here
On our planet floor,
Any broad alarm of their of their hastening doom
Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.
But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully,
Come, you may stand upon my
Back and face your distant destiny,
But seek no haven in my shadow.
I will give you no hiding place down here.
You, created only a little lower than
The angels, have crouched too long in
The bruising darkness,
Have lain too long
Face down in ignorance.
Your mouths spelling words
Armed for slaughter.
The rock cries out today, you may stand on me,
But do not hide your face.
Across the wall of the world,
A river sings a beautiful song,
Come rest here by my side.
Each of you a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.
Your armed struggles for profit
Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.
Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more.
Come, clad in peace and I will sing the songs
The Creator gave to me when I
And the tree and stone were one.
Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your brow
And when you yet knew you still knew nothing.
The river sings and sings on.
There is a true yearning to respond to
The singing river and the wise rock.
So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew,
The African and Native American, the Sioux,
The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek,
The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh,
The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher,
The privileged, the homeless, the teacher.
They hear. They all hear
The speaking of the tree.
Today, the first and last of every tree
Speaks to humankind. Come to me, here beside the river.

Plant yourself beside me, here beside the river.
Each of you, descendant of some passed on
Traveller, has been paid for.
You, who gave me my first name,
You Pawnee, Apache and Seneca,
You Cherokee Nation, who rested with me,
Then forced on bloody feet,
Left me to the employment of other seekers--
Desperate for gain, starving for gold.
You, the Turk, the Swede, the German, the Scot...
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru,
Bought, sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare
Praying for a dream.
Here, root yourselves beside me.
I am the tree planted by the river,
Which will not be moved.
I, the rock, I the river, I the tree
I am yours--your passages have been paid.
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, and if faced with courage,
Need not be lived again.
Lift up your eyes upon
The day breaking for you.
Give birth again
To the dream.
Women, children, men,
Take it into the palms of your hands.
Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts.
Each new hour holds new chances
For new beginnings.
Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.
The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out upon me,
The rock, the river, the tree, your country.
No less to Midas than the mendicant.
No less to you now than the mastodon then.
Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister's eyes,
Into your brother's face, your country
And say simply
Very simply
With hope
Good morning.

“Listen to the mustn’ts”

by Shel Silverstein

Listen to the MUSTN'TS child,
Listen to the DON'TS
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS
Listen to the NEVER HAVEs
Then listen close to me -
Anything can happen, child
ANYTHING can be.

“The Bridge”

by Shel Silverstein

This bridge will only take you halfway there
To those mysterious lands you long to see:
Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab fairs
And moonlit woods where unicorns run free.
So come and walk awhile with me and share
The twisting trails and wondrous worlds I've known.
But this bridge will only take you halfway there-
The last few steps you'll have to take alone.

The End (For Now)

LICENSED
for the
WHOLE SCHOOL

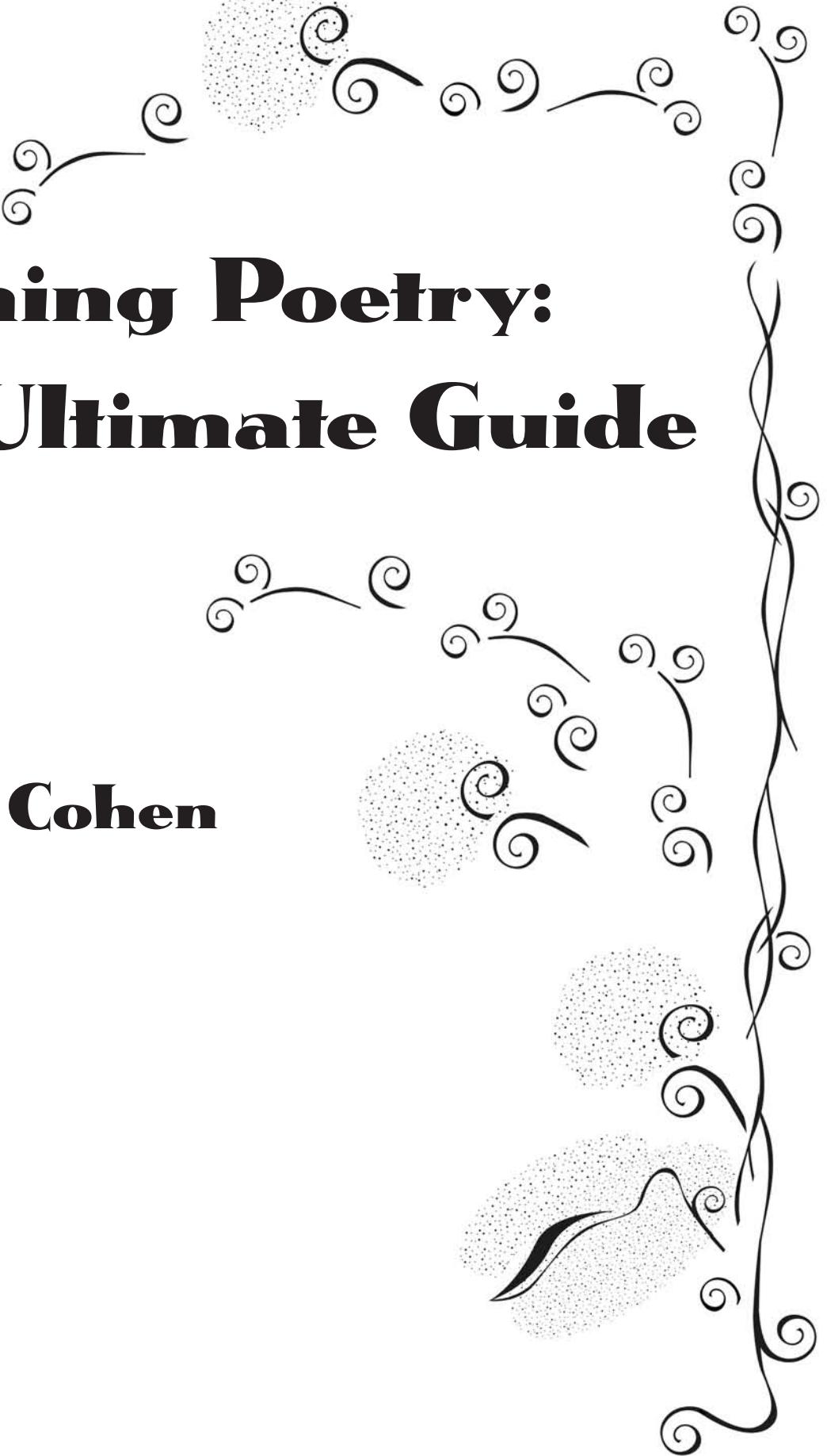
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Teaching

Poetry

The
Ultimate
Guide

by Brooke Cohen



Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

by

Brooke Cohen

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Overview

Guide your students into the world of poetry using this easy-to-follow format poem process.

How to Use

1. Begin by reading Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom and Tailoring Your Approach to fit your students' needs.
2. Next, review the Format Poem Introduction for details on using the format poem process.
3. Select a format poem and copy both sides of the page: the format worksheet and the poem examples.
4. Select and copy a rubric from page 17 or 18 to accompany the format poem.
5. Distribute the format poem pages and rubric to your students.
6. Select one of the Poetry Projects and follow the instructions to complete your poetry unit.

Time

Plan one class-period for presenting and working together on each format poem. Project time requirements are listed with the instructions for each project.



About the Author

Brooke Cohen worked as a middle-school English teacher for several years at Parkway Middle School in Broward County, Florida. Teaching meant the world to her, and she still keeps in touch with some of her students from ten years ago. She feels that poetry gives children a new way to express their innermost feelings.

Brooke is happily married and has two fantastic children.

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Preparing to Teach Poetry

Teaching poetry is a very rewarding experience when done correctly. Teenagers love to write poetry and are amazed that a few well-chosen words are able to express their innermost feelings. When teenagers are afraid to write poetry, it is often because they are unsure of how to proceed—there are no clear-cut answers about what is right and what is wrong. Helping students to enjoy poetry at the start of the school year is the key. Read poems aloud in class and encourage active listening. Before beginning the lessons, get ready to teach poetry by making these simple preparations:

Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom

- Show Students What Is Expected
- Display Student Poems
- Create A Safe Environment
- Organize Student Work in Folders
- Provide Access to Essential Resources

Tailoring Your Approach

- Have Reasonable Expectations
- Provide Examples
- Be Gentle With Creativity
- Include Positive Encouragement
- Offer Alternatives
- Read Every Word
- Be Compassionate
- Preserve Student Confidentiality
- Make It Interesting

Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom

Structure the classroom to make students feel comfortable when writing poetry. Students need easy access to tools, and they need to feel safe writing about personal issues.

Show Students What Is Expected

Grading

Grading assignments is one of the most difficult tasks a teacher faces. Language Arts teachers, in particular, give so many assignments that it is hard to know which ones to grade to make the process run efficiently.

If a teacher tries to grade all student assignments, he or she is grading every day and every night. If that is acceptable, then HAVE FUN!!! Otherwise, follow these suggestions to grade papers efficiently and effectively in a short amount of time.



Divide the students' work into smaller categories:

1. Very Important—assignments graded with extra care

These assignments are usually given only once each quarter and count as a large percentage of the student's overall grade. Guide students through this type of assignment. Advise students ahead of time how grades are determined and explain that students are going to be completing the assignments at home, at their own pace.

2. Important—assignments graded for following specific instructions

Important assignments deserve detailed grading since students take several days to complete this type of assignment.

3. Pass/Fail—assignments that are marked as complete or incomplete

These assignments are exercises meant to spark creativity and/or fill a requirement for a greater assignment and do not require review.

Rubrics

Rubrics are a key element in successful grading. A rubric provides students a clear explanation of the teacher's expectations. It also helps a teacher keep on track during the grading process. Follow the suggestions below when creating rubrics.

Point Value

Include a point value for all sections of the rubric. This gives students a goal at which to aim. Make the total point value either 20, 50, or 100 points, making the final percentage easy to calculate.

Specifics

Be as specific as possible in the rubric. The more specific the guidelines, the easier it is to determine a student's grade.

Consistency

Be as consistent as possible with rubrics. Consistency means fewer changes for future assignments.

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide					
Format Poem Rubric 1		Student name: _____			
Format assigned: _____		Date: _____			
Excellent Good Fair Poor	Originality	Format	Meaning	Spelling/Grammar	
	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. <i>5 points</i>	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. <i>5 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. <i>5 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. <i>5 points</i>	
	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. <i>4 points</i>	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. <i>4 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. <i>4 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. <i>4 points</i>	
	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. <i>3 points</i>	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. <i>3 points</i>	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. <i>3 points</i>	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. <i>3 points</i>	
Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is not written in the assigned format. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. <i>2 points</i>	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. <i>2 points</i>		
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points	/20
				<input type="text"/>	

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide			
Format Poem Rubric 2		Student name: _____ Date: _____	
Format assigned: _____			
Excellent	Originality and Meaning	Format	Spelling/Grammar
	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 10-12 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 4 points
	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 7-9 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 3 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 3 points
	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3-6 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 2 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 2 points
Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 1-2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 1 point	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 1 point	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.			Total Points /20

Display Student Poems

Display student poems around the classroom. Include both good and not-so-good efforts. This rewards the best students and at the same time encourages others who are working hard but still struggling.

Some poems are too intimate to display; get permission before displaying any poems that could be embarrassing to the student. Since intimacy is a matter of interpretation, it is best to get permission before displaying any poem.

Create a Safe Environment

Teach students to listen to each other respectfully. Before students read their poems, remind the class to stay quiet during the reading, maintain eye contact, and applaud once the reading is finished. Reprimand students for not displaying respectful listening behavior and review proper listening skills to create a good listening environment.

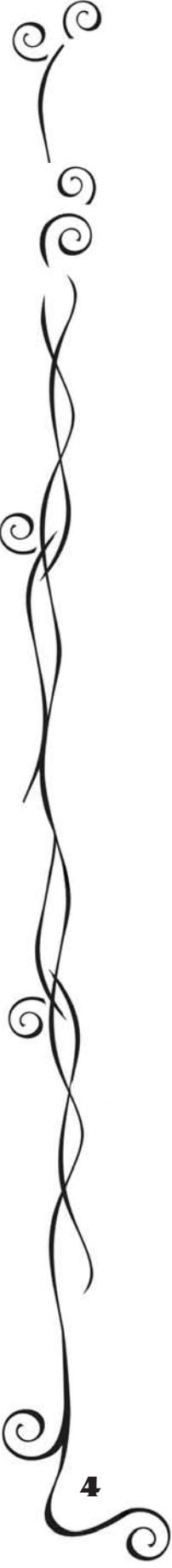
It is imperative for the teacher to demonstrate good listening skills as well. Students need to see an example of expected behavior. Find a time other than class time to grade papers or write lesson plans.

Teach students that what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom. Make it a hard-and-fast rule so students are more comfortable revealing emotions. This is especially true if they know there are consequences for any student revealing what has been shared in the classroom. It is important to emphasize emotional safety as often as possible.

Share a small amount of personal information (nothing too revealing) with the students. Even inconsequential things like a favorite food or television show make students feel at ease.

Organize Student Work in Folders

Require each student to keep a poetry folder in the classroom. Include a copy of every completed poem assignment, as well as poem rough drafts. Keep all work in progress in one pocket of the folder and all completed, graded drafts in the other pocket. Store the folders in a closet or file cabinet.



Keeping a complete record avoids excuses like “I lost it” or “I left it at home.” This is especially important when students are working on a group poem or display. In addition, writing folders keep the students’ work organized and help track progress throughout the year, making it easy for the teacher, student, and parents to see improvement. If portfolios are part of the school’s year-end requirements, poetry folders provide easy access to a student’s best work.

Provide Access to Essential Resources

Print Resources

Provide students access to both a dictionary and a thesaurus while they complete their poems. In addition, actual published compilations and poetry collections are excellent resources to have handy. Research and reading prior to and upon completing an assignment are two great reasons for providing a designated poetry bookshelf in the classroom.

Internet Resources

Computer-savvy teachers and students know that websites like Dictionary.com and its sister site Thesaurus.com, are fantastic writing aids. Consider using Encyclopedia.com when addressing historical figures as a topic for formats such as the Biographical Poem. Wondering how else the Internet can be helpful in writing poetry? Search “words that rhyme with [insert a word or word ending]” and see the web pages that result. Review all sites first for appropriate content.

Classroom Compilations

Create a poetry binder of student and teacher favorites. Assign yourself and your students the mission of locating one or more poems that speak to you personally. Find published poems that have special meaning or appeal, photocopy the poems, and place them in the binder. Share one of the poems as a class warm-up or to introduce a unit.

Tailoring Your Approach

Have Reasonable Expectations

It takes time to get ideas written down on paper. Asking students to come up with a poem in twenty minutes, or telling them to “hurry up and write,” does not encourage the creative process to flourish. In order to determine an assignment’s level of difficulty and the amount of time it takes to complete it, do it yourself beforehand.

Provide Examples

It is easier for students to understand how to write a poem if they are given a good example. Provide examples of the completed assignment and go over the examples in class, showing why each poem is a good solution for the assignment. Invite students to analyze the examples as well, stating specific reasons why the poem is good. Even though students are not experts, they begin to exercise their critical skills by analyzing poems, which aids in the creative process. If a student’s reasoning is faulty, ask the student if there is another way to look at the poem; this makes the student more receptive to other points of view, as well as more open to learning.

