

Poetry

Writer's Workshop

Our first priority as a group is to create and maintain a safe, respectful community where your poems can get a fair reading. Make this goal your own. Procedures are below.

1. Email your poem as a PDF or photo to your workshop team.
2. Read each of your teammates' poems at least twice and write comments on the poem itself; consider:
 - a. General reaction: do you like the poem? Why? Why not? Favorite section?
 - b. Title: does the title help ground you as a reader in the dramatic context of the poem? If there is no title, why do you think it's untitled? Does it need a title? Suggest one.
 - c. Speaker: who is the speaker of the poem? Do we need to know to understand? If the speaker is someone other than the author, is the speaker clearly different from the author?
 - d. So What: do the poem's images evoke emotion? Do they help the poem's purpose? Is there *one* clear purpose?
 - e. Word Choice: are the nouns and verbs specific? Unique? Appropriate for speaker?
 - f. Sound: does the poem use tricks to enhance sound, such as rhyme, alliteration, etc.? If so, are these tricks effective or overdone?
 - g. Meaning: does the poem use tricks to enhance meaning, such as metaphor, allusion, personification, etc.? If so, are these tricks effective or overdone?
 - h. Form: do line breaks, stanzas, or specific form enhance the poem? Hurt? How so?

****Do NOT wait to write your comments while the poet reads; all initial comments should be done before any verbal work begins.**
3. Verbally share poems and comments:
 - a. Poet: read your poem out loud, then remain silent and keep an open mind as you listen. Only after all teammates have spoken may you speak. Defending the poem is *not* allowed, as no defense will change the fact that the poem wasn't received as you expected. The important goal is to figure out why and then apply the lesson to revisions or future work. You might ask how people read aspects of the poem not discussed, but it's better to simply say thanks. Be sure to save the feedback you receive.
 - b. Commentators: listen as the poet reads his/her poem aloud. Then share your thoughts with your team, focusing on the following questions: what's working in this poem? What do we like? What confusions exist? Why? How might we push further on this poem? After all questions are addressed and comments finished, email your annotations to the poet.