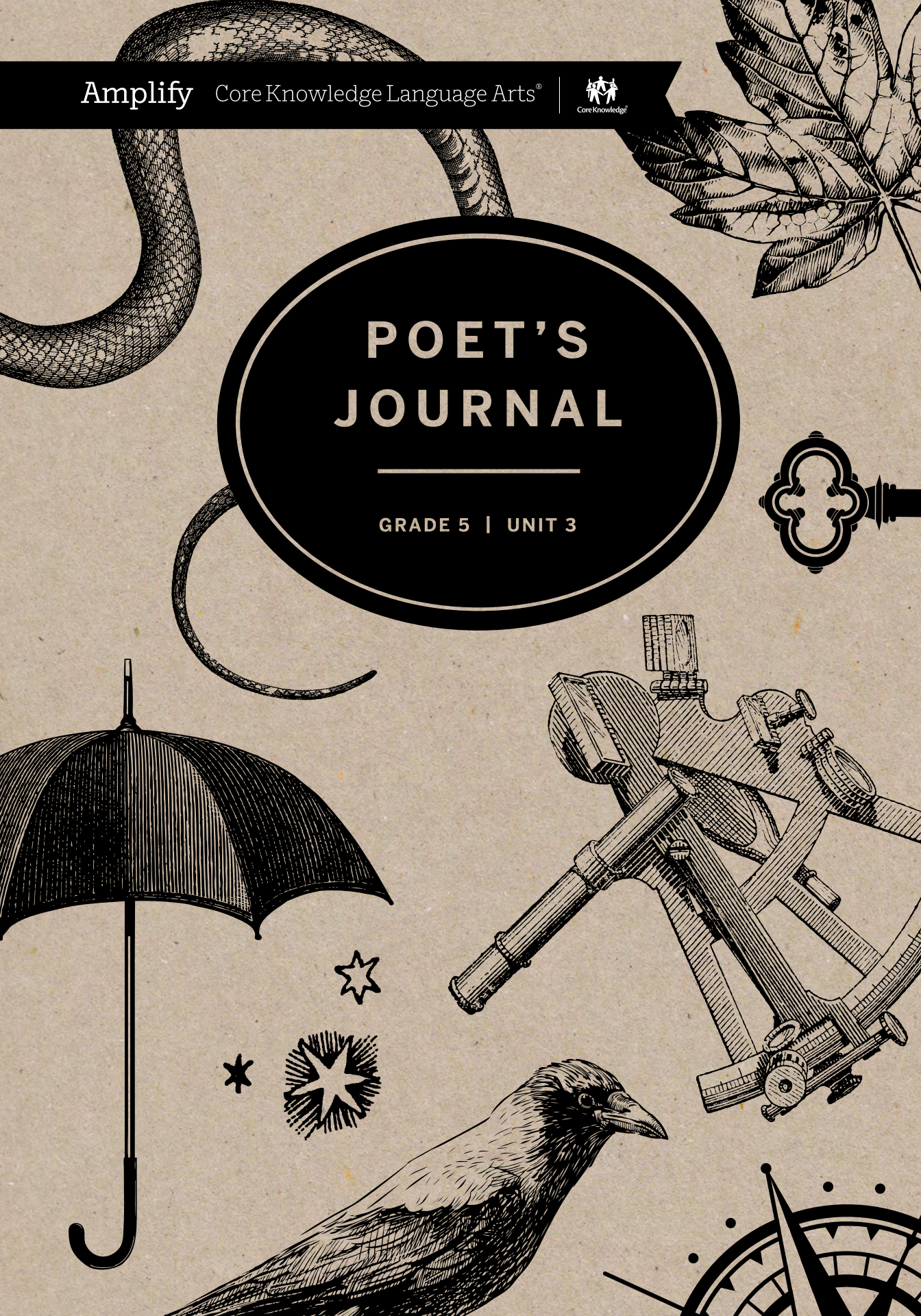


POET'S JOURNAL

GRADE 5 | UNIT 3



POET'S JOURNAL

GRADE 5 UNIT 3

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Amplify.

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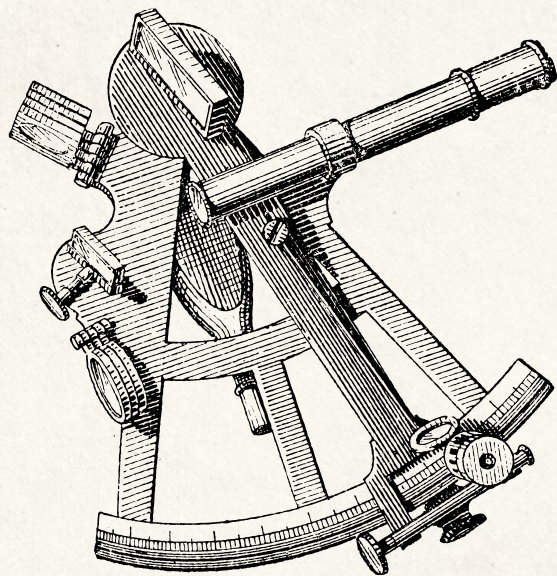
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Introduction

If you've studied poetry before, you may have heard a number of different descriptions of what it does and how it works. Sometimes it's challenging to figure out how to make sense of all the different meanings poetry can have. The poet Emily Dickinson, whose poem #359 you will read as part of this unit, described poetry as possibility—a good way to express how it can contain so many different things for different people.

People use poetry to express deep and complex thoughts, share their emotions, make a case for something in which they believe, entertain, record history, and many other things. Poets write about all sorts of things, including how they feel, what they believe, questions they have, their dreams for themselves and the world. In this unit, you will study poems written by men and women from different countries and time periods. You'll practice reading poems aloud and figuring out what possibilities each poem holds. You'll also learn how to recognize some of the tools poets use and use them in poems of your own. We hope you enjoy learning all about these possibilities and figuring out what poetry can make possible for you!

Now let's get started!



To the Snake

Denise Levertov

Green Snake, when I hung you round my neck
and stroked your cold, pulsing throat
 as you hissed to me, glinting
arrowy gold scales, and I felt
 the weight of you on my shoulders,
and the whispering silver of your dryness
 sounded close at my ears—

Green Snake—I swore to my companions that certainly
 you were harmless! But truly
I had no certainty, and no hope, only desiring
 to hold you, for that joy,
 which left
a long wake of pleasure, as the leaves moved
and you faded into the pattern
of grass and shadows, and I returned
smiling and haunted, to a dark morning.

1.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer the following questions about Denise Levertov's poem "To the Snake." You may consult the poem or the glossary as you work.

1. Write down the poem's title here.

2. Who or what is being addressed in the poem's title?

3. How does the speaker describe the green snake in stanza 1?

HELPFUL HINT

Some questions require that you find the exact word or phrase in the poem to write your answer. For some questions it will be necessary for you to read closely to find clues to inform your response.



Name: _____

Date: _____

1.1

4. According to stanza 2, what did the speaker tell her “companions” she believes about the snake?

5. The speaker then tells the snake “But truly I had no certainty.” What did the speaker really believe about the snake?

6. Why did the speaker decide to hold the snake?

7. At the end of the poem, the speaker says that after holding the snake, she was “smiling and haunted.” What words or details in the poem explain why she might feel this way after holding the snake?

1.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Independent Writing Practice

Now you will think about writing your own poem! To get started, answer questions 1–4 to help you think about your poem’s subject and ideas.

Planning

Earlier your group listed a number of different animals and ways you have seen, watched, or otherwise experienced them. Using your group ideas or some of the ideas your class listed, pick the animal experience you would like to describe in your poem.

1. What animal are you writing about, and where did you see it?

2. Perhaps you saw, smelled, heard, or touched the animal. In the space below, write down how you experienced the animal. If you did more than one of those things, write as many as necessary.

3. What did the animal do when you were around it?

Name: _____

Date: _____

1.2

4. What would you like to tell the animal now that the two of you are no longer together?

Drafting

Now that you know what your poem is about, it's time to draft it. Use the space on the following page to complete the following steps.

Title: Think about your poem's title. It should describe what your poem is about. On the first line, write the title of your poem.

Stanza 1: On the lines of the first stanza, write about when and how you experienced the animal. You might describe what you were doing and what you noticed about the animal.

Stanza 2: On the lines of the second stanza, write about what the animal did when it was around you and what you want to say to the animal now.

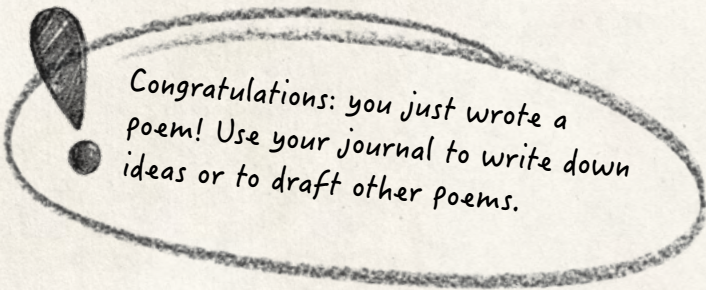
If you finish with time to spare, look back over your draft and try to add one word or detail to describe the animal or what happened with it.

1.2

Title: _____

Stanza 1: _____

Stanza 2: _____



Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

glinting—adj.

sparkling or shining

pulsing—adj.

throbbing rhythmically, like a heart beating

wake—n.

a trail of disturbed water or air left by the passage of a ship or aircraft

REMINDER

The back of your Poet's Journal contains a glossary with definitions for some of the words in the poem. You can also often figure out the word's meaning from the other words around it. If you can't find the word in the glossary you can look in a dictionary or ask your teacher for help.

Literary Vocabulary

apostrophe

writing that addresses a person or thing that is not present

content

the words or subject of a piece of writing

form

the shape, structure, or appearance of a piece of writing

line break

the place where a line ends

stanza

a section of a poem; consists of a line or group of lines

stanza break

the blank space that divides two stanzas from each other



Denise Levertov

Denise Levertov was born in 1923 in Essex, United Kingdom. At a young age, she knew writing would be her future: “I lived in a house full of books, and everybody in my family did some kind of writing.... It seemed natural for me to be writing something. I wrote poems from an early age, and stories,” she recalled. Her mother encouraged her to send poems to the poet T. S. Eliot, and at age seventeen she published *The Double Image*, her first collection of poetry.

In 1947 Levertov moved to the United States and continued publishing poetry. Influenced by the writing of William Carlos Williams, she began to experiment with a style of imagery that transformed everyday objects into something remarkable and new. Her collections of poetry, including *The Sorrow Dance*, *To Stay Alive*, and *Freeing the Dust*, earned many awards. She continued to write and teach until her death in 1997.



This Is Just To Say

William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

from

Variations On A Theme
By William Carlos
Williams

Kenneth Koch

I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in
next summer.

I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do
and its wooden beams were so inviting.

2.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“This is Just to Say”; “Variations On A Theme By William Carlos Williams”

After listening to the excerpt from “Variations On A Theme By William Carlos Williams,” answer the following questions as instructed by your teacher. You may consult the glossary and the poem as you answer the questions.

1. What is the speaker of the poem apologizing for?

2. What reasons does the speaker give for doing this?

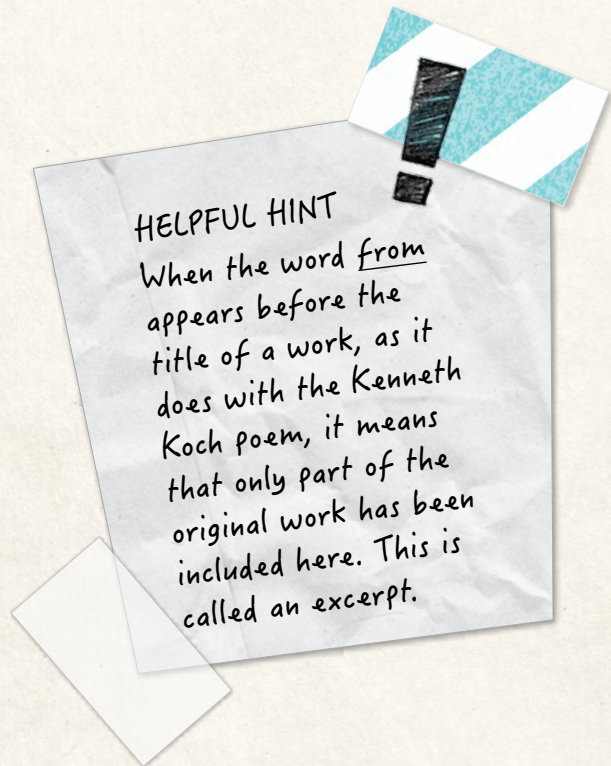
3. What tone does the speaker have, and what details in the poem help you recognize that tone?

Name: _____

Date: _____

2.1

4. In writing a poem inspired by “This Is Just To Say,” Koch stresses or plays up some of the qualities of the original. How does his poem show that exaggerated tone?



2.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Independent Writing Practice

In this lesson so far, you've read several poems that offer an apology for something the speaker may not really be sorry for doing. Think about your own example of something that might require an apology. This example may come from your life or your imagination; it does not have to be based on real life.

