ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY

Written by students in Dominica



Things People Do

by Melinda, age 8

My people are very loving when they share soup that smells like crayfish with cousins.

My people are trustworthy when they keep secrets about you.

My people are responsible when they give manure to the garden.

My people are there for me when I'm alone.
They tell me stories.

In the Shop

by Dana, age 7

In the shop at night
I hear my friend curse.
It makin' my heart beat hard.

In the shop at night I smell drugs—Red Cap, Soca And I feel so so afraid.

In the shop at night
I see people drink a lot of rum.
They lookin' sad
Their faces get ugly like a
tiger.

In the shop at night I wish my father will never again sell rum before Christmas come. Students use REPETITION by threading certain words or phrases throughout the poem to create rhythm.

In these poems, students choose dialogue and images from daily life to repeat in their poems.

Beauty Poem

by Aaliyah, age 8

My mother is calling, "Richie! Richie!" for my brother to go and get some water in the pipe.

I was in the backyard, bathing, listening to the sounds of the birds.

I felt like the water in the barrel, cold and pure.

My neighbor made macaroni and cheese. It smelled delicious.
And my brother said,
"I like to take the smells."
And he said,
"I wish I could eat the smells and it could taste nice in my stomach."

My mother is calling, "Richie! Richie!

She Don't Want To Wash the Windows *by Sherris, age 10*

"Sherris, go and wash windows!
Sherris, go and wash the windows!
They're like pigs with mud on them,
It smells funky!
Sherris, Grandma tellin' you that.
Sherris, go and wash windows NOW!
Take a wet cloth and wipe
That's the last time I telling you that!"

"Sherris, go and wash windows!"
Sherris, go and wash the windows!"

I take a bucket with water,
I take a hard cloth,
And I take a stool and stand on it
And pass a wet cloth on the windows.

You have to put a lot of focus on the inside not the outside. You have to stick to your work: washing the windows.

When I pass the wet cloth on the window Like a rainbow I see everything on the outside clear. The grass come green, The trees come bright, The birds sing their songs louder.

"Sherris, go and wash windows!"
Sherris, go and wash the windows!"

Sister

by Brianna, age 9

My sister is as pretty
As a beautiful pink flower.
Nice like a yellow sun.
Kind because she always gives me food.
She watches TV when she's out of work.
She drives a jeep to Roseau.
My sister
likes to play rounders with me.

Beautiful Shoes

by Jhanai, age 8

My
Mother likes beautiful shoes
black
as shiny as gold
the heel
meg like a cylinder
When you walk, it make
"po po po po."

Students write OBSERVATION poems by

"spinning similes" and thinking of new ways to describe familiar things: shoes, older sisters, and guava fruit.

The Green Light of a Car by Curtis, age 11

What could be the green light of a car? A guava, of course.
While the car was driving, the guava was falling.
It broke the light and became it.

In the morning, they asked, "What kind of light is this?" It is the green light of a car.

Students use similes and details to turn ORDINARY experiences into POETIC language.

Children Making Fun of Me

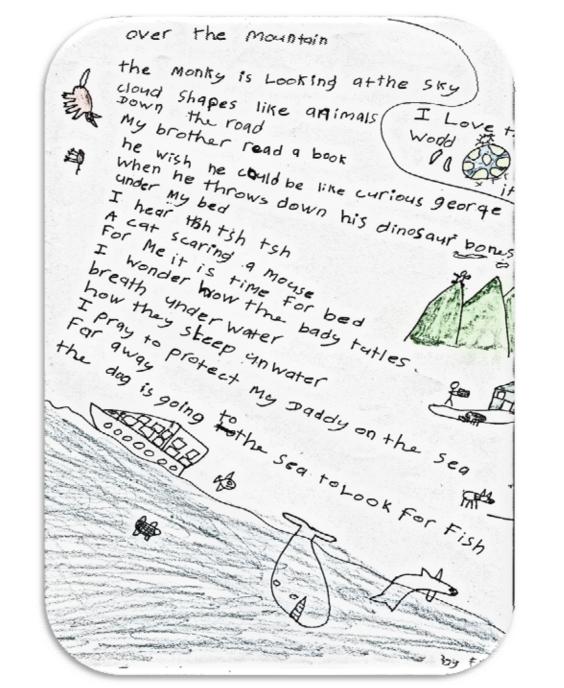
by Curris, age 7

"Fat bottom!"

