

2015
CAN YOU
HEAR
ME NOW?

www.canyouhearmenowyychs.com

Performance
Poetry Lessons &
Resources

Foreward

Stop reading this.

I'm serious - stop reading this and start flipping through this booklet. When you're done, turn back here and continue reading. I'll even mark your spot so you won't forget.

You stopped reading here.

Now use or adapt any of the resources, favourite lessons, strategies, and ideas you've found that look interesting and useful to help your students write, revise, and perform their poetry.

Below are listed a number of other resources many of us have used in teaching performance poetry in our classes and schools. If you'd like to contact any of our presenters or contributors, their emails are included at the bottom of the page.

RESOURCES

Websites:

<http://canyouhearmenowychs.com>
www.YoungChicagoAuthors.org
www.LouderThanABomb.org

Books:

Wilson, Sheri-D (Ed.). (2011). *The Spoken Word Workbook*. Calgary, AB: Calgary Spoken Word Society.
Stafford, Tim & Meacham, Molly (Eds.). (2010). *Learn Then Burn*. Long Beach, CA: Write Bloody Publishing.
Eleveld, Mark (Ed.). (2003). *The Spoken Word Revolution: Slam, Hip Hop & the Poetry of a New Generation*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks mediaFusion.
Eleveld, Mark (Ed.). (2007). *The Spoken Word Revolution: Redux*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks mediaFusion.

Movies:

Jacobs, Greg & Siskel, John (Producers & Directors). (2012). *Louder Than a Bomb*. (This is a phenomenal film and what gave me the idea to start *Can You Hear Me Now?* If you want to inspire your students and give them a sense of what the competition will - hopefully - be like, get this movie. Or better yet, support the filmmakers and encourage everyone you know to get this movie just because it tells an inspiring and fascinating story about four amazing poets.)

Pod-casts:

IndieFeed: Performance Poetry (A great pod-cast that showcases both established and brand new poets - check the website for submission guidelines if you want to hear yourself on the pod-cast - it offers commentary on the performances, interviews with the poets, and bios of the performers being featured.)

Emails:

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Poetry on a Box

(submitted by Warren Lake)

INTRODUCTION

Building on the idea of getting up on a soapbox to share ideas with people, "Poetry on a Box" adds something infinitely better than just ideas - poetry.

For "Poetry on a Box," Students will give a public performance or reading of an original or screened piece of poetry while standing on the poetry box*. Each student will identify when and where s/he will perform the poetic reading.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student performance will be two to three minutes in length.
2. The performances will make effective use of dynamics and pacing.
3. Students will clearly articulate their words.
4. Students will make appropriate use of gestures to convey their message or feeling of their poems.
5. Each student should be thoroughly familiar with his or her poem and come across as practiced and polished.
6. No props or costumes of any kind are permitted – just poetry in its purest form.
7. Each student needs to be willing to take a risk.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Each student decides whether she or he are performing an original piece or a screened piece of poetry.
2. Each student determines the time and place the box will be available – each student must have an audience for the performance.
3. At the chosen time and place, the student steps up on the box and performs a poem.



* I requested our wood-shop to build a couple of boxes, which we then painted in very different designs. Students choose not only the time and place of their performances, but also the box they feel best matches their poem and style.

An Introduction to Performance Poetry

(submitted by Anders Alm)

PART I - INTRODUCTION

Performance poetry is poetry that is specifically composed for or during performance before an audience. During the 1980s, the term came into popular usage to describe poetry written or composed for performance rather than print distribution. In recent times, the increasing popularity of open mikes and poetry slams, which allow "unknown" poets to take the stage and share their own work in 3 minute increments, has meant that performance poetry is now one of the most widespread forms of popular poetry.

Now you have a chance to explore this performance art form.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find a partner and get on a computer.
2. On the Internet, go to youtube.com or Google and search under these parameters:
 - a. Def Poetry Jam
 - b. Button Poetry
 - c. Poetry Slam
 - d. Canadian Poetry Slam
 - e. Performance Poetry
 - f. Beat Poetry
3. Analyze the various performances, looking at:
 - a. Tone/Voice
 - b. Eye Contact
 - c. Volume
 - d. Elocution
 - e. Pace / Rhythm / Length
 - f. Content / Relevance
4. Find your favorite and write down the URL.
5.
 - a. What makes your favorite poetry performance piece special? What characteristics make a poetry performance memorable? What forms do these performance pieces take?
 - b. In your opinion, are there more effective styles?
6. Be ready to share your favorite piece with the class during the next period. You will be required to give an explanation about why you chose this poem and poet as your favorite using the criteria listed in #3 (more than "It was so funny" or "I thought it was awesome").

NOTES

Poet/Poem

- a. Tone/Voice

b. Eye Contact

c. Volume

d. Elocution

e. Pace / Rhythm / Length

f. Content / Relevance

SOME POETS TO REVIEW

Anis Mojgani	Erin Dingle	Jesus Lark	Lamar Jordan
Mike Gordon	Noah St. John	Alex Dang	Neil Hilborn
Denise Frohman	Lewis Mundt	Mike Rosen	Phil Kaye
Rachel Rostad	Hibaq Osman	Chad Anderson	Dwayne Morgan
If	Miles Hodges	Joshua Bennett	Harry Baker
Katie Makkai	Christine Hatch	Paul Mabon	Abyss
Michael Cirelli	Mike McGee	Steve Colman	Malak Salaam
Twin Poets	Jamie Kennedy	George Watsky	Daniel Beaty
Sekou Sundiata	Universes	Mike Ellis	Sunni Patterson
Wyclef Jean	Poem-cees	Erykah Badu	Alicia Keys
Shappy	Natalie Stewart	Black Thought	Bao Phi
Amanda Diva	John Legend	Patrick Washington	John S. Hall
Bassey Ikpi	Mark Gonzales	Dan Sully & Tim Stafford	Muta Baruka
Oveous Maximus	Rives	Smokey Robinson	Amir Sulaiman
Poetri	Kelly Tsai	Steve Connell	Sarah Kay
Taylor Mali	Saul Williams	Lauryn Hill	Black Ice
Javon Johnson	J.Ivy	Lamont Carey	Preach
Heru Ptah	Talib Kweli	Beau Sia	Julian Curry
Ise Lyfe	Alvin Lau	Oscar Brown, Jr.	Aaron Simm
Nate Marshall	Nova Venerable	Shane Koyczan	Fannon Grey
Joe Hernandez-Kolski	Mos Def	Shihan	Patrick Roche

PART II - INTRODUCTION

A. Lone Wolf

You are a lone wolf, ready to roam the poetic landscapes in search of deeper meaning and truth in the purest sense. In order to facilitate a sense of community in this classroom, you will create a poetry performance, utilizing vocabulary and/ or themes selected through random draw.

