

## Observation and Imagination

Age Group: undergraduate, graduate, community audience

Materials: “The Lantern Room” Chloe Honum, writing materials

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

Medium: in person or virtual

**Lesson objectives:** Through discussion, activities and writing students will have the opportunity to see poetry as an exercise of observation, and see the complications and possibilities of the imagination and the lyric

### The lesson

#### *Landscapes*

##### Read:

“Nightfall in spring” 9pg.

Note how this poem captures a single recurring moment with striking detail.

##### Activity

As a class complete the following

Make a list of

1. What do we know about the speaker
2. What do we know about the speaker’s mother
3. Write as many details about the landscape as possible.

#### *The Imagination*

##### Read

“On the Stairs Outside The Psychiatric Ward” 15 pg. and “Stairway” 16pg.

##### Discuss

What are the moments in the poem that do not take place in the immediate landscape of the poem?  
I.e. What are moments of imagination?

How is the imagination functioning in these two poems?

What does the imagination represent to the speaker and characters of the poem?

### Read

“Late Mornings with Blossoms” 23 pg.

What are the moments of imagination in this poem?

How are they functioning differently than the earlier poems?

What do these moments offer to us as readers? What extra introspection/knowledge do we gain from said moments?

### Activity

Take your list of details from activity one and write a new poem using at least 1 moment of each “type” of imagination. Try to bring new life into the landscape, adding new details to the characters and the surrounding whole as the poem permits. Do NOT use the lyric I at this point.

### Read

“The Lighthouse” 31 pg., and “At Americas Best Value Inn in Crossett, Arkansas” 41 pg.

### Discussion

What extra layer does the lyric I add into these poems?

How does it further complicate the piece? (paying close attention to the “I want” statement”

### Exercise

With your previous writing activity, insert at least 1 moment of lyric I and/or first person language...  
What emotional core is the poem asking for? What is the lyrically confession the speaker wants to make?