Be Gentle with Creativity

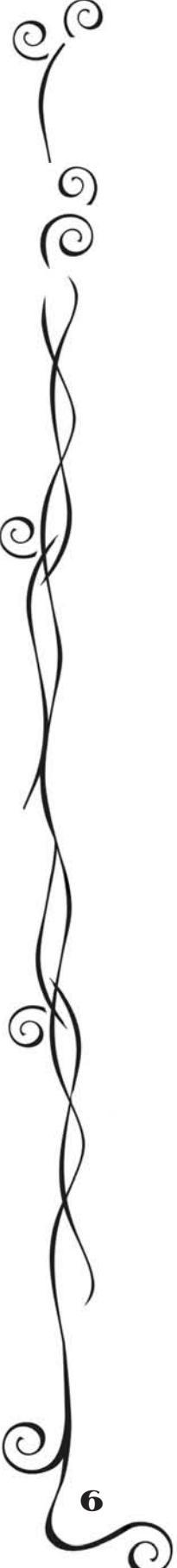
Students come from all kinds of backgrounds, and writing often brings out very personal issues. A teacher who picks apart a poem that has meaning to a student discourages further student effort instead of exciting the student about writing poetry. Even if the subject matter, style, or tone seems to be lacking, refrain from criticizing the student for any perceived lack of creativity. Student work need not match a teacher’s personal tastes. The teacher’s primary concern is that the student completes the assignment. For example, when students write a free-verse poem (one without “rules”), the grade reflects completion of the assignment, not choice of subject matter. And it is not necessary to grade every single poem; sometimes a simple word of encouragement does wonders for a student’s esteem, especially a student unsuccessful in other areas.

Encourage Student Writers

Teachers have the ability to inspire writers, build self-esteem, and encourage creativity. Unfortunately, they also have the ability to make a student feel incapable of ever writing anything worthwhile. Some students are reluctant to write poetry because they feel they have no talent. Teachers must do whatever is necessary to create a comfortable writing environment and instill in each student the confidence to write a terrific poem. Most students have latent abilities and succeed in at least one form of poetry. Introduce a format poem such as the biographical or “I am” poem, and find an honest compliment to give even the least impressive. This encourages students to write more complex poems in the future.

Offer Alternatives

Sometimes a student refuses to do an assignment because of the topic. A student comes to school with many problems, often too personal to discuss. Providing an alternative topic that is less personal, but equally difficult, lets the student complete the assignment without revealing things



too painful to share. Later, the student may feel comfortable enough to express painful feelings in a poem; if not, the student's privacy must be respected. Be especially cognizant of this when working on projects about family, as there are many family situations about which students feel sad or embarrassed. Instead of an assignment to "write a poem to your mother," instruct the class to "write a poem to someone who cares about you." This helps students find positive ways to complete the assigned poem.

Read Every Word

Avoid being in the position of the teacher who didn't bother to read the completed assignment and gave a good grade to a chili recipe! Read every word of each completed assignment. In addition to reading completed poems, spend time during class walking around and reading poems in progress; this decreases the amount of time spent grading each night. If a student has questions, discuss the issue quietly while the other students are still writing. If possible, offer a positive comment on every poem. Tell students specifically what they are doing right, not just what they're doing wrong.

Be Compassionate

Imagine what it feels like to share creative ideas with others. Is the primary emotion fear of what others might think? Embarrassment? Or hope? These are some of the things students feel when sharing their poems. Be compassionate and understanding when offering advice or suggesting ways to improve students' poems; be careful with criticism and extravagant with praise. If possible, avoid changing students' words, deleting them, or moving them around. (At times a graded poem looks like it bled to death on the page because of all the red marks.) When words are changed or deleted, when lines are moved, it makes the student feel the poem is no longer his or hers, and it invites discouragement. Remember, it is not the teacher's job to turn students into the greatest poets of all time; rather it is to get them excited about writing and interested in learning more. When a teacher succeeds in this, everything else falls into place.

Preserve Student Confidentiality

Tell students up front (and remind them often) that the poems they write in class are between them and the teacher (unless the poem indicates they are thinking about hurting themselves or someone else). Poems are never to be shown to anyone without students' permission, not even other teachers or students' parents. It's important that the teacher gain the students' trust; even more important is that the teacher never break that trust. Trust lets students reach inside to create meaningful poems.

Make It Interesting

Teach poetry at the level of the students' understanding. There are hundreds of resources from the local or school library that make learning about poetry fun. A list of such poems, divided by subject matter, begins on page 63. Each of these poems has a unique quality, making it easy for students to relate to the words and imagery. The more a student relates to a poem and understands its meaning, the more open he or she is to more complex works.

Format Poems

Introduction

Format poems are a great way to begin teaching poetry. Format poems provide students with specific rules for correctly creating poems. Having specific rules alleviates initial student resistance and eases anxiety, because students often don't realize they are writing poetry!

Tailor assignments to the skill level and interest of the students to make poetry writing an enjoyable challenge. Many students have probably written haiku, limericks, and diamantés since the third grade, so try to add a twist on the poems by selecting a specific topic or incorporating the assignment as part of an interdisciplinary unit.

Time needed: One class period per format-poem worksheet for simple or short poems. Grant more time, as needed, for longer and more complex poems.

Steps to using the Format Poems

1. Display the format-poem worksheet on the board for students to see.
2. Distribute photocopies of the poem examples and worksheet.
3. Explain the format, read the examples aloud to the students, and discuss them.
4. Create one poem together as a class.
5. Brainstorm about topics for the students' poems and suggest several alternatives.
6. Display and explain the rubric being used to grade the format poem.
7. Give students adequate time to write their own poems.
8. Write your own format poem and share it with the class.
9. Ask students to volunteer to share their poems (with respect to student privacy).
10. Collect and grade the poems using the selected rubric.

Option: Have students refine their poems, and consider the format-poem worksheets as their rough drafts. Instruct students to complete a final typed version and grade it using the selected rubric.

The format poems all follow the above instructions. For additional information about a particular format, review the next nine pages. The reproducible rubrics are located on pages 17 and 18, followed by the format-poem worksheets and examples.

Siegophical Examples

Example 1

Me
I'm not going to play
Leave home, for my dog, happy
I'm not going to play
I'm not going to play

Example 2

Me
I have, go to the beach
I'm not going to play
I'm not going to play

Opposite Poem Examples

Example 1

I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends

Example 2

I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends

Japanese Lantern Poem Examples

Example 1

I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends

Example 2

I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends
I like when the weekend ends

Diamante Poem Examples

Example 1

School
School
Back to class
School
School

Example 2

Snow
Snow
Snowflakes fall
Snow
Snow

Example 3

Snow
Snow
Snowflakes fall
Snow
Snow

Example 4

School
School
Back to class
School
School

Example 5

Snow
Snow
Snowflakes fall
Snow
Snow

Parts of Speech Poem Examples

EXAMPLE 1

A flower
Beautiful and fragrant
Spreading and blooming
Quacky
Blossom

EXAMPLE 2

A hamster
Cute and cool
Eating and dancing
Hairy
Hamster

EXAMPLE 3

Sausage
Sweet and sticky
Bursting and playing
Happy
Sausage

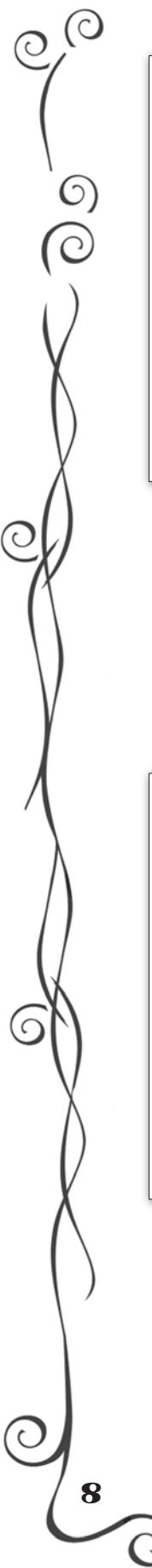
EXAMPLE 4

A convertible
Fast and sleek
Spreading and moving
Quacky
Carrot

EXAMPLE 5

A cat
Cute and small
Dancing and running
Quacky
Cat





Biographical Poem

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide Student name _____ Date _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested below. Use phrases or single words. Use the first and last lines, on which you can write single words.

(first name)	
I	(three traits that best describe you)
Loves	(three people/things you love)
Is good at	(three things you do well)
Feels	(three things you feel)
Needs	(three things you need)
Wants	(three things you want)
Fears	(three things you fear)
Likes to eat	(three foods you like)
Watches	(three TV shows/movies you like)
Is a resident of	(city, state where you live)
(last name)	

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO.

19

i am POEM

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide Student name _____ Date _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested below. Use phrases or single words. Use the first and last lines, on which you can write single words.

I am	(an special characteristic that you have)
I	(something that you actually concern about)
I have,	(an imaginary word)
I see,	(an imaginary sight)
I eat,	(an actual eating)
I am	(repeat the first line of this poem)
I pretend	(something that you actually pretend to do)
I feel	(a feeling that you have)
I stand	(an imaginary stand)
I never	(something that bothers you)
I	(something that makes you very sad)
I am	(repeat the first line of this poem)
I understand	(something that you know is true)
I sing	(something that you believe in)
I dream	(something that you dream about)
I try	(something that you make an effort to do)
I hope	(something that you hope for)
I am	(repeat the first line of this poem)

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO.

21

Biographical Format Poem (page 19)

Suggestions:

During the first week of class, assign the Biographical Poem as a meet-and-greet exercise. Then display the poems around the classroom to help students get to know one another.

Ask students to find similarities between themselves and other student poets in the class, and invite them to share their observations during a class discussion.

Additional Project: Ask each student to make a display using the final draft of the Biographical Poem: paste the poem on construction paper or poster board, decorate it with drawings or a collage, and add a picture of himself or herself. (Instruct students to bring in photographs or draw self-portraits as their first homework assignment.)

I AM Format Poem (page 21)

Additional Instructions: Tell students that their answers need to be phrases, not single words—with the exception of the “I AM” line. Ask them to be as creative as possible.

Suggestions:

Use this poem at the beginning of an autobiography unit.

Revisit this poem at a later date and instruct students to write the “I AM” poem about a specific person. For example:

- Someone for whom they are thankful (at Thanksgiving)
- A male family member or role model (for Father’s Day)
- A favorite teacher (for Teacher Appreciation Day)
- The main character from a cherished story or book

Additional Project: Instruct students to make a frame for this poem. Use poster board or construction paper, or create a frame using image-making software. Decorate the frame with words and/or pictures (from magazines or online sites) relating to the poem. Place a final draft of the poem in the frame.

Look in the Mirror Poem

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Use words and phrases that best describe YOU.

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
A _____ person looking back at me.
I'm really good at _____
and love to _____
I spend lots of time _____
and can't wait for _____
I could improve my _____
and _____ is hard for me.
but I know if I try, I'll be the best I can be.

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO. **23**

Look In the Mirror Format Poem (page 23)

Additional Instructions: Instruct students to fill in the blanks of this poem in a way that reflects them.

Suggestion: Revisit this poem later in the year and ask students to write this poem about a character from a book they are reading.

Additional Project: Ask students to create a “mirror.” Glue a piece of aluminum foil to the front of a poster board or piece of construction paper. Write the poem on the back.

Opposite Poem

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Include descriptive adjectives and nouns for each pair of items.

I love _____
I dislike _____
I have _____
I want _____
My friends say I am _____
My family says I am _____
One day I will _____
I will never _____
My favorite foods are _____
I'll never eat _____
I feel sad when _____
I feel happy when _____
I feel safe when _____
I feel scared when _____

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO. **25**

Opposite Format Poem (page 25)

Suggestion: Ask students to make each pair rhyme as an additional challenge.

Additional Project: Create a collage illustrating the opposites described in this poem. Use drawings or find pictures in magazines or on the Internet.



Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide
Student name _____ Date _____
ACROSTIC POEM
Instructions: Write about a vertical word, profession, or topic. The vertical word must be seven or more letters long. Write complete sentences, each starting with the letter of the vertical word and continuing horizontally.
Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO. **27**

Acrostic Format Poem (page 27)

Additional Instructions: Emphasize to the students that the vertical word must be seven or more letters long, and to write complete sentences, each starting with a letter of the vertical word. Sentences extend horizontally.

Suggestion: Write about a specific person, profession, or topic. For example: best friend, desired career, current event, family member, holiday, movie character.

Additional Projects:

Ask students to create an acrostic poem as a gift for a friend or family member by writing the poem on a piece of paper, trimming, then framing it. Give extra credit if the students bring a note from the recipient verifying that the poem was received as a gift.

Have students make a collage, with the poem as a centerpiece surrounded with descriptive pictures and words found online or in magazines.

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide
Student name _____ Date _____
Japanese Lantern Poem
Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words or phrases with the required number of syllables to evoke a feeling or scene. Use descriptive terms to evoke a feeling or scene.
(one syllable)
(two syllables)
(three syllables)
(four syllables)
(repeat first line)
Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO. **29**

Japanese Lantern Format Poem (page 29)

Additional Supplies: Scissors, markers or colored pencils, enough string to span the room.

Additional Instructions:

1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. When everyone is done, display the lantern poems on a string hanging across the room.

Format:

Line 1: one syllable

Line 2: two syllables

Line 3: three syllables

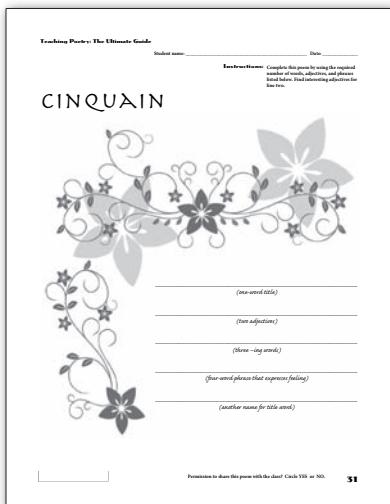
Line 4: four syllables

Line 5: same as line one

Suggestions: Use the Japanese lantern poem to introduce a lesson about different forms of description. Introduce an interdisciplinary unit about seasons with a Japanese lantern poem, as many are about nature.

Additional Project:

Ask the students to write the final draft of this poem on paper cut into the shape of a lantern. Cut a hole near the top of the lantern and thread a short piece of string or yarn through the hole. Stretch a long piece of string or yarn across the room and attach it close to the ceiling. Tie students' lanterns to the string as a display.



Cinquain Format Poem (page 31)

Additional Supplies: A thesaurus for each student

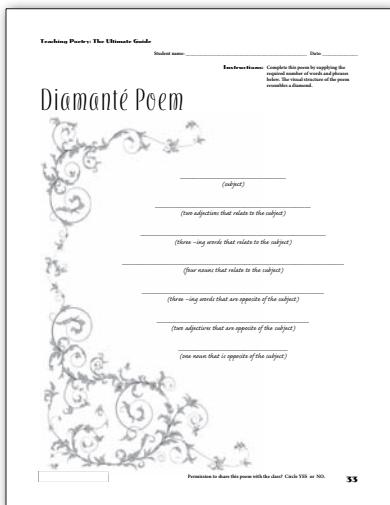
Additional Instructions: Review how to use a thesaurus to find interesting adjectives for line two.

