

Animal Metaphors Worksheet

1. On a separate sheet of paper, list eight animals that live in your region
2. Read “Desert Bestiary, Sonnet One” by Alberto Ríos twice. The first time, read it aloud to yourself. The second time, circle any words or phrases that stand out to you:

Desert Bestiary, Sonnet One

by Alberto Ríos

Hummingbirds are quarter notes that have left the nest of the flute.
Tarantulas are awkward left hands in search of a piano.
Horny toads are the Queen Elizabeths of dirt.
Cardinals are made from wounds that have not healed.
Ants are grains of sand that have hatched.
Snakes sometimes flaunt their diamonds, but we do not love them.
Skunks are photographs of the Milky Way.
Gila monsters are grandfathers on the family trees of beaded purses.
Spiders are tattoos in search of your skin.
Beetles are armored vehicles taking sides in the war raging beneath us.
Scorpions are lobsters sent west by the witness protection program.
Cicadas wear goggles and make noise to warn us of the apocalypse.
Coyotes baying at midnight are broken hearts with teeth.
Prairie dogs at attention are the patient ears of the earth.

Alberto Ríos, "Desert Bestiary, Sonnet One" from *A Small Story About the Sky*. Copyright © 2015 by Alberto Ríos. Used by permission of Copper Canyon Press.

3. On your separate paper, answer the following questions:
 - What parts of this poem stand out to you? Why?
 - What details does Ríos in this poem?
 - Why do you think he calls his poem a “desert bestiary” and not just a “bestiary”? (The definition of bestiary is: “A written or illustrated work that describes real or mythical animals.”)
 - What is one literary device Ríos in this poem?

- What is metaphor? (Look up a definition if you need to.) Can you find two metaphors in the poem? Write them down.

4. Circle four animals on the brainstorm list you made in step one. Write a line, including a metaphor, for each one, just like Ríos does in his poem.

Example: Sandhill cranes are the oboe section in an airborne orchestra.

5. Congratulations! You've just written a poem!