1. Think about something that might deserve an apology, even if you didn't know it was wrong or hurtful at the time. This could be something you have done (such as Williams eating the plums) or something you have imagined (such as Koch chopping down a house). Write that thing down here.

Based on the action you used to answer question 1, answer questions 2-4. If you are writing about something imagined, just answer as you would if you had actually performed the action in question 1. These planning questions will help you think more about the scenario you will use in your poem, which you will write in the next section.

2. To whom are you apologizing?

3. How might that person have been hurt or annoyed by your action?

Name: _____

Date: _____

2.2

4. Why would you have performed this action?

If you complete question 4 and still have time remaining, look back over your answers for questions 3 and 4. Add at least one more detail to each answer.

Poem #1: Sincere Tone

Now, with your answers to questions 1–4 in mind, write an apology poem of your own. In this poem, make your tone sincere; make it clear that the speaker really is sorry for what he or she has done. You may use the lines below to write your poem. You might think about your answers to the questions above for inspiration, but you do not have to use the exact same words as you did before.

Your poem might include the following things:

- The action that deserves an apology
- Why someone might be hurt by this action

2.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

5a. For whom is this apology intended?

5b. What words or details in this poem show the speaker's sincerity?

Poem #2: Sarcastic Tone

Now it's time to try a different tone. Write another poem that apologizes for the exact same action, but use a sarcastic tone to show that the speaker may not really be sorry for his or her actions. Use the lines below to write your poem. You might think about your answers to the questions above for inspiration, but you do not have to use the exact same words as you did before.

In writing your poem, you might think about the following things:

- The action that deserves an apology
- Why someone might be hurt by this action
- What enjoyment the speaker got out of the action
- For whom the apology is intended

Name: _____

Date: _____

2.2

6a. For whom is this apology intended?

6b. What words or details in this poem show the speaker's sincerity?

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

beams—n.

thick pieces of wood or steel

theme—n.

main point or topic

variation—n.

change; a different approach to a topic

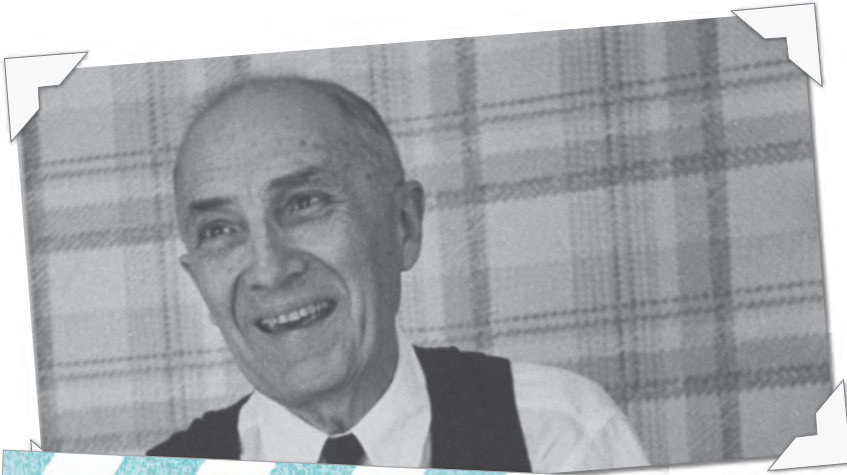
Literary Vocabulary

excerpt

a small part of a larger work; for example, one chapter of a novel or one paragraph of a newspaper article

tone

the attitude of a piece of writing, expressed through the style of writing and the words the author uses



William Carlos Williams

William Carlos Williams was born in 1883 in Rutherford, New Jersey. His mother and father encouraged him at a young age to pursue a career in medicine, despite his talent for writing. While pursuing his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania, he met the famous poet Ezra Pound, who remained an ally and influence throughout his career.

After becoming a doctor, Williams drew inspiration from the patients that visited his office. His wife, Flossie, remembered, “He loved being a doctor, making house calls, and talking to people.” His observations propelled him to write poetry focusing on the lives of normal people. Known for his imaginative, experimental, and original style, he wrote several books of poetry—including *Spring and All*, *Paterson*, and *Pictures From Brueghel and Other Poems*—that influenced the world of poetry. He continued to write until his death in 1963.



Kenneth Koch

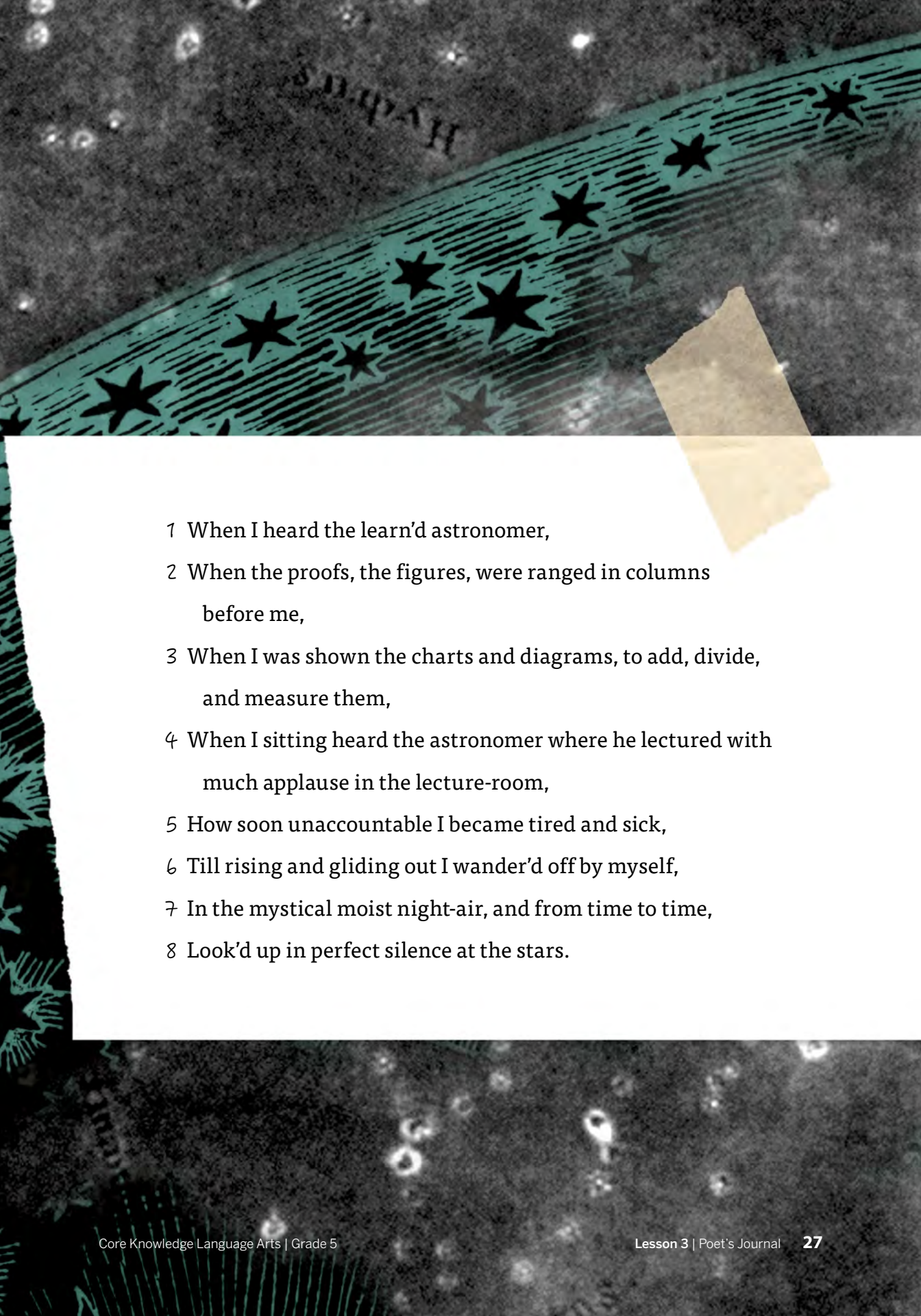
Kenneth Koch was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1925. He remembered writing his first poem at age five: “I don’t know where I got the idea for it. It rhymed and everything... And I showed it to my mother and she threw her arms around me and kissed me.” Later, in high school, he was encouraged by his English teacher to experiment with language and free verse poetry. After high school, he fought in World War II.

After returning from the war, he enrolled at Harvard University. Koch published many books of poetry over his career, including *Poems*; *Ko, or A Season on Earth*; and *The Art of Love*. Koch became known as an inspiring teacher of creative writing and poetry at a public school in New York City. His poetry was known for its lyricism, formal experimentation, and humor. Kenneth Koch died in 1992.



When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

Walt Whitman



1 When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
2 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
before me,
3 When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,
and measure them,
4 When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with
much applause in the lecture-room,
5 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
6 Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
7 In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
8 Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

3.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”

Answer the following questions about Walt Whitman’s poem. You may consult the poem and the glossary in your journal as you compose your answers.

1. Write down the first word of lines 5–8.

2. How do these opening words differ from the opening words of lines 1–4?

3. In line 5, the speaker describes his feelings at the lecture. What words does he use to describe how he started to feel?

4. Earlier in the discussion, we predicted how the speaker might feel at the lecture. What clues did you use from the poem that helped you to make your prediction?

**REMINDER**

Anaphora is the repetition of certain words at the beginning of lines of a poem. Poets use anaphora for lots of reasons, including to add emphasis to their ideas.

Name: _____

Date: _____

3.1

5. According to line 6, what did the speaker do as a result of these feelings? Use the words from the poem in your answer.

6. Paraphrase your answer to question 5 by putting the poem's words in your own words.

7. What does the speaker do in lines 7–8?

3.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

8. Starting with line 5, the poem no longer uses anaphora and instead begins each line with a different word. We know that in lines 1-4, the speaker is starting to feel sick and tired. Why might someone who feels sick and tired use the same words over and over?

9. Based on the variety of words used to start lines 5-8, how do you think the speaker might feel at the end of the poem? Give a reason for your answer.

10. Based on the poem, do you think this speaker would rather hear someone describe his favorite food or eat his favorite food? Give a reason for your answer.

HELPFUL HINT

To paraphrase someone's writing or speech, you express the meaning in different words. When you paraphrase, you change the words without changing the main idea.



Name: _____

Date: _____

3.2

Independent Writing Practice

Pick a time in your past when something made you feel bored, then a change happened that made things more interesting. Maybe it was waiting at the doctor's office until you could get the ice cream your parents promised you afterward, or maybe it was when you had to clean your room before you could play with your friends. Make sure to think of a time when you remember feeling bored but when you also stopped feeling bored as soon as something you liked happened.

Describe the place or situation by answering the following questions.

1. Where were you?

2. What were the people around you doing?

3. What did you hear, see, taste, touch, or smell?

4. How long did it feel like you were there?

3.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Now that you've thought about the situation and remembered what it was like, use your answers to the questions on the previous page to write a poem like Whitman's. On each line that starts with "When," write a description of the scene connected to each of your answers above. You might need to rearrange some words from your answers to ensure your lines make sense. We call that revision, or changing your writing. Revision is a great technique that can help you make your work better.

After you write four "When" lines to describe the situation you were in, compose four more lines to describe how your situation changed, or what helped end your boredom. You may start those lines with any word you like, as long as you do not use "When."

When: _____

When: _____

When: _____

When: _____

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

astronomer - *n.*

scientist who studies outer space and the bodies (such as stars, moons, and planets) in it

figures - *n.*

numbers or diagrams

learn'd - *adj.*


a shortened version of *learned* (in which the apostrophe stands in for missing letter *e*) used to describe people, who have spent many years studying one subject

lecture - *n.*

a talk, usually given by a teacher or other expert, on a single topic

mystical - *adj.*

not of this world



proofs-n.

in math, arguments that show an idea or rule must be correct

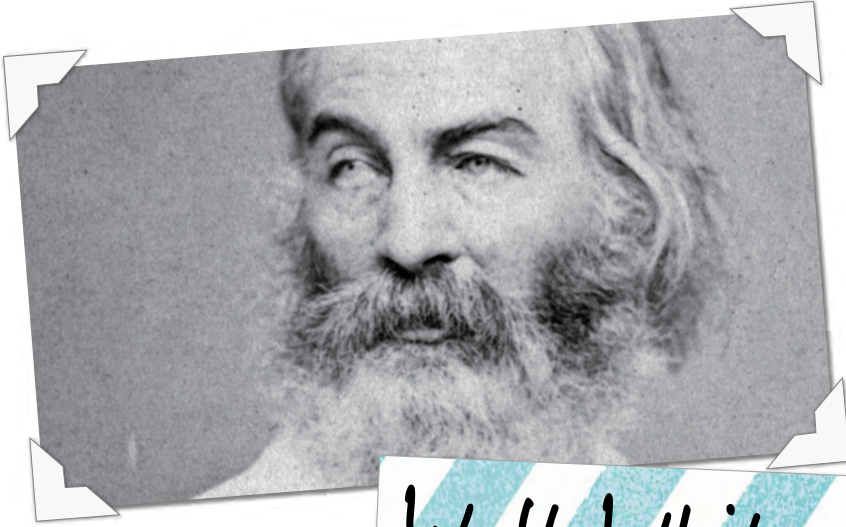
unaccountable-adj.

something that cannot be explained; a person who does not take responsibility

Literary Vocabulary

anaphora

the repetition of words at the start of a series of lines in a poem



Walt Whitman

Born on May 3, 1819 in Long Island, New York, Walt Whitman worked as a teacher and a journalist before becoming a poet. His poetry related to people of all backgrounds and made him one of America's most well-known and beloved writers.

