

**The primal impulse: singing with the inner voice
(for new and intermediate poets)**

Elizabeth Tornes

The purpose of this class is to help you refine your skills in writing poetry through practice, reading, and discussion of poetry. The focus of this workshop is to discover and practice using the tools available to us to write poetry for pleasure, with an emphasis on poetic forms.

Using Stephen Fry's *The Ode Less Travelled* and Mark Strand's *The Making of a Poem* as our guides, we will dally with diction, meet with meter, rap with rhyme, and fraternize with poetic forms. You'll try your hand at different traditional forms, such as haiku, blank verse, and rhymed forms, as well as free verse poems. Along the way, we'll explore imagery, simile and metaphor, sound devices, rhythm, and repetition. We will end the class with a discussion of revising our poems, and where to get our poems published.

Monday June 15

Dallying: Some basic rules:

- 1) Take your time (read and craft poems slowly).
- 2) Don't worry about meaning (let it emerge organically—don't think too much).
- 3) Buy a notebook and a pen or pencil you love, keep them with you at all times.
- 4) Practice writing every day.
- 5) Use sensory imagery in your poem.

Involving all the senses in poetry--sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell

Reading and discussion of poems in handout

Poetry Exercise: Writing a haiku (3-line imagistic poem with a syllable count of 5-7-5)

Tuesday June 16

Sound devices and rhythmic patterns

Alliteration, rhyme, assonance, repetition

Line breaks and stanza breaks, enjambment and caesuras

Meeting meter--the rhythm in a poem measured by beats

Basic types of meter and how to identify them

Reading and discussion of poems in handout

Poetry Exercise: Writing a poem using meter

Wednesday June 17

Rapping with rhymes—"only connect"—starting with nursery rhymes

Types of rhyme: end rhymes, internal rhymes, perfect, and slant rhymes

Rhyme in traditional forms and in contemporary music
Some traditional rhymed forms: sonnet, ballad, villanelle
“Make it new”: new uses of old forms
Reading and discussion of poems in handout
Poetry Exercise: Write a poem in a traditional form of your choosing

Thursday June 18

Free verse poems:
Using formal techniques to empower free verse poems
Bring in a favorite poem and talk about its use of formal techniques
In class writing: a poem made of “10 Little Poetry Projects”
Poetry Exercise: Write a free verse poem that “exploits” poetic form

Friday June 19

Revision: What’s it all about?
Revision of and feedback on final poems
Publishing: What is a cover letter, what to include, how and where to submit
What will you take from this class? What’s next for you now?