

Poetry Writing

Contemporary Poetry Presentation

The value of reading a collection by a single poet is twofold: first, it allows you to understand the way a poet might build a collection; second, it gives you a chance to apprentice with a single poet in a way that can inspire your own poems.

This presentation, then, asks you to engage in both of these ways:

1. Explore the “arc” of the collection: What seems to be the arrangement behind the design of the collection? What can you say about how the poems relate to each other sequentially, as a whole, or in groups? Most collections progress in sections, and each section coheres and has a relationship to the rest of the collection.
2. Choose a poem that feels representative of the collection and explore it more fully, including notes about the poetic devices you see and the effects of these choices. Further, what is the poem about and how does the poem convey its meaning both directly and indirectly? Finally, how does the poem fit into its immediate context (with poems before and after)? How does it fit into its section? Into the collection as a whole?

To accomplish this project, first read through the collection to gain an overall sense of any narrative links among poems, as well as tonal confluences and modulations. Then, go back to a favorite section and choose the poem you will explore more fully.

To present, you should have your poem photocopied for the class and relate your clear ideas in answer to the prompts here. This presentation will work especially well as a PowerPoint or Prezi. Ideas must be presented clearly and with examples.

Each presentation should take between 8 and 10 minutes of talking time, including any set-up. Any electronic material must be submitted to the teacher no later than first period of the presentation day. Please do not use outside sources closely enough to need to cite.

Have fun! Collections, in addition to individual poems published in magazines, are the most important way contemporary poets convey their ideas to the world.

One of your lyric poems should be an imitation of discernible aspects of your poet’s style and themes.