During Whitman's time, the United States of America was divided by slavery, threatening to split the country in two. The Civil War inspired him to write *Drum Taps*, poetry about the war and his experiences as a battlefield nurse. His writing was powerful; even President Lincoln admired him. In fact, several of his poems are tributes to Lincoln.

Whitman also wrote poems about nature. Whitman died in 1892. However, his poetry and free verse style, along with his conversational tone, remain appreciated and admired.

Name: _____

Date: _____

4.7

The Natural World

Part 1

Look over the list of natural items your teacher wrote down. Using that list or your own memory, think about a time when you saw, visited, or otherwise experienced something in nature that made a big impression on you. Recall your memory of that experience and use it to answer Part 1 (questions 1–5).

1. Where were you?

2. What was the part of nature you experienced?

3. Did you experience it through smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, or hearing? Write one to two sentence(s) to describe what it was like to experience it this way.

4.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. How did this experience change your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

5. Using your answers for questions 1–4, condense your information into two or three sentences that tell a brief story.

Name: _____

Date: _____

4.7

Part 2

After you and your partner have exchanged your stories about encountering nature, work together to answer the following questions.

6. How did your lists of experiences differ? List as many ways as you can that your experience in nature was different from your partner's.

7. What did your experiences have in common? List as many ways as you can that your experience in nature was similar to your partner's.

**REMINDER**

When describing how two or more things are similar, equal, or alike, you are comparing.
When you focus on the differences between two or more things, you are contrasting.



The Copper Beech

Marie Howe

Immense, entirely itself,
it wore that yard like a dress,

with limbs low enough for me to enter it
and climb the crooked ladder to where

I could lean against the trunk and practice being alone.

One day, I heard the sound before I saw it, rain fell
darkening the sidewalk.

Sitting close to the center, not very high in the branches,
I heard it hitting the high leaves, and I was happy,

watching it happen without it happening to me.

4.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

“The Copper Beech”



1. Looking at the image above and using clues from the words of the poem, draw a circle to show where the speaker would be located. Then write a sentence below to explain what details in the poem help you know that the speaker would be located here.
-
-

REMINDER

Figurative language consists of words or phrases that mean more than their dictionary definition. Two examples of figurative language are similes and metaphors. Similes are comparisons using like or as, and metaphors are comparisons that do not use like or as.



Name: _____

Date: _____

4.2

2. In line 5, the speaker mentions what she did in the tree. What words does she use to describe what she did in the tree?

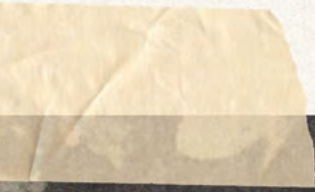
3. Later in the poem the speaker says she “was happy.” Look back at the poem and find a word or words that suggest why the speaker felt happy. Underline that word or words. Then, using your own words, write a sentence that explains what made the speaker happy.

4. Each phrase below suggests a possible meaning the tree has for the speaker. For each phrase, write a reason from the poem that shows why the tree has this meaning. Then write two more words or phrases on the two remaining lines to show other things the tree means to Howe. Make sure to give a reason for each.

observation post: _____

secret lair: _____

5. This poem’s title, “The Copper Beech,” describes the name of the tree and indicates that the tree is somehow important to the speaker. Using your own words but basing them on the way the speaker feels about the tree, write a sentence that describes how the speaker of this poem might feel about nature in general. Make sure to use evidence from the poem to explain your choice.



My Father and the Figtree

Naomi Shihab Nye

For other fruits my father was indifferent.
He'd point at the cherry trees and say,
"See those? I wish they were figs."
In the evening he sat by our beds
weaving folktales like vivid little scarves.
They always involved a figtree.
Even when it didn't fit, he'd stick it in.
Once Joha was walking down the road
and he saw a figtree.
Or, he tied his camel to a figtree and went to sleep.
Or, later when they caught and arrested him,
his pockets were full of figs.

At age six I ate a dried fig and shrugged.
"That's not what I'm talking about!" he said,
"I'm talking about a fig straight from the earth —
gift of Allah! — on a branch so heavy
it touches the ground.
I'm talking about picking the largest, fattest,
sweetest fig
in the world and putting it in my mouth."
(Here he'd stop and close his eyes.)



Years passed, we lived in many houses,
none had figtrees.

We had lima beans, zucchini, parsley, beets.

“Plant one!” my mother said,

but my father never did.

He tended garden half-heartedly, forgot to water,
let the okra get too big.

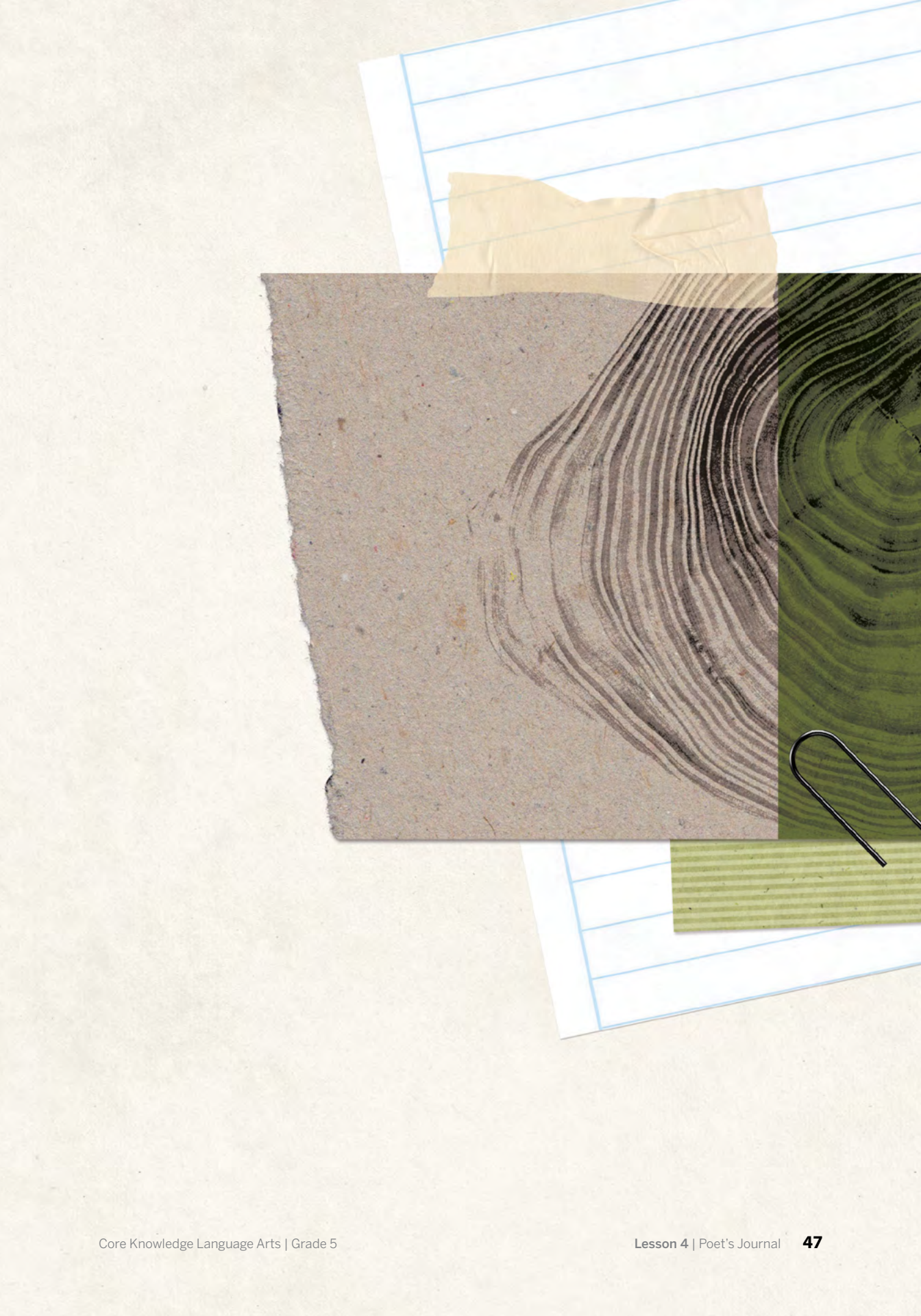
“What a dreamer he is. Look how many
things he starts and doesn’t finish.”

The last time he moved, I had a phone call,
my father, in Arabic, chanting a song
I’d never heard. “What’s that?”

He took me out to the new yard.

There, in the middle of Dallas, Texas,
a tree with the largest, fattest,
sweetest fig in the world.

“It’s a figtree song!” he said,
plucking his fruits like ripe tokens,
emblems, assurance
of a world that was always his own.



4.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

“My Father and the Figtree”

1. Underline the similes in the first and last stanza of this poem. Then list them below and explain what the figurative meaning of each simile might be.

Simile from first stanza: _____

Figurative meaning: _____

Simile from last stanza: _____

Figurative meaning: _____

2. In stanza 1, the father tells three different tales about Joha. What happens in each one?

2a. In the first tale, _____

2b. In the second tale, _____

2c. In the third tale, _____

3. What is Nye’s reaction to the fig she eats at age six? Use words from the poem to help you with your answer; you might look at stanza 2 for a starting point.

Name: _____

Date: _____

4.3

4. Based on this reaction, how do much do you think she liked the fig?
Circle the best answer below.

- She loved it.
- She thought it was okay.
- She hated it.

5. Later in stanza 2, Nye's father describes a different kind of fig than the one she has eaten. What words does her father use to describe his fig?

6. Based on the way Nye's father describes the figs in stanza 2, how does he seem to feel about figs?

4.4

Name: _____

Date: _____

“My Father and the Figtree”

Complete the following chart, then use that information and other information from the poem to answer the following questions. You may consult the poem in filling out the chart and answering the questions below.

Question	Character	
	Howe	Nye's Father
1. What kind of tree does the character like?		
2. Whose story does the character tell?		
3. How does the character show his or her feelings for the tree?		
4. What does the tree represent to the character?		

1. What do these characters have in common?

Name: _____

Date: _____

4.4

2. What differences exist between the way Nye's father feels about nature and the way Howe feels about it?

3. Based on what you know about each character, make an inference about which of the following he or she would be most likely to do from the list below. Fill the item in on the appropriate blank, then provide a reason explaining your choice.

Visit a library

Plant a tree

Tell stories to the neighbors

Speak to a group of people about why they should protect the forests

Visit another country

3a. Howe would most likely: _____

because: _____

3b. Nye's father would most likely: _____

because: _____

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

Allah-*n.*

Arabic word for God

assurance-*n.*

a promise

copper beech-*n.*

a large tree that can live for several hundred years and grow to a height of over 150 feet

emblem-*n.*

a symbol

immense-*adj.*

extremely large

indifferent-*adj.*

uncaring

Joha-*n.*

a character in Palestinian folktales who is known for playing tricks

Literary Vocabulary

figurative
language

words or phrases that mean more than their dictionary definition; similes and metaphors are two examples of figurative language

metaphor

a figure of speech in which words typically used to describe one thing are used to describe something else in order to suggest a likeness

simile

a comparison of two different things using the words *like* or *as*



REMINDER

If you can't find a definition you need in the glossary, you might try to figure out the word's meaning from the other words around it. You can also look in a dictionary or ask your teacher for help.



Marie Howe

Marie Howe was born in Rochester, New York, in 1950. As a child, she loved to read and write. As an adult, she became a journalist and a seventh grade English teacher. While teaching, she realized her true love of poetry and spent hours reading and selecting poems for students to read. Her passion inspired her to return to college and create art that would make “hearts break open, rather than close.”

Not long after her first book of poetry, *The Good Thief*, was published, Howe’s brother died of an AIDS-related disease, inspiring her second poetry collection, *What the Living Do*. Her poetry has inspired readers with its honesty and openness on many diverse topics. In 2012, Marie Howe was named Poet Laureate for New York state. She writes and teaches in New York City.



