

Becoming a Poet

...in secret, if necessary

Why some people won't admit to writing poetry:

- They perceive poetry as inaccessible/too hard/useless.
- They think that it's "just not them" because all poets are _____.
- Their writing is personal and they don't want to feel exposed.
- They are afraid that their writing "sucks."

Counterarguments...

- Poetry is within every writer's potential. (And we'll get to usefulness later)
- Poets come in all sorts... you don't need to be "artsy" or "sensitive" or "feminine" to be a poet.
- Life experience and personal inspiration is a strength, not a weakness—makes writing real.
- Nobody is a perfect writer. That's why we come to practice and learn.

Why writing poetry is awesome:

- It's a **short** literary form
- Grammar rules are out the window—poets use words the way they want to
- Song lyrics = poetry, something we have vast experience with
- Topics can range from intensely serious to silly and playful... It's *your* voice, your decision.
- It allows us to explore language and say things in more interesting ways than.. well... just saying them.
- We get to work with the **sound** of language as well as the logic

Why do people write poetry?

- Discover their own emotions
- Describe beauty, terror, complexity
- Sing the praises of someone/something
- Criticize/expose fault
- Write something that sounds cool
- Make others laugh
- Tell about a dream
- Tell a story
- Express an opinion
- Use words to make an image
- Write something nobody else has thought of

THE LIST GOES ON!

What will we be doing in this unit?

- Reviewing poetry basics
- Working with a variety of forms/techniques
- Focus on writing poetry rather than reading it...
put it in our hands
- Form critique groups that can give
feedback/praise
- Learn to revise
- Share poetry (perhaps in secret...)
- Create a poetry portfolio

Quote from Emily Dickinson:

"If I read something and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

Let's get started... select a pseudonym

- Ex. Bob Dylan = Robert Allen Zimmerman
Vanilla Ice = Robert Van Winkle
Mr. T = Lawrence Tureaud

A secret name will help you reduce inhibition and give you more control over who knows what you wrote. It will also give you more confidence. Hint: if you really want to be more anonymous, don't make it a dead giveaway!

Poetry basic terms – Write this down!

- Metaphor: a comparison/symbol that doesn't use like or as (strong)
- Simile: a comparison using like or as (softer)
- Personification: giving human characteristics to non-human things
- Sensory imagery: details of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch
- True rhyme: Word endings sound exactly the same (true, shoe)
- Slant rhyme: Word endings sound close enough for jazz (tree, breathe)
- End rhyme: Rhymes occur at the ends of verses
- Internal rhyme: Rhymes occur within one verse
- Verse: A line of poetry
- Stanza: A “paragraph” of poetry—unit of meaning