Your task is to create a poem, and brainstorm a mode of delivery that will be unique and memorable in a performance. This performance and poem should incorporate all the aspects of effective presentation in poetry performance (that we have witnessed in our analysis of effective performance poetry - See the "Intro to Performance Poetry").

B. Wolf Pack

Now that you've blown up the spot, delivering your personal poetry to the world, you need to further dip your imagination in the clear waters of poetic group performance. You are now part of the "Wolf Pack" and will have to howl at the moon with your poetic voices.

In order to facilitate a sense of community in this classroom, you will be partnered with a group of your fellow students to create a group poetry performance, utilizing themes selected through random draw. Your task is to create a poem as a group, and brainstorm a mode of delivery that will be unique and memorable.

INFORMATION

Each "Poetry Friday" (dates TBD) names will be randomly drawn from the class for students to perform their poems (if it's a "Lone Wolf" performance, everyone must have a poem ready to perform; if it's a "Wolf Pack" performance, your group must be ready to perform a poem). You will only be required to have one poem ready for each round ("Lone Wolf" or "Wolf Pack"). If your name is drawn, you will be required to perform. We will make note of who performed, and these students will be exempted from further performance until every student finishes that round of poems. Everyone is required to take notes for their personal response/ reflection (see section below) based on performances for that round.

THE RULES

1. Performances must be a minimum of 2 minutes in length
2. Don't just read it (unless that is deliberately part of the point) – Know the material
3. If we are highlighting vocabulary or themes, you must use the themes and incorporate these within the poem
4. Any poetic style is fair to use in your poem and performance (rhyme/free verse/whatever)
5. Have a good copy of your created poem to hand-in after the performance
6. The concept of respect is integral to this process; No discriminatory or pejorative language will be tolerated

EVALUATION

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Tone/Voice | b. Eye Contact | c. Volume |
| d. Elocution | e. Pace / Rhythm / Length | f. Content / Relevance |

If you (or your group) "hit it," you will get the mark for the category. If you falter or neglect a category, you will not get the mark for it. For each "Wolf Pack" performance, there will also be a peer assessment through an independent and anonymous reflection.

TIMELINE

Selection of themes and performances:

First "Lone Wolf" Performance: _____

"Wolf Pack" Presentations: _____

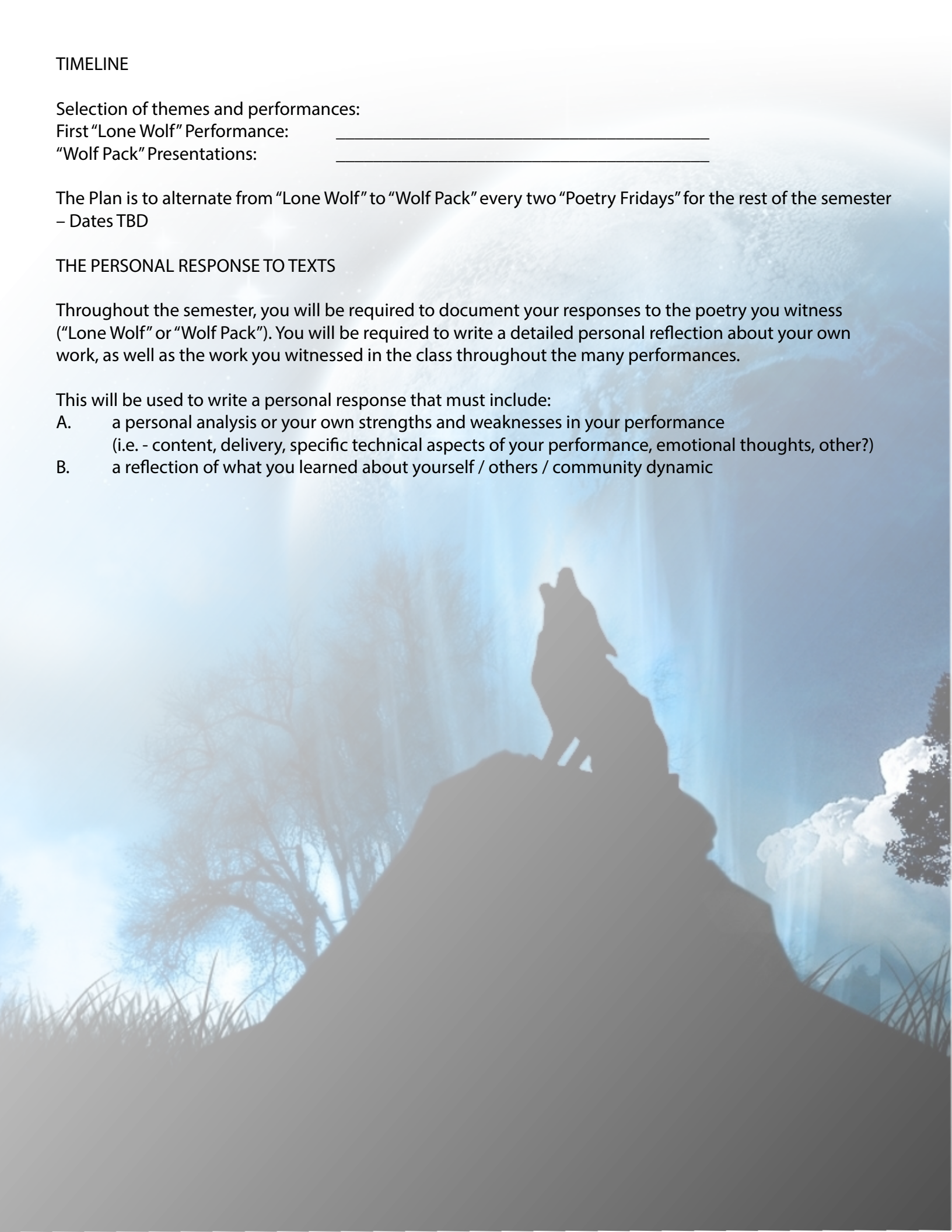
The Plan is to alternate from "Lone Wolf" to "Wolf Pack" every two "Poetry Fridays" for the rest of the semester
– Dates TBD

THE PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS

Throughout the semester, you will be required to document your responses to the poetry you witness ("Lone Wolf" or "Wolf Pack"). You will be required to write a detailed personal reflection about your own work, as well as the work you witnessed in the class throughout the many performances.