Naomi Shihab Nye

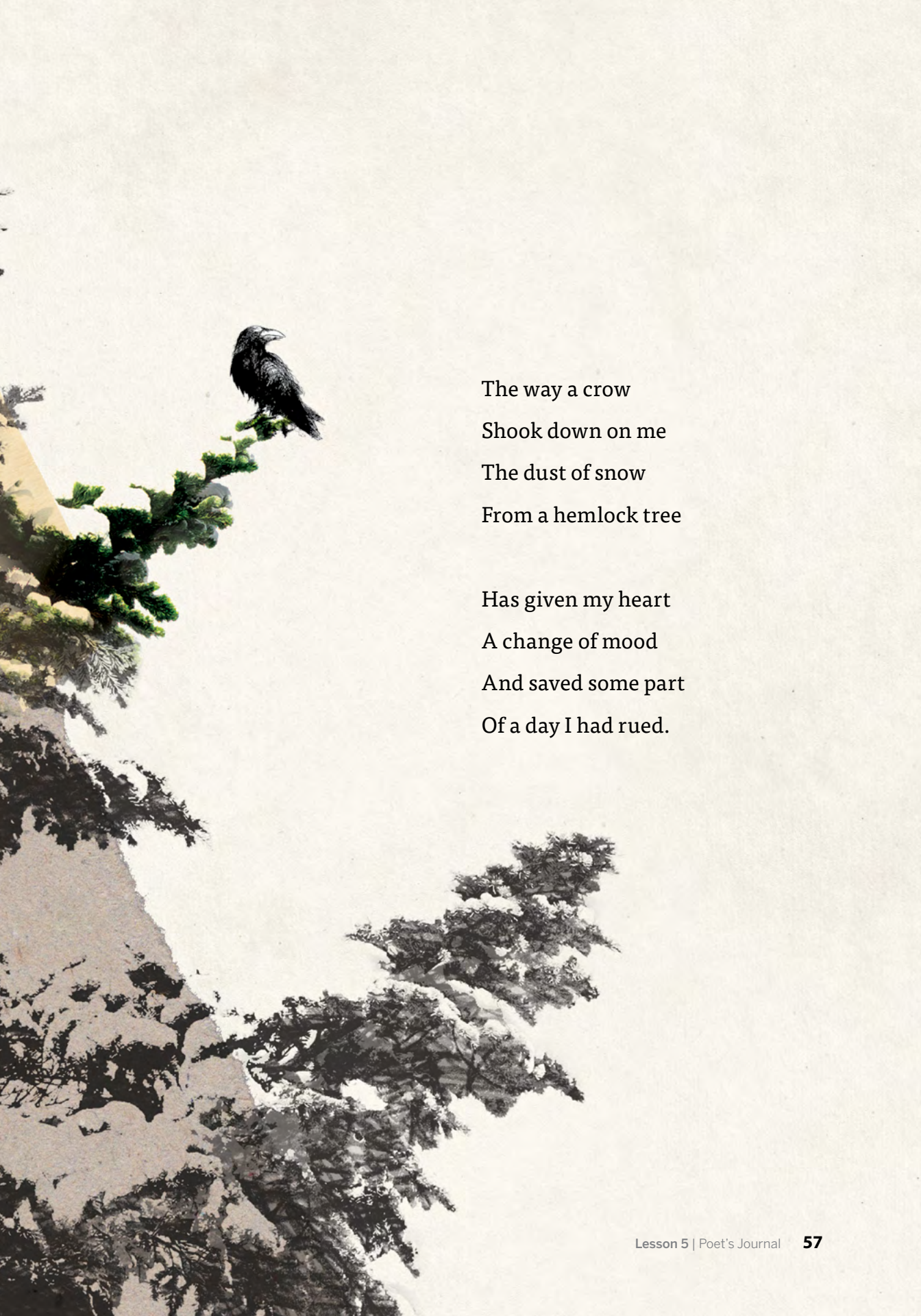
Naomi Shihab Nye was born on March 12, 1952, in St. Louis, Missouri. As a child, she wrote poetry as soon as she could. She explains: “I wrote about all the little stuff a kid would write about: amazement over things, cats, wounded squirrels found in the street, my friend who moved away, trees, teachers, my funny grandma. At that time I wrote about my German grandma—I wouldn’t meet my Palestinian grandma till I was 14.” Growing up between both Ramallah, Palestine, and San Antonio, Texas, Nye experienced a contrast between two cultures, and it shapes her poetry today.

Nye’s books of poetry include *Different Ways to Pray, Fuel*, and *19 Varieties of Gazelle*, which earned praise and awards. Her poetry traces her daily life from the Middle East to the American southwest. She lives, teaches, and writes in San Antonio, Texas.



Snow Dust

Robert Frost



The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

5.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Snow Dust”

Sometimes we encounter words we don't know. The questions below will help you to figure out the meaning of the word *rued* from the other words in the stanza. You may consult the poem as you answer these questions.

1. What happens to the speaker in the first two lines of the second stanza?

2. What does the speaker say was “saved”?

Working together with your group, answer question 3 on the next page. You may consult the poem as you work on your answer, but you should not look the word up in a glossary or dictionary.

HELPFUL HINT

When you come across words that are unfamiliar, don't panic. Discovering new words is a fun and challenging way to develop your vocabulary. If you are uncertain about the meaning of a word, use the context words around it to help you infer its meaning.



Name: _____

Date: _____

5.1

3. The speaker says that at first he “rued” the day, but it was eventually saved by the crow shaking snow onto his head. Based on his use of the word *saved*, what do you guess *rued* might mean? Write down details or words from the poem that help you decide.

When your teacher tells you to do so, complete questions 4–5 individually.

4. In your own words, describe the change that took place for the speaker.

5. Summarize the events of the poem in your own words.

5.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Identifying Rhyme Scheme in “Snow Dust”

When you read a poem with rhyming words at the end of its lines, it may be following a rhyme scheme, or using those rhyming words in a set pattern. Follow the steps below as your teacher explains them in order to identify a poem’s rhyme scheme.

1. First, review the words that rhyme in the poem. Although words within each line may sometimes rhyme, in looking for a rhyme scheme, you should consult only the last words of each line. When your teacher instructs, review with your class the words at the end of each line of “Snow Dust.”
-
-

2. Using colored pencils, markers, or the other tools your teacher provides, underline each pair of rhyming words, giving each rhyming pair its own unique color.

Name: _____

Date: _____

5.2

3. Now assign each colored pair a letter, starting with the letter A and working through the alphabet in order. For example, if you underlined the words *crow* and *snow* in red, assign those words the letter A. Every end word that rhymes with *crow* will get the letter A. When you get to an end word that does not rhyme with *crow*, give it the letter B, and so on. Write the letter next to each word.

Snow Dust

Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

5.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

Independent Writing Practice

In this exercise you will write your own poem using an ABAB rhyme scheme. Like Robert Frost, you should make your poem about something that was surprising or unexpected.

1. Think of an event from your life that was surprising or unexpected. Write what was surprising in the space below.

2. What was happening before the surprising event?

3. What changed because of the surprising event?

Name: _____

Date: _____

5.3

Now you'll use this information to write a poem with an ABAB rhyme scheme. Remember that you will need four rhyming pairs. You may write your own rhymes or use the rhyming words your class listed in the previous exercise. After you finish your poem, reread it. Then mark the rhyme scheme by writing the appropriate letters to the side of each end word.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

rue-v.

to feel sorry about or regret

Literary Vocabulary

rhyme

words that end in the same sound or sounds

rhyme scheme

the pattern of repeated rhyming words in a poem



Robert Frost

Robert Frost was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874, and moved to Massachusetts when he was eleven. Although he never earned a college degree, Frost attended Dartmouth and Harvard Universities. As a young man, he worked as a teacher and as editor of a local newspaper, writing poetry all the while. In 1894, he published his first poem, “The Butterfly,” and went on to publish several volumes of poetry, including *A Boy’s Will*, and *North of Boston*, in the 1910s. Frost travelled extensively with his wife and children and was influenced by several poets he met abroad. He mostly wrote about life and nature, especially in New England, where he spent most of his life.

He became well known and loved as a writer during his lifetime, winning many awards, including four Pulitzer Prizes for poetry and the Congressional Gold Medal, in 1960. He died in 1963.



359

Emily Dickinson

A Bird, came down the Walk –
He did not know I saw –
He bit an Angle worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass –
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass –

He glanced with rapid eyes,
That hurried all abroad –
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,
He stirred his Velvet Head. –

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer Home –

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,
Leap, plashless as they swim.



6.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“#359”

Listen to stanza 3 as it is read aloud, then answer the following questions. You may consult the poem as you work.

1. What does the bird do in the first line of the stanza?

2. Using context clues from the other words in the first two lines of the stanza, try to infer the meaning of the word *abroad*. What does it mean in this stanza?

3. Name the simile in the stanza.

4. What is the simile describing?

Name: _____

Date: _____

6.7

5. What words in this stanza help you know how the bird might feel? Write the words from the stanza and the way you believe the bird feels.

Listen to stanza 4 as it is read aloud, then answer the following questions. You may consult the poem as you work.

6. Who is “like one in danger?”

7. What does the speaker do in stanza 4, line 2?

6.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Independent Writing Practice

Emily Dickinson uses figurative language to describe the way a bird flies. Working with a partner, you will also practice using two kinds of figurative language, similes and metaphors, to describe the actions of animals.

Read the word lists below.

List A

eat
sing
jump
roar
hiss
prance

List B

lion
snake
dog
horse
pony
bird

1. One student should pick a word from list A, and the other should pick a word from list B. Try to pick pairs of words that seem to go together. Write those words on the space below.

word from list A: _____

word from list B: _____

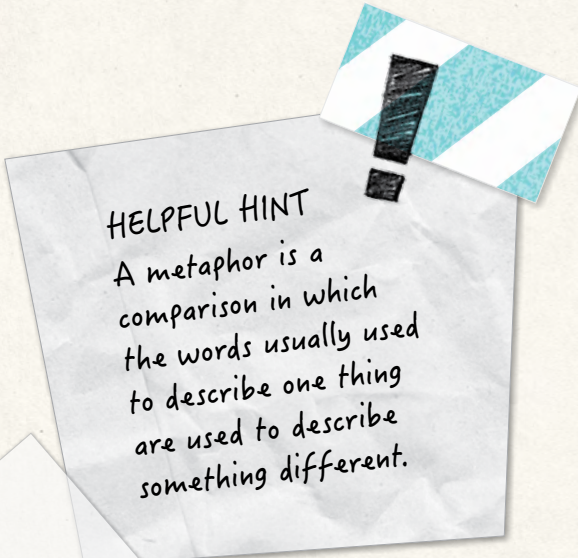
2. Work together with your partner to write a simile that uses the words like or as to connect this animal action to something else. For example, if you had the words *flap* and *bird*, you might write “The bird’s wings flapped like oars dividing the ocean.”

Name: _____

Date: _____

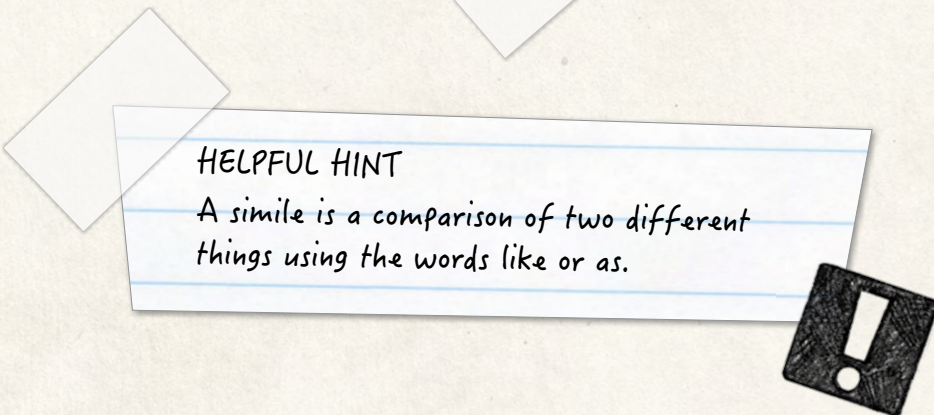
6.2

3. Work together with your partner to turn your simile into a metaphor. Remember that a metaphor does not use the words *like* or *as*. For example, you might write “The bird’s flapping wings were oars dividing the air.”
-
-
-



HELPFUL HINT

A metaphor is a comparison in which the words usually used to describe one thing are used to describe something different.



HELPFUL HINT

A simile is a comparison of two different things using the words *like* or *as*.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

cautious—adj. careful

convenient—adj. nearby or easy to find

dew—n. drops of water that form overnight

oar—n. a long, thin, usually wooden pole with a blade at one end, used to row or steer a boat

plash—n. a splash

seam—n. the place where two things connect

Literary Vocabulary

quatrain

a four-line stanza

slant rhyme

when two words share the same final consonant sound (example: *crumb* and *home*)



Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts on December 10, 1830, to a wealthy and successful family. She attended school for only a short time but was a prolific writer who composed nearly 1,800 poems during her lifetime. After leaving school, Dickinson spent the majority of her life in seclusion from other people. She maintained many friendships, however, by writing letters.

Dickinson's poems touch upon many themes, including death, nature, the Bible, and the human mind and spirit. She is best known for her non-traditional use of syntax and style, but she remained an unknown and mostly unpublished writer during her lifetime. Her family discovered her poetry journals after she died in 1886. Her first book of poems was published in 1890, although her work only gained widespread appreciation later in the twentieth century. Today she is considered one of America's most important poets.



Advice

Dan Gerber

You know how, after it rains,
my father told me one August afternoon
when I struggled with something
hurtful my best friend had said,
how worms come out and
crawl all over the sidewalk
and it stays a big mess
a long time after it's over
if you step on them?

Leave them alone,
he went on to say,
after clearing his throat,
and when the rain stops,
they crawl back into the ground.

7.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Advice”

Answer the following questions. You may consult the poem as you work.

1. The speaker tells us that he “struggled with” his friend’s words. Based on that, how do you think the speaker felt about what happened?