Format:

- Line 1:** one-word title
- Line 2:** two adjectives
- Line 3:** three -ing words
- Line 4:** four-word phrase expressing a feeling
- Line 5:** another word for the title word

Suggestion: Use the cinquain poem when introducing adjectives.

Additional Project: Instruct students to create displays based on their poems, using pictures found in magazines or online to illustrate each poem. Place poems with similar imagery near each other, forming groups. Divide the class into groups based on the similarities of their poems. Ask each group to write a new poem as a collaborative effort.



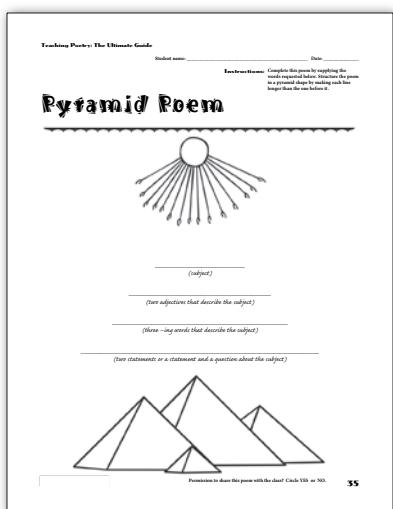
Diamanté Format Poem (page 33)

Format:

- Line 1:** the subject
- Line 2:** two adjectives relating to the subject
- Line 3:** three -ing words relating to the subject
- Line 4:** four nouns relating to the subject
- Line 5:** three -ing words that are the opposite of the subject
- Line 6:** two adjectives that are the opposite of the subject
- Line 7:** a noun that is the opposite of the subject

Suggestion: Revisit the poem at a later date and assign a specific topic: family. Start the poem with a female relative such as mother, sister, or grandmother, and end the poem with a male figure such as father, brother, or grandfather. Offer as much interpretive leeway to the students as possible, since some families have nontraditional structures.

Additional Project: Tell each student to write the final draft of his or her diamanté poem on a piece of paper cut in the shape of a diamond. Hang a long piece of string or yarn from the ceiling, letting the end reach the floor. Staple or tape the students' poems down the length of the yarn, with an inch or two separating the poems. Repeat in all four corners of the room, if necessary.



Pyramid Format Poem (page 35)

Additional Instructions: Tell students that the first line is the shortest and each subsequent line must be longer than the one before it.

Format:

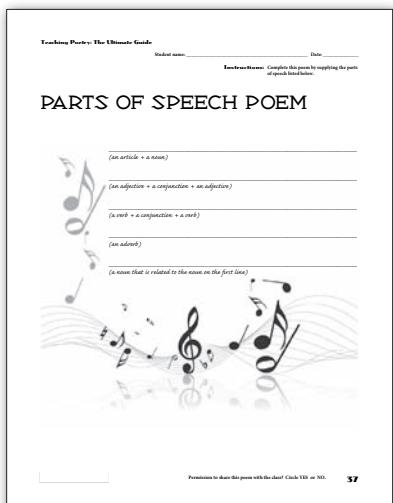
Line 1: the subject

Line 2: two adjectives that describe the subject

Line 3: three -ing words that describe the subject

Line 4: two statements or a statement and a question about the subject

Suggestion: Display poems in a pyramid shape on one of the classroom walls.



Parts of Speech Format Poem (page 37)

Format:

Line 1: an article plus a noun

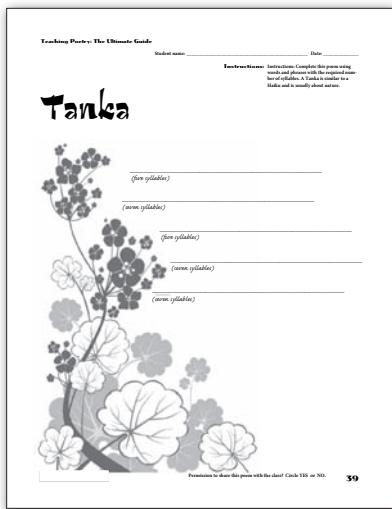
Line 2: an adjective plus a conjunction plus an adjective

Line 3: a verb plus a conjunction plus a verb

Line 4: an adverb

Line 5: a noun related to line 1

Suggestions: Use a parts of speech poem as the introduction to a parts-of-speech unit.



Tanka Format Poem (page 39)

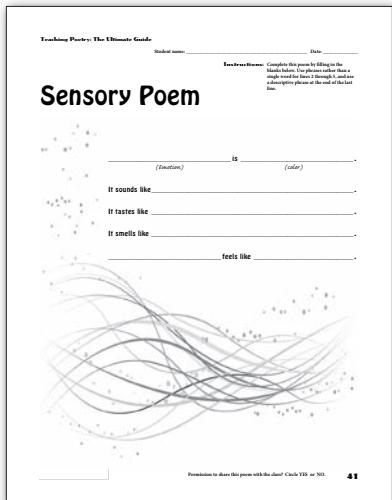
Additional Instructions:

1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. Explain to students that a Tanka is usually about nature—similar to a Haiku.

Format:

- Line 1:** five syllables
Line 2: seven syllables
Line 3: five syllables
Line 4: seven syllables
Line 5: seven syllables

Additional Project: Give the class sheets of paper in colors that represent each season (winter is blue or white; summer is yellow or orange; spring is green or yellow; fall is brown, orange, or red). Instruct students to choose the season that most closely matches their poems and write a final draft of the poem on paper of the corresponding color. Display the poems according to the season and ask students to compare and contrast different ways to describe the time of year.



Sensory Format Poem (page 41)

Additional Instructions:

1. Brainstorm with the class about all the different emotions a person has. Do this prior to assigning the poem for writing.
2. Instruct students to write sentences rather than single words for lines 2 through 5 and to use a descriptive phrase at the end of line 6.
3. Tell students to be specific with color choices and other details (not *blue*, but *sky blue* or *turquoise* or *cobalt*).

Suggestion: Use this poem to introduce students to similes.



Couplets

Instructions: Use these lines for couplets to write your poem. Couplets are poems in which every two lines rhyme and are approximately the same length.

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide
Student name _____ Date _____
45

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO.

Couplet Format Poem (page 43)

Additional Instructions: Tell students to have fun with the poem. Couplets are sometimes humorous, and they are written about any topic.

Format: A couplet is a poem in which every two lines rhyme and are of approximately the same length.

Additional Project: Give the students the option of creating a booklet as the final. Instructions are below:

1. Fold a piece of paper into fourths.
2. Cut the bottom of the paper so that it opens as a booklet.
3. Staple the inside edge.
4. Write one or two lines from the poem on each page.
5. Illustrate each page (optional).

Haiku

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words and places with the required number of syllables listed below. Haiku are usually about nature and are very descriptive.

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide
Student name _____ Date _____
45

(title—optional)
(five syllables)
(seven syllables)
(five syllables)

Permission to share this poem with the class! Circle YES or NO.

Haiku Format Poem (page 45)

Additional Instructions:

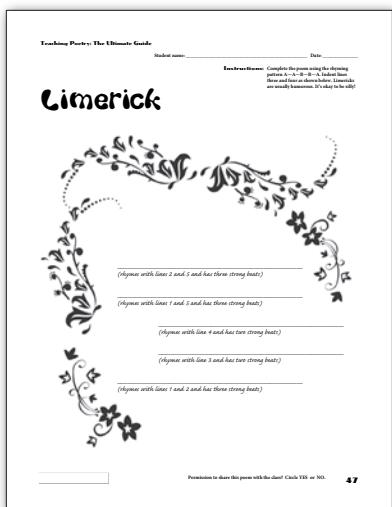
1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. Tell students to be as imaginative as possible. Haiku are usually about nature and are very descriptive.

Format:

Title is optional (usually consisting of a single word or short phrase)

- Line 1:** five syllables
Line 2: seven syllables
Line 3: five syllables

Suggestion: Share Sokka's Story in the episode "Tales from Ba Sing Se" from the animated television program *Avatar*. Sokka's Story is about a young man who accidentally lands in a poetry class and engages in a haiku slam with the students there. It's entertaining and is an opportunity to connect with the haiku form in a new way.



Limerick Format Poem (page 47)

Additional Instructions: Explain to students that limericks are often humorous. It's okay for the students to have fun and be silly!

Format:

Rhyming pattern A—A—B—B—A

Indent lines three and four

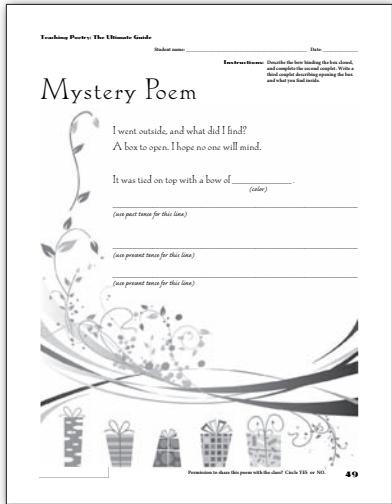
Line 1: rhymes with lines 2 and 5 and has three strong beats (often starts with "There once was ...")

Line 2: rhymes with lines 1 and 5 and has three strong beats

Line 3: rhymes with line 4 and has two strong beats

Line 4: rhymes with line 3 and has two strong beats

Line 5: rhymes with lines 1 and 2 and has three strong beats



Mystery Format Poem (page 49)

Additional Instructions: Tell students to close their eyes and imagine a mysterious box that is closed with a ribbon. Is the box a gift, an old cardboard box, or something in-between? Now, have them imagine opening that box. What do they find? Is it funny? Scary? Good? Bad? Tell them to explore the possibilities.

Format:

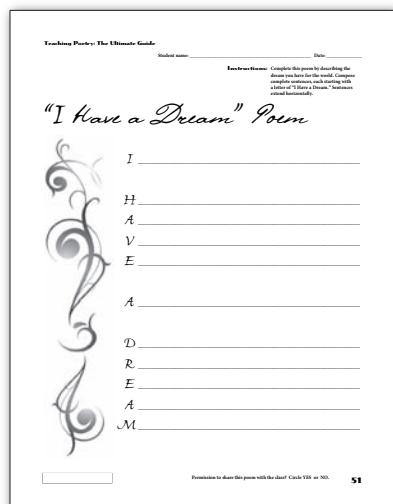
I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of ...

(Complete the sentence above and then write the second line of this couplet)

(Write a third couplet, using present tense, describing what is found when the box is opened.)

Additional Project: Instruct students to bring a box from home, with something to tie it closed (string, ribbon, etc.). Ask the students to write the first two couplets on the outside of the box. On the inside of the box, have students write the third couplet and include a photo, collage, drawing, or sculpture to illustrate the poem.



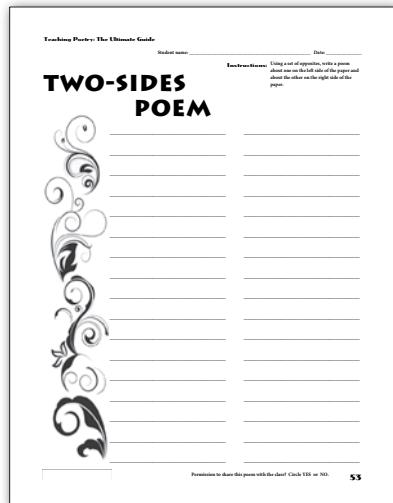
“I Have a Dream” Poem Format (page 51)

Additional Instructions: Ask students to describe the dreams they have for the world.

Suggestions:

Assign this poem at the beginning of Black History Month or when teaching the class about Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

Challenge students by requiring them to make the poem rhyme.



Two-sides Poem Format (page 53)

Additional Instructions:

1. Brainstorm with students about opposites and write them on the boards (people, things, feelings, foods, seasons, etc.).
 2. Assign each student a set of opposites with which to work.

Additional Project: Ask students to write each poem on a separate piece of paper and illustrate the poems with drawings or with pictures found in magazines or on the Internet. Display the poems side by side.

Format Poem Rubric 1**Format assigned:** _____**Student name:** _____**Date:** _____

	<i>Originality</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. <i>5 points</i>	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. <i>5 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. <i>5 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. <i>5 points</i>	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. <i>4 points</i>	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. <i>4 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. <i>4 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. <i>4 points</i>	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. <i>3 points</i>	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. <i>3 points</i>	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. <i>3 points</i>	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. <i>3 points</i>	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is not written in the assigned format. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. <i>2 points</i>	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. <i>2 points</i>	

Write/Read additional comments on the back.

Total Points*/20*

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Format Poem Rubric 1**Format assigned:** _____**Student name:** _____**Date:** _____

	<i>Originality</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. <i>5 points</i>	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. <i>5 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. <i>5 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. <i>5 points</i>	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. <i>4 points</i>	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. <i>4 points</i>	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. <i>4 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. <i>4 points</i>	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. <i>3 points</i>	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. <i>3 points</i>	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. <i>3 points</i>	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. <i>3 points</i>	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is not written in the assigned format. <i>2 points</i>	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. <i>2 points</i>	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. <i>2 points</i>	

Write/Read additional comments on the back.

Total Points*/20*

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Format Poem Rubric 2

Format assigned: _____

Student name: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Originality and Meaning</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 10-12 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 7-9 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 3 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 3 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3-6 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 2 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 2 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 1-2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 1 point	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 1 point	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points _____ /20

--

Format Poem Rubric 2

Format assigned: _____

Student name: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Originality and Meaning</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 10-12 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 7-9 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 3 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 3 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3-6 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 2 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 2 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 1-2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 1 point	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 1 point	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points _____ /20

--

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Biographical Poem

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the requested information.

(first name)

Is _____, _____, _____
(three traits that best describe you)

Loves _____, _____, _____
(three people/things you love)

Is good at _____, _____, _____
(three things you do well)

Feels _____, _____, _____
(three things you feel)

Needs _____, _____, _____
(three things you need)

Wants _____, _____, _____
(three things you want)

Fears _____, _____, _____
(three things you fear)

Likes to eat _____, _____, _____
(three foods you like)

Watches _____, _____, _____
(three TV shows/movies you like)

Is a resident of _____, _____
(city, state where you live)

(last name)

Biographical Examples

Example 1

Mr.
 Is smart, easy-going, addicted to pizza
 Loves himself, his family, his dog, Snoopy
 Is good at playing basketball, writing, listening
 Feels sleepy, happy, nervous to start a new school year
 Needs a hug, a girlfriend, new sneakers
 Wants a million dollars, to live in New York, his students to have a successful year
 Fears failing, sharks, drugs
 Likes to eat pizza, pizza, pizza
 Watches *American Idol*, *CSI*, Will Ferrell movies
 Is a resident of Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Smith

Example 2

Amy
 Is funny, goofy, in love
 Loves John, texting, hot air balloons
 Is good at telling jokes, tripping over her own feet, annoying her big brother
 Feels happy, tired, excited about the dance after tonight's game
 Needs new socks, a brother with a sense of humor, aliens to abduct her brother
 Wants to see a UFO, go to college, meet Conan O'Brien
 Fears tripping over her own feet more than once a day, making a lame joke,
 being abducted by aliens
 Likes to eat M&M's, hot fudge sundaes, popcorn
 Watches *The Daily Show*, sci-fi movies, the Red Sox
 Is a resident of Boston, MA
 Nicco

Example 3

John
 Is friendly, smart, strong
 Loves football, hanging out, Amy
 Is good at football, math, getting teachers to like him
 Feels pumped up about tonight's game, nervous about SATs, angry with Dad
 Needs a new helmet, new cell phone, dad to get off his back
 Wants an iPhone, to win the game tonight, freedom
 Fears losing, snakes, not catching an easy pass
 Likes to eat his mom's spaghetti and meatballs, sausage and mushroom pizza, doughnuts
 Watches football, basketball, hockey
 Is a resident of Boston, MA
 Turrono

i am POEM



Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested below. Use phrases to fill in all of the blanks, except for the first and last lines, on which you can use single words.