This will be used to write a personal response that must include:

- A. a personal analysis of your own strengths and weaknesses in your performance (i.e. - content, delivery, specific technical aspects of your performance, emotional thoughts, other?)
- B. a reflection of what you learned about yourself / others / community dynamic



Poem-a-day

(submitted by Esau Tamura)

INTRODUCTION

Make a goal that you will write something every day. And make this goal manageable - you don't have to write Paradise Lost every day, but at least write something.

To help you with this goal, use resources from the following websites (as well as your own ideas) to compile weekly poetry primers. Try to write (or complete) a poem each day using the primers and/or your own ideas.

RESOURCES

- http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/davidc/6c_files/Poem%20pics/poetry_primer.htm
- <http://poetryprompts.tumblr.com>
- <http://www.creative-writing-now.com/creative-writing-prompts.html>
- <http://www.davidrm.com/thejournal/tjresources-exercises.php>
- <http://www.poewar.com/poetry-prompts/>
- <http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/april-is-poetry-month-ready-for-our-poem-a-day-challenge>

Sample Week 1:

Day 1 Write a poem based on your belief about life after death . . . or about what you WISH you believed.

Day 2 Write a poem with the following words in it: complain, complete, compliment.

Day 3 Write a love poem.

Day 4 Write a poem with the title being a type of food that is popular in your city.

Day 5 Write a poem from the perspective of a character in a fairy tale.

Day 6 Write an unsolicited advice poem (see the next page).

Day 7 Write a poem about your shadow.

WEEKLY REVIEW

At the end of the week, evaluate your performance in relation to your goal, and make adjustments as necessary.

Also at the end of the week, perform your poems in the mirror to see which one(s) might work the best as performance poems or to decide about which ideas you might want to keep working on.

Now the easy part: find time to revise, edit, complete, and rehearse your work.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write!</i>	<i>Write Review Revise</i>

Good Advice: Speaking to Others About Where You've Been

(submitted by Richard Wagner)

INTRODUCTION

1. Create a list of the most important lessons you've learned about any of the following:
 - a. Love and relationships
 - b. Sports
 - c. Family
 - d. Writing
 - e. School
 - f. Parents
 - g. Siblings
 - h. Jobs
 - i. Music
 - j. Success
 - f. Traveling
 - l. Other

ANALYSIS

2. Watch Jeanann Verlee's performance of "Unsolicited Advice to Teenage Girls with Pink Hair and Crooked Teeth" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYZkLy0GHZ0>).
3. What is interesting and powerful about this poem?
4. What are some of the lines or phrases that Verlee repeats? What effects are created through this repetition?
5. What different emotions does Verlee express through her poem? How do her choices about subject, details, imagery, and tone of voice work together to build these emotions?

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

6. Choose one of the lists you created and use that to generate a poem that offers advice to a specific audience. Write the title for your poem by identifying three specific characteristics of your audience and using the phrase "Unsolicited Advice to . . ."
e.g. Unsolicited Advice to Teenage Boys who have been Cut from the Football Team,
Unsolicited Advice to Crazy English Teachers who are Forcing Students to Write Poetry,
Unsolicited Advice to Bored Students who are Being Forced to Write Poetry by Crazy English Teachers
7. Identify the best or most important piece of advice you wrote down when making your list. This will become a repeated line in your poem.
8. Be sure to include advice for a variety of experiences you expect this person to have.
9. Free-write for 10 minutes without stopping. If you get stuck, re-write your repeated line until you think of a new piece of advice. Or, write for as long as it takes to record at least 20 pieces of advice.
10. Stop writing. Share what you've written with other people in the class or in a small group.

Using Mythology and Spoken Word as a Medium for Social Change

(submitted by Nancy Krar)

INTRODUCTION

Inspired by Shane Koyczan's Spoken Word Poem, "Shoulders", you will research a Greek myth of your choice and use the character or events from that myth to create a poem advocating for social change.

In his poem, Koyczan alludes to the god Atlas, questioning why Atlas alone should shoulder the problems of the world. The poem serves as an introduction to the Blue Dot campaign for environmental stewardship and conservation.

Watch "Shoulders" by Shane Koyczan (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An4a-_NjilY) before starting your poem.

PLANNING

Do the following two activities in whichever order you prefer:

- make a list of problems in your community, culture, country, and/or world.
- browse information about Greek (or other) mythology and pick a story or character you find interesting and that relates to a problem we face today.

RESOURCES

- <http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/>
- <http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/greeceancientgreece/u/Classics.--2h.htm>
- <http://www.pantheon.org>

Use your chosen mythical character or story (Greek or otherwise) as a metaphor in a poem about a desired social change.

CONSIDERATIONS

You have at least three parts to your poem: problem, solution, phrase (that includes the allusion). Consider how you want to organize your poem around the phrase "We are (mythical character)." You can use this phrase, and variations of it, as a repeated line within your poem.

What tone do you want to use to begin and end your poem, and how can you use the allusion phrase to shift between different tones?

How much of the myth do you need to tell in order to communicate your idea clearly? How can you strike a balance in your writing between telling too much (for people who already know the myth) and not telling enough (for people who don't know the myth)?

How can you effectively describe the problem? What allusions, images, objects, figurative language, experiences, examples, or forms of irony can you use to clearly and powerfully communicate the severity and nature of the problem for your audience?

EXEMPLAR

The following student exemplar uses Narcissus as a social commentary about the selfie generation.