2. In stanza 1, the father describes a scene involving worms. What do the worms do, and how do the people in this stanza react to them?

3. What does the father believe happens if people step on the worms in stanza 1? Use the words from the stanza in your answer.

4. In stanza 2, the father describes another way to act. What is it? Use the words from the stanza in your answer.

5. What does the father say will happen to the worms if people act the way he recommends in the second stanza?

Name: _____

Date: _____

7.1

6. We know that the father is comparing the situation between the people and the worms to the speaker's situation with his best friend. How could the speaker respond to his best friend in a way that is like a person stepping on the worms?

7. The father gives another way to respond to the worms in stanza 2. Which of the two responses does the father seem to think is the best? Give a reason from the poem for your answer.

8. The father gives his son advice in the form of an implied metaphor. Rather than telling the son directly how to respond to his friend, the father makes a comparison between the way to handle worms and the way to handle hurtful words. How might hurtful words and worms be alike? Give a reason from the poem to support your answer.

7.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

9. Unless they are sick, which the father in this poem does not seem to be, people usually clear their throats when they feel “choked up” or emotional. Why might the father become emotional in this poem as he gives his son advice?

10. What differences exist between the way the speaker initially reacts to the situation and the way his father tells him he should react?

Name: _____

Date: _____

7.2

Metaphor Revision

In the last lesson, you worked with a partner to write original metaphors. Now you and your partner will use revision to think about how to use a different version of metaphor in a poem. You will use the same animal action, but instead of making a direct comparison, you will think about what that action could represent. Your poem will use an implied metaphor to compare a human character's situation to a different kind of situation in the animal world.

1. Write down the metaphor you wrote in the previous lesson.

2. Working with your partner, list as many ways as possible that the animal's action could resemble or represent a human situation. Remember Gerber's poem: it used an animal action as a metaphor for a human situation, and you want your poem to do the same. Try to include some things that are from the class list your teacher wrote down.

7.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

3. Now look over these ideas and find one you want to describe in your poem. Circle it.

4. Describe in one sentence what you will be comparing in your poem.

5. Explain how these two things are similar.

Name: _____

Date: _____

7.3

Independent Practice

Now it's time to draft your work! You will follow these steps to write your draft:

1. Review your metaphor.

In the example the writer decided to compare the flapping wings of a bird to doing homework every night. The writer decided these two things were similar because each one seems like a little task, but when you put all the little tasks together, they add up to something bigger.

2. Compose a title.

Your title should name the human action you are describing.

3. Write your poem's first draft.

Because this is an implied metaphor, you are not going to state directly that you are comparing two different things. Therefore, your poem should not mention the human action. It should only discuss the animal action.

Here is an example poem:

Doing Homework Every Night

The bird's wings flap
over and over and over,
each time only moving
a few inches up, then down.

The same thing, again
and again
and again.

The wings never go very far
but with their small flaps
the bird itself flies
for many miles.

7.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

Remember that your poem does not have to be exactly the same as the example poem; in fact, it should be unique to the situation you are describing.

A large rectangular area of brown paper with horizontal lines, held in place by four white corner tabs, intended for writing a poem.

When you finish drafting your poem, make sure to go back and look over it again. Did you include any mention of the human action in the lines of the poem? If so, make sure to change those. As you read, find a place where you could add one more detail to your poem to make the description even stronger.

Vocabulary

Literary Vocabulary

implied
metaphor

a comparison that is not made directly

REMINDER

The back of your Poet's Journal contains a Glossary with definitions for some of the words in the poem. If you can't find a definition you need in the Glossary, you might try to figure out the word's meaning from the other words around it. You can also look in a dictionary or ask your teacher for help.



Dan Gerber

Dan Gerber was born and raised in Fremont, Michigan. While at school, Gerber read the poem “The Highway Man” by Alfred Noyes and became inspired by the magnetic power of language. “When I read that poem it made the hair stand up on the back of my neck,” he remembers. Gerber studied journalism in college and earned an English degree in 1962. His other passion was race cars, which he raced professionally until a crash nearly ended his life in 1966.

During recovery, he taught high school English and continued to write. “Teaching was pretty instrumental in my development as a poet,” he recalls. Gerber has published novels, a collection of short stories, and nonfiction. His books of poetry include *Departures*, *A Last Bridge Home: New & Selected Poems*, and *Trying to Catch the Horses*. Gerber lives and writes in California.



Travelling

Simon Ortiz



A man has been in the VAH Library all day long,
looking at the maps, the atlas, and the globe,
finding places.

Acapulco, the Bay of Bengal,
Antarctica, Madagascar, Rome, Luxembourg,
places.

He writes their names on a letter pad, hurries
to another source, asks the librarian for a book
but it is out and he looks hurt and then he rushes
back to the globe, turns it a few times and finds
Yokohama and then the Aleutian Islands.

Later on, he studies Cape Cod for a moment,
a faraway glee on his face, in his eyes.

He is Gauguin, he is Coyote, he is who he is,
travelling the known and unknown places,
travelling, travelling.

8.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Travelling”

1. Where does this poem take place?

2. How long has the man spent in this place? Use words from the poem in writing your answer.

3. How does the man seem to feel when he learns that one of the books he wants is checked out? Use words from the poem in writing your answer.

4. Why might the man feel hurt by this?

5. We know that the man has been in the hospital library for a very long time. Why might someone who is in a hospital be particularly excited about going to new places?

Name: _____

Date: _____

8.1

6. How does studying Cape Cod make the man feel? Put your answer into your own words but explain what part of the poem helped you know this.

HELPFUL HINT

This poem contains allusions to two cultural figures, Paul Gauguin and Coyote. Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) was a painter who grew up in Peru, moved to France, then spent the end of his life in Tahiti and other South Sea islands.

Coyote is a common character in Native American literature. He is a trickster—a character who can use many different tools to get ahead. He is also a survivor; he deals with hard situations and keeps going.



8.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Independent Writing Practice

In this activity, you will write your own list poem. Follow the prompts below to get started.

1. In your class discussion, you should have picked a kind of list you want to include in your poem. Write that down here.

2. Using the lines below, write down at least seven things you would like to put on the list in your poem.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

8.2

3. Why are the things on this list important to you? In writing your answer, you might think about how you use them or experience them.

4. How does thinking about the items on this list make you feel?

Using the information above, write a poem that describes making your list, what items are on it, and why they are important to you. Be sure to use details to help make your poem as clear as possible.

8.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

A large rectangular area of brown cardboard is centered on the page. It is held in place by four white corner tabs. The cardboard has 15 horizontal lines drawn across it, providing a space for writing a poem.

If you finish with time remaining, go back and add two more details to your poem.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

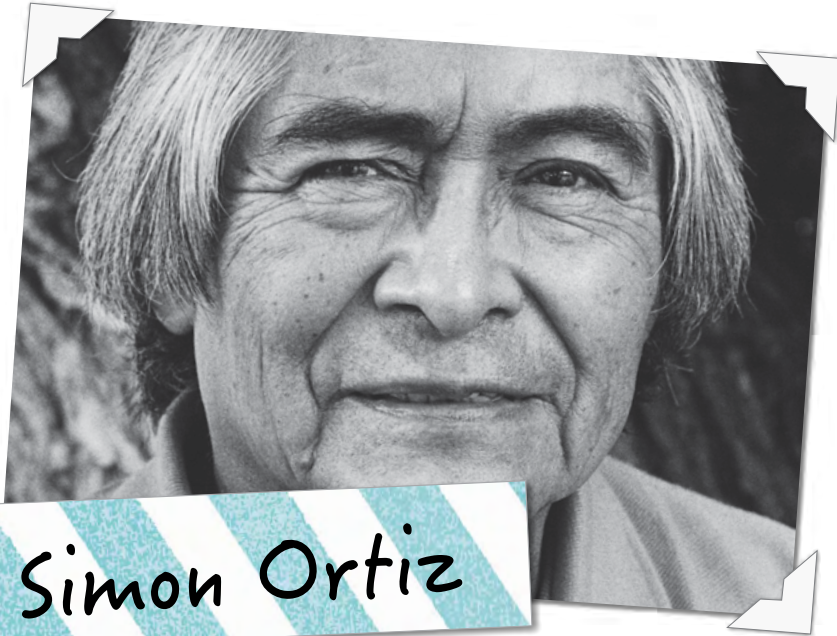
veteran-n.

a person who has been in the military

Literary Vocabulary

allusion

an indirect reference to an outside work of art or a cultural figure



Simon Ortiz was born on May 27, 1941, and raised in the Acoma Pueblo community outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ortiz attended both Native American schools, learning English as a second language, and American schools, including the University of New Mexico and the University of Iowa. He also served in the U.S. Army in the 1960s, facing much discrimination. He began writing seriously in the 1970s while teaching at different colleges.

Ortiz's writing typically admires landscapes and nature while criticizing mechanization and industrialization. He often writes in a simple rhythmic style on topics ranging from political problems facing the world to mythology and spirituality. He has published several books of poetry, including *Going for the Rain* and *From Sand Creek*; a collection of short stories, *Men on the Moon*; and a children's book, *The Good Rainbow Road*. He currently teaches at Arizona State University.

One Art

Elizabeth Bishop



The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

9.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Villanelle Structure

A villanelle is a poetic form with a set appearance, as shown below. It begins with five three-line stanzas and ends with a four-line stanza. Each stanza repeats at least one line from elsewhere in the poem. The poem's rhyme scheme is ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA.

A-Line 1:

B: The art of losing isn't hard to master;

A-Line 3: so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

A:

B: Lose something every day. Accept the fluster

A-Line 1 repeated: of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.

The art of losing isn't hard to master.

A:

B: Then practice losing farther, losing faster:

A-Line 3 repeated: places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

A:

B: I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or

A-Line 1 repeated: next-to-last, of three loved houses went.

The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Name: _____

Date: _____

9.1

A: I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,

B: some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.

A-Line 3 repeated: I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

A: —Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture

B: I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident

A-Line 1 repeated: the art of losing's not too hard to master

A-Line 3 repeated: though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

9.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

“One Art”

1. In the second stanza the speaker mentions losing both keys and time. What kind of mood or situation does this loss cause? If you need help, look at the other lines in the stanza for context clues.

2. The speaker also discusses losing “places, and names, and where it was you meant to travel.” Like time, these are not necessarily objects someone can misplace. For example, “where it was you meant to travel” could mean a thought or idea. How do people lose names or ideas? If you need help, think about where people store those things.

3. The poem lists more and more lost things, from the watch to a house. Which of these is bigger?

4. Stanza 5 says the speaker lost two cities and a continent. Which of these things is bigger?

5. The arrangement of items in each stanza seems to follow a pattern. For example, the watch appears before the house, and the cities appear before the continent. What pattern seems to exist here?

6. Based on the pattern you see elsewhere in the poem, why do you think the speaker listed “losing you” last in the poem?

Name: _____

Date: _____

9.3

Independent Writing Practice

Now that you've read and studied Elizabeth Bishop's villanelle, it's time to write your own! Use the following prompts to help you plan your writing.

The villanelle form requires repeated lines, so it's important to find some sentences that you want to repeat frequently. One way to do this is to think about Bishop's example. Her speaker seems to repeat some sentences that she wants to believe.

One way to think about something you believe or repeat often is to consider the idea of a motto or mantra. This is a sentence that you might repeat to yourself often. It can be something that you want to remind yourself of or that you consider a core belief. For example, your motto might be "Do my best every day."

1. Write your motto, mantra, or other sentence you want to repeat here.

2. On each of the following lettered lines, write down a situation that would make you need to repeat your motto, mantra, or other sentence.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

9.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

3. Think of a sentence that you would like to pair with your mantra in your poem. For example, you might write, "When things get rough, there's a thing I say."

If you finish with time to spare, look back at the two sentences you plan to repeat. How can you make them rhyme?

Name: _____

Date: _____

9.4

Independent Writing Practice

Take the lines you planned in the previous section and fill them in below. The notes below each line will help you remember when to repeat the first and third lines. Remember that some lines do not have to be repeated, so you should fill in other words for those lines.

Line 1

Line 3

Line 1 repeated

Line 3 repeated

9.4

Name: _____

Date: _____

Line 1 repeated

Line 3 repeated

Line 1 repeated

Line 3 repeated

If you finish with time to spare, go back and think about how you can make the first five stanzas follow the ABA rhyme scheme. Remember that the last stanza should have an ABAA rhyme scheme. Make edits if needed to create this rhyme scheme for your villanelle.

Congratulations! You just started writing a villanelle!

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

evident—adj.

clear or obvious

fluster—n.

a confused feeling

vast—adj.

extremely big

Literary Vocabulary

villanelle

a poetic form with nineteen lines and a set pattern of repeating lines and rhyming words



Elizabeth Bishop

Born on February 8, 1911, in Worcester, Massachusetts, Elizabeth Bishop endured a series of tragedies in early childhood. Her father died not long after she was born, and her mother was permanently hospitalized for a nervous condition. Bishop was raised by extended family in Nova Scotia and Massachusetts. She attended Vassar College, pursuing a career in medicine until she met the poet Marianne Moore. Moore's inspiration and encouragement motivated Bishop to publish her poems in 1935.

