



Time, Flashback, and Trauma Loops

What do I want to write as the “now” of the poem/story? And why do I want to flashback it to a different time?

Flashback formula:

- Write Moment #1.
- Write Moment #2.
- Create the Takeaway Transition, about 1-3 sentences where you reveal enough of the takeaway after having read Moment #2, such as hindsight reflection, regret, what you wished you learned or knew in that moment. If writing on trauma, in particular, consider the power(s) you wish you had, if you could redo the moment, if you could write justice for yourself and/or for your audience.
- Weave Moment #2. Check and revise transitions.
- Move back to your present “now” of the poem/story. Does the flashback work? Does it need more: lingering, suspense, drama, silence? Does it need less: passive and periodic sentences to punctuate the tension? Do the transitions work?

Objectives:

Analyze a poem that braids a flashback(s) and explore the flashback world and “present” time of the poem by writing a poem that switches between past and present.

Time Frame:

1 hour

Literary Models:

[“Tender”](#)

by José Antonio Rodríguez

[“In the Surgical Ward”](#)

by Carmen Calatayud

Lesson Plan created by:

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Revise in “Vertical Spikes”

Nina Schuyler calls Vertical Spikes a revision approach to playing with narrative distance: changing perspectives with respect to their distance and proximity can allow for different tones and emotional mappings.

Try writing a stanza or a paragraph, from the perspective of close to your speaker or protagonist. Then write another stanza or paragraph where you go high up, where the perspective is looking down on your speaker or protagonist. Then write one more stanza or paragraph where you come all the way down to your speaker or protagonist, on the ground.