- I am _____
(two special characteristics that you have)
- I wonder _____
(something that you are actually curious about)
- I hear _____
(an imaginary sound)
- I see _____
(an imaginary sight)
- I want _____
(an actual desire)
- I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)
- I pretend _____
(something that you actually pretend to do)
- I feel _____
(a feeling that you have)
- I touch _____
(an imaginary touch)
- I worry _____
(something that bothers you)
- I cry _____
(something that makes you very sad)
- I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)
- I understand _____
(something that you know is true)
- I say _____
(something that you believe in)
- I dream _____
(something that you dream about)
- I try _____
(something that you make an effort to do)
- I hope _____
(something that you hope for)
- I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)

i am POEM Examples



Example 1

I am caring and loving.
 I wonder if I am reaching any of my students.
 I hear my name being called even when I'm alone.
 I see a bright, hopeful future for our world.
 I want my students to stay away from drugs and gangs.
 I am caring and loving.
 I pretend that I can make a difference.
 I feel sad that my students won't all graduate.
 I touch the sky with my imagination.
 I worry that some of my students will turn to drugs.
 I cry when I get frustrated.
 I am caring and loving.

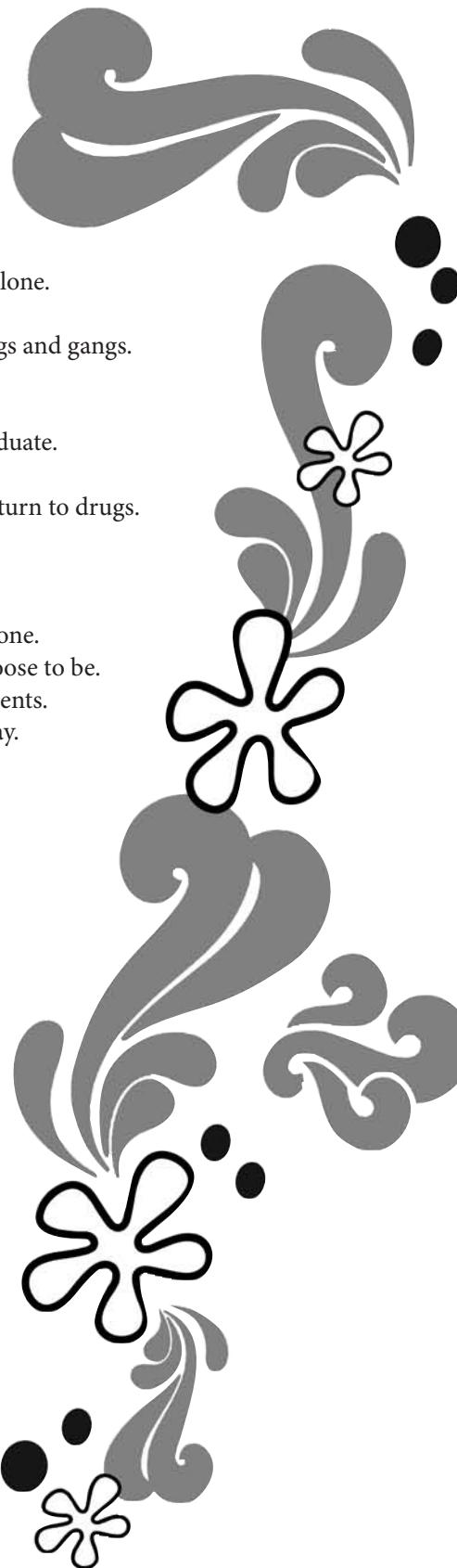
I understand that you can't save everyone.
 I say that you can be anything you choose to be.
 I dream that I will reach all of my students.
 I try to be thankful and happy every day.
 I hope that I will be lucky in my life.
 I am caring and loving.

Example 2

I am silly and goofy
 I wonder if anyone takes me seriously
 I hear my teachers saying "sit down"
 I see my future on a stage
 I want to be famous
 I am silly and goofy

I pretend that I don't understand
 I feel that people like me this way
 I touch the handle of the microphone
 I worry that I won't make it
 I cry beneath my smile
 I am silly and goofy

I understand fame is hard to reach
 I say "go for it"
 I dream about accepting my Emmy
 I try to make you laugh
 I hope that you see the person behind the smile
 I am silly and goofy



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Use words and phrases that best describe YOU.

Look in the Mirror Poem

I look in the mirror and what do I see?

A _____, _____, _____ person looking back at me.
(fill in three traits)

I'm really good at _____
(something you are good at)

and love to _____.
(something you love to do)

I spend lots of time _____.
(something you spend a lot of time doing)

and can't wait for _____.
(something you are looking forward to and rhymes with last word in the "love to do" line)

I could improve my _____.
(something you could do better)

and _____ is hard for me,
(something hard for you to do)

but I know if I try, I'll be the best I can be.

Look in the Mirror Poem Examples

Example 1

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
 An average, fun, kind person looking back at me.
 I'm really good at swimming
 and love to dance.
 I spend lots of time reading
 and can't wait for romance.
 I could improve my math skills
 and algebra is hard for me,
 but I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.



Example 2

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
 A serious, quiet, smart person looking back at me.
 I'm really good at writing
 And I love to sing.
 I spend lots of time studying
 And can't wait for spring.
 I could improve my math skills
 And talking to others is hard for me,
 But I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.



Example 3

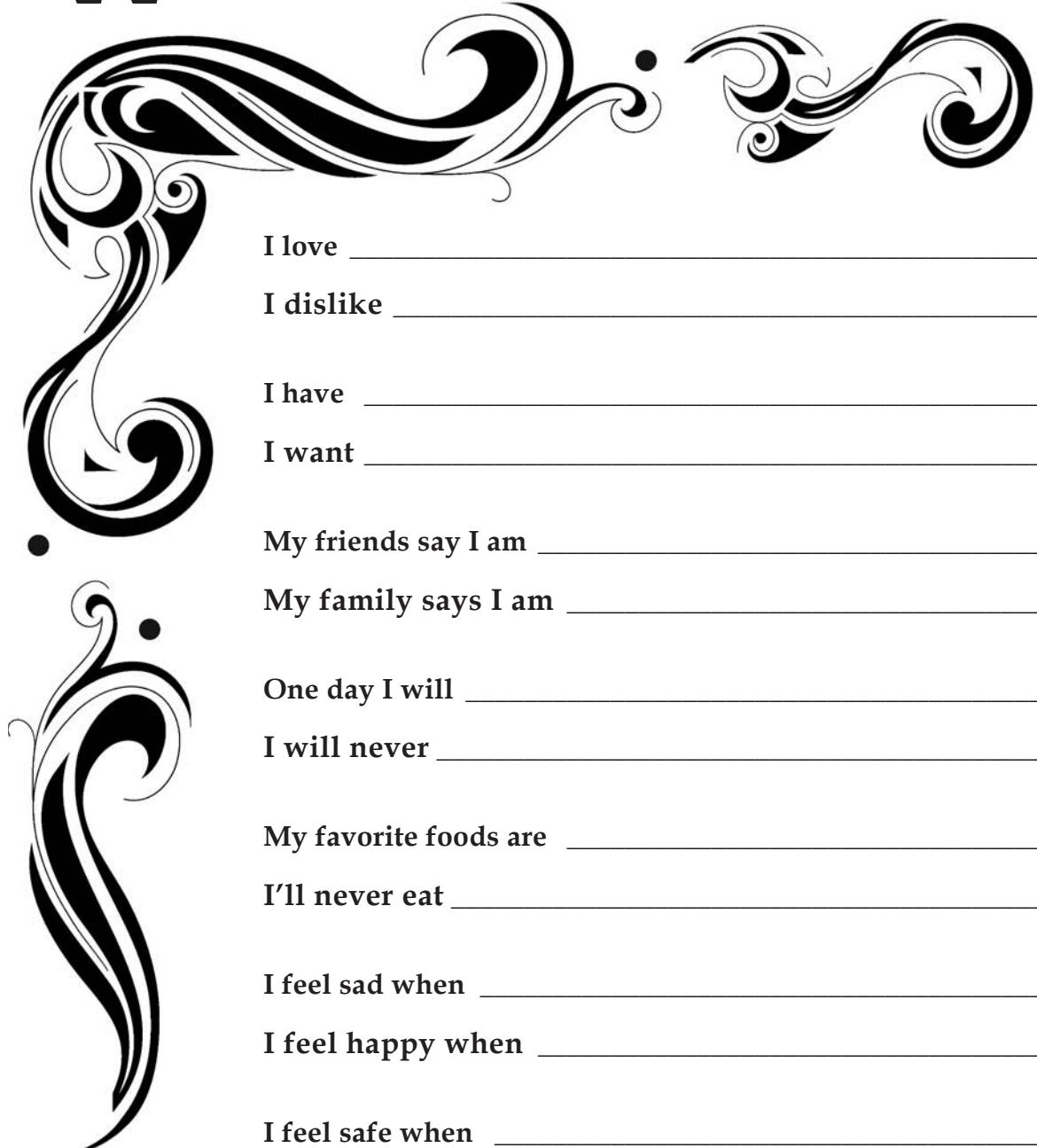
I look in the mirror and what do I see?
 A funny, pretty, sweet person looking back at me.
 I'm really good at listening
 And I love to write.
 I spend lots of time texting
 And can't wait for Prom Night.
 I could improve my posture
 And accepting myself is hard for me,
 But I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Include descriptive adjectives and make the last word of each pair of lines rhyme.

Opposite Poem



I love _____

I dislike _____

I have _____

I want _____

My friends say I am _____

My family says I am _____

One day I will _____

I will never _____

My favorite foods are _____

I'll never eat _____

I feel sad when _____

I feel happy when _____

I feel safe when _____

I feel scared when _____

Opposite Poem Examples

Example 1

I love to spend time with my friends.
I dislike when the weekend ends.

I have lots of shoes and tons of hats.
I want to get another orange cat.

My friends say I am lovable and full of fun.
My family says I am the crazy one.

One day I will write a book.
I will never become a criminal or crook.

My favorite foods are pizza and ice cream with cherries.
I'll never eat ants or rotten blueberries.

I feel sad when my head hurts or I get a bad grade.
I feel happy when I babysit and then I get paid.

I feel safe when I'm home on the phone.
I feel scared when I'm all alone.

Example 2

I love texting and talking to my friends.
I dislike when the summertime ends.

I have a lot of people to love.
I want money to rain from above.

My friends say I am up for a blast.
My family says I always come in last.

One day I will buy myself a new red car.
I will never waste time wishing on a star.

My favorite foods are chocolate brownies with whipped cream on top.
I will never eat corn that is not popped.

I feel sad when I am all alone.
I feel happy when I spend hours on the phone.

I feel safe when I am tucked in my bed.
I feel scared when there is lightning overhead.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Write about a specific person, profession, or topic. The vertical word must be seven or more letters long. Compose complete sentences, each starting with the letter of the vertical word and extending horizontally.

ACROSTIC POEM

The template features a central vertical column of ten horizontal lines for writing, flanked by a delicate, symmetrical floral and vine pattern in light gray. The pattern includes various leaves, small flowers, and circular motifs, all rendered in a soft, monochromatic style that complements the white background of the lines.

ACROSTIC POEM EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

Teaching is a way to change lives.
Each teacher has something special to bring to students.
All students are important and unique.
Caring is a necessity for teachers.
Help is right there when a teacher is near.
Education is the key to success.
Respect is essential in the classroom.

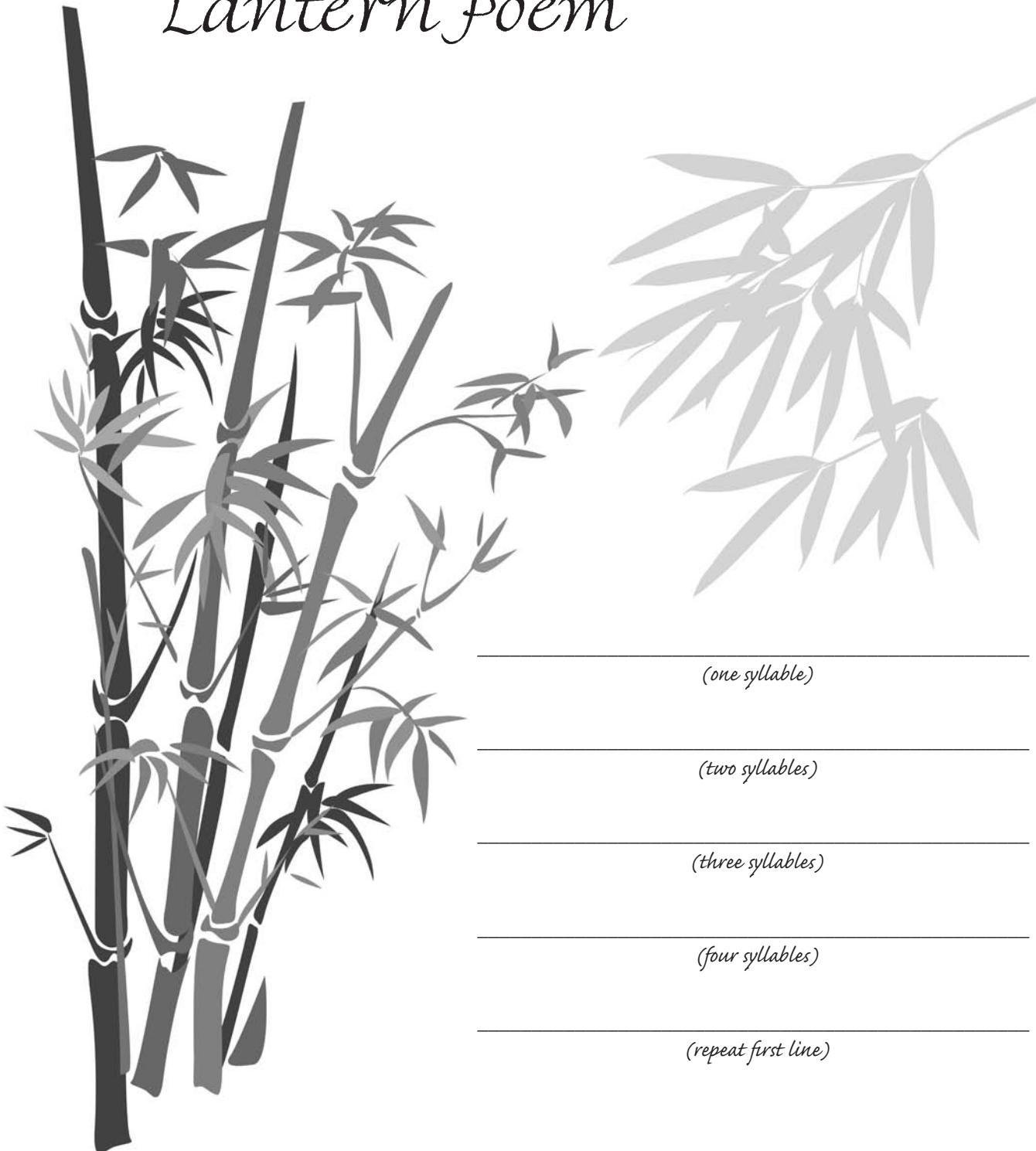
EXAMPLE 2

Can you believe how cruel her stepmother was?
Iwish I had a fairy godmother!
Now hurry back before midnight!
Do you think they lived happily ever after?
Even the mice loved Cinderella!
Running down the steps made her lose her glass slipper!
Everyone thought Cinderella was the most beautiful girl at the ball!
Look at how lovely she was in her gorgeous gown.
Living in an attic would be very dusty!
All of the animals pitched in to make Cinderella's party dress.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Japanese Lantern Poem

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words or phrases with the required number of syllables. Japanese Lantern poems combine descriptive terms to evoke a feeling or create a word-picture.