During a trip to Brazil in 1951, Bishop fell ill, and for the next 18 years she lived in Brazil, where she adopted a toucan she named Uncle Sam. Her second volume of poetry, *A Cold Spring*, was inspired by her new home. Bishop was known for wit, attention to detail, and accuracy in her writing, and she often spent years writing a single poem. Bishop died in 1979.



Strange Patterns

Carrie Allen McCray

When I was a young child
in Lynchburg, Virginia
I could not ride the
trolley car sitting next
to our white neighbor
But could sit, nestled
close to her
under her grape arbor
swinging my feet
eating her scuppernongs
and drinking tall, cold
glasses of lemonade
she offered us on
hot, dry summer days

When I was a young child
moving to Montclair, New Jersey
I could now ride the
trolley car sitting next
to our white neighbor
but did not dare
cross the bitter line
that separated our house
from hers
and she never offered us
tall, cold glasses of lemonade
on hot, dry summer days

10.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Strange Patterns”

Answer the following questions about Carrie Allen McCray’s “Strange Patterns.” You may consult the poem as you work.

1. How does the description of Virginia resemble the description of New Jersey?

2. How do the trolley systems in these two states differ from each other?

3. Based on the way the trolley passengers are arranged in each state, who would you expect to be more friendly to McCray: the white neighbor in Virginia or the white neighbor in New Jersey? Give a reason from the poem for your answer.

4. How are the neighbors in Virginia and New Jersey different from each other in their treatment of McCray?

Name: _____

Date: _____

10.1

5. McCray mentions being “nestled close to” her white neighbor in Virginia. Based on the words she uses here, how does she seem to feel around this neighbor?

6. McCray mentions “the bitter line” that separates her house from the house of her white neighbor in New Jersey. Based on the words she uses here, how does she seem to feel around this neighbor?

7. How does the title relate to or explain the content of the poem?

10.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

8. McCray uses parallel structure to show how these two scenes are different from each other. They have several kinds of differences, including the way passengers are arranged in public spaces such as the trolley and the way people treat one another in the private spaces of their homes. McCray's poem shows that in both states there is a difference between public and private. Based on the descriptions she gives, which state do you think she preferred? Give a reason from the poem to support your answer.

9. Does McCray think either Virginia or New Jersey is perfect? Give a detail from the poem to support your answer.

Name: _____

Date: _____

10.2

Independent Writing Practice

In this exercise you will plan the next poem you will write. This poem will be like Carrie Allen McCray's "Strange Patterns," because it will compare and contrast two situations that are similar but not exactly alike. Answer the questions below to help you plan your poem.

1. Your poem will describe two situations that are similar but not exactly alike. Based on the class discussion or on your own ideas, pick what you will write about in your poem. List the two situations you will compare and contrast below.

2. Remember that comparing is pointing out ways that two or more things are alike. Write down at least three ways that your two situations are alike. You might use these comparisons to help create parallel structure in part of your poem.

3. Remember that contrasting is pointing out ways that two or more things are different. Write down at least three ways that your two situations are different from each other. You might use these points of contrast to help decide which words in your parallel situations should be different.

10.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. Which of these two things do you like better? Give at least two reasons for your answer.

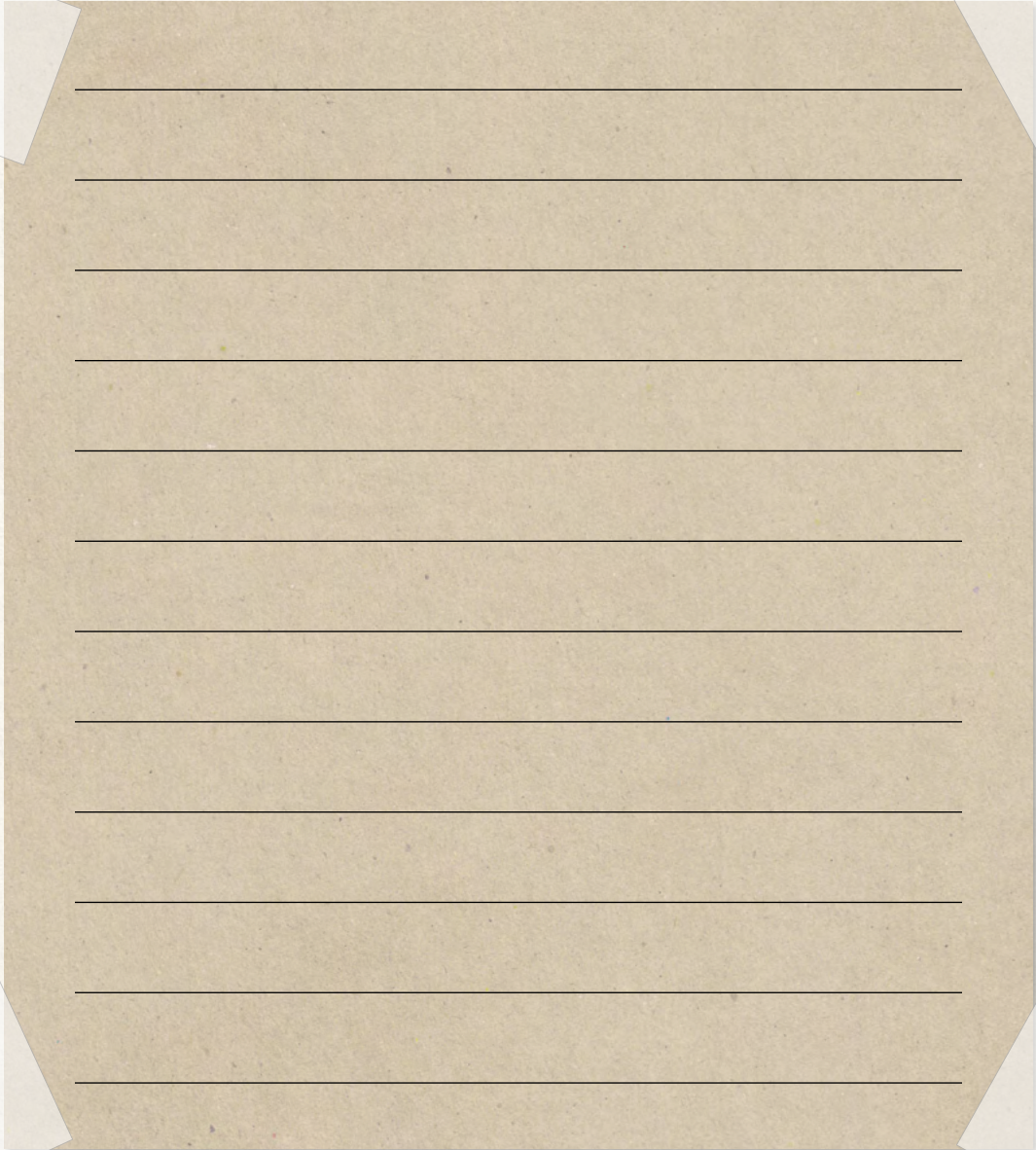
5. Remember that McCray does not say directly which state she likes best. Instead, she uses words such as “nestled close” or “bitter line” to show how she felt about each situation. List at least two phrases you can use to help your readers understand which thing in your poem you like best.

Name: _____

Date: _____

10.3

Use the space below to compose your poem. Remember to describe both situations and to list ways that they are alike and ways that they are different. Think about how you might use parallel structure in part of your poem.



If you finish with time remaining, go back and add one more detail to your description of each thing.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

arbor—n.

structure used for supporting vines, which wind around the arbor as they grow

scuppernongs—n.

large grapes found in the southeastern United States

Literary Vocabulary

parallel structure

when the same form is repeated in a series of lines or stanzas; poets often use parallel structure to demonstrate they they are linking two ideas or descriptions

Carrie Allen McCray

Born on October 4, 1913, in Lynchburg, Virginia, Carrie Allen McCray was the ninth of ten children. She remembered childhood in Virginia fondly. However, when McCray was seven, her family moved to Montclair, New Jersey, where the family met intimidation and threats from neighbors who were unhappy to have a black family in a white neighborhood.

McCray was surrounded by poetry at a young age. James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes were family friends and guests in the family's home. As an adult, McCray found that these influences helped shape her writing.

She published *Ajös Means Goodbye* in 1966 and continued writing throughout her life, publishing other works, such as the memoir *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate General's Black Daughter*. Surprisingly, it wasn't until age 73 that McCray came to think of herself as a writer. She died in 2008 at age 94.

Isla

Virgil Suárez



In Los Angeles I grew up watching *The Three Stooges*,
The Little Rascals, *Speed Racer*, and the Godzilla movies,
those my mother called “*Los monstruos*,” and though I didn’t
yet speak English, I understood why such a creature would,
upon being woken up from its centuries-long slumber, rise
and destroy Tokyo’s buildings, cars, people—I understood
by the age of twelve what it meant to be unwanted, exiled,
how you move from one country to another where nobody
wants you, nobody knows you, and I sat in front of the TV,
transfixed by the snow-fizz on our old black and white,
and when Godzilla bellows his eardrum-crushing growl,
I screamed back, this victory-holler from one so rejected
and cursed to another. When the monster whipped its tail
and destroyed, I threw a pillow across my room; each time
my mother stormed into the room and asked me what,
what I thought I was doing throwing things at the walls.
“*¡Ese monstruo, esa isla!*” she’d say. That monster, that island,
and I knew she wasn’t talking about the movie. She meant
her country, mine, that island in the Caribbean we left behind,
itself a reptile-looking mass on each map, on my globe,
a crocodile-like creature rising again, eating us so completely.

77.7

Name: _____

Date: _____

Character Chart**HELPFUL HINT**

Virgil Suárez was born in Cuba but left with his family when he was a young child. He eventually moved to Los Angeles, California. This poem contains two phrases in Spanish, his native language. They are:
los monstruos: monsters, the monsters
ese monstruo, esa isla: that monster, that island



Answer the following questions, using the poem as a reference as needed.

1. Complete the chart below, using evidence from the poem to help you fill in the spaces.

Character	Situation the Character Is In	How the Character Feels About the Situation	Character's Actions
Godzilla			
Speaker			

Name: _____

Date: _____

11.1

2. How do Godzilla's circumstances resemble the speaker's circumstances?

3. Two of the other programs the speaker watches show characters who are young boys like him. Why might the speaker identify more with the character of Godzilla, the monster, than with the characters who are human boys?

4. How does the speaker's mother react to his actions?

5. The mother references a monster too. However, it is not Godzilla. What does the mother refer to as a monster?

11.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

6. The boy says that his mother sees their home country as “a crocodile-like creature rising again, eating us so completely.” Of course, the home country does not literally eat the boy and his mother, so we know she must be seeing this figuratively. How might the mother believe their home country is like a monster?

7. What is different about how the mother sees the situation and how the speaker sees it?

Name: _____

Date: _____

11.2

Independent Writing Practice

Respond to the prompts below to help you plan your next poem. Remember that in this poem you will show how two different characters react to the same thing.

1. Name the situation or object your characters will react to in the poem.

2. Name the two characters who will be reacting.

3. Describe character 1's reaction.

11.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. What details about character 1 help shape his or her reaction? For example, in the Suárez poem, the mother loves her child, so she does not view him as a monster.

5. What details about character 2 help shape his or her reaction? For example, in the Suárez poem, the child feels left out and isolated, so he feels like a monster.

If you finish with time remaining, go back and add one more detail to your answers to numbers 3–5.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

exiled-adj.

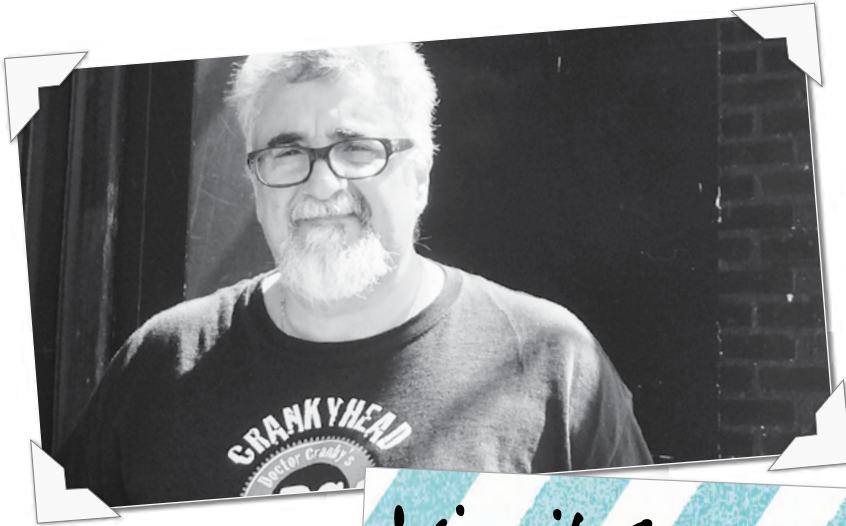
away from one's homeland

transfixed-adj.

intensely focused

REMINDER

The back of your Poet's Journal contains a Glossary with definitions for some of the words in the poem. If you can't find a definition you need in the Glossary, you might try to figure out the word's meaning from the other words around it. You can also look in a dictionary or ask your teacher for help.