"Last caca rat!"

"Slow poke!"

Devil faces
making fun of me.
School hallway,
sick blue.
Kitchen.
I am grass bending down.
I want to go home
where it's warm like the sun.
I like to drive my toy car.
I have guardians around me.



About Rounders

by Amanda, age 10

Rounders is about:
Batting, running about,
getting sweaty when you run,
getting back to your position,
and batting over and over again until you
Out!

When I play rounders, I see children running,
Talking about how they love to play rounders.
I hear shoutings
When team wins: HURRAY!
And BOO! when the other team loses.
I feel sticky
Tired
Thirsty when I run.
Rounders is about feeling cool in the wind in the shade.

Cricket

by Kimani, age 10

bowl run jump catch throw
I like to play cricket.
I like to hit big shots to the mountain.
I like to hit big shots to the mountain.
I like to take out people mid stamp.
When I play I feel happy as a man.

Crab Hunt

by Eden, age 10

Rainy Saturday

I go hunting crabs

Inside the forest

Alone

Brave Grass that growing around the house.

by Eron, age 9

Walking Through Fire

No track, so I remember I get home

The way I came in. from the river,

I hear a crab crawling my mother told me,

Lehook it through its go and burn the grass.

I chook it through its Back.

It shakes like when you get an

It shakes like when you cut an earthworm in half.

With two sticks. I light it.

Vith two sticks, I pour it with more kerosene.

put it in my bag. Mother watches.

Voices of the trees somethick spreading.

friends talking to me.I was bored

In the middle of the fooestwalked through fire.

Snakes gather around me.

I cut them and I went.

When I reach back

at the beginning of the forest

I feel free.

Student poems inspired by:

My People

Langston Hughes

The night is beautiful, So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful, So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun. Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

My People

by Zanna, age 8

They are kind in helping my mother cook rice and pumpkin and meat.

The eyes of my people are bright like a full moon.

Their voices are beautiful when they sing, warm like cocoa tea.

Their faces are round like a new chick egg in a nest on a tree.

The souls of my people are clean like a house top.

by Sherris, age 10

The rainbow is colorful, So the sights of my people.

The grasses by the distillery are green, So the clothes of my people.

Intelligent also are my reading books. Intelligent also are the brains of my people.

My People

by Aaliyah, age 8

The breeze blows sweet So the smiles of my people.

The soil is dirty So the cheeks of my people.

Crushed, also are the bananas. Crushed also are the hearts of my people.

by Devanne, age 7

Love each other when we bathe in rivers.

Hardworking when we wash clothes and put cheese, baloney and butter in bread for me.

Funny when we make jokes about shocking, falling down on water.

Quiet when night falls.

Cool when we run on the road.

My people, I love them.

by Jamie, age 11

My people are nice. They share dasheen and fig with neighbors.

They are tall like a door.

We like to do work.
My sister
washing plates and clothes.
Me
cleaning the yard.
I pick up passion fruits.

They are human beings. They can talk about food, work, and going to Roseau.

My people are three sisters and a mother and father.

My People

by Curtis, age 11

The book gives information So do the brains of my people.

The fan gives wind So do the mouths of my people.

The wood is smooth like the skin of my people.

Painful is the slaughter of the animals. Painful, also, are the stories of my people.

