

Poems in Sections & Lucky Fish

Age Group:, undergraduate, graduate, community audience

Materials: *Lucky Fish*, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, a draft of your longest poem

Medium: in person or virtual

Lesson Overview: through reading, discussion and exploration, this lesson offers an opportunity for students to examine the possibilities of a poem in sections, and how the section break can be a tool for exploration and revision.

***Although not required this lesson would benefit from students reading the following poems prior to the lesson:

“The Ghost-Fish Postcards” 48pg-50 pg, “The Feathered Cape of Kechi (A Fable)” 14pg-15pg, “The Sick Diet” 70pg, “How to be a Poet” 34 pg. and “A Natural History of the Color Red” 12 pg -13 pg.

The Lesson

Opening Discussion: as a class discuss the following questions. Use them as a framework to return to throughout the lesson:

- What is your experience with poems in sections?
- Why use a section break as opposed to a traditional stanza break?
 - What can a section break do for a poem?
- What can be gained and/or lost with the use of a section break?
- What are some symbolic markers you have seen used for section breaks?
 - Think “*”, “A/B/C” etc.
- What are some leaps in content you have seen that mark a section break?
 - Think narrative time, movement from lyric to narrative etc.

Reading and Discussion

“The Ghost-Fish Postcards” 48pg-50 pg & “The Feathered Cape of Kechi (A Fable)” 14pg-15pg

- What is the symbolic marker for the section breaks?
- How is the title of the poem working?
 - Who is the speaker(s) of the poem?
 - Within the framework of the poem what does each section become?

“A Natural History of the Color Red” 12 pg -13 pg.

- What is each section of the poem accomplishing?
 - Describe “what is happening”, “What it is giving the reader” in 1-2 sentences
- What do the section breaks in the poem allow it to “do” that a traditional stanza break would not?

Activity: Self Examination

With your “long poem” that you brought into class today complete the following:

- For every 3-4 lines (or stanza break) write a quick summary of what is happening in the work? What it is accomplishing etc.
- Mark any perspective shifts
- Examine the title and write a 1-2 length description of how it is working in context with the poem.

Reading and Discussion: A new lens

“The Sick Diet” 70pg, and “How to be a Poet” 34 pg.

- Are these poems in sections?
 - If so, how?
 - If not, why?
- What is the framework each section of the poem is working through?
- Describe the form of each poem in 2-3 sentences.
 - How does the form amplify the content and work in tandem with the work?

Activity: Sections as Revision

With your long poem and information from activity number 1 add at least three distinct section breaks to the poem. Consider how a new title could add framework to the poem, what symbolic markers could be used to add to the content etc.

End Discussion:

Return to the opening discussion questions + consider adding these closing questions into the fold

- What was your experience like working with poems in sections?
- In what ways do you think adding section breaks to your long poem benefited it? Was anything lost?
- What symbolic marker did you use in your poem and why?
- Where did you choose to make the section breaks? What content shift, movement, etc. did work off from to add the break?