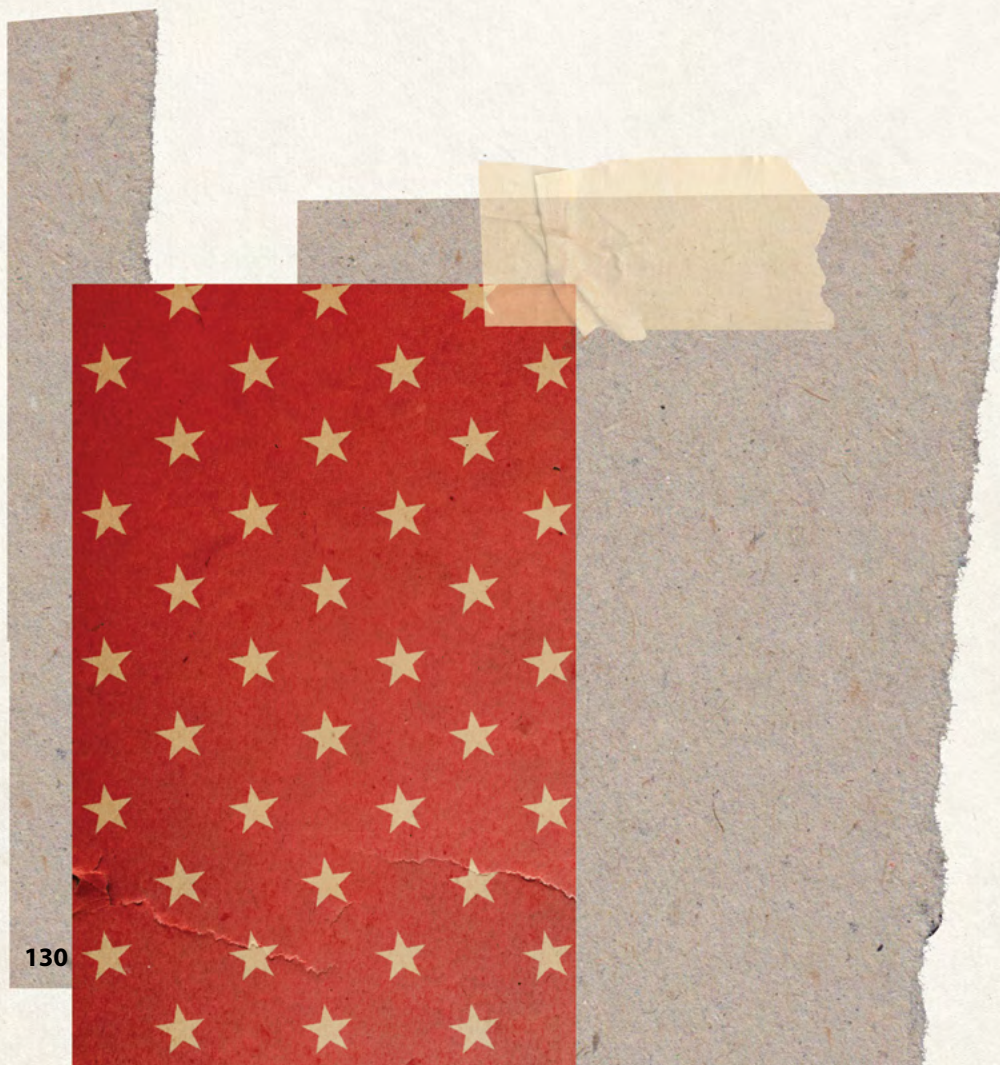
Virgil Suárez


Virgil Suárez was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1962. His family moved several times, and when he was an adolescent, they immigrated to the United States. In his new home Suárez sought to find acceptance by learning to share his voice. He was influenced by the music, culture, and stories of his friends and family. As a professor today, Suárez teaches his students “to listen to the voices in their lives, the present, the past, whatever speaks to them,” as a source of inspiration in their writing.

As both a poet and a novelist, Suárez focuses on the experience of migrant peoples seeking to find a home in a new culture. His works *Latin Jazz*, *Garabato Poems*, *Spared Angola: Memories of Cuban-American Childhood*, and many others highlight the themes of identity, culture, and language. Virgil Suárez continues to write novels and poetry and lives in Florida.

Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)

Lawrence Ferlinghetti





Constantly risking absurdity
and death
whenever he performs
above the heads
of his audience
the poet like an acrobat
climbs on rime
to a high wire of his own making
and balancing on eyebeams
above a sea of faces
paces his way
to the other side of day
performing entrechats
and sleight-of-foot tricks
and other high theatrics
and all without mistaking
any thing
for what it may not be

For he's the super realist
who must perforce perceive
taut truth
before the taking of each stance or step
in his supposed advance
toward that still higher perch
where Beauty stands and waits
with gravity
to start her death-defying leap

And he
a little charleychaplin man
who may or may not catch
her fair eternal form
spreadeagled in the empty air
of existence



12.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

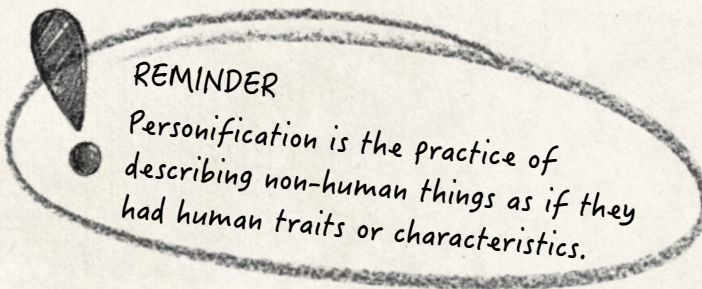
“Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)”

Answer the following questions about Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s “Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15).” You may consult the poem as you work.

1. Reread stanza 2. How would you put the message of the first four lines of stanza 2 into your own words?

2. According to stanza 2, who waits for the poet?

3. Ferlinghetti personifies beauty by describing it in human terms. What actions or characteristics show how beauty is personified?



Name: _____

Date: _____

12.2

Independent Writing Practice

Now it's your turn to write an ars poetica. In your poem you will describe the craft of poetry—why poets should practice it, what poetry does, and how poets should do their jobs. Follow the prompts below to compose your poem. As you work, you might want to think about the list of ideas your class brainstormed. You may also look back at “Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)” if you would like.

1. Name at least three things you notice about poems you read.

2. Name at least three things you think about when you write a poem.

3. What is the most important thing you have learned about writing poetry?

12.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. What is your favorite poetic device to use, and why do you like using it?

5. Pretend that someone is reading your poems. What response, emotions, or actions would you want your poem to evoke in the reader?

6. Based on your answer to question 5, what do you think poetry does for people?

Use your answers to write an ars poetica for people who have never written poetry before. What would they need to know in order to write poetry successfully? Make sure your poem tells them at least four different things about what poetry writers should know or do.

Name: _____

Date: _____

12.2



A large rectangular area of brown cardboard with horizontal lines, held in place by four white corner tabs. The cardboard is intended for students to write a poem on.

If you finish with time remaining, read back over your poem. Make sure to give it a title. Then think about all the tools you have learned in this unit for reading poetry. Is there someone you know who might enjoy reading or writing poetry? Give that person a copy of this poem as a way to inspire or encourage him or her.

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

absurdity—n.

foolishness, stupidity, or senselessness

entrechats—n.

dance-like jumps in which the performer taps his feet together quickly while in the air

perceive—v.

to understand or see

perforce—adv.

necessarily

rime—n.

a variation on the word *rhyme*

spread eagle—n.


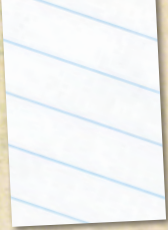
a kind of jump in which the arms and legs are stretched out so that the body takes the shape of an X

supposed—adj.

believed to be true

taut—adj.

stretched tightly



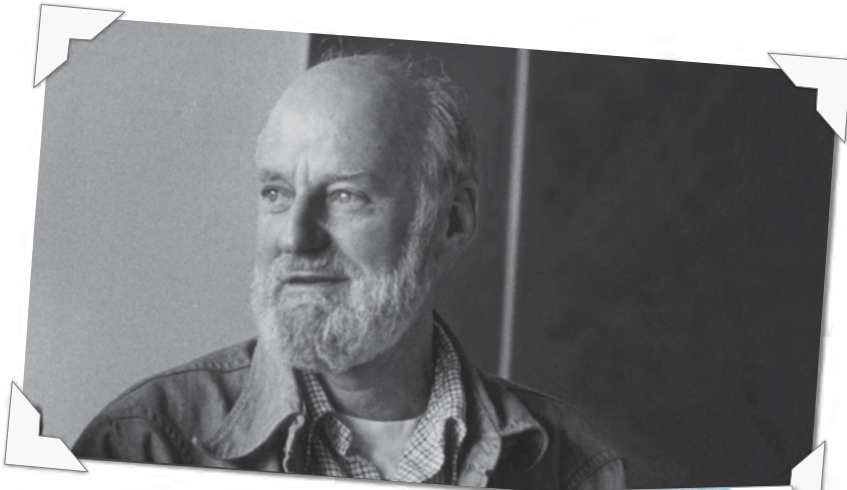
Literary Vocabulary

ars poetica

a poem about the craft of poetry

personification

describing non-human things as if they had human qualities



Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Lawrence Ferlinghetti was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1919. Several months before Ferlinghetti was born, his father died of a heart attack. Unable to care for him, his mother sent him to live with various relatives, and he eventually landed in France with his aunt. After they moved to America for work, his aunt left suddenly, leaving him with a foster family. It was there that he first encountered poetry.

After serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II, Ferlinghetti began writing poetry by imitating his heroes: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Determined to develop his own voice, he began to focus on creating a new style of poetry, leading to his collection *A Coney Island of the Mind*. Soon after its publication, Ferlinghetti started a poetry magazine and opened the City Lights Books store in San Francisco.

Ferlinghetti's poetry is known for its creative imagery and humor. He continues to write and publish today.

The Echoing Green

William Blake

The sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
'Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green.'

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer the following questions. You may consult the poem as you work.

1. Using letters of the alphabet as you did in earlier lessons, mark the poem's rhyme scheme. You may write the letters on the printed copy of the poem in your Poet's Journal.

2. Use your own words to summarize stanza 1.

3. Use your own words to summarize stanza 2.

Name: _____

Date: _____

4. Use your own words to summarize stanza 3.

5. How do “Old John, with white hair” and the other “old folk” feel as they watch the children play? Make sure to quote words from the poem in your answer.

6. What do the “Many sisters and brothers” have in common with “birds in their nest”?

Name: _____

Date: _____

7. When the speaker states “like birds in their nest,” what type of figurative language is he using? Give a reason for your answer.

8. The phrase “On the echoing Green” appears in stanza 1 and 2. In stanza 3 it changes to “On the darkening Green.” What are some reasons that the poet might make this change?

Reading Score: /16 points

Name: _____

Date: _____

Blake's poem presents adults who look at children and think about growing up. Write your own poem describing your memories of growing up. Make sure your poem includes a title and figurative language such as simile and metaphor. When you have finished your poem, complete the checklist table below.

Check	Statement	Complete the statement below
	The poetic tool I use in this poem is... My poem is a really strong example of the tool being used. I know this because...	
	I convey the message in a creative and new way. This is not a poem another person would write. It shows my unique imagination in the following way...	
	I have looked over each line and made intentional choices about where to begin and end each line.	<i>(No writing here)</i>
	I read my poem aloud, thought about how it sounded, and then revised the poem so it is easy to follow and sounds great.	<i>(No writing here)</i>
	My poem will surprise my readers because...	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Check	Question	Complete the question below
	My poem has strong images, such as...	
	I have chosen the best words to express myself. I took out all the words I don't need.	<i>(No writing here)</i>
	I have written a strong beginning to my poem by...	
	The ending of my poem looks and feels like an ending because...	
	I chose the best title for my poem. It is really good because...	
	I looked at my poem and decided whether it needed a particular shape, line breaks, long lines, or short lines. I decided...	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Check	Question	Complete the question below
	I have carefully decided how to use white space in my poem, especially in places where I want the reader to pause to think about what I just said. I decided...	
	I have checked my spelling, and every word is spelled correctly.	<i>(No writing here)</i>

Writing Score: / 16 points



The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.



P.P.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short-Answer Writing Questions—Text-Based

After reading the poem, you will answer several questions.

Who is the narrator of the poem?

What traits of the speaker are emphasized?

What metaphors, similes, or other forms of figurative language does this poet use?

Name: _____

Date: _____

P.P.7

Identify an example of repetition of words or phrases in the poem.

In one sentence, describe what this poem is about.

P.P.1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Graphic Organizer

Langston Hughes uses many different sensory details to help the reader to feel, see, smell, taste, and hear throughout this poem. Imagine yourself as the narrator of the poem. Complete the graphic organizer to infer what the narrator has experienced.

