Live Poets Workshop Process

From October 1996 to May 2024, the Live Poets Society met twice monthly at The Cabin in Boise, except for meeting via Zoom during the pandemic. Since May of 2024, meeting schedules have adjusted to accommodate focused writing projects and outreach to the poetry community on the east and west coasts.

In a typical meeting, each poet hands out a poem-in-progress. While the poet reads the poem aloud, the other poets may make a few notes on their copies (which are returned later to the poet for further use). After reading, the poet remains silent while the others give constructive spoken feedback. Then the poet who wrote the poem may ask questions to hear additional remarks on how the poem comes across. The intent is to praise what works well in a poem and to offer suggestions for improving the poem’s effectiveness.

During these meetings when we poets give each other feedback on poems-in-progress, we develop trust while we listen to comments about our poems. We also develop responsibility and respectfulness as we find ways to give honest and constructive suggestions that support the poet who just shared a poem. As a result of this collaborative process, abiding friendships have developed over the years among the Live Poets.