"Narcissus" by Reanna Lam

Beauty of a flower but personality like a weed
this is what we all are
you resemble a russian doll,
full of yourself
each layer within is coated with thoughts of only you

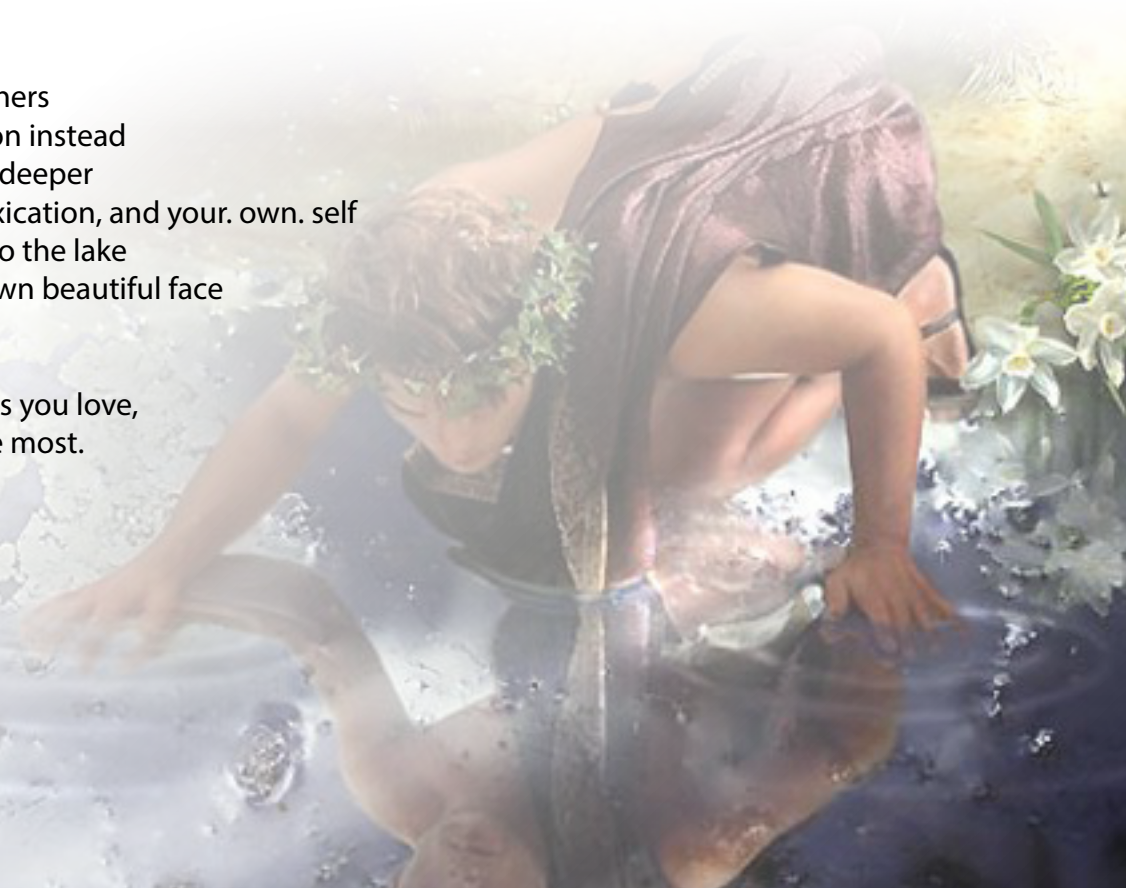
instagram
facebook
tumblr
twitter
how many selfies do you post a day?
hashtag no makeup, hashtag with bae.
you put as the caption "fml I'm so ugly"
and wait for someone to comment "like omg no you're not"
insert 50 heart emojis
you live off of that crave for self admiration, idolization

why only look at yourself and trample over the ones that love you
why only look at yourself and become oblivious to the world around you

god didn't make the world so that you could be in the center
the bible said adam and eve not adam and only adam

we are narcissus,
conceited and clueless
the more you look away at others
and look at your own reflection instead
the more you fall deeper and deeper
into self-admiration, self-intoxication, and your. own. self
you'll fall like narcissus did into the lake
the lake which reflected his own beautiful face
and trapped his dead self

because sometimes the things you love,
are the ones that hurt you the most.



The Noun Catalogue

(Adapted from George Elliott Clarke's lesson in *The Spoken Word Workbook*, pp. 32-33)

(submitted by Tyler Perry)

STEP 1

On a clean page in your writing notebook, on a computer screen, or on a plain sheet of paper, take five to ten minutes—or as long as you like—to list nouns—only persons, places, things—separated by commas. Try to focus mainly on concrete nouns, and be as specific as possible, without the use of adjectives.

Do not form sentences; deny yourself verbs and adjectives.

EXAMPLE

scarf, glasses, hoodie, window, car, minivan, Taurus, Honda, grass, leaves, chain link fence, pulpit, soapbox, sneeze, breath, nostril, throat, eyelash, tear duct, tape, drain, pipe, metal, iron, steel, fence, cast iron pan, stove, gas, flame, charcoal, trail, roots, trees, spruce, maple, oak, poplar, dirt, mud, seeds, earth, weeds, flowers, petals, clouds, rain, atmosphere, pain, pen, paper, pulp, muck, serpent, snake, tiger, coyote, cougar, lynx, bobcat, rock, shovel, engine, motor, fuel, water, gatorade, veins, arteries, skin cells, hair follicles, knots, string, rope, spokes, tires, windows, wheels, asphalt, gravel, concrete...scissors, brush, comb, tool, pick, axe, sledgehammer, canon, rifle, deer, ox, buffalo, bison, moose, bear, grizzly, black bear, claws, paws, tongue, teeth, stomach, throat, fur, skin, stitch, knife, dagger, sawdust, firewood, kindling, tent, trailer, pit, ditch, smoke, ash, milk, water, wind, leaves, river, lake, boat, sled, ice, skates, sticks, blades

STEP 2

If you read a catalogue aloud, you'll discover that it possesses its own intrinsic rhythm, which will be—guaranteed—hypnotic. Take a moment to read your noun catalogue quietly to yourself, circling, underlining, or highlighting words that stick out for any particular reason—words to which you have a strong personal connection.