What the character feels:

Quote/detail from the poem:

What the character sees:

Quote/detail from the poem:

What the character
smells:

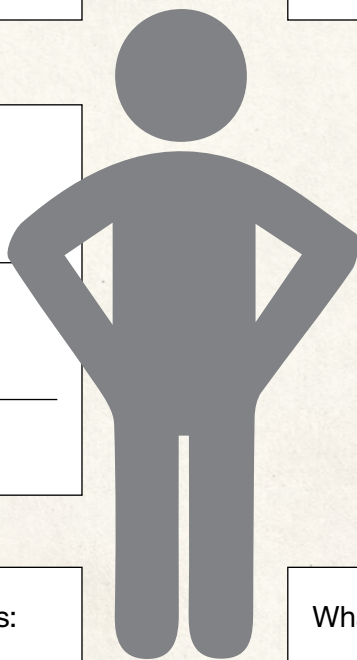
Quote/detail from
the poem:

What the character hears:

Quote/detail from the poem:

What the character tastes:

Quote/detail from the poem:



Vocabulary

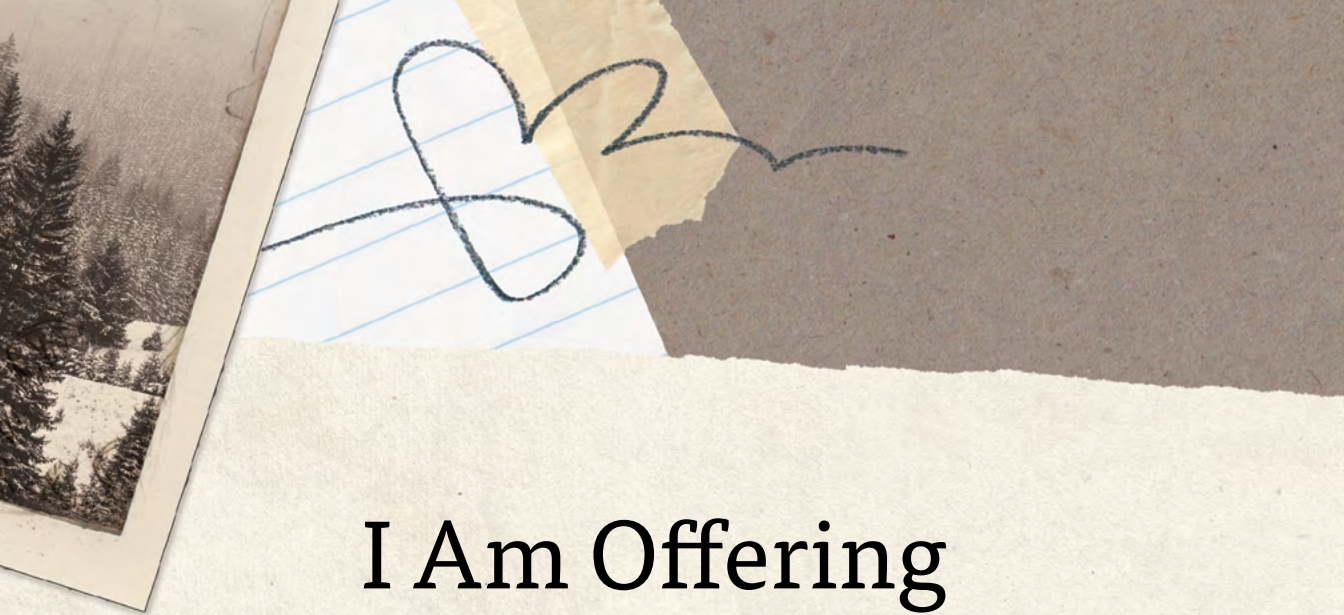
Core Vocabulary

ancient—*adj.*

belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence

bosom—*n.*

a woman's chest



I Am Offering This Poem

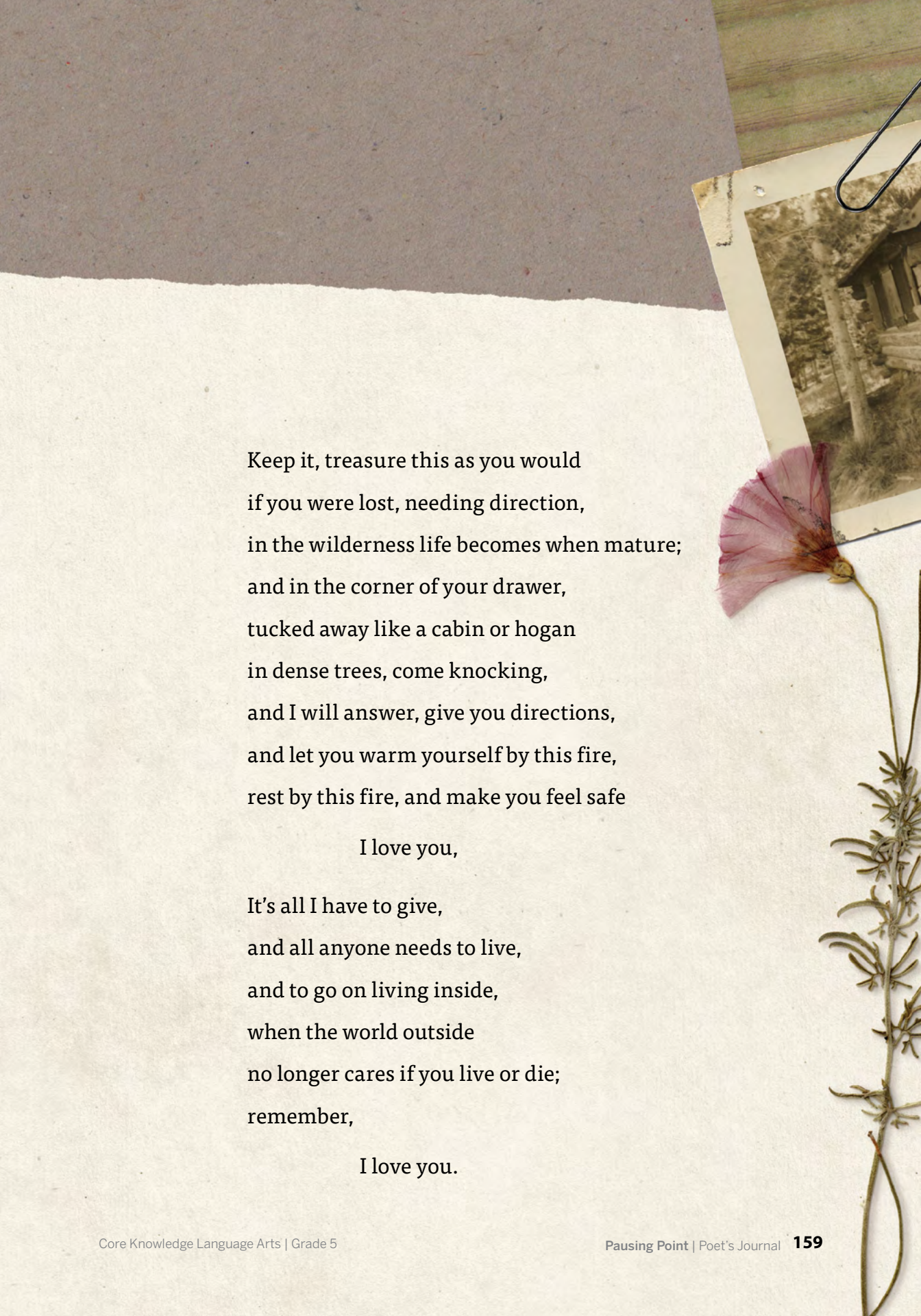
Jimmy Santiago Baca

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
when winter comes to cover you,
or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
to warm your belly in winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,



Keep it, treasure this as you would
if you were lost, needing direction,
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or hogan
in dense trees, come knocking,
and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
and all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

I love you.

P.P.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short-Answer Questions

Summarize the poem you read.

Suggest a new title for the poem, one that highlights a different part of the poem from its current title.

Name: _____

Date: _____

P.P.2

What devices does the poet use? Complete the table below using examples from the poem.

Poetic Device	Example(s) from "I Am Offering This Poem"
Repetition	
Simile	
Personification	
Point of View	

P.P.2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Graphic Organizer

The poem uses several similes to compare various things to a poem.
Complete the table below.

ITEMS	Quotes from the Poem	In Your Own Words, How is the Poem Like This Item?
		
		
		
		

Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

mature—*adj.*

fully developed physically; full-grown

dense—*adj.*

closely compacted in substance

hogan—*n.*

traditional Navajo hut of logs and earth

P.P.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

Performance Reflection Sheet

What did you like about the subject of the poem?

What is this poem about?

What did you like about the language in the poem?

Name: _____

Date: _____

P.P.3

Did the student use figurative language, or alliteration, or anaphora?

What did you like about how the speaker performed the poem? Did anything stand out for you? What was it and why?

Remember to focus on positive feedback. Of course you can have constructive criticism too (what can be improved). You may wish to write that down, but do not share it for now.



Glossary

A

- absurdity—*n.*** foolishness, stupidity, or senselessness
- Allah—*n.*** Arabic word for God
- allusion—*n.*** an indirect reference to an outside work of art or a cultural figure
- anaphora—*n.*** the repetition of words at the start of a series of lines in a poem
- ancient—*adj.*** belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence
- apostrophe—*n.*** writing that addresses a person or thing that is not present
- arbor—*n.*** structure used for supporting vines, which wind around the arbor as they grow
- ars poetica—*n.*** a poem about the craft of poetry
- assurance—*n.*** a promise
- astronomer—*n.*** scientist who studies outer space and the bodies (such as stars, moons, and planets) in it

B

- beams—*n.*** thick pieces of wood or steel
- bosom—*n.*** a woman's chest

C

- cautious—*adj.*** careful
- content—*adj.*** the words or subject of a piece of writing
- convenient—*adj.*** nearby or easy to find
- copper beech—*n.*** a large tree that can live for several hundred years and grow to a height of over 150 feet

D

- dense—*adj.*** closely compacted in substance
- dew—*n.*** drops of water that form overnight

E

- emblem—*n.*** a symbol
- entrechats—*n.*** dance-like jumps in which the performer taps his or her feet together quickly while in the air
- evident—*adj.*** clear or obvious
- excerpt—*n.*** a small part of a larger work; for example, one chapter of a novel or one paragraph of a newspaper article
- exiled—*n.*** away from one's homeland

F

- figurative language—*n.*** words or phrases that mean more than their dictionary definition; similes and metaphors are two examples of figurative language
- figures—*n.*** numbers or diagrams
- fluster—*n.*** a confused feeling
- form—*n.*** the shape, structure, or appearance of a piece of writing

G

- glinting—*adj.*** sparkling or shining

H

- hogan—*n.*** traditional Navajo hut of logs and earth

I

- immense—*adj.*** extremely large
- implied metaphor—*v.*** a comparison that is not made directly
- indifferent—*n.*** uncaring

J

Joha—*n.* a character in Palestinian folktales who is known for playing tricks

L

learn'd—*adj.* a shortened version of *learned* (in which the apostrophe stands in for missing letter *e*) used to describe people, especially those who have spent many years studying one subject

lecture—*n.* a talk, usually given by a teacher or other expert, on a single topic

line break—*n.* the place where a line ends

M

mature—*n.* fully developed physically; full-grown

metaphor—*n.* a figure of speech in which the words typically used to describe one thing are used to describe something else in order to suggest a likeness

mystical—*adj.* not of this world

O

oar—*n.* a long, thin, usually wooden pole with a blade at one end, used to row or steer a boat

P

- parallel structure**—*n.* when the same form is repeated in a series of lines or stanzas; poets often use parallel structure to demonstrate that they are linking two ideas or descriptions
- perceive**—*v.* to understand or see
- perforce**—*adv.* necessarily
- personification**—*n.* describing non-human things as if they had human qualities
- plash**—*n.* a splash
- proofs**—*n.* in math, arguments that show an idea or rule must be correct
- pulsing**—*adj.* throbbing rhythmically, like a heart beating.

Q

- quatrain**—*n.* four-line stanza

R

- rhyme**—*n.* words that end in the same sound or sounds
- rhyme scheme**—*n.* the pattern of repeated rhyming words in a poem
- rime**—*n.* variation of the word *rhyme*
- rue**—*v.* to feel sorry about or regret

S

- scuppernongs—*n.*** large grapes found in the southeastern United States
- seam—*n.*** the place where two things connect
- simile—*n.*** a comparison of two different things using the words *like* or *as*
- slant rhyme—*n.*** when two words share only the same final consonant sound (example: *crumb* and *home*)
- spread eagle—*n.*** a kind of jump in which the arms and legs are stretched out so that the body takes the shape of an X
- stanza—*n.*** a section of a poem; consists of a line or group of lines
- stanza break—*n.*** the blank space that divides two stanzas from each other
- supposed—*adj.*** believed to be true

T

- taut—*adj.*** to be full of or swarming with
- theme—*n.*** a violent windy storm
- tone—*n.*** the attitude of a piece of writing, expressed through the style of writing and the words the author uses
- transfixed—*adj.*** intensely focused

U

unaccountable—*adj.* something that cannot be explained; a person who does not take responsibility

V

variation—*n.* a different approach to a topic

vast—*adj.* extremely big

veteran—*n.* a person who has been in the military

villanelle—*n.* a poetic form with nineteen lines and a set pattern of repeating lines and rhyming words

Y

wake—*n.* a trail of disturbed water or air left by the passage of a ship or aircraft

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