_____ (one syllable)

_____ (two syllables)

_____ (three syllables)

_____ (four syllables)

_____ (repeat first line)

Japanese Lantern Poem Examples



Example 1

Fall
Changes
Leaves tumble
Beds of orange
Fall



Example 2

Snow
Cold, wet
Snowflakes fall
Winter white bed
Snow

Example 3

School
Read, write
Run to class
Homework is hard
School

Example 4

Friends
Laugh, play
Text and talk
Make room for more
Friends

Example 5

Gym
Sweat, run
climb the rope
locker-room smell
Gym

Example 6

Birthday
Smile, laugh
Time with friends
Lots of presents
Birthday

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by using the required number of words, adjectives, and phrases listed below. Find interesting adjectives for line two.

CINQUAIN



(one-word title)

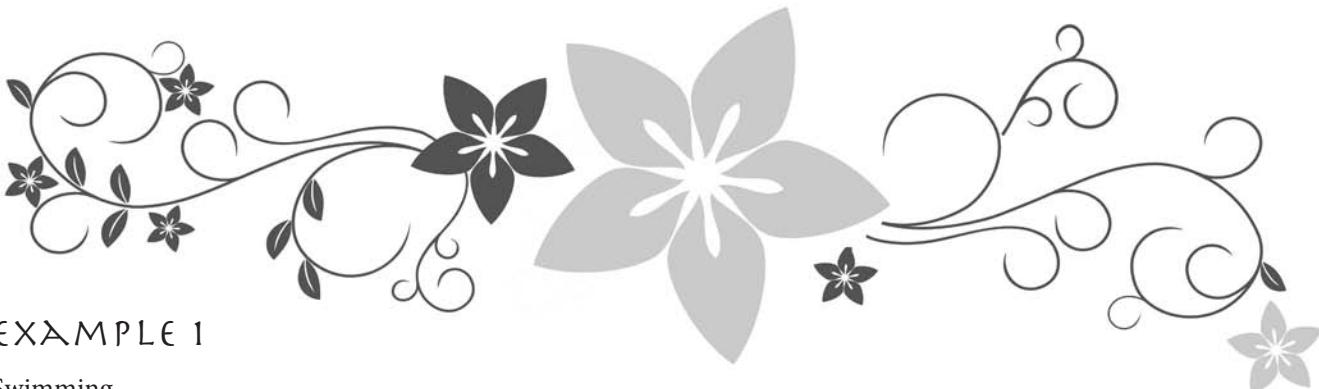
(two adjectives)

(three -ing words)

(four-word phrase that expresses feeling)

(another name for title word)

CINQUAIN EXAMPLES



EXAMPLE 1

Swimming
Wet, cool
Diving, splashing, invigorating
Hot days melt away
Butterfly stroke

EXAMPLE 2

Dancing
Birdlike, free
Spinning, twirling, leaping
Sadness fades from me
Ballet

EXAMPLE 3

Football
Tough, powerful
Pushing, plowing, succumbing
Hot knife through butter
Touchdown



EXAMPLE 4

Mom
Young, old
Nagging, worrying, talking
Looks out for me
Best friend

EXAMPLE 5

Florida
Hot, sticky
Flying, swimming, fanning
Shirt sticks to me
Vacation

EXAMPLE 6

Oak tree
Magical, majestic
Bending, forming, rooting
A sculpture of wood
Shade

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the required number of words and phrases below. The visual structure of the poem resembles a diamond.

Diamanté Poem



(subject)

(two adjectives that relate to the subject)

(three -ing words that relate to the subject)

(four nouns that relate to the subject)

(three -ing words that are opposite of the subject)

(two adjectives that are opposite of the subject)

(one noun that is opposite of the subject)

Diamanté Poem Examples

Example 1

School
Difficult, busy
Working, writing, reading
Teachers, books, chalkboard, tests
Relaxing, watching, playing
Fun, calm
Home

Example 2

Dog
Friend, furry
Walking, playing, licking
Leash, bowl, bed, food
Staring, hiding, meowing
Sleek, statue-like
Cat

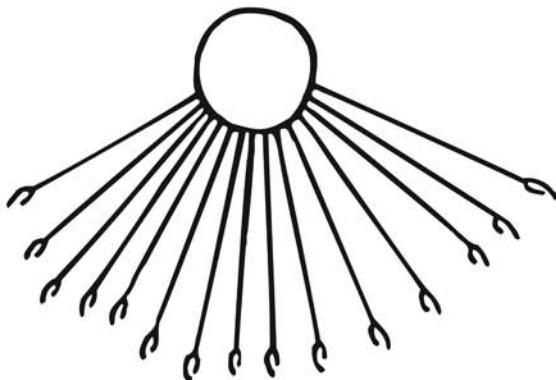
Example 3

Brother
Confidante, idol
Texting, learning, roughhousing
College, car, girlfriend, iPhone
Ignoring, annoying, reading
Unlikable, uncaring
Sister

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the words requested below. Structure the poem in a pyramid shape by making each line longer than the one before it.

Pyramid Poem

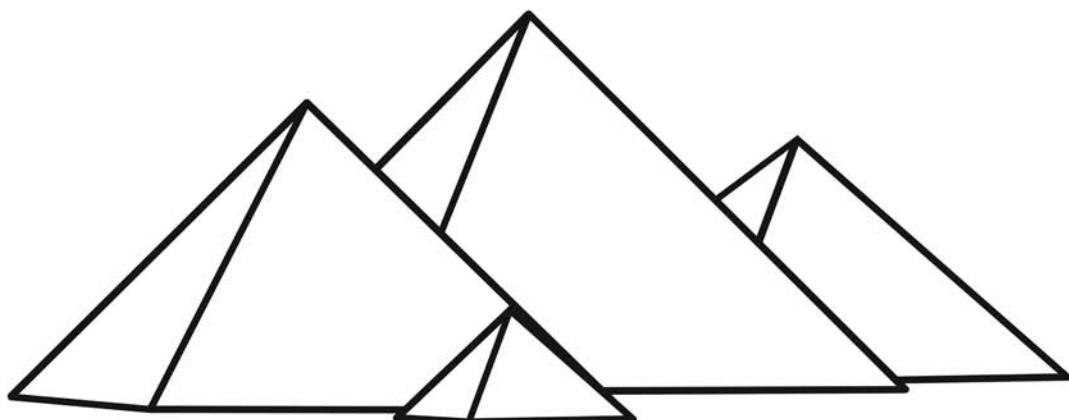


(subject)

(two adjectives that describe the subject)

(three -ing words that describe the subject)

(two statements or a statement and a question about the subject)



Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

Pyramid Poem Examples



Example 1

Ice cream
Delicious, sweet
Tasting, refreshing, cooling
My favorite is Rocky Road. What's yours?

Example 2

Pizza
Bubbly, cheesy
Eating, burning, dripping
Pepperoni is perfection. What do you like?

Example 3

Shower
Smelly, clean
Soaping, rinsing, toweling
Strawberry wash is my favorite. I love the smell.

Example 4

Autumn
Colorful, bare
Falling, dropping, raking
Leaves change. People don't.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the parts of speech listed below.

PARTS OF SPEECH POEM

(an article + a noun)

(an adjective + a conjunction + an adjective)

(a verb + a conjunction + a verb)

(an adverb)

(a noun that is related to the noun on the first line)



PARTS OF SPEECH POEM EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

A flower
Beautiful and fragrant
Swaying and bending
Quietly
Roses

EXAMPLE 2

A hammock
Comfortable and cool
Drifting and moving
Softly
Breeze

EXAMPLE 3

Summer
Sweet and sticky
Running and playing
Happily
August

EXAMPLE 4

A convertible
Fast and sleek
Speeding and moving
Quickly
Corvette

EXAMPLE 5

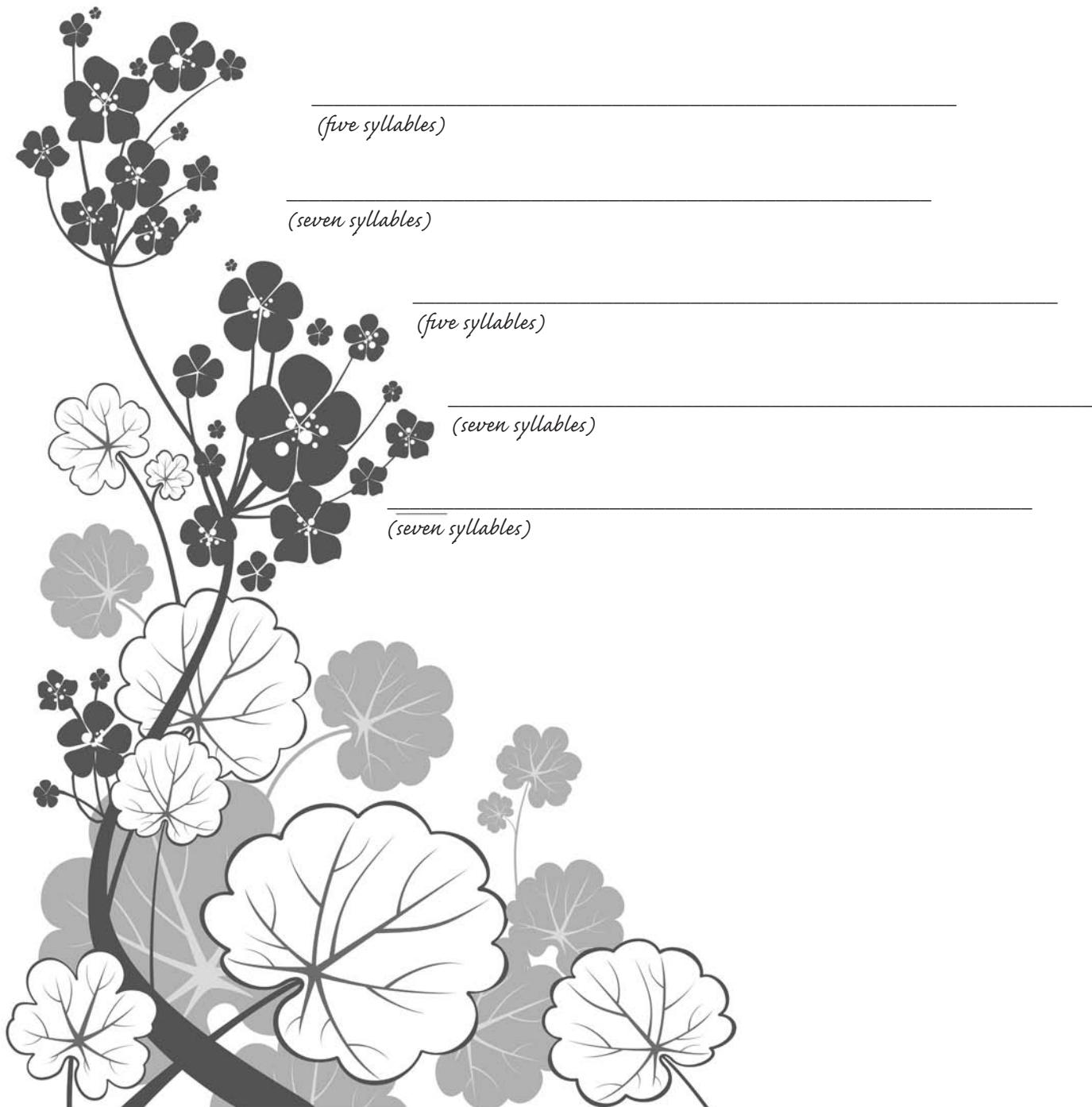
A fish
Gold and small
Diving and swimming
Quietly
Goldie



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Instructions: Complete this poem using words and phrases with the required number of syllables. A Tanka is similar to a Haiku and is usually about nature.

Tanka



(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

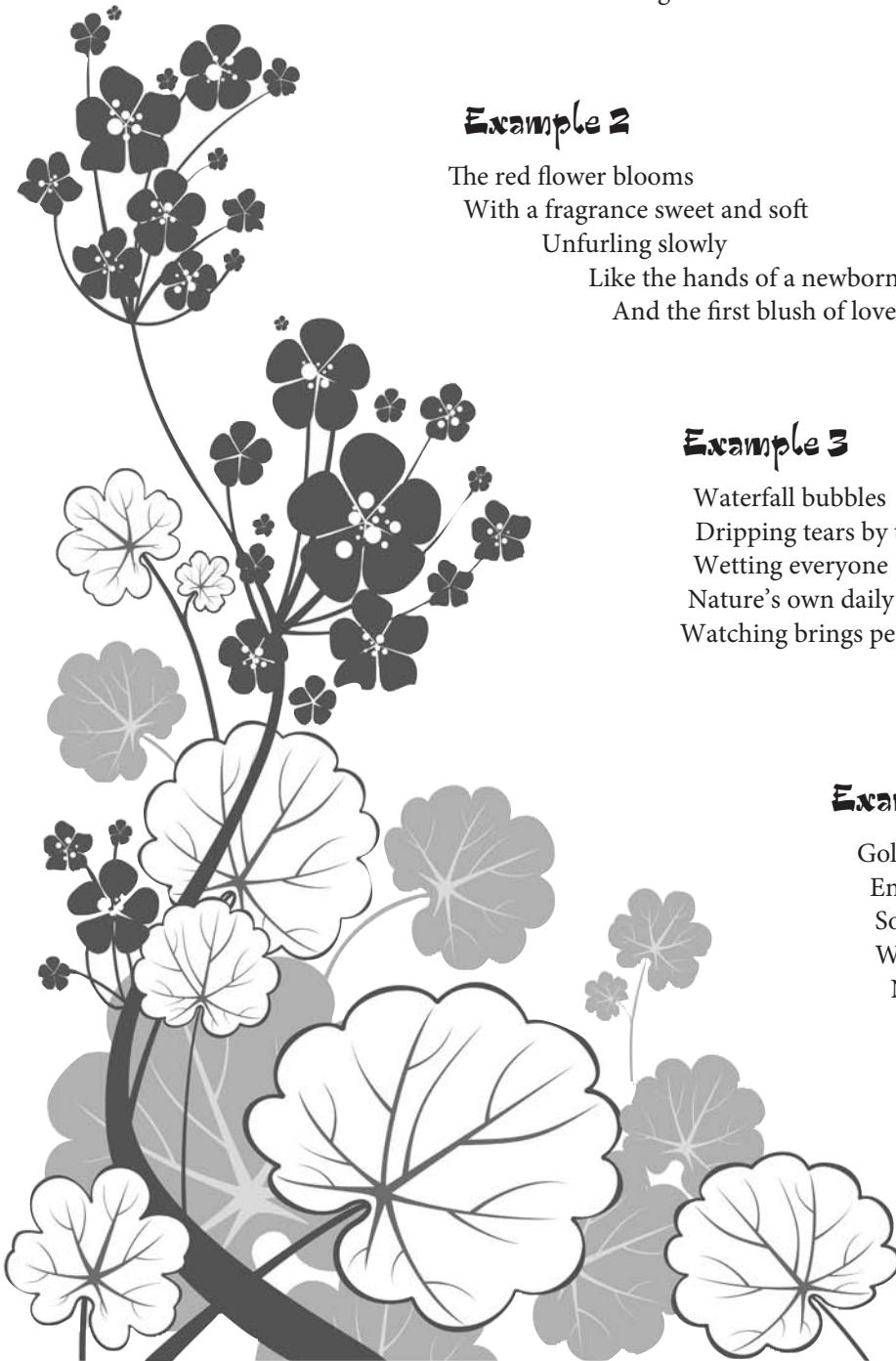
(seven syllables)

Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

Tanka Examples

Example 1

The butterfly flew
Celebrating its freedom
A rainbow with wings
Whispering words about peace
As it traveled through the world



Example 2

The red flower blooms
With a fragrance sweet and soft
Unfurling slowly
Like the hands of a newborn
And the first blush of love's smile

Example 3

Waterfall bubbles
Dripping tears by the gallons
Wetting everyone
Nature's own daily shower
Watching brings peace to mankind

Example 4

Gold hues paint the sky
Ending a hot, steamy day
Soft palette of light
Watercolor in the clouds
Nature's canvas up above

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks below. Use phrases rather than a single word for lines 2 through 5, and use a descriptive phrase at the end of the last line.