In groups or as a class, take turns reciting your noun catalogs, following the natural rhythm of the words, feeling free to place emphasis wherever it feels natural. Listeners, pay attention to any patterns or connections among the words. Is there an implied narrative? Can you follow the writer's thought process? Are any words or types of words repeated? What else do you notice? Briefly discuss each piece.

STEP 3

The purpose of the catalogue, the creation of which is an eternal process, is to tell you what nouns at any given moment in your life occupy your consciousness and define your being. Your duty is to make your literature—or orature (Chinweizu, Jenie, & Madubuike, 1983)—out of these constituent particles of being.

Follow-Up Activities:

1. After reading your poem aloud, see if your noun catalogue could be considered a poem in of itself. Treat this like a first draft, and edit what is there to see what you come up with.
2. Of the nouns that you highlighted, pick one that reminds you of a person or a time in your life. Read "The Lanyard" by Billy Collins, or "Waiting and Finding" by Jack Gilbert (both available online). Write a poem that explores the significance of this person or time in your life through the image(s) you've chosen from your noun catalogue.
3. Look at the relationships among the nouns you've written. Is there an implied narrative? If so, write a narrative poem using the nouns that are connected. Tell the story adding as few words as you can.
4. Choose five nouns from your catalogue and write a poem that uses all of them.
5. Choose ten nouns from your catalogue and use them with the "Vivid Verb" activity (attached).
6. Do more noun catalogs. Try it again in a different place, or at a different time of day (e.g. before bed, first thing in the morning, on the bus, in math class...)

Vivid Verbs (and the Action of a Sentence)

(Adapted from Writing Down the Bones, 2005, Natalie Goldberg, Shambala Publications, Inc.)

(submitted by Tyler Perry)

Verbs are important. They are the action and energy of a sentence. Be aware of how you use them. Try this exercise.

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Fold a sheet of paper (or page in your journal) in half, vertically. On the left side of the page list ten nouns. Any ten. You might want to take them from your noun catalogue.

lilacs
horse
mustache
cat
fiddle
muscles
dinosaur
seed
plug
video

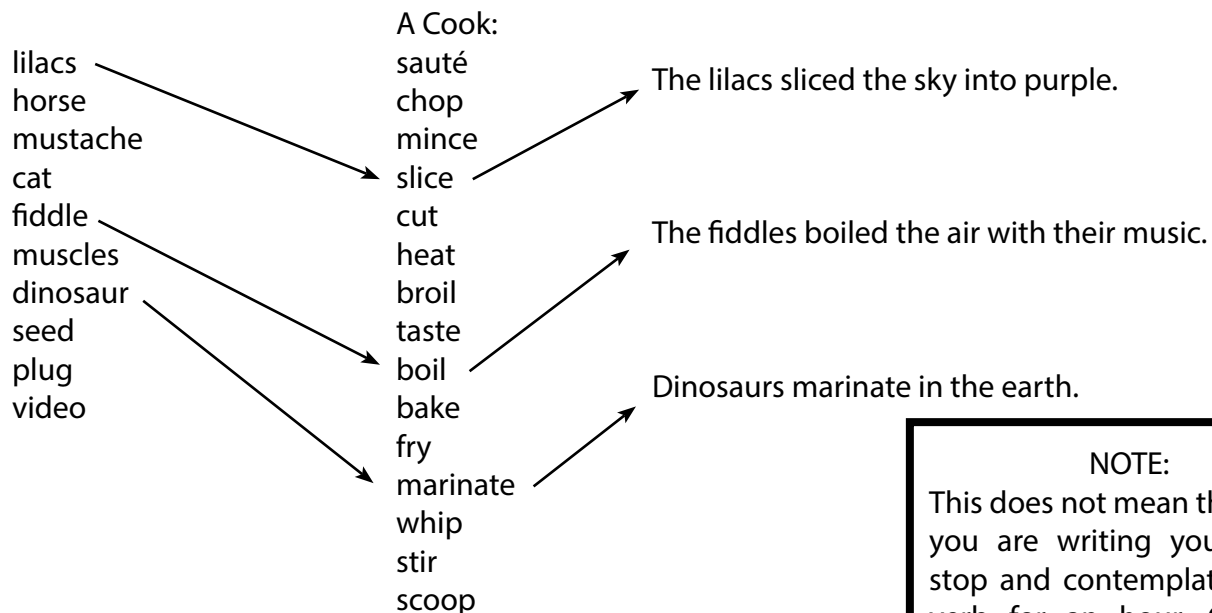
STEP 2

Now turn the paper over to the right column. Think of an occupation; for example, a carpenter, doctor, flight attendant. List fifteen verbs on the right half of the page that go with that position.

A Cook:
sauté
chop
mince
slice
cut
heat
broil
taste
broil
bake
fry
marinate
whip
stir
scoop

STEP 3

Open the page. You have nouns listed in a row down the left side and verbs listed on the right. Try joining the nouns with the verbs to see what new combinations you can get, and then finish the sentences, casting the verbs in the past tense if you need to.



NOTE:

This does not mean that while you are writing you should stop and contemplate a new verb for an hour. Only, be aware of your verbs and the power they have and use them in fresh ways.

Playing with Perspective

(submitted by John Williamson)

STEP 1

Write down 3 to 5 topics based on each of the following prompts:

- conversations you've had in the last couple of days
- activities you've participated in during the last week
- times you were either angry or disappointed with someone and/or times you were happy with or pleasantly surprised by someone, in the last month

STEP 2

Pick one topic from Step 1 and begin a journal. Write something down about your chosen topic at least once a day for the next week. These could be additional thoughts you've had while thinking about the topic, paraphrases of conversations you've had about this topic, other people's thoughts about the topic, examples from popular culture that deal with the topic, news stories that relate to the topic, or descriptions of other personal experiences with this topic. Don't hesitate to discuss this topic with other people to find out their perspectives about it.

STEP 3

After a week, look at what you've written down about the topic and describe your current perspective about it. Has it remained the same or has it changed? What caused this?

STEP 4

Choose one different perspective about this topic and describe it in as much detail as you described your own thoughts in Step 3.

