

Why/How/What Poetry

Poetry holds my art world. I love and anguish over many art forms, but poetry is their breath as it propels them all. To me, it is *the root* of every art form.

A masterpiece (be it a painting, film, novel) is revered if it has a unique voice, a fresh way of articulating its message. I find that what makes a voice “original” is a lyrical veneer: the artist takes the traditional way of expression and gives it a wise little tweak. I would equate these twists to poetry: a different way of turning one’s head and looking at the world. Writing poetry, to me, means departing from the usual way of writing an idea -- casting it into the world with a musical hand.

My goal is to learn everything I can about this foundation of all art forms. I want to learn about the pioneers of all styles of poetry and practice writing in my most inexperienced forms (haikus and sestinas, for example) and my most clumsy aspects (rhythm). I want to become a better, more educated, more open poet.

I feel this strongly about poetry, not only because I believe it is the mother of all expression, but also because it is the most mentally disruptive art form in which I partake. To write, I have to forget my eyes, bend backward, lose my body and feel the senses. I become my subject and its observers and its creator: I inhale, blink and digest its sky. I find colors and sounds that *are* that world. Then I write, still removed.

In high school, I worked as a literary-arts magazine editor. This was my first glimpse into unusual forms of artistic expression... the modern child-adult hybrid bursting from his structured mannequin. Later, in the last couple years of college and since graduating, I have worked as an America Reads tutor in NYC public schools, an arts camp counselor, and a nanny for two families. These experiences have been a prominent force in influencing my poetry. As I mentioned earlier, I think poetry entails reconfiguring an idea so it can be understood in more ways than one. Spending my days with these children, watching their worlds and hearing their voices, has made me hunt for new ways of conveying thoughts (it is more compelling to say things in unfamiliar ways, because it is often more honest). These experiences have been striking when alternated with the adult world, in which we often comfortably slip into “the normal gaze”.

Filmmaking, in particular, is an art that requires me to stay active with poetry. When I am discovering a new character, to create a full human, I write poetry to feel him. This is the only way I can craft someone honestly, because there is undeniable truth and discovery about a person in *rhythm* and *sound* and *imagery*. More so than: “He is this. She is that.” Real characters breathe colors and leak whatever they will from that. They are not fenced in by an adjective.

I love writing poetry in New York City because it is the best place for me to learn. I love our loud land. In this city, an endless amount of artists' voices can be heard. No one ever stops learning. I know that this is a place where ideas are born and built.

Someday I hope to become a published author of poetry anthologies and lyrical novels, who presses her old theories to new ones. With future guidance in poetry, the essence of art forms, I hope to become someone who heightens the role of poetry in all arts.