Duchess

by Lyndsay, age 8

If I was a duchess I would go to a ball every day And buy a dress with hearts and flowers. If I was a duchess I would be beautiful With my hair tall like a stick. I would feel the air in my skin And it's cold. I would smell like a flower that's Just opened. And I would be happy because People would say *lovely* things about me. I would hear branches shaking. I would like a gown with flowers and Bright stars. And a lovely crystal palace. If I was a duchess doing all those things I would be exhausted! ZZZzzzzzz

Cherries

by Shian, age 10

Some cherries are sweet
Some cherries are sour
Some are green or ripe
The green are like mothballs
The red are like lollipops
It is nice to pick cherries with your friend.

Look and Learn

by Zanna, age 8

Why do people build homes?

For their radio not to get wet when the lightning flashing. For rain not to burn it.

Why do children go to school? For them to tell their parents what they didn't learn in school: ants can fly.

Why do people wear shoes? Not to cut their foot on glass bottles and pieces of wood.

Where does people get food? From trees tall like ladders. From bars like little houses. From animals.

Where do people get clothes to put on? When they go in the forest, they scrape out a monkey skin, put it on them.
The banana the monkey was eating, they could eat it too.

Why do people cook food?

For them not to faint.

Poetry Handouts for Caribbean Students

Grades 3-6 (adapted from Awakening the Heart by Georgia Heard)

INTRODUCTION: FIND POETRY ALL AROUND YOU

What do we *mean* when we talk about "poetic" language?

Listen for words that make a picture in your mind, say something in a surprising way, give a strong feeling, or bring up a memory from your own life.

"What We Say Is Poetry." Find the seeds of poems in the things people say around you. Write down interesting phrases you hear. Keep a list of expressions that surprise or describe something in a new or beautiful way.

➤ Some examples of What We Say is Poetry: "Girl, your bone prickin' me!" "Children are meant to pray and obey," "Sherris, go and wash the windows; Sherris GO and wash the windows!"

In his poem "I Love Johnnie Bake," John Lyons describes his grandmother as she bakes:

She kneading de flour

An she whole body shake.

What do you notice about Lyons' poem?

Does the poet always use correct spelling and grammar?

Why do you think he makes these choices?

I near de oven,
where she bake Johnnie bake,
looking at how she cuff
de dough flat;
and I cahn get enough
of
Jo NOTES:
hn
nie
ba

ke.

Remember...

- Poems don't need to rhyme!
- Write in your own voice (how your speak naturally) don't worry about using correct language!

Think of words of phrases you overhear in daily life: in the kitchen, at school, on the bus. Do your parents or grandparents repeat something to you again and again? Is there someone you know who has a interesting way of saying things? Write down a couple of these poetry seeds below.

1) 3)

2) 4) HANDOUT 2: PAINTING WITH WORDS

<u>Cracking-Open Words to Find the Images:</u>

Try to write poetry that gives your reader a picture in her mind. Instead of "It was a nice day," help the reader *see* the day in his or her mind. Crack-open the sentences below by closing your eyes and seeing what images appear in your mind. Now repaint the sentences using your own images and words.

It was a nice day. = The bright sun peeked over Morne Paix Bouche and cut diamonds across the blue sea.

We had a lot of fun. =

The flowers were beautiful and colorful. =					
She was a good person. =					
The food tastes nice. =					
Spinning Metaphors and Similes					
Surprise your reader with creative comparisons. If they are strange or unusual, don't worryyou're on the right track.					
Love is like:	A pineapple is like:	My mother/father is like:			
1					
2					

3			
Dragonfly <i>Rebecca Kai Dotlich</i>	This sky-ballerina, this glimmering jewel, glides in a gown of lucid blue— with wings that you could whisper through.		What do you notice about this poem? Does it surprise you? How?
HANDOUT 3: CREA	TIVE GUESSING		
Word Guessing			
	the most interesting words 'ry to avoid common phrase	· ·	-be sure to consider image, wet you." Remember there are
April Rain Song Langston Hughes			
Let the rain	you.		
Let the rain beat upon	your head with		drops.

