



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
POETRY CENTER

The Sounds of Daydream

by Elizabeth Falcón

Poet-in-Residence, 2010

Grade Level: 5-8

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives: Introduce and ask students to engage with a canonized literary text, introduce Irish author (Yeats), students will understand how sound and word choice affects mood and meaning in their writing, students will learn how to write about setting/place, students will produce a 12 line poem, students will practice performing and reading aloud.

Sequence of Activities:

I. Introduction and Literary Model, 30 minutes.

Yeats and Place Introduction

Last lesson, we wrote a poem about whales, who live in a type of place called the ocean. Arizona is a desert. What other types of places (geography) are there?

How many of you have been out of the country? William Butler Yeats, the author, is an Irish poet who lived over a hundred years ago (1865 - 1939).

Personal Anecdote: I was in Ireland when I first read this poem, in Sligo (where the Lake Isle of Innisfree really is), so I got to see the place from which he was writing. (I brought in pictures of Sligo/Ireland for kids to see).

Read a poem (Yeats' Lake Isle of Innisfree)

Ask students to each read a line aloud. Then read the poem again. What did you notice about sound in this poem? Feel free to stop at places where you think words may not be familiar. Ask questions. Below is a sample list.

-What are wattles? (woven wooden supports, built with clay or mud to support a wall/make a house - like adobe - straw and clay)

-Why nine bean rows? (specificity)

-Peace comes dropping slow? What is he talking about? What are the veils of the morning?

-Where is Innisfree? (County Sligo, Ireland, show pictures) What does it represent to the speaker?

-What does it mean to hear lake water lapping in your heart?

II. Introduction and Literary Model, 30 minutes.

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Read the poem again.

What did you notice about the sounds of the poem this time? Make a list. Discuss rhyme, internal and end, and alliteration (consonance/assonance). What does the poem make you think of? How do the sounds make you feel? What do you like about this poem? Does it relax you? Does it feel like a dream? Is it a song? A lullaby? Does it make you want to go to sleep? Images? How does it accomplish this? What sounds do you like? Does the poem sound like lake water lapping during that line? Why? How do the sounds make us hear what he's talking about? Talk about the stress of words and how it makes a rhythm that works with sounds of consonants to achieve a sleepy effect. How would the poem change if the rhythm changed, or if the vowels/consonance changed? (For instance, if the poem was The Lake Isle of Boise, Idaho.)

III. Writing and Sharing, 30 minutes.

Brainstorming

Ask students to think about places that are special to them, real or made up. Ask them to name and describe the place they are thinking of - what does it look like, how does it feel? Sensory detail describing that place? List the places and sensory perceptions on the board. Prompt them for more specific details with questions -- specific details like nine bean rows - but what kind of beans? Are the rows straight? Is the soil dry? Is it raining? How tall are the bean plants?

Writing Assignment

Ask students to close their eyes and go to the place that is special or magical to them. (Optional: turn out the lights.) What color is their place? If their place could be a letter, what letter would it be? What do they smell? hear? taste? touch? feel? see? Is the place quiet? Is it loud? Is it wild? Who else is there? Is everything upside down? Does color change? (Is it like Alice in Wonderland where nothing makes sense? Have they discovered a new creature?) Ask students to open their eyes and quickly write down anything and everything they experienced in their minds. Ask students to try for 12 lines about their special place (for more advanced students, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each). What letters match the feelings of their place the best? How do they get there? Remind them that the soft and sleepy sounds from the Yeats' poem helped us feel how safe and sleepy the place is (f, s, l, o, etc.) - is their place sleepy? Is it wild? Ask them to try to use words that begin with the particular letters of their places.

Sharing

Ask for volunteers to read their projects aloud. (If no one wants to, read your own if you made one, or read another poem on such a topic. Then ask again.) Make sure students stand up and project loudly. Allow students to read aloud their poems till the end of class.

IV. Extension Activities

- Discuss metrical feet, why the poem sounds like lake water lapping in the context of sound and stress, how changing the feet can change the whole feel of the poem, how sensitive a line is to the words. Introduce types of metrical feet: iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, spondee, pyrrhic. You can map Yeats' poem in terms of feet and play with the stresses in students' own work. Ask them to imitate one stanza and see how difficult it is to write like that (and how rewarding it can be)! If time, they can go on to write a whole poem.
- Example for imitating Yeats' sound/rhythm in this poem. Ask them where they go when they daydream. This is a special place poem, real or made up. We also don't talk like Yeats now, so they can modify the poem imitation to reflect modern speech. "I will arise and go now" can be changed to something more modern that matches cadence. However, they need to still try to imitate the cadence. Teacher should make an example first line. "I want to go to Africa where all the zebras roam, eight monkeys will I raise there in brilliant sun and gloam..."
- If students need more structure, the teacher can also prepare a form-like version of poem, asking students for specific detail to fill in blanks of the modified poem. This way, students will get a sense for sound and rhythm that Yeats was striving for and its effect.

- More Advanced Questions about *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*:
 - Does anything surprise you about this poem? What is the tension in the poem?
 - Why does the speaker want to go to Innisfree?
 - What is he going to do there?
 - Why isn't he there now - what's stopping him from going? Does it feel like there's something getting in the way of him going there? Why? (roadway, pavements gray) Why does he keep saying he will go, but isn't going?
 - What does the speaker want? Who do you think the speaker is?

Required Resources:

The Lake Isle of Innisfree
by William Butler Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
 And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
 Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
 And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
 Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
 There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
 And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
 While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
 I hear it in the deep heart's core.