

Workshop: Alan Maley

Creative Writing for Students and Teachers

Something to nibble on while you wait:

This lyfe so short, the crafte so long to learn. Chaucer.

*Poetry is that which arrives at the intellect by way of the heart.
R.S.Thomas.*

A story is a candle lit against the dark.

*...linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but
an exceptional property of all people. Ron Carter.*

Poetry: 'Dancing in chains' Tang Chinese.

Poetry: 'Articulate energy' Donald Davie

Some key features of Creative Writing

- *Self discipline*
- *Playful engagement with language*
- *Close/accurate observation*
- *Use of imagination, memories, dreams, experiences, visualisation – associations*
- *Figurative language*
- *Sensitivity to sound patterns*

Some things to try: Hello /goodbye

Hello paper.

Goodbye trees.

Hello cigarettes.

Goodbye lungs.

Hello honey.

Goodbye money.

Stem Poems

- *I love the way ...*
- *Nobody knows (who, what, why, etc.)*
- *Why is ...?*
- *I used to...but now I...*
- *If you want to..., you'll have to...*
- *Have you ever...? No but I have...*

Stem poems, examples

- *Sleep is ...*

Sleep is the theatre

Where I am both actor and audience.

- *Loneliness is ...*

Loneliness is a songbird that never sings

Loneliness is a telephone that never rings.

Stories in 9 words

*He
loved her,
then found out,
so he
left.*

Try 16-words.

*My
brother's wife
ran off with
my sister's first husband.
They all re-married-
playing Happy
Families.*

Hemingway's 6-word story

For sale baby shoes never worn.

Questions to nature

Formulate some unusual questions to nature. eg. Do trees dream?

Can fish think?

Students then try to combine their questions into a short poem.

Do fish sleep?

Do trees dream?

Can whales sing?

Can roses scream?

Do snakes blink?

Can horses pray?

Can oysters think?

Can worms play?

Rhyme Time

- *Make a list of all the words that rhyme with PAY.
Do the same for words that rhyme with – HIGH.*
- *In pairs or groups, write sentences ending with the words in the lists.*
- *Make a selection of 12 sentences: 6 for each rhyme, and combine them into a short poem rhyming a,b,a,b.*

Bucket Lists

Make a list of TEN things you want to do before you die. Then combine them into a short poem. e.g.

*After getting rid of my books,
And making peace with everyone,
I shall lose weight
By becoming a hermit
(just for a while!)
On a Scottish island,
Return home to find my son has children –
Then re-read the whole of Shakespeare, (on my
Kindle)
And die in my bed with a bottle of champagne,
And be forgiven.*

Mini-sagas

Write a story in exactly 50 words (excluding title)

Mistaken identity.

*A hunter in Africa helped an elephant
by taking a thorn out of its foot.*

The elephant lifted his trunk then ran off.

Years later in a zoo, the man noticed an elephant lifting its trunk.

*He remembered Africa,
went towards it ~*

it crushed him to death.

Wrong bloody elephant!

Cinquains

*2,4,6,8,2 syllables per line. First and last
word related.*

*Breakfast
All those fried eggs,
And gallons of coffee:
Cholesterol! Diabetes!
Lunchtime.*

Grammar poems

Grammar poem:

N, Adj + adj, vb-ing + adv., Like...., If only...

Eagle.

Strong and powerful.

Flying effortlessly

Like a leaf in the wind..

If only I could join you.

You are ... Guided poem

You are mango ice-cream (food)

You are a cool breeze.(weather)

You are a shady palm tree.(tree)

You are dawn. (time of day)

You are a sailing boat. (vehicle)

You are comfortable shoes.(clothing)

You are jasmine. (flower)

You are a soft gamelan. (music)

You are light blue (colour)

You are a playful kitten. (animal)

You are my friend.

Metaphor poem

<i>Hope</i>	<i>a spoon</i>
<i>Life</i>	<i>a knife</i>
<i>Marriage</i>	<i>an egg</i>
<i>Love</i>	<i>a brush</i>
<i>Anger</i>	<i>a window</i>
<i>Disappointment</i>	<i>a mirror</i>
<i>Work</i>	<i>a banana</i>
<i>Happiness</i>	<i>a rope</i>
<i>Time</i>	<i>a bus</i>
<i>Hate</i>	<i>a cup</i>
<i>Fear</i>	<i>an alarm-clock</i>

Ss make up 3 metaphors by randomly combining words from each column.

Anger is an alarm-clock.

Work is a rope. etc

Metaphor poem cont...

*They then choose ONE of their metaphors.
They add 2 lines to explain the metaphor:*

*Marriage is a banana:
when you've eaten the fruit,
Only the skin is left.*

*Love is an egg.
Take good care
Not to break it.*

Word Array

<i>he</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>me</i>
<i>sent</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>most</i>
<i>parks</i>	<i>anyway</i>	<i>was</i>
<i>of</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>flowers</i>
<i>silence</i>	<i>took</i>	<i>wrote</i>
<i>it</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>what</i>
<i>letters</i>	<i>restaurants</i>	<i>how</i>
<i>to</i>	<i>cannot</i>	<i>love</i>
<i>spoke</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>remember</i>
<i>met</i>	<i>but</i>	

Sentence permutation

Nobody knows the woman he loves

~ re-write the sentence in as many ways as possible simply by changing the order of the words:

eg. Nobody loves the woman he knows.

*~ Arrange your new sentences into a poem.
Three lines to a stanza will work well.*

Mining a Text

Milmaq was a solitary person. He would spend hours in the forest, not hunting, simply sitting still, watching, waiting for something to happen. A spider would swing its thread across the canyon between two branches. A woodpecker would drum at the trunk of a chestnut tree, its neck a blur of speed. Above all, the trees themselves would speak to him. He would be aware of them creaking and swaying in the wind. He could sense the sap rising in them in the springtime; feel their sorrow at the approach of winter. If he put his ear to the trunk of a tree, he could hear it growing, very slowly; feel it moving towards its final, magnificent shape.

(The Man Who Talked to Trees. Alan Maley)

Why creative writing?

- *Language development*
- *Fostering ‘playfulness’*
- *Self-discovery through exploration/risk*
- *Drawing on affect*
- *Increased motivation from confidence/self-esteem*
- *Creative writers = Creative readers*
- *CW helps improve Expository Writing.*

Thank you

for

your participation.

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