Let the rain	_ you a	·	
The rain makes still pools o	n the sidewalk.		
The rain makes running poo	ols in the gutter.		
The rain			on our roof at night—
And I love the rain.			
Missing words: <i>kiss / silver lie</i>	quid / sing / lullaby / p	olays a little sleep song	

- ➤ Compare the poet's words with yours. Why do you think the poet chose the words he did?
- > Read the poem below and see if you can guess the title.

?
Nan Fry

At the center, a dark star wrapped in white.
When you bite, listen for the crunch of boots on snow, snow that has ripened. Over it stretches the red, starry sky.

Nan Fry poem title: Apple

Now try writing your own poem by describing something familiar in a new way. Avoid saying what the subject is to keep it a mystery. Read the poem aloud and see if others can guess what you wrote about.

HANDOUT 4: POET STUDY: LANGSTON HUGHES

Group Reading and Inspiration

Read the two poems by Langston Hughes a couple times. Say them out loud so you can hear the rhythm and sounds of the words.

Questions to Think About:

What do the poems make you feel?
Listen to the sounds and meanings of the words—what do you notice?
Do the poems remind you of anything in your own life?
What pictures do you see in your mind?

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go Life is a barren field Frozen with snow. Write down some of your responses.

Choose one of the poems to copy into your notebook and memorize.

Now write a poem about your people or your own version of the "Dreams" poem.

Remember to include: sights, sounds, smells and feelings in your poem.

Where does poetry hide?

A Teachers' Guide to Sharing Poetry with Caribbean

Students

From Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School by Georgia Heard

...poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,

My People

The night is beautiful So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful, So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun. Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people. they are sleeping. They are the shadows drifting across our ceiling the moment before we wake up... Naomi Nye

Making a Poetry Environment:

- "What We Say Is Poetry" bulletin board. Find the seeds of poems in students' natural, everyday voices: expressions that surprise or describe something in a new or beautiful way. Make a class poem—a kind of "found poem"—from the collected poetry seeds.
- Poetry study centers: Amazing Language Center, Discovery Center, Performance Center

Amazing Language Center:

To foster awareness, appreciation and a love of words –both their meaning and sound. Poetry can be found anywhere, not only in poetry books. Create a bulletin board labeled 'Amazing Words' where students post vivid words taken from what they read and hear.

TEACHER: What do I mean when I say "poetic"? Listen for words that make a picture in your mind, say something in a surprising way, give a strong feeling, or bring up a memory from your own mind.

- ➤ Treasure Hunt for Poetry: Sit with a partner and treasure hunt for poetic lines or words in these picture books. Write them down on a piece of paper. Next choose one line from your selection, write and illustrate it on a story sheet. Write down the title and author of the book too.
- ➤ Cracking-Open Words: On a large piece of paper write several generic sentences and place an equal sign next to each one. Writing with images takes practice.

It was a nice day = It was exciting and the snow was beautiful It was a nice day = The snow was falling like feathers from a big bed

None of the sentences below give us a clear picture in our minds using words. Next to each sentence describe and write what you see in your own mind.

Examples of sentences to crack open: The puppy was cute. The boy was troublesome. The day was fine. My grandmother is kind. My older brother is strong. The weather was stormy.

➤ Word Scramble: Gather sentence strips for students to write words on, and scissors to cut out the interesting words they find. Ask your students to choose words that relate to their lives in some way.

- On a large piece of paper write a list of interesting words—words that have to do with your life, what you know, or what you see every day. Now write the words on sentence strips and cut them out. The other poets in the class will eventually use these words to create poems.
- Lay the words out on a table or on the floor so you can see all the words at the same time. Create a poem or several poems using just these words.
- Finding word sound personalities: Think about the sounds of words. Find at least three words that sound smooth, bumpy, and sharp.
 - For example, a word that sounds smooth is ice, a bumpy word is hippopotamus, a sharp word is kite because the consonants are sharp.