Sensory Poem

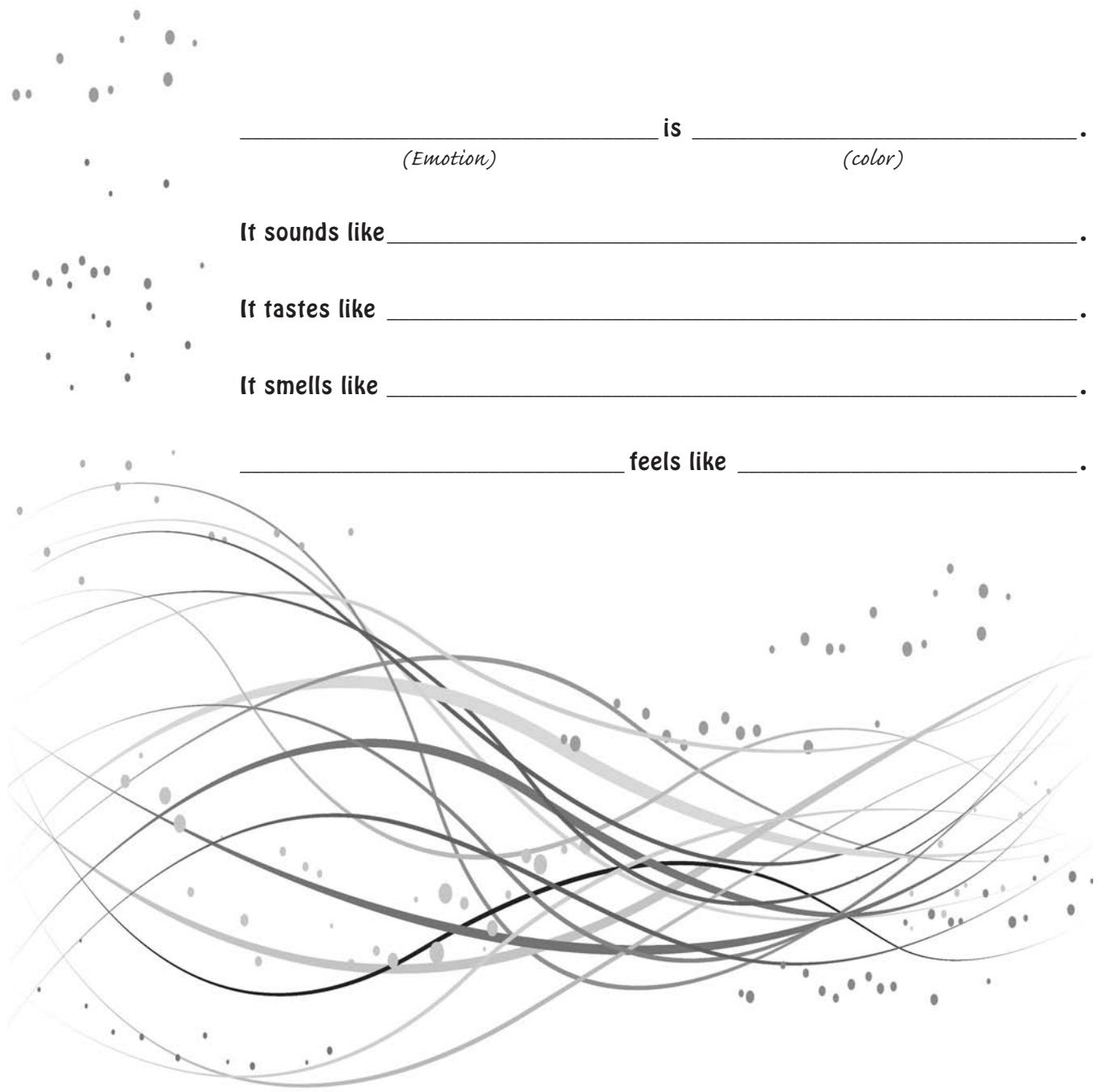
_____ is _____.
(Emotion) (color)

It sounds like _____.

It tastes like _____.

It smells like _____.

_____ feels like _____.



Sensory Poem Examples

Example 1

Love is magenta.
It sounds like children laughing while their parents push them on swings.
It tastes like hot apple pie straight from the oven with a side of vanilla ice cream.
It smells like the peach roses that make up a wedding bouquet.
Love feels like the hundreds of hugs at a family reunion.

Example 2

Happiness is yellow.
It sounds like thunderous applause after a recital.
It tastes like a giant birthday cake with one fork.
It smells like chocolate-chip cookies right out of the oven.
Happiness feels like warm sand between your toes on a cloudless day.

Example 3

Sad is blue.
It sounds like a broken-hearted girl crying alone.
It tastes like chocolate candy when there's none in the house.
It smells like the last bag of popcorn—burnt.
Sad feels like a pelican's wings after an oil spill.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Use three to five pairs of lines to write your poem. Couplets are poems in which every two lines rhyme and lines are approximately the same length.

Couplets



Couplet Examples

Example 1

I used to think school was a bore.
Homework was my most dreaded chore.

Now that I'm older I know what's true.
Your education is important to you.

I can be all that I choose to be.
The truth is, education is the key.

Example 2

Popcorn at the movies is my favorite treat,
Except for the times I want something sweet.

I could go to see movies all day or all night,
Swept into worlds of friendship or fights.

But my wallet won't let me go to more than a few.
I'll rent movies at home—what else can I do?

Example 3

I'm the oldest girl in a family with three.
My baby sisters are only as tall as my knee.

They whine and they cry and babble all day,
Unless I join them on the floor to play.

They climb on me till playtime is done.
Being a big sister is really kind of fun.

Example 4

Facebook is an interesting place to be.
I connect with friends I rarely see.

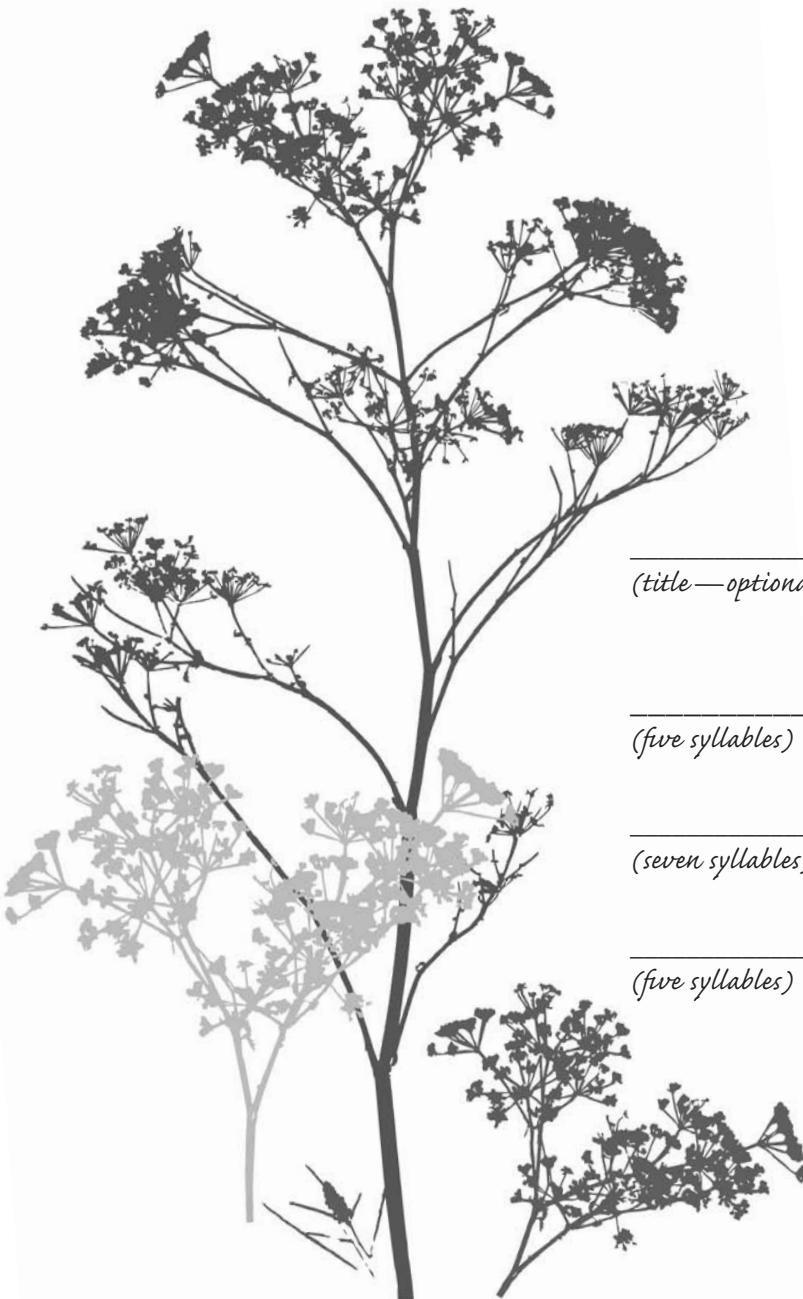
Posting pictures or writing on walls.
I'm often online until bedtime calls.

I'm careful to protect my privacy.
Post nothing that would embarrass me.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words and phrases with the required number of syllables listed below. Haiku are usually about nature and are very descriptive.

Haiku



(title—optional)

(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

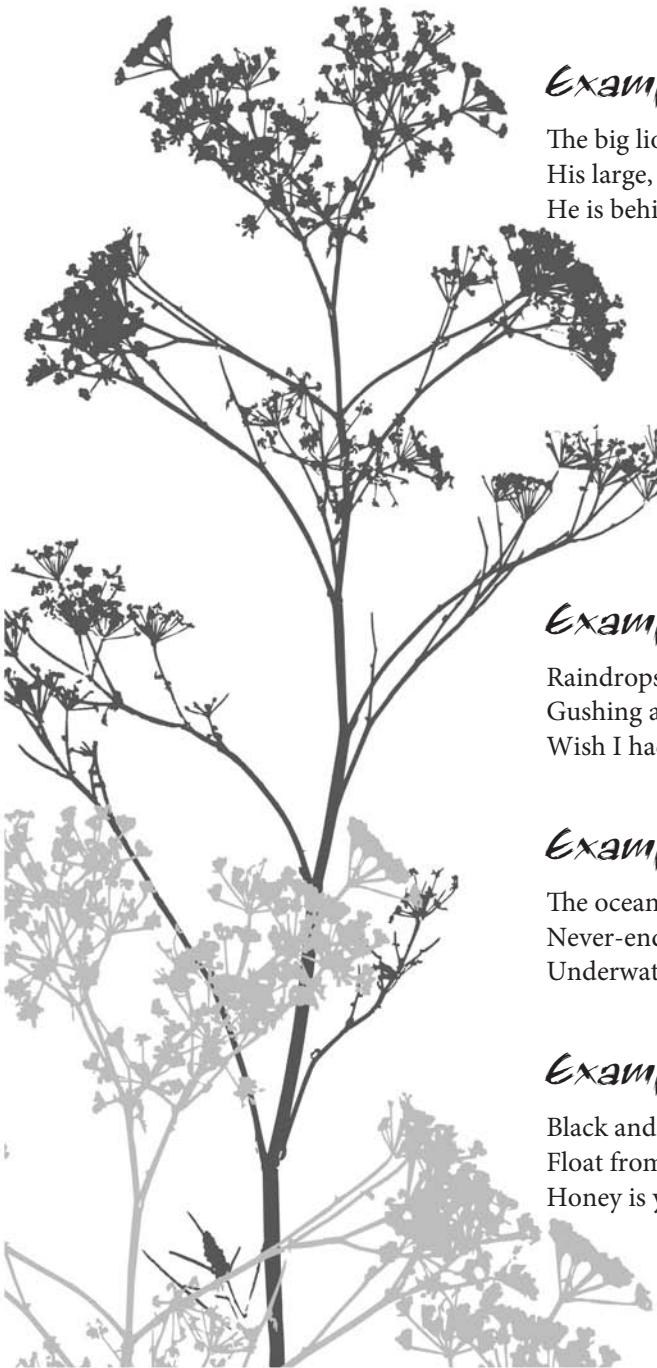
(five syllables)

