

Today in the Taxi, Repetition

Age Group: undergraduate, graduate, community audience

Materials: *Today in the Taxi*, writing materials

Time: 45 - 60 minutes

Lesson overview: through close reading, discussion, and practice work this lesson explores the power and impact of repetition, with an eye towards the students implementing said poetic tool in their own work.

Lesson

Read and Discuss: Repetition

Through both an overview of *Today in the Taxi* and a close reading of a selection of the poems these questions aim to examine the impact and power of repetition.

As a group read aloud “Pink Gloves” (44), “Voyagers” (45), “Glands and Nerves” and scan through the opening lines of the book, and discuss the following questions.

What similarities and differences do we see in the opening lines (think space, temporality etc.) What does this repetition, and change in expected pattern do for the poems.... imagine the poems without the opening statement “XTime in the taxi” what would be lost? Stepping into the broader landscape of poetry: what can repetition *do* for a series of poems? Are there any poems/sequence of poems of yours that may benefit from the use of repetition?

Group Activity: The Art of the Everyday Ritual; Crafting Material

Just as we may imagine that the speaker of *Today in the Taxi* drove a taxi everyday, this activity aims to examine repetitive everyday tasks with the goal of generating material for the writing activity to come.

As a group, create a list of tasks, activities, etc. that you do nearly everyday. These can be small mundane things like brushing your teeth, moments of joy like coming to see your dog, etc.

Individual Work: Drafting Poems

This final activity will have students drafting their own poems. Depending on your classroom time and dynamics, the steps following the instructions may be a useful starting point.

Prompt: Select one of the “every day rituals” from our class list, and create a series of poems that all begin with said activity ie. “This morning I brushed my teeth”, “Last night I brushed my teeth” etc.

Steps:

1. Select one of the everyday rituals
2. Write down the ritual three different times
3. Imagine the landscape of the world surrounding the activity?
 - a. What do you see, smell, hear etc.
 - b. How might those things change
 - c. Are you interacting with anyone?

4. Describe the world surrounding the ritual in three distinct ways
 - a. Allow this to be the starting off point for your poems