

Today in the Taxi Imagination and the Real World

Age Group: graduate, community audience

Materials: *Today in the Taxi*, writing materials, at least one draft of an old poem that the student feels “stuck on”, **optional highlighters

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

Lesson Overview: through close reading, discussion and practice work this lesson aims to explore the world of poems through both their exterior landscapes and the interior of the speaker.

The Lesson

Read and Discuss

Read: “Schism” (18) “An Imperfect Glass” (16) “Bottomless Vat” (38), aloud.

Map the interior vs. exterior moments of the both poems ie. (It may be helpful to highlight these 2-3* levels different colors within the text.) What is happening in the “real world” of the poem and what is being experienced in the mind of the speaker? How do we define (physical or internal) moments of past tense such as in stanza two of “An Imperfect Glass”?

Re-read “Schism” (18) and “Bottomless Vat”(38) aloud. This time select different readers for each different type of text... ie 1 person for interior, another for exterior.

How are these two poems using the spaces similarly? How are they working differently? How does the shape opening or closing in the different spaces shape the poem?

Crafting: Revision, flipping the Spaces

***The following two activities (A + B) are scaffolded. If time completes both activities, however, if there is limited time, you can skip to B.

The aim for this activity is to examine how we can shift the interior and exterior landscapes of a poem as a tool for revision.

A.: Using *Today in the Taxi*

Using “Schism” (18) recreate the poem by flipping the spaces ie. changing interior to exterior and vice versa. Think of how we can use the key words such as “I” and “thought” to create interiors, while exteriors can be created by a focus around image and action. Do not feel overly restricted by the existing poem on the page. For example, the speaker in the revised version could be speaking

Kafka to the passenger.

B. Using your own poem

1. With your own poem map the interior and exterior moments.

What do you notice about your own work? Does it heavily work in one space or the other?

2. Now re-draft the poem by flipping interior and exterior moments?

What new moments stand out? How do these changes alter the tension and narrative of the poem?
Does it land in a new rumination?