

Poetry Journal
AP English
Mr. Thomas

Assignment:

To create a brief poetry journal that connects your own writing with the larger poetic canon.

Purpose:

Poetry is visual, but somehow we have made it exclusively interpretive. This project helps you to see poetry in several different ways: as a reader, a writer, and an evaluator.

Procedure:

Part I: Personal Poetry

In class, we covered in class the process of evaluating poetry.

Determine Form – What does the poem look like?

Determine Purpose – What is the author doing?

Determine Devices – What devices help him/her do it?

Left to themselves these are empty exercises, so the first part of this assignment has to do with writing poetry. In class you wrote a brief lyrical poem (4 lines describing something metonymical about you). Because there were no limitations, the poem was probably free verse (words strung together in a certain rhythm and strategically aligned for the purpose of sound).

With the assumption that poetry is entirely interpretive comes the mistaken notion that whatever is written must be legitimate. This thinking discounts poetry's complexity and the poet's intent (if, for example, I write something about a blanket, and you think it is about a dog, which of is right?) Poetry is not all about interpretation and the reader!

Your **first task** then, is to enter poetry as a writer. Re-write your poem in *two different poetic forms* using *two different poetic purposes* (from the list below):

As cinquain aubade

As limerick ode

As narrative elegy

As free verse conceit

As haiku apostrophe

Write your three poems on a page: one at top center, one bottom left, one bottom right. **Rhetorical Triangle:** in class, we have been working hard at using a your responses (audience) to a written work (text), to determine an author's intention. To some extent, this exercise becomes a concrete poem (the form tells the story). Therefore, in the middle of the three poems, I want you to write **three theses/topic sentences** that would direct someone's study of each poem. This is like writing your resume; the reader (audience) should sense the depth of the writer (author), and recognize the technical skill of the product (text).

Part II: Encountering Other's Poetry

Each of you will be given a published poem. Though publication is no sure sign of greatness, the process speaks to a real-life review process where one person's ideas are subject to other people's sensibilities. In short: if it gets to publication, an expert thought it was good. Therefore, as you read, you are encountering somebody who has exhibited poetic skill and ingenuity, and who thought enough of their ideas to offer them up to you. Reading is a communal act; it's a conversation with a page. So I want to hear your conversation.

If poetry is anything, it is sensory. If your textbook has anything to say about it, poetry is:

Sight: Visual
Sound: Auditory
Sense: Reasoned

Therefore, this assignment – called a tableaux: “a visual presentation” – asks you to visualize, talk to, and discuss with a poem. Do this in three parts:

I. Visual

Poetry is seeing. After reading your poem, find the “synecdochetic picture” (I just made this word up – see the joy of poetry?) of the poem: “the one part that makes the whole thing work.”

Then take your camera and go find the part. Take 10 pictures from 10 different angles. **Personal Preference:** use black and white or sepia (they are much more dramatic and cool).

When you've taken the pictures, return to class.

II. Conversation

Poetry is also sound. As you read your poem, think about what you hear:

Is it a sound?
Is it another poem?
Is it a song?

Whatever it is you hear, I want you to write a response to your poem starting with the line: **“I hear what you're saying . . .”** Your response can be written in the They Say/I Say Method, or in dialogue, or as another poem written in response (Free Verse). Whatever mode you choose, you have to interact *in response to the poem you have read!*

Example:

Sound: “You say _____, and I hear _____”
Poem: “You say _____, but have you considered _____”
Song: “You say _____, and it sounds like a song that says _____”

III. Discourse

Finally, poetry is discussion. Poetry, like learning, is discursive, meaning it comes as a result of conversation, reflection, and dialogue. As we speak, we construct concepts that help us to understand a context, in this case: the author's intentions.

So, after finishing **Part I** and **Part II**, you need to find **three pictures** or **one painting that tells your poet's story**. Use the **one painting/picture as a controlling metaphor for your response** -- it should be clear through your writing the point you are trying to make.

If you do the **three pictures**, have one picture representing the poem's beginning, one picture representing the shift, and one picture representing the poem's resolution. Next to the pictures, you need to re-write the poet's story as a brief narrative using either:

1st Person re-telling - *relaying a story you have heard, not seen* - **using the opposite tone of the poet** (example: If high diction, write in low diction - *visa versa*; If childish, write as an adult, etc)

- OR -

1st Person Observer, responding to the poet as if you were the subject of the poem. In other words, give your perspective as the one who has been objectified.

Evaluation:

- 2-3 Pages (**1-page** for Pt I, **1-2 pages** for Pt II)
- 10-12 font - Typed
- Writing, Syntax and Details: assessed by AP's *Diagnostic Writing Rubric*
- Classmates will write a 3-C in response to your Individual Poems (this will give you a sense of how Author-Audience-Text connect as you read and respond to their evaluation)