Discovery Center:

Poets are like scientists and many poems are sparked by observation. In this center, students become close observers of the small, ordinary, and fascinating objects in nature and in the world around us. Bring in some interesting objects from nature on a shelf or table. Find poems that have observation as their source and display them as examples.

TEACHER: Choose one of the natural objects from the table. Take it to your desk and make several drawings. As you draw, write down details you're noticing and other thoughts that come into your mind—what it looks like or reminds you of—or questions you have. Try to write a poem from your notes. Or divide a piece of paper into 4 boxes. Under each heading, describe you've chosen:

Describe what it looks like.

Describe what it feels like.

Compare it to something else. Do you have any questions?

Performance Center:

This center makes poetry come alive by performance. Simple props such as paper plate masks and fabric for students to use when they are performing poems. Kids can do group readings, act out the poem, or dance. One first grade class performed a poem using silent movements and the rest of the class guessed which poem they were performing.

Choose one of the poems in the basket. You can dance the poem, read it together, or act it out. Practice your performance for the rest of the class.

More ideas:

 Each student keeps a writer's notebook decorated with photographs, quotes and poems

- The class chooses a poem together and displays it above the classroom door.
- Each morning the class recites their poem together before poetry workshop.

The Three Layers of Reading Poetry

- 1) Choose poems that are immediately accessible, nonthreatening, and relevant to students' lives—encourage reading projects that will invite all students into the world of poetry.
- 2) Help students connect personally to a poem by guiding them toward finding themselves and their lives inside a poem.
- 3) Guide students toward analyzing the craft of a poem, figuring out how a poem is built, interpreting what a poem means, or unlocking the puzzle of a difficult poem.

Reading Activities for "My People" by Langston Hughes

The night is beautiful So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful, So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun. Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

#1 Read Hughes' poem out loud to the class twice. Ask students to close their eyes during the reading. Ask a few questions about their personal response to it:

What does the poem make you feel?
Listen to the sounds and meanings of the words—what do you notice?
Does the poem remind you of anything in your own life?
What pictures do you see in your mind?
Open sharing

Don't overwhelm students with questions; it's important to leave room for silence after the first reading.

#2 Read "My People" again. Ask your students to draw or paint a pictures the poems

paints in their minds. They can illustrate the poem on a single sheet or they can divide the poem's lines and illustrate on separate sheets and make a picture book.

#3 Read "My People" together as a class. Ask the students to express each line of the poem through arm and hand movements.

#4 Ask students to bring in a personal response or connection to "My People": a letter, a

photograph, an object, another poem, a book or anything that will help to connect

them to the poem.

Other ideas: write a letter to the poet telling or asking him anything they would like to know, write a call and response poem—for every one of Langston Hughes' lines, write one of your own in response—like a poem in two voices.

Writing Poetry

Doors of Poetry: potential sources of poetry for students. They are the thresholds that invite students to cross into the world of poem-making. Here are some examples of

verses written by students in Dominica as they stepped through various doors.

The Heart Door: when students write from their hearts, they give their inner feelings, longings, images space to breath.

From **Shoes**, by Jhanai

...the heel meg like a cylinder When you walk, it make "po po po po."

The Observation Door: the door of our eyes—what we observe and what we are amazed by.

From My People, by Devanne

...Love each other when we bathe in rivers.

Hardworking when we wash clothes and put cheese, baloney and butter in bread for me.

The Concerns About the World Door: We tell the whole truth about the world around us when we write poetry, not just about the pretty parts. This is an opportunity for students to speak out against things that bother them in the world: pollution, wars, fighting in their communities...

The Wonder Door: Kids and poets are the most curious humans alive. Questions can be a lever for a poem. Ask students if they have any questions about the world, their lives, what they are learning in school—whatever is unresolved or inspires their curiosity.

The Memory Door: Memories drift in and out of our minds all day long whether we are aware of them or not.

From **Look and Learn**, by Zanna

...Why do people build homes?