STEP 5

Use the contrasting perspectives about your selected topic to create a poem.

As you write (and then revise) your poem, take time to reflect on the following questions:

- Which perspective do I want to start with (first impression) and which do I want to end with (final thought)?
- How do I want to treat each perspective within my poem?
- How much of my poem do I want to devote to each perspective?
- Will this poem be about me, about another person, or about people in general? How does my choice of subject change my poem?
- Will my subject's perspective change throughout the poem or not?
- What will cause my subject's perspective to change or to remain the same? How will I communicate this to my audience?
- How will I shift from one perspective to another within my poem?
- What writing and/or performance techniques can I use to enhance this shift?
- What can I do to create a powerful closing line that will leave an impact on my audience?

MY WRITING PROCESS

I don't write poems about specific topics until I feel I have something of interest to bring forth about that topic. How does one get a unique perspective about something? Journaling, reading, and talking to people are all things that help me think but the two most important things are trying to be an amateur anthropologist in my daily life and paying attention to the things that feel like insights when I have them. I try to honor these sorts of ideas, writing them down, rolling them around in my head. Once I think I have something good the words flow more easily and come out in less clichéd ways.

A few years ago I was at the C-train station at the University of Calgary and noticed many students running to catch the train. Despite having young, fit-looking physiques they all seemed breathless and clumsy. Their limbs were flailing, their otherwise toned muscles working dis-harmoniously under their street clothes like angry mammals stuffed in a sack turning on each other. That got me thinking how, while our ancient ancestors may have lived in a constant state of preparedness for physical struggle, the present "hard-earned" recreational fitness many of us maintain may not actually be sufficient training for the perils life throws at us. I thought of a contrast poem of a proud recreational runner who finds himself unable to run effectively on a morning he got up too late. As I've been on both sides of this story it was easy to fill it with specific detail once I had the perspective.

Draft 1

Fit

At a path by the river
clever threads wick away his sweat
intwothreefour
outtwothreefour
quick feet, quiet feet
finishing
slurping autumn's air

"better than sex" he says when
these hard-earned drugs
these satisfied drugs
his body's own drugs
smugly rush and flood his blood

Now

formless
book-stuffed rucksack stuck
on his shoulder
tugs hard back
trips and tumbles him ahead
plummeting, though the road is flat
his lungs make do with stale and aged breath
seems he hasn't exhaled or exhaled since he saw
he'd overslept
angular buckle bores into ribs
trousers bunch at buttocks
boxer shorts torture twist constrict

An athlete when prepared to be
today
he runs the run of one who hadn't expected to
run

After sitting on an earlier draft of the poem for a few years I revised it to be a sort of envy poem (made for slamming) about not just everyman recreational runners, but all runners who are faster than me and who must therefore be arrogant and deserving of miserable failure. For whatever reason I'd initially written it in the third person (maybe the anthropologist thing) already, so I found this change made the poem more fun without changing the central insight.

I also lengthened the piece and tried to make both the idyllic running imagery and the failing imagery more graphic and specific.

Draft 2

Fit

This is for anyone who can run faster than I can

Dusk's setting sun
funnels through
crimson leaves
gaps between trees
affording
iridescent river glimpses
this path was made for
a man like this

clever microfibers
wick away the sweat
intwothreefour
outtwothreefour
quick feet, quiet feet
kick back with each step

spacing perfect
just enough left for a
sprint to the finish

his improvised line a sign reading slow down
meant for cyclists
not for him
who never will

one hand on the post
stretching quads, hamstrings, and calves
cooling down
quaffing autumn's air

"Better than sex" he says,
smugly buzzed, as
hard-run drugs
hard-won drugs
his body's own drugs
flood his blood

Now

Fine sunrise unnoticed

stuffed rucksack
tugs hard back
stiff Rockports
tumble ahead
plummeting, though the road is flat

lungs have clung to
thin and ragged breaths
little respiration since
he saw he'd overslept

drenched with tense sweat

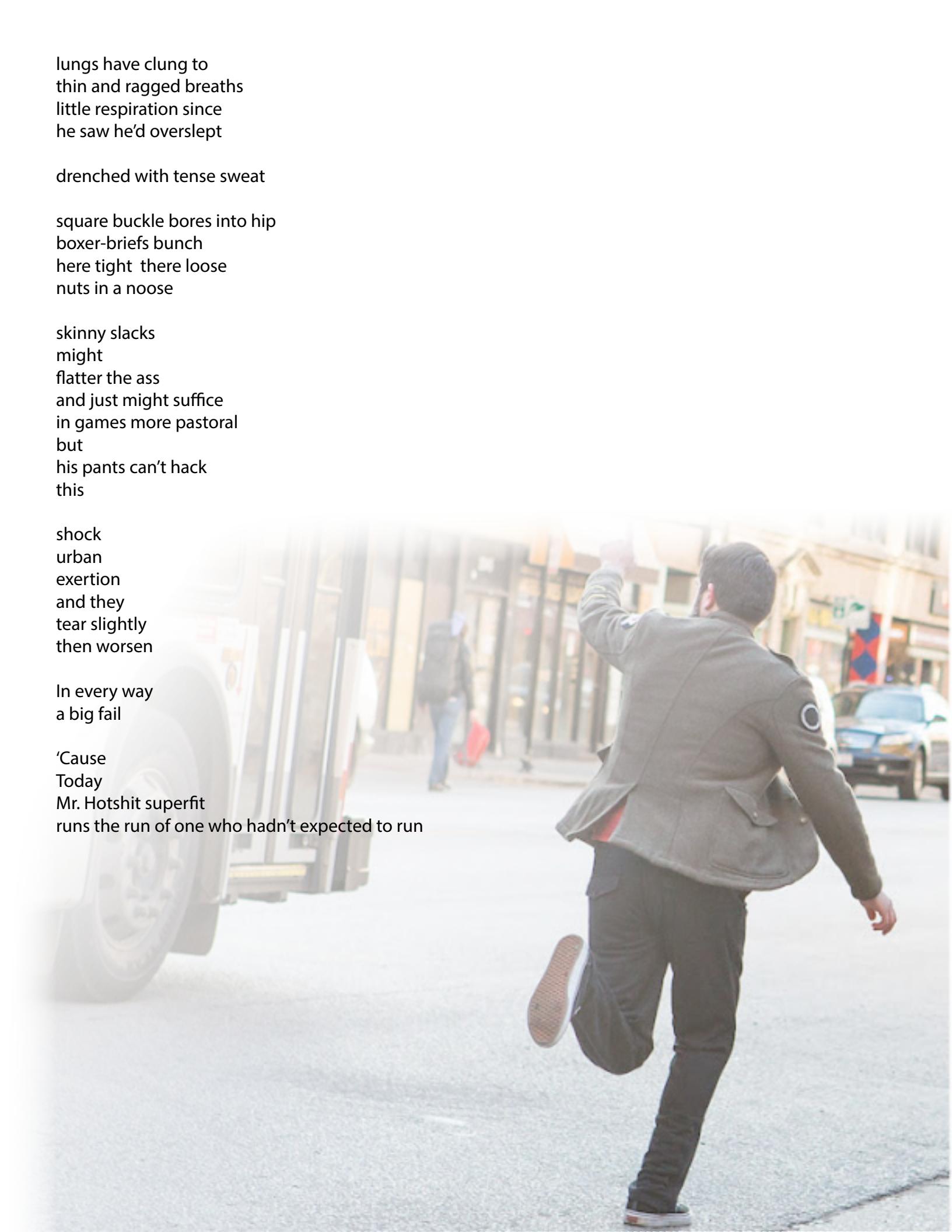
square buckle bores into hip
boxer-briefs bunch
here tight there loose
nuts in a noose