Haiku Examples

Example 1

Rainfall

Water crying down
Refreshing the summer day
Allows life to thrive



Example 2

The big lion roars
His large, white teeth glistening
He is behind bars



Example 3

Raindrops fall quickly
Gushing all over my head
Wish I had shampoo

Example 4

The ocean is vast
Never-ending boundaries
Underwater world

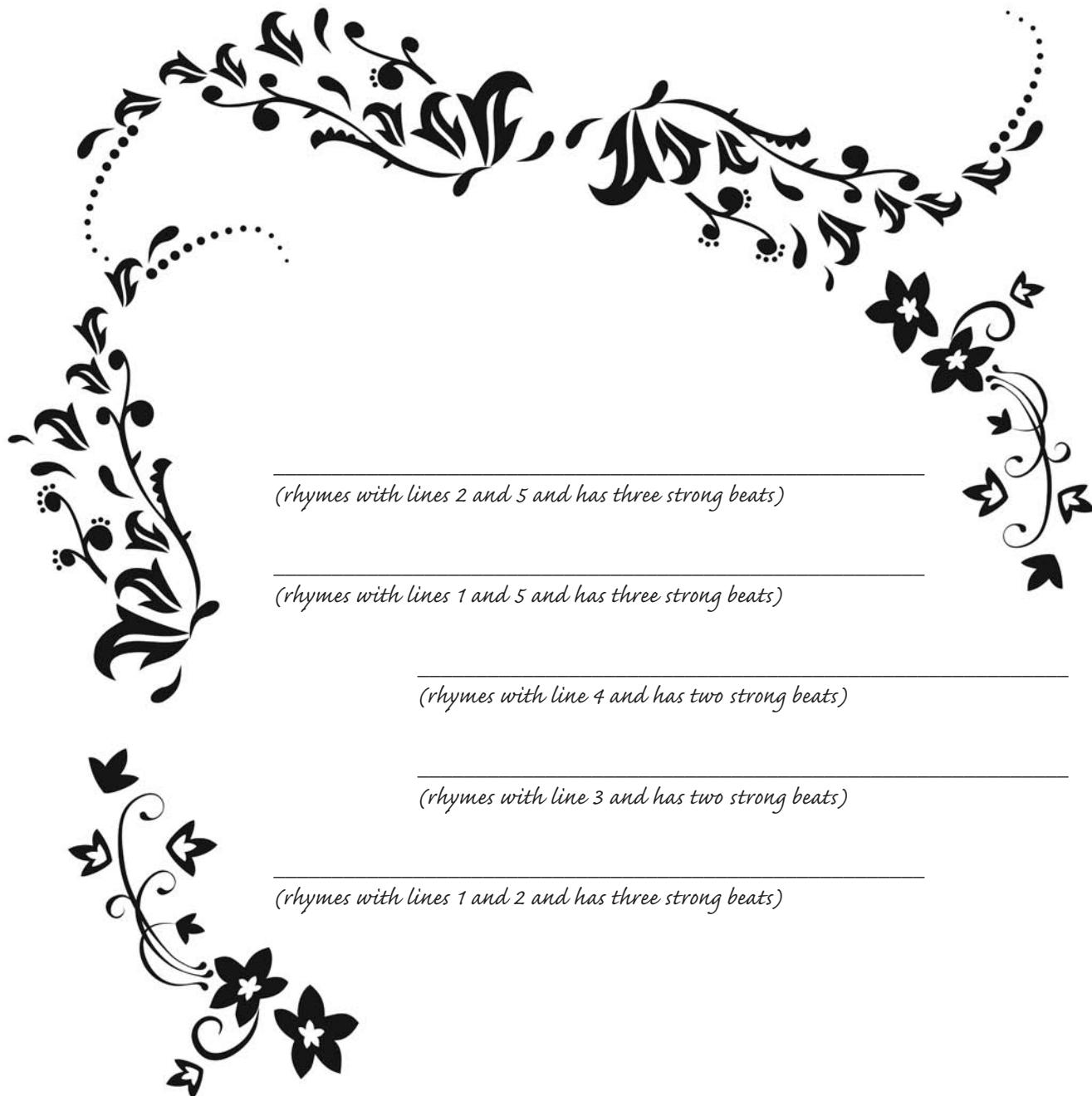
Example 5

Black and yellow coat
Float from flower to flower
Honey is your gift

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete the poem using the rhyming pattern A—A—B—B—A. Indent lines three and four as shown below. Limericks are usually humorous. It's okay to be silly!

Limerick



(rhymes with lines 2 and 5 and has three strong beats)

(rhymes with lines 1 and 5 and has three strong beats)

(rhymes with line 4 and has two strong beats)

(rhymes with line 3 and has two strong beats)

(rhymes with lines 1 and 2 and has three strong beats)

Limerick Examples

Example 1

There once was a girl named Sue,
 Who spoke only words that were true.
 Her motto “No lies!”
 Was bright as her eyes
 When she turned her attention on you.

Example 2

There once was a boy named Tim,
 Who began working out at the gym.
 He exercised so long
 And became so strong,
 His classmates said, “Wow, look at him!”

Example 3

There once was a girl named May,
 Who crossed paths with a skunk one day.
 She washed with strong soap,
 But there isn’t much hope
 That the smell will soon go away.

Example 4

We once had a dog named Cat.
 He liked to meow, how about that?
 When he climbed up a tree
 People gathered to see—
 How he’d escape from the branch where he sat.

Example 5

There once was a family named Sun.
 The kids loved to go outside and have fun.
 In wind, rain, and snow,
 Out they would go—
 All weather is good when there’s Sun.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Describe the bow binding the box closed, and complete the second couplet. Write a third couplet describing opening the box and what you find inside.

Mystery Poem

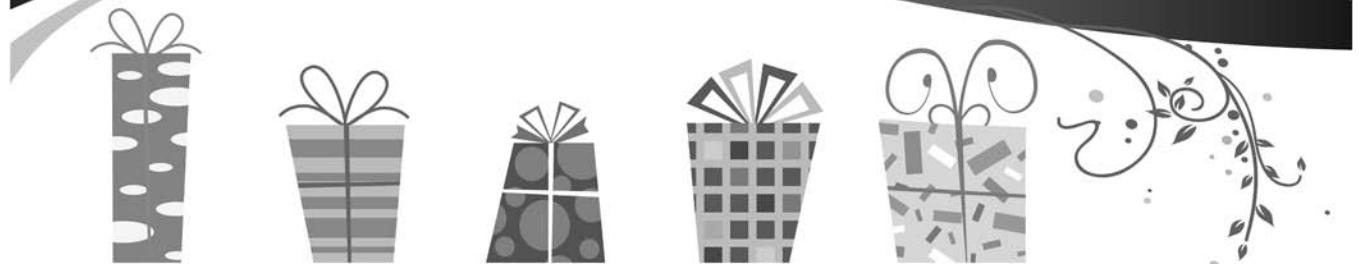
I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of _____.
(color)

(use past tense for this line)

(use present tense for this line)

(use present tense for this line)



Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

Mystery Poem Examples



Example 1

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of teal
I was so excited I gave out a squeal.

Inside the box I am surprised to see
My reflection in a mirror looking back at me.

Example 2

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of pitch black.
I turned the box around, examined front, sides, and back.

Opening it up, I find a fantastic surprise,
A friendly grasshopper jumping around inside.

Example 3

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of burlap.
At first I was cautious, in case of a trap.

Removing its lid proves to reveal
Welcome contents—an extra-value meal!

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by describing the dream you have for the world. Compose complete sentences, each starting with a letter of "I Have a Dream." Sentences extend horizontally.

"I Have a Dream" Poem



I _____

H _____

A _____

V _____

E _____

A _____

D _____

R _____

E _____

A _____

M _____

"I Have a Dream" Poem Examples

Example 1

I have a dream that there will be no more violence in schools.
 Hallways will be cleared of guns.
 And students will follow all of the rules.
 Violence will no longer be acceptable in any form.
 Every student will feel safe.
 All teachers will respect the students, and all students will respect their teachers.
 Disrespect and drugs will stay out of the class.
 Respect and love will stay in the class.
 Each student will have a mentor to talk to when things get rough.
 And teachers won't feel afraid to say "no" to a student.
 My dream is for school to be safe for us all.

Example 2

I have a dream that all children will be safe
 Hands that hurt will now hold
 All children will have someone to talk to
 Violence will never be directed at the young
 Every person who hurts a child will go to jail
 Anger and aggression will not be known to children
 Disrespect will never occur
 Rain will come from the sky—not from a child's eyes
 Every child will have a happy, peaceful childhood
 Abuse will become a foreign word
 Mankind will be just that ... KIND

Student name: _____ **Date:** _____

TWO-SIDES POEM

Instructions: Using a set of opposites, write a poem about one on the left side of the paper and about the other on the right side of the paper.

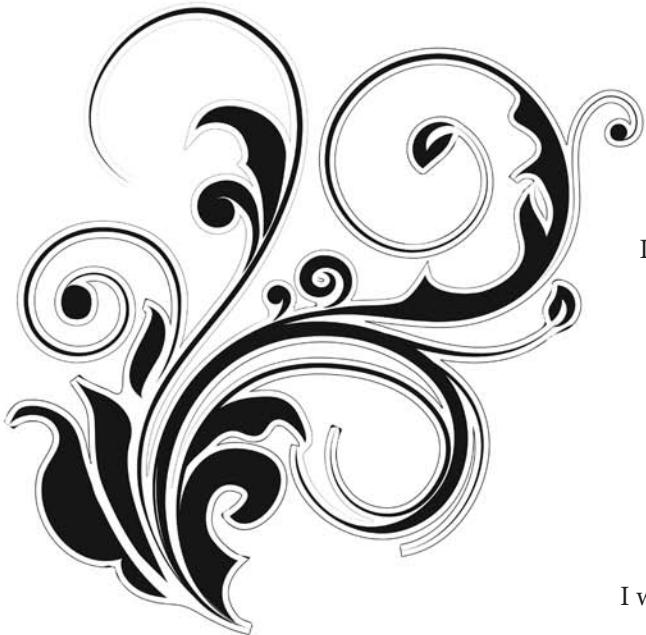


Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

TWO-SIDES POEM EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

My brother loves to pick on me.	My sister hates being picked on.
He does it all the time, but he always gets caught. He could stop. He's annoying; He's mean; He's obnoxious;	I don't do it much, and I rarely get caught. I can't help it. I'm fun; I'm nice; I'm sweet; Well, most of the time.
Well, only sometimes. Other times He's fun; He's nice; He's sweet; All of the time, he's my friend.	Other times I'm annoying; I'm mean; I'm obnoxious; All of the time, I'm her friend.



EXAMPLE 2

The winter is Cold, Icy, Boring. It's too cold to play outside No beach, No swimming, No volleyball.	The summer was Hot, Sunny, Fun. I played outside each day Beaches, Swimming, Volleyball. The hot sticky sun made me sweat. I miss enjoying the Ice skating, snowmen, hot chocolate.
The still white coolness makes me shiver. I guess I should enjoy the Ice skating, snowmen, hot chocolate. I wish it were summer again.	I wish it were winter again.

Poetry Projects

Class Poetry Book

A poetry book for the whole class is a great deal of work, but it's also rewarding and fun! It helps students feel pride and excitement about their accomplishment and helps them care about their efforts. Students also see how much the teacher cares about them, which helps improve their attitude and behavior.

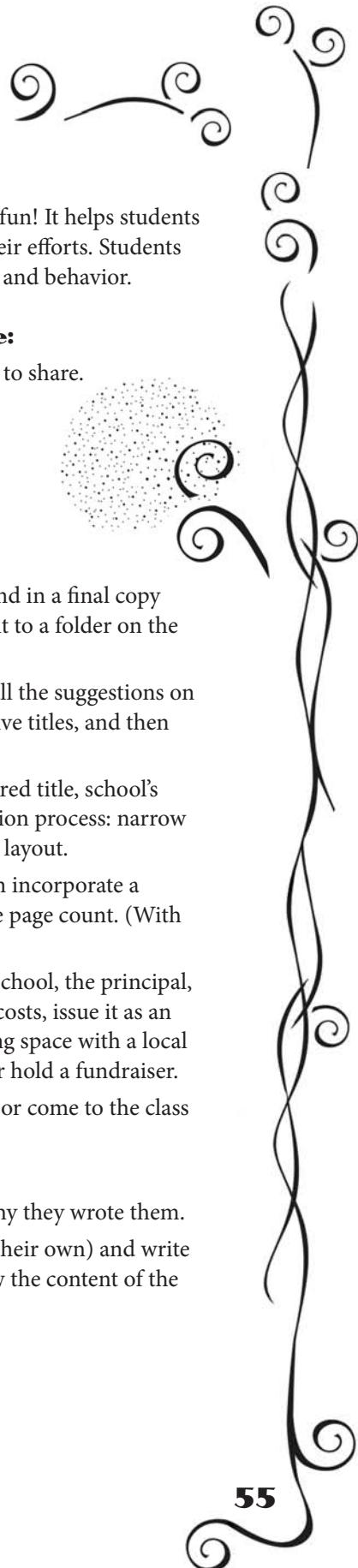
To make the Class Poetry Book the best it can be:

- Give students enough time to write and perfect the poems they plan to share.
- Ensure that every student has a poem in the book.
- Encourage students to do their best work.

Time required start to finish: Five class periods

Instructions:

1. Select a format poem already worked on and instruct students to hand in a final copy of that poem as a typed digital file. Have them email the file or load it to a folder on the school server.
2. Brainstorm with students about possible titles for the book and list all the suggestions on the board. After, work with the students to narrow the list down to five titles, and then have them vote for their favorite one.
3. Instruct students to each design a book cover incorporating the favored title, school's name, class, and year. Have a cover contest, much like the title selection process: narrow the candidates and vote. Scan the winning cover and save the file for layout.
4. Lay out the book pages using the student files and the cover file, then incorporate a contents page. Put two or more poems on each page to minimize the page count. (With luck, one or more student volunteers will do this part.)
5. Publish copies for each student, yourself, other ELA teachers at the school, the principal, the administrators, and the school media center. To defray printing costs, issue it as an online magazine, charge students for copy price, exchange advertising space with a local printer or vendors, appeal to the parent-teacher organization, and/or hold a fundraiser.
6. Ask the principal, administrators, and other teachers to write a note or come to the class to congratulate the students on their book.
7. As a portion of the unit grade:
 - Have students read their poems aloud to the class and explain why they wrote them.
 - Instruct students to select one of the poems from the book (not their own) and write a short letter to its author expressing why they selected it. Review the content of the notes prior to delivering them to the recipients.



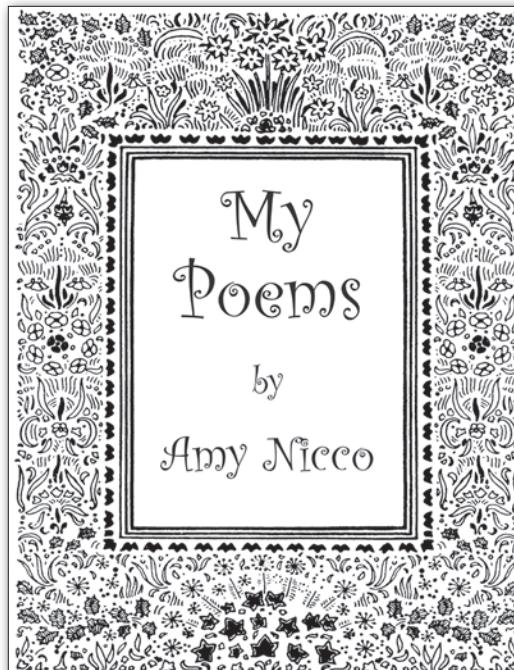
Individual Poetry Book

Individual poetry books broaden student exposure to different kinds of poems.

Time required start to finish: Seven weeks total. Students focus on two format poems a week (two class periods per week) for five weeks, then spend two final weeks (two class periods each) on final drafts, illustrations, and binding.