For their radio not to get wet when the lightning flashing. For rain not to burn it.

Why do children go to school?
For them to tell their parents what they didn't learn in school:

Crafting Poetry

Introducing poetic craft to students:

- 1) Explain tools not simply as terms with definitions but as vehicles that serve a deeper emotional purpose.
- 2) Introduce craft using the metaphor of a toolbox. A carpenter, like a poet, carries his or her tools to every job—nails, hammer, screwdrivers—just as a poet carries tools to the writing table.

Meaning and Music Toolboxes: Tools to Help Craft Poetry

Meaning

Expressing feelings and experiences through visual and sensory tools; revision techniques

Image

Metaphor

Simile

Personification

Words

Line-Breaks

Beginnings/Endings

Titles

Observation

Music

Expressing feelings and experiences through auditory, musical and rhythmic tools.

Rhyme

Repetition/Patterns

Rhythm

Alliteration

Words

Line-Breaks

Onomatopoeia

Assonance

Consonance

The Meaning Toolbox

Image: Moistening the Poem

TEACHER: Think of a strong feeling, something that is important to you, anything that is on your mind. Close your eyes and try to see a picture of it. Wait until it's as clear as a photograph in your mind. An image is usually a picture in your mind, but you can use any sense—sound smell taste or touch.

Here is what some poets have written about imagery:

Naomi Nye: "The energy that comes from rubbing one image against another in poems...we're desperate for that energy."

Robert Bly: "...the image moistens the poem."

Rilke: "Work of the eyes is done now / go and do the heartwork / on all the images imprisoned within you."

Now try writing down the images in your mind, exploring memories as you go.

Six-Room Poem

TEACHER: Start by dividing your paper into 6 rooms. In the first room, I'd like you to think of something that you've seen outside that is amazing, beautiful, interesting or just stayed on your mind. Now close your eyes and see it as clearly as a photograph—notice all the little parts of it—and write your description in the first box.

IMAGE	LIGHT
SOUND	QUESTIONS
FEELING	REPEATING WORD(S)

In room number two, look at the same image as in the first room, but just focus on the quality of light. Is the sun bright? Or is it a dull gray day? Are there any shadows? You can also describe colors or other qualities (sparkly, shiny).

In the third room, picture the same image and focus only on the sounds: Are there any voices? Rustling of leaves? Sound of rain? If it's silent—what kind of silence? Empty? Scary? Peaceful?

In room number four, write down any questions you have about the image. Anything you want to know more about? Or wonder about?

In room five, write down any feelings you have about this image.

In room six, look over the five rooms and select one word or a few words that feels important and repeat it three times.

I'll give you some time to read over what you wrote in the six rooms, then see if you can create a poem. You can rearrange the rooms in any order or get rid of a room if it doesn't fit. Just try and create a poem.

Additional rooms:

- Think of three different similes or metaphors to describe the image.
- Describe any smells: earthy, sweet, damp
- Describe what the image would feel like if you touched it. Use your imagination and make it up if your image is something like the moon or night sky.
- Describe what your image would taste like.
- If your image could speak what would it say? How would it sound? What would its voice be like?

Cracking-Open Words to Find the Image

Crack-open the sentences below by closing your eyes and seeing what images appear in your mind. Now repaint the sentences using your own images and words.

It was a nice day. = The bright sun, appearing from behind Morne Paix Bouche, cut diamonds

across the blue sea.

We had a lot of fun. =

The flowers were beautiful and colorful. =

She was a good person. =

The cat was cute. =

Metaphor and Simile: Ordinary to Poetic

One of the things that poetry does is that it helps us look at the world in a new way and describe it like no one else has before. Today we're doing to write a poem together that tries to do just that. Let's look at something together—how about the trees outside the window here?

Look at the tree and tell me the first words that come into your mind. Do you think we have a poem? This is what poets do. They write a few words down, and then they reread it and

sometimes realize that they have to go back and re-see. Now let's look at the tree again, even more closely.