skinny slacks
might
flatter the ass
and just might suffice
in games more pastoral
but
his pants can't hack
this

shock
urban
exertion
and they
tear slightly
then worsen

In every way
a big fail

'Cause
Today
Mr. Hotshit superfit
runs the run of one who hadn't expected to run



Picture of a Person I Know

(submitted by Richard Wagner)

INTRODUCTION

1. Take a look at a couple of poems that describe people:
 - "21" by Patrick Roche (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LnMhy8kDiQ>)
 - "To the Boys Who May One Day Date My Daughter" by Jesse Parent (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KclwZ1Dth0c>)

GUIDING QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS

2. How did each poet use a repeated pattern to organize and develop his idea?
3. Using the chart you've completed, put the poet's initials (P.R. or J.P.) in the categories that have information each poet used in their respective poems. For example, which poet talks about his first meeting with the person he is describing? Which poet describes an object he associates with the person he is describing?
4. How did each poet use a shift to significant effect within his poem?
5. How did each poet vary his tone and the mood of his poem?

PLANNING

6. Review your chart and put a star in each category where you feel you've written the most powerful, interesting, amusing, or clear details about the subject of your poem.
7. How do you feel about the subject of your poem, and what is the dominant tone you want to use? How will you make this tone clear to your audience?
8. What is an object, detail, or image that you could repeat within your poem, as you describe this person? Why is this object, detail, or image so important?
9. Is there an object, event, or action that you associate with this person that you could use as a symbol to represent him or her? What is it, and how might you use it as a symbol to teach us something about this person?
10. Using the information you feel is most able to clearly and powerfully describe this person, how could you create a repeating pattern within your poem?
11. How could you group the information you've chosen to create stanzas?

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

12. Use some of the information you've gathered and your answers to the above questions to create a poem. If you get stuck, use phrases and sentences right out of your chart in your poem

COMMENTS ON WRITING A POEM

A poem doesn't have to look like, or sound like, anything. There are a nearly infinite variety of poems – your poem may rhyme or it may not; your poem may be written in sentences and paragraphs or in short phrases and lines; your poem may use lots of figurative language (metaphors, similes, personification) or it may not.

A poem can be anything you want it to be, so don't feel like there are certain things that you have to do when you're writing, other than put words, phrases, and details together in a way that gives a clear, interesting, entertaining, accurate, and powerful picture of the person you're describing.

<p>A person I care about, admire, or respect is ...</p>	
<p>I first met this person when I ... (describe the experience, if you can remember it, or make it up if you can't)</p>	
<p>If you were to meet this person, you would notice ... (provide a physical description with at least 5 specific details)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . • . • . • . • .
<p>When I think of this person, the place I associate with them is ... (describe the place with at least 5 specific details)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . • . • . • . • .
<p>An object that I associate with this person is ... (describe the object and explain why you associate it with this person)</p>	
<p>A story this person once told me was ... (re-tell the story)</p>	

<p>The time when we laughed the hardest was when . . . (describe the situation or conversation in as much detail as you can)</p>	
<p>The craziest, most interesting, or best conversation we had was about . . . (paraphrase the conversation or the best parts of it)</p>	
<p>This person loves to . . . (provide at least 3 activities this person enjoys)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• . . .• . . .• . . .
<p>My most important memory of this person is . . . (describe this experience in as much detail as you can remember)</p>	
<p>When we're together, our favourite thing to do is . . .</p>	

<p>This person has changed me by . . . (describe a specific event, conversation, or experience with this person as well as specifically how it changed you - give details!)</p>	
<p>If I could do one thing to help this person, I would . . .</p>	
<p>What everyone should know about this person is that . . .</p>	
<p>The last time I saw this person, we . . .</p>	
<p>One thing I'd like to tell this person is . . .</p>	

Rubric A (submitted by Richard Wagner)

Name: _____

	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Limited (1)
Performance	Movements are fluid and emphasize details effectively. Frequent and effective interaction with audience. Tone of voice, inflection, and pacing are used to enhance the details in the poem.	Movements are considered and emphasize details. Consistent interaction with audience. Tone of voice, inflection, and pacing are often used to enhance details in the poem.	Movements occasionally reinforce details. Audience is generally engaged, but interaction may falter. Tone of voice, inflection, and pacing are generally appropriate, but may be lacking in consistency.	Movements rarely reinforce details and may be distracting. Audience interaction is lacking or inconsistent. Tone of voice, inflection, and pacing are frequently ineffective and frequently interfere with details in the poem.
Poem	Opening and closing lines are engaging and powerful. Details are precise and successfully chosen to enhance the ideas and emotions being shared. The poem helps the audience empathize with the experience.	Opening and closing lines are interesting and relevant. Details are specific and purposefully chosen to communicate the ideas and emotions being shared. The poem clearly describes the experience.	Opening and closing lines are appropriate but may be general. Details are appropriate and generally relate to the ideas and emotions being shared. The poem generally summarizes the experience.	Opening and closing lines are vague, unclear, and/or ineffective. Details are vague, inconsistent, and/or unclearly related to the ideas and emotions being shared. The poem unclearly or inconsistently paraphrases the experience.