Instructions:

1. Select the ten format poems to present in class over the first five weeks and print and distribute those handouts to each student. Also distribute a copy of the Individual Poetry Book Rubric, located on the next page.
2. Require students to write two poems for each format poem. This requires that additional time be spent at home by the student. These are the rough drafts and are turned in for teacher feedback.
3. At the end of five weeks, instruct students to select one poem from each set of poems, resulting in one poem selected from each of the ten formats. These are the ten poems included in their final poetry books.
4. Explain that the final poetry books are to be typewritten with one poem per page, and each poem is to be illustrated. Illustration can be photo collages, drawings, paint, etc., but should pertain to the poem.
5. Advise students to use a report binder to hold their poems followed by the grading rubric. The cover must include a book title, the author's name, and a date.
6. Grade the book, in its entirety, as 20% of the final project grade (see rubric), judging the poems on format and coherence, not creativity.



Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide			
Individual Poetry Book Rubric		Student name: _____	
		Date: _____	
Peer Format	Does the poem follow format guidelines? Is the poem coherent?	Possible Points	Earned Points
Peer 1		X	
Peer 2		X	
Peer 3		X	
Peer 4		X	
Peer 5		X	
Peer 6		X	
Peer 7		X	
Peer 8		X	
Peer 9		X	
Peer 10		X	
Is the booklet illustrated? (Give one point for each illustration)		10	
Overall presentation (cover, condition, etc.)		10	
Total Points out of 100			
Additional comments:			

Individual Poetry Book Rubric

Student name: _____

Date: _____

<i>Poem Format</i>	<i>Does the poem follow format guidelines? Is the poem coherent?</i>	<i>Possible Points</i>	<i>Earned Points</i>
Poem 1		8	
Poem 2		8	
Poem 3		8	
Poem 4		8	
Poem 5		8	
Poem 6		8	
Poem 7		8	
Poem 8		8	
Poem 9		8	
Poem 10		8	
<i>Was the booklet illustrated? (Give one point for each illustration)</i>		10	
<i>Overall presentation (cover, condition, etc.)</i>		10	
<i>Total Points out of 100</i>			
<i>Additional comments:</i>			

Poetry Reading

A poetry reading, or performance, is a large task to complete, and one that may require additional staff involvement. Consider speaking with the drama teacher and/or other members of the staff for assistance—even consider presenting it as a cross-curricular opportunity, depending on the focus.

Time Requirements: Plan on spending three to four weeks for the event from introduction to performance. Pre-planning may take longer.

Instructions:

1. Begin by getting permission and scheduling a date that doesn't conflict with other school events. Possibly, schedule the performance to occur during school: lunchtime or classtime. Location needs to be considered as well.
2. Select a theme for the reading around which the writing and performance are based. For example, peer pressure, family, recycling, yesterday and tomorrow, connects, etc. (If the reading is going to include a variety of topics and formats, present it as a showcase.)
3. When presenting the poetry reading project in class, ask which students are interested in doing the reading portion of the performance. Assign approximately two-thirds of the class as readers.
4. As a class, decide what is to be included as part of the event.
 - Are there any students who wish to perform music as a prelude to the readings?
 - Who sets up the performance space and decorates?
 - What kind of flyer or invitations are sent out?
 - Who will be invited?
 - Will there be refreshments?

... and so on.
5. With the collected information, create committees and assign tasks. Involve students who are not reading as committee leaders.
6. With the theme in mind, create fifteen two-person teams to write the poems—each team gets a different format while focusing on the same theme.
7. Rehearse the performance/reading twice, at the least. Include running through who will do non-reading duties, too—just like a wedding rehearsal. Agree on a dress code for the day of the reading.
8. Take pictures and/or record the event and post it to the school website. In order to recoup expenses, consider providing a published version of the poems that students and family members can purchase.

Publishing Poetry

Publishing poetry is rewarding for both the teacher and the student. Students feel pride and higher self-esteem when their work is published. Even the most gruff or shy students carry themselves a little differently when they see others admiring their work. And when students know that some poems are going to be published—either in or out of class—they are more careful when crafting their final work.

The “Community Section” of a Local Newspaper

Contact a local newspaper and ask if there is a section where student work is printed. For example, the *Sun-Sentinel*, in Florida, publishes student artwork and poetry once each week. Nothing (except money—see below) motivates students more than seeing their names in the newspaper.

The Parent-Teacher Association/Organization

Request that the Parent-Teacher Association sponsor a poetry contest at the school. Cash awards (twenty dollars for 1st place, fifteen dollars for 2nd place, and ten dollars for 3rd place) are exciting for students and lead to an interest in writing. Include students, teachers, parents, or other volunteers in a small panel of judges to select the award winners. Encourage a local newspaper to publish the winning poems.

School Newspaper/Newsletter

Ask the editor of the school paper/newsletter to reserve a page in the paper for student poems. Find out if an issue of the paper focuses on a certain theme and ask students to write poems based on that theme.

Magazines

Locate magazines that publish exceptional student poems. Call or email the publishers to ask for a sample magazine and submission guidelines.

<i>Stone Soup</i>	www.stonesoup.com
<i>Creative Kids</i>	www.prufrog.com
<i>READ</i>	www.weeklyreader.com
<i>Teen Ink</i>	www.teenink.com

School Website

Create a page on the school’s website for student poems.

Library/Media Center

Speak with the head librarian at a local or school library and ask to display student poetry in the library. While not true publication, displaying student poems in a public setting is another form of acknowledgment for students.

Recommended Reading

Read poems aloud as an ice-breaking introduction for a difficult subject, or to begin or end a lesson. These books and poems are used successfully in many classrooms to foster a love of poetry. Some are funny, some are sad, but all are uniquely interesting and thought-provoking. The language and concepts are simple enough to understand, but intriguing enough to leave the students wanting more.

Assign poetry books as required reading; these books provide inspiration and examples for students to emulate. Enjoy!

Poetry Collections

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
American Poetry & Literacy Project; Academy of American Poets	"How to Eat a Poem: A Smorgasbord of Tasty and Delicious Poems for Young People"	Dover Publications, 2006
Angelou, Maya (Edwin Graves Wilson and Jerome Lagarrigue, editors)	"Poetry for Young People: Maya Angelou"	Sterling, 2007
Appelt, Kathi	"Poems from Homeroom: A Writer's Place to Start"	Owlet Paperbacks, 2010
Aquado, Bill, and Richard Newirth	"Paint Me Like I Am: Teen Poems from WritersCorps"	HarperTeen, 2003
Brewbaker, James	"Poems by Adolescents and Adults: A Thematic Collection for Middle School and High School"	National Council of Teachers of English, 2002
Buscani, Lisa, Tracy Zeman and Johnpaul Higgins	"Hands-On Stanza Anthology of Poetry 2006-2007 (Poems by Students)"	The Poetry Center of Chicago, 2007
Cohen, Leonard	"The Lyrics of Leonard Cohen"	Omnibus Press, 2009
Dakos, Kalli	"Don't Read This Book Whatever You Do: More Poems About School"	Aladdin, 1998
	"If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand"	Aladdin, 1995
DeDonato, Colette	"City of One: Young Writers Speak to the World"	Aunt Lute Books, 2004

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Dunning, Stephen	“Reflections on a Gift of a Watermelon Pickle”	HarperTeen, 1967
Feelings, Tom	“Soul Looks Back in Wonder”	Dial Books, 1993
George, Kristine O’Connell	“Swimming Upstream: Middle School Poems”	Clarion Books, 2002
Giovanni, Nikki	“Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat”	Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2008
	“Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking At The Harlem Renaissance Through Poems”	Henry Holt and Co., 1996
Glenn, Mel	“Back to Class”	Clarion Books, 1988
	“Class Dismissed! High School Poems”	Clarion Books, 1982
	“Class Dismissed! More High School Poems”	Clarion Books, 1986
	“My Friend’s Got this Problem, Mr. Candler: High School Poems”	Clarion Books, 1991
Greenfield, Eloise	“Honey, I Love and Other Love Poems”	Crowell, 1978
	“In the Land of Words: New and Selected Poems”	Amistad, 2003
Holbrook, Sara	“I Never Said I Wasn’t Difficult”	Boyd’s Mills Press, 1997
	“More Than Friends: Poems from Him and Her”	Wordsong, 2008
	“Walking on the Boundaries of Change: Poems of Transition”	Boyd’s Mills Press, 1998
Hughes, Langston (David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad, editors)	“Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes”	Sterling, 2008
Janeczko, Paul	“A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms”	Candlewick, 2009
	“A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems”	Candlewick, 2005
	“Don’t Forget to Fly: A Cycle of Modern Poems”	Bradbury Press, 1981

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Janeczko, Paul (continued)	“Going Over to Your Place”	Simon & Schuster, 1987
	“Preposterous: Poems of Youth”	Orchard Books, 1991
	“Wing Nuts: Screwy Haiku”	Little, Brown, 2006
Keeve, Mildred	“Black Ain’t No Kiver”	Self-published, 1988
Keyes, Alicia	“Tears for Water: Songbook of Poems and Lyrics”	Berkley Trade, 2005
Knudson, R.R., and May Swenson	“American Sports Poems”	Orchard Books, 1995
Lerrick, Nancy	“Crazy to be Alive in Such a Strange World”	Lippincott, 1977
Livingston, Cohn Myra	“Lots of Limericks”	McElderry, 1991
	“Cricket Never Does: A Collection of Haiku and Tanka”	McElderry, 1997
Michael, Pamela	“River of Words: Young Poets and Artists on the Nature of Things”	Milkweed Editions, 2008
Meltzer, Milton	“Hour of Freedom: American History in Poetry”	Wordsong, 2003
Mora, Pat	“My Own True Name: New and Selected Poems for Young Adults”	Arte Publico Press, 2000
Myers, Walter Dean	“Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices”	Holiday House, 2008
Nye, Naomi Shihab	“A Maze Me: Poems for Girls”	Greenwillow Books, 2005
Paschen, Elise, and Dominique Raccah	“Poetry Speaks / Who Am I: Poems of Discovery, Inspiration, Independence, and Everything Else in Your Amazing Future”	Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2010
Prelutsky, Jack	“A Pizza the Size of the Sun”	Greenwillow Books, 1996
	“It’s Raining Pigs and Noodles”	Greenwillow Books, 2005
	“New Kid on the Block”	Greenwillow Books, 1984

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Prelutsky, Jack (continued)	"Something Big Has Been Here"	Greenwillow Books, 1990
Shields, Carol	"Someone Used My Toothbrush!"	Dutton Juvenile, 2010
Serlio, John N.	"Poetry for Young People: The Seasons"	Sterling, 2005
Silverstein, Shel	"A Light In the Attic"	HarperCollins, 1981
	"Falling Up"	HarperCollins, 1996
	"Where the Sidewalk Ends"	HarperCollins, 1974
Viorst, Judith	"If I Were in Charge of the World and Other Worries: Poems for Children and Their Parents"	Athenium, 1984
	"Sad Underwear and Other Complications: More Poems for Children and Their Parents"	Athenium, 1995
WritersCorps	"Tell The World (Poems by Teenagers)"	HarperTeen, 2008
Yolen, Jane	"Color Me A Rhyme: Nature Poems for Young People"	Boyd's Mills Press, 2003

Poems by Type/Topic

<i>Type/Topic</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
<i>Couplets</i>	Prelutsky, Jack	"I'm The Single Most Wonderful Person I Know"
	Silverstein, Shel	"Deaf Donald" "Fancy Dive" "Homework Machine" "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take The Garbage Out" "Sick" "Smart"
	Viorst, Judith	"It's A Wonderful World, But They Made A Few Mistakes"
	Wynne, Annette	"Excuse Us" "Animals in the Zoo"

Type/Topic	Author	Poem Title
<i>Drugs</i>	Keeve, Mildred	"A Place to Run" "Just Say No!" "The 'Rock'"
	Sexton, Anne	"The Addict"
<i>Family</i>	Glenn, Mel	"Dawn Weinberger" "Hildy Ross" "Justin Faust" "Rodney Whitaker"
	Hayden, Robert	"Those Winter Sundays"
	Hughes, Langston	"Mother to Son"
	Jenkins, Brooks	"Loneliness"
	Kunitz, Stanley	"The Portrait"
	Millay, Edna St. Vincent	"The Courage That My Mother Had"
	Mora, Pat	"Mothers and Daughters"
	Ortiz, Simon J.	"What My Uncle Tony Told My Sister, Angie, and Me"
	Roethke, Theodore	"My Papa's Waltz"
	Viorst, Judith	"Our Mom's a Real Nice Mom But She Can't Cook" "What Dads Do"
	Walker, Alice	"Women"
<i>Feelings</i>	Glenn, Mel	"Ellen Winters" "Lauren Jones" "Lisa Goodman" "Susan Tulchin" "Thomas Kearns"
	Holbrook, Sara	"Disappointment" "I Never Said I Wasn't Difficult" "What to Do When She Looks at You?"
	Mora, Pat	"First Love"
	Viorst, Judith	"If I Were In Charge of the World" "Short Love Poem"

Type/Topic	Author	Poem Title
<i>Friendship</i>	Glenn, Mel	“Brenda Stewart” “Phillip Zavala/Connie Morrison” (good example of opposite poem)
	Viorst, Judith	“See the Jolly Fat Boy”
<i>Future</i>	Angelou, Maya	“Alone”
	Silverstein, Shel	“What if”
<i>Inspirational</i>	Allen, Samuel	“To Satch”
	Angelou, Maya	“Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” “Still I Rise”
	Austin, Mary	“A Song Of Greatness”
	Driscoll, Louise	“Hold Fast Your Dreams”
	Hughes, Langston	“Dream Variations” “Dreams” “I Dream A World” “The Dream Keeper”
	King, Jr., Martin Luther	“I Have A Dream” “Raymond Richard Patterson”
	Silverstein, Shel	“Listen To The Mustn’ts”
<i>Limericks</i>	Ciardi, John	“Be Kind to Dumb Animals”
	Livingston, Myra Cohn	Untitled (“Said a restless ... ”)
	Mahy, Margaret	“My Sister”
<i>School</i>	Appelt, Kathi	“Notes Passed Back and Forth in United States History, Seventh Period”
<i>School</i>	Antler	“Raising My Hand”
	Glenn, Mel	“Mr. Henry Axhelm” “Ms. Marilyn Lindowsky”
	Robinson, Barbara B.	“Foreign Student”
	Silverstein, Shel	“Kidnapped”
	Stein, Dona Luongo	“Homework”
	Tsuboi, Shigeji	“Silent, But ...”

Type/Topic	Author	Poem Title
<i>Sports</i>	Francis, Robert	“His Running My Running”
	Glenn, Mel	“Marvin Pickett”
	Mueller, Marnie	“Strategy for a Marathon”
	Scheele, Roy	“Nothing But Net”
<i>The World</i>	Coatsworth, Elizabeth	“Swift Things are Beautiful”
	Cullen, Countee	“Incident”
	George, Phil	“Battle Won is Lost”
	Glenn, Mel	“Kwang Chin Ho” “Song Vu Chin”
	Hughes, Langston	“Merry-Go-Round” “Troubled Woman”
	Jordan, Norman	“Feeding the Lions”
	Keeve, Mildred	“David Deal Family Play Day” “Soul Tears” “Too Little Time”
	Livingston, Myra Cohn	“Poor”
	Pollack, Felix	“Speaking: The Hero”
	Silverstein, Shel	“No Difference”
	Steiger, Anatoly	“Nobody Waits”
	Whitman, Walt	Untitled (“I sit... ”)
	Williams, William Carlos	“Young Woman at a Window”
	Yevtushenko, Yevgeny	“Lies”