What kind of green is it? The green of a frog? The green of the ocean? How old is it?

Example:

Ordinary	Poetic
Green	Trees are as green as limes
Tall	Majestic giants
Leaves	Their leaves are jewels
Old	Historic recorders of time

Discuss with students why the poetic side sounded and felt more like poetry. Students can divide papers and write their own poems this way. Finding Metaphors and Similes in the Everyday

Today we're going to try to write poems about the things all around us that seem ordinary but if we look hard and closely enough we can find the poetry inside. When I read Valerie Worth's poem "safety pin" I'm able to see the poetry even in a safety pin. She makes me see this ordinary safety pin in a new way, and that's a poet's job: to help us look at the world in a new way. Listen to this poem that does just that.

safety pin Student response poem:

Closed, it sleeps
On its side
back and forth

Quietly, zippity zip
The silver It bangs along its little

Image

Of Some like a tiny engine

Small fish; along a rail road trail

Opened, it snaps zippity zip

Its tail out

Like a thin up my coat it fastens on

At the sharp open and close

Point with a Surprised eye. that's the way

TEACHER: Now choose one interesting object to look my zipper goes or in the classroom. Under "ordinary" describe the object using the first words that come into your

mind. Then under "poetic" transform these descriptions into poetry by using metaphor or simile or describing its exact details.

Spinning Metaphors and Similes

Spin five or more similes for each below by thinking of several different comparisons for each subject:

Love is like: A pineapple is like: My mother/father is like:

- Surprise your reader, don't be afraid to think of comparisons that may seem strange or unusual.
- If your subject is a feeling like "love" it's best to compare it to something concrete (a physical object or natural element).
- If your subject is concrete (tree, desk, etc.) you can compare it to both concrete and abstract things.

The Music Toolbox

There are many ways to fasten a poem together musically. All of them are a form of repetition. Hearing the same sounds over again creates a music that borders on song.

Here are a few of the most frequently used musical tools:

- rhythm (the music of words in a line)
- repetition
- rhyme
- alliteration (repetition of initial consonants: meaning and music)
- assonance (repetition of vowel sounds: mouth and house)
- consonance (repetition of consonant sounds: short and sweet)
- onomatopoeia (words that sound like what they mean: bang and slap)

Drawing Sounds

Draw the sounds of the following words, not their meaning. For example, the word "hour"—I wouldn't draw a picture of a clock—instead I listen to the sound of the word and hear its soft sounds and that it has no sharp or hard sounds, so my illustration might be a curved line—like the curve of a half moon to show this softness.

glide solar system peek-a-boo ax

Word Textures

Next to each word-sound description write a list of words that match the texture of the word-sound. For example, two smoothly textured words are "ice" or "rise."

Smooth (e.g. slice)

Bumpy (e.g. hippopotamus)

Hard (e.g. catch)

Craft Groups

Each group of three or four students highlights and discusses one craft element, then shares what they have discussed with the rest of the class.

Image: What the poet paints with words.

Underline where the poet gives a clear image—what exact words help paint a clear picture?

Metaphor/Simile: What comparisons are the most surprising? Why?

Illustrate the two things that are being compared in a metaphor or simile.

Words: Focus on sound as well as meaning.

Are there any words that surprise you? Which words add to music of poem? Circle unusual, strong and vivid words. Why do you think the poet chose certain words?

• Line-Break: How the poet organizes the words on the page.

Where and why did the poet break the lines of the poem? How does it help us understand the meaning? Do line-breaks emphasize certain words?

Beginning and Ending: How does poet open the door to the poem?

Is the beginning an image? A surprise? How does the poet shut the door of the poem? Does the ending surprise you? Does the poem feel resolved?

Music:

Notice where the poet uses sounds to glue the poem together musically: a chime, an echo, alliteration, and repetition. How do the sounds contribute to the meaning and to the overall feeling of the poem?