Performance /4 Comments:

Poem /4

Stand Up/Bow /1

Time /1

Bonus: Memorized /1

Total /10

Rubric B (submitted by Warren Lake)

/30

	Exemplary	Skilled	Competent	Adequate	Basic	Not Met
Physical Presence	Authoritative body language and eye contact show compelling stage presence	Poised; body language and eye contact reveal strong stage presence	Comfortable; steady eye contact and confident body language	Body language and eye contact are at times unsure, at times confident	Timid; unsure; eye contact and body language reflects nervousness	Stiff or agitated; lacks eye contact with audience; appears uncomfortable
Voice & Articulation	Very clear, crisp, mastery of rhythm and pace, skillful use of volume and intonation	Very clear, crisp, effective use of volume, intonation, rhythm and pacing	Clear, appropriate intonation and pacing	Clear, adequate intonation, even pacing	Audible. But quiet; too loud; monotone; paced unevenly; affected tone	Inaudible; slow; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations
Dramatic Appropriateness	Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem, all gestures and movements feel essential to poem's success	Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; poem's voice is well conveyed	Poem is enhanced by style of delivery; any gestures, facial expressions and movement are appropriate to poem	Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery	Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of distracting gestures, facial expressions and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone	Poem is overshadowed by significant distracting gestures, facial expressions, inflections or accents; acting out of poem; over emoting; inappropriate tone
Complexity	Contains extremely challenging content and language; length is challenging for a poem of this complexity	Contains very challenging content and language; length is appropriate to complexity of poem	Contains many elements of challenging content, language or length	Contains elements of challenging content, language or length	Straight-forward language and content; moderate length	Simple content, easy language, short length
Overall Performance	Captivating performance; shows mastery of recitation skills	Inspired performance, shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience's experience of the poem	Enjoyable recitation; successfully delivers poem	Sufficient recitation; lacks meaningful impact to audience	Inadequate recitation; lackluster; does disservice to poem	Ineffective or inappropriate recitation; does disservice to poem

Rubric C (submitted by Anders Alm)

	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Limited (0)
Time Limit	Performance does not need to have a minimum time limit, because it greatly exceeded expectations. It rocked the Kasbah!	Performance exceeds the minimum time required (enough to make time-limits not an issue).	Performance meets the minimum time required (no more, no less)	Performance is less than the minimum time required (by a long shot). Are you finished already?!
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly throughout the performance and mispronounced no words.	Speaks clearly, but mispronounces a couple words.	Speaks with errors evident during the performance. Errors begin to impede the performance.	Often mispronounces words in the performance, mumbling or cannot be understood by the audience.
Posture & Eye Contact	Stands straight, looking relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the audience throughout the performance.	Stands straight, establishes eye contact with most of the audience during the performance (some but not all).	Sometimes stands straight, taking eyes from the page and engaging a part of the audience (maybe in a single direction).	Poet does not look up from the page and the audience isn't really engaged by the poet's eyes or posture.
Volume	Volume is loud enough to be heard by all members of the audience throughout the performance.	Volume is loud enough during most of the performance, and the audience can hear for the majority (70-80%)	The poet raises his/her voice just enough to engage the audience, but it is obviously a struggle for the audience to hear without considerable effort.	Volume of the poet's voice is simply too soft to be heard by the audience.
Content (Special x2)	Poem is enlightening and shows a complex understanding of the topic. The poem is insightful and creatively addresses the assignment.	Poem is thoughtfully produced for the topic. The poem addresses the assignment in a way that is memorable.	Poem shows an emerging understanding of the topic. The poem needs further effort to make it truly unique and memorable within the assignment.	The poem does not seem to address the topic. The poet needs a better understanding of the purpose of the poem and the content to avoid further embarrassment.
Preparedness	Poet is completely prepared, KNOWS THE MATERIAL (because they have lived it, and have obviously rehearsed (it's perfect)!	Poet seems prepared, and seems to have a solid understanding of the material, but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	Poet is somewhat prepared, but could have taken further time to understand the material better. It was evident that rehearsal was lacking.	The poet is not prepared and seems to be in crisis as they present more of a poetry reading than an actual performance.
Emotional Connection	Facial expressions and body language generate a strong empathy among the audience members, captivating the listener!	Facial expression and body language engage the audience and develop an interest in the performance among the audience members.	Facial expressions and body language is utilized to generate interest in the performance, but it doesn't seem to be somewhat artificial or needs to be developed further.	Very little effort made to create and empathetic connection with the audience. The performance didn't generate much interest in the poem.
Pitch	Pitch enhanced the poem through the skillful use of voice and took the audience on a roller-coaster of sound.	Pitch was often used, and the emotion it conveyed was beneficial for the audience, though it was not extended throughout the performance.	Pitch was only sporadically utilized to convey the emotional significance of the poem to the audience.	Pitch was not utilized for the performance. It was a robotic performance.
Pacing/Rhythm	Pacing and Rhythm were insightfully used throughout the performance to convey the meaning and adequately engage the audience for dramatic impact.	Pacing and rhythm were partially utilized to improve the meaning of the poem and/or the dramatic impact for the audience.	Pacing and rhythm were used at times, but only minimally effective in improving meaning or dramatic content for the audience.	Pacing and rhythm were not intentionally utilized in the performance.
Elocution	The performance intricately layered vocabulary and insightful stylistic forms of expressive speech to engage the audience	The poet stretched the vocabulary of the audience and was thoughtful in his/her use of stylistic elements to express ideas to the audience.	The poet was moderately successful in utilizing vocabulary and style to further the ideas of the poem. The expression within speech was typical.	The vocabulary and style of the performance was not intentionally manipulated by the poet. The audience gains nothing from the poet's performance.