

## Last Updated

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## Author

Cody Lake

Exercise 1) Listen to poets read their work out loud

Sample source: [The 2River View 25.1 \(Fall 2020\)](#)

- Don't be afraid to listen multiple times, this is not a bad thing
- Think about the following questions before and after you listen
- Do you have any other questions that could be added to this list?

How are the words spoken?	What do I hear?
What do I see? Taste? Touch? Smell?	Is there a single time and place or many?
What questions do I have?	What does the poem mean to me?
What words stick out?	Why does this poem work?

## Sample quick analysis by Cody Lake

[Susan Landgraf \*The Cello\*](#)

It's actually a pretty incredible poem that took me a couple times to hear Susan read it to see how it's musically shaped. The words are spoken with an even pace and no attempt at working *for them* with the voice.

The words speak for themselves. It is vocal storytelling, it is a poem that asks to be read out loud. I appreciate this writing and reading because I felt really encouraged to speak. I read the poem a few times and attempted a translation into Spanish.

What I noticed:

The repetition of "*there's a ...*," with descriptions of the scene flow in the structure and syntax. It's interesting listening over, I noticed that Cello, in the title, and Cellist at the top of stanza 4 are the only **cheh** syllables. These are the only places that the syllable is available for the ear so it kind of cocoons the cellist and instrument in the poem. This comes after really sitting on the poem for some time. The ability to forget about time and get lost in a poem is a great way for me to relax. This repetition and the imagery lend themselves to time and place sort of melting into one another.

The music encompasses the whole river. Upon reading it feels we've escaped the physical location and I realize the elements may or may not have stemmed from the cello the whole time. That's the power of a poem. The river indicates both a body of water and the flow of music from an instrument and the person behind it. That means that we can go through various dimensions and realms in a sense and they're all connected through memory. Love the ingenuity of a frog knowing the well water taste.

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I also appreciate how short it was without being abrupt at all. It was a poem I definitely want to emulate and turn into my own iteration because I could translate it into Spanish or French or even Mandarin. For some reason it calls to be translated into Spanish the most for me.

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Translating *The Cello* by Susan Landgraf and Spanish is the one I want to hear this poem in

### The Cello

#### *El Cello*

There's a river in there  
and a jumping frog that knows  
the taste of wells.

*Ahí dentro está un río  
y algunas ranas saltan  
desde el gusto del pozo*

There's an occasional  
gator and coffin or two, one  
of the coffins knowing  
how deep the ground goes.  
There's a boat that wants  
a crossing.

*Ahí dentro está un caimán a veces  
o un cajón a la sepultura,  
De los cuales un conoce  
el fondo de la tierra,  
Allí está una barca*

*pensando en pasarse.*

There's a cellist singing  
the sap, old trees talking  
down the hollows  
until the clouds empty.

*Ahí dentro el cantante con su cello  
Llorando de savia,  
árboles viejos hablan  
en el bosque  
desde las nubes salen de la vacuidad.*

There's a river in there  
with rapids and pools  
and a well-worn boat  
that thinks it's a fish.

*Ahí dentro está un río  
con rápidos y charcos  
Y un barco muy desgastado  
que se considera como pececillo*

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Exercise 2) Translate a poem of your own. Maybe you don't know another language but you have insider knowledge of another topic. Is there a way to translate the poem you choose by using different words or phrases in the same language that the original poem is written in?