Repetition and Pattern:

Does the poem repeat any lines, words, or phrases? Does it have a predictable pattern? How does the pattern contribute to the meaning of the poem?

Rhyme: Hunt for all the rhyming words and write them down.

Are there any words that rhyme slightly (slant rhyme)? What is the rhyming pattern? Write the rhyming words down next to the poem. Do you see any meaningful connection between the words?

Sharpening Outer and Inner Visions: Poetry Projects

You note only have to open the window but come through the windows and live with rivers and animals and beasts. I would

say to young poets...to discover things, to be in the sea, to be in the mountains, and approach every living thing... -Pablo Neruda

Observational Drawing

Dear Poets,

Please bring in a beloved object from nature—an acorn, a shell, a nest, a bone, a shark's tooth, a piece of pine, a flower—some piece of nature that you've chosen because you think it's beautiful, makes you wonder, or amazes you. It should be carefully selected as a reminder of the beauty and vastness of the natural world. Whatever you choose, it should have a story, a wonder, or a memory attached to it.

Ask students to make several sketches and to notice the smallest details of their pieces of nature. Don't get hung up on good drawings, the idea is just to sketch and notice details. Write down details they hadn't noticed before. You can also ask students to spin similes next to what they're drawing.

Heart Mapping

Poets write from their hearts about what we deeply care about: memories of family, the place where we grew up, people you meet who are important to you.

Today I'd like you to make a map of all the important things that are in your heart, all the things that really matter to you.

You can put: people and places that you care about; moments and memories that have stayed with you; things you love to do, anything that has stayed in your heart because you care a lot about it.

First let's sit for a while, and I'd like you to think about what might go in the map of your heart.

What has stayed in your heart?

What has really affected your heart?

What people have been important to you?

What are some experiences that you will never forget?

What happy or sad memories do you have?

What secrets have you kept in your heart?

What small things or objects are important to you—a stuffed animal, a photograph...?

Questions explored by students:

Do we have more than one heart—good and bad; happy and sad; secret and open—and include different things in each heart? What's at the center of your heart? What's outside around the edges? Do different colors represent emotions, events, relationships?

Finding Your Inner Poet

What does my inner poet look like?

What does my inner poet see?

When was my inner poet born?

Your inner poet is the picture you get in your mind of how you feel when you're writing poetry: you could be an animal—anything in nature—a storm, a river. Think about who you are inside: How do you think of yourself? What is that person like inside who writes the poems you write?

Wolf You Are My Brother Kathryn, Grade 2

Inner Poet Brian, Grade 2

My inner poet is a Bird. Have you ever seen a bird flying into a window

Wolf you are my brother my inner poet, as well.

You prowl around watching...watching the moon.

You do give me a free feeling. I love your cry when you present it to the moon.

Wolf you are my brother my inner poet as well.

Create a Poetry-Rich Environment to Prepare and Support Students' Poetry Writing

By educator & poet, Georgia Heard

Read Many Kinds of Poems: Each Morning/Afternoon

- Weave poetry throughout the day
- Climb Inside a Poem: Living with a Poem for 5 Days
- Create a What We Know About Poetry chart

Post Poems around the Classroom

- Give a tour of posted poems
- Invite students to write their own poems to post

Notice Poetry In What We Say/Read/Hear

- Create a What We Say Is Poetry bulletin board to collect seeds of poems students speak throughout the day
- Create a Finding Poetry All Around Us bulletin board to collect seeds of poems from students' reading and listening

Collect Amazing Words

 Create an Amazing Words bulletin board to gather poetic and memorable language from all genres of books

Find Inspiration through a Window

• Create a *Poetry Window* for students to observe and describe what they notice out the window

Keep a Poetry Notebook

- Invite students to keep a special poetry notebook throughout the year
 - Observations
 - Poetic Words
 - Wonder Writing

Find Inspiration from Natural Objects

• Create an *Observation Table* using objects from nature for students to observe and write about