Weekly Independent Poetry Responses   
Due Each Thursday

AP English: Literature and Composition

AP students will be responsible for completing a typed, one page poetry analysis once weekly. This is done outside of the classroom, and will be turned in on Thursdays.

The nature of poetry has always been problematic or mysterious, leading poets, readers, critics, and   
scholars to fashion their own solutions and definitions. Emily Dickinson wrote, "If I read a book ' [and] it makes-my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me I know *that* is poetry." "Poetry is a composition of words set to, music," said Ezra Pound. Alberto Rios wrote that "poems show us what's right in front of us-in a way that surprises and engages:' In addition, Yvor Winters wrote, “A poem is a statement in language about a human experience." The essence of poetry remains elusive and open to a range of definitions.

Our goal this year is not to remove the mystery of poetry; instead, our goal is for you to discover the pleasures and values of poetry even if, or even though, poetry itself is inexplicable. This year we will *approach* or "come nearer to "poetry in two ways. We will study poetry through a formal or structured study in class; we will also study poetry informally through poetry responses. The goal of both methods will be for you to "come nearer to" poetry.

What should you write for a poetry response? You have several options: an analysis of the poem, relating what you think the theme is; an examination of the theme; a narration of a personal experience, relating the poem to yourself What you write is up to you as long as you say something besides how you have no idea what this poem is about. A sample will be given to help you get started.

Guidelines --

* Poetry responses are due at the beginning of class; if absent, they can be turned in at the beginning of class on the day you return to school.
* Mercy Moments may be used for a poetry response; it will be due on FRIDAY.
* When you turn in your first poetry response, you will receive a 100 if you follow directions. **Your grade stays 100 unless you fail to turn in a poetry response**; if so, I subtract 15 points for each missed response.
* Poetry responses are typed, double spaced, and one page in length. If your computer/printer misbehaves, turn in a hand-written response so that your grade will not be penalized. After I record the response, I will ask you to type it for credit. Do not ask me for extensions.
* No printing on my computer, and no printing during class.
* Attach a copy of the poem with your one page analysis.

Analysis notes--

* Remember to listen to the poem.
* Read slowly. Take your time. A poem isn’t meant for speed reading any more than you would speed listen to your favorite song.
* Read straight through the first time, getting a feel for the poem, without worrying about what you do not know.
* Read the poem several times, just as you listen to as song several times, getting to know it, feeling the life within it, each time discovering something new in it.
* Notice the title. Titles are not labels. They can sometimes offer an entry point, can be a part of the poem. They can set a tone or atmosphere, create tension, even interact with the poem itself.
* Work through the sentences, if the poem uses them to get the subjects, verbs, objects, and other elements straight.
* Read the poem aloud at least once. Because sounds and rhythms are crucial parts of poetry, it helps to hear poems, not just “say them in your mind.” Sometimes the sounds and rhythms bring out aspects you will not notice in silent reading.