



Poetry Project #2

Surrealist and Persona Poetry

The Poetry of Defamiliarization and Getting into the Weird!

5 pts.

You have a choice of a couple options for this project. The aim here is to get a little whacky, tap unconscious material, practice making images that LEAP, and try some very unusual perspectives. Go

outside the box. Being brave is a requirement!

It's surprising how hard it can be for students to really get loose and say funny, strange, and genuinely surprising things.

Option 1: Surrealism

Write a surrealist poem. This poem must make unpredictable leaps, juxtapose disparate images and ideas, tap archetypes, include wildly surprising metaphors and similes, and in general be nice and weird.

Take care to avoid RECEIVED or CLICHE constructions. Standardized or stock fantasy, carnival, or sci-fi imagery is not what you are after. You are going for something stranger, out of your own goofy little psyche.

We have a fairly lengthy Power Point to assist you with this option: *Poetry Project #2 Option 1 The Surrealist Poem (Getting Into the Weird)*. Find it in Bb/Poetry Unit/Poetry Project #2.

Option 2: Masks

Write a poem in persona; that is, in the voice of another being, in this case someone or something quite unexpected: a friend, a family member, a public or historical figure, an invented person, an animal, an object, an extraterrestrial, etc. Your aim to get as authentically inside of the character and the character's way of seeing as you can. (A student who took the point of view of a deer once, for example, said that a rifle was "a branch that barks.") *Don't just intellectualize the experience*; you want to actually imaginatively embody your subject. See Bishop's poems about the giant toad and snail as models, along with Ai's poems usually written in the voices of down-on-their-luck folks, people in trouble, marginalized and overlooked people.

Aims for Both Options

In this project you are going for STRANGENESS. You want to inhabit an alien perspective as vividly as possible, or write a poem which provides lots of unconscious, startling connections and images. Both options should DEFAMILIARIZE the everyday, kick you a bit out of your comfort zone, give you practice seizing "nonsensical sense" out of randomness. As with Project #1, you still need plenty of CONCRETE, SPECIFIC DETAILS.

Grading scale for all poetry projects:

Outstanding = A Meets all of the stated criteria and instructions exceptionally well. Excels in inventiveness, originality, and energy, relative to work produced generally in 229. Well-edited and proofed. May be publishable in journals that publish college writing.

= 5 pts..

Very Good = B Meets all of the stated criteria and instructions, or meets several of them exceptionally well, despite a weak performance with others.. May be especially striking in spots, despite noticeable flaws. Very competent, but may lack originality or inventiveness, relative to work produced generally in 229. Good attention to style and mechanics. Clear attention to assignment.

= 3.5 pts.

Fair = C Meets most of the stated criteria, or meets all of them only partially. Not very inspired, but fairly competent; or very inspired but lacking competence in key areas.. May show some inattention to, or misunderstanding of, instructions. Weak proofreading and editing. May not have gone through the entire workshoppin process.

=2pts.

Poor = D Meets few of the criteria. May not heed or understand instructions. May be sloppy, unproofed, unedited, and/or very perfunctory and uninspired.. An unsatisfying poem, saved by at least minimal attention to at least one facet of the piece.

= 1/2 pt.

Unacceptable = F = less than 0 pts. Poem either fails to meet any of the stated criteria, or demonstrates severe oversights or weaknesses in significant areas.