



Poetry and Loss: Part I

Recommended Grade Range: High School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Consider the deeper, richer meaning of "loss" as conveyed by a poem.

Lesson Agenda

Do Now

Begin class with an independent freewrite in response to the following prompt: think about a time you lost something or someone and felt deeply impacted by it. Prepare students that they will be asked to share their responses out loud.

- ◆ Students can write about anything as long as it impacted them--the "something" could be money, a pet, a shoe; the "someone" could be a friend or family member, and could refer to a separation, relationship change, or death.
- ◆ In addition to the prompt above, you may wish to pose the following questions to start their writing:
 - ◆ What is your overall feeling about this experience?
 - ◆ What, if anything, helped you through this time?
 - ◆ What happened later? Did your life change?

Share Out

Students' Do Now responses might be personal, so you may wish to keep share out in pairs or small groups, or offer time to share with the whole class.

Mini Lesson

Play the four FPP videos (or segments of them) listed in the "Lesson Resources" section of this lesson plan, and ask students to consider the following questions as they watch:

- ◆ What types of loss did each person address? (e.g., loss of innocence, loss of loved ones, loss of identity).
- ◆ How were these losses similar? How were they different?
- ◆ How has poetry helped this person through his or her loss?
- ◆ What are the connections between the person and the poem?



Share Out

Students will share their answers to the questions above, as a whole class or in small groups.

Closing

Ask students to reread their Do Now response from the beginning of class. Ask them to share out any connections they may notice between the FPP videos and their response.

Suggestions for Next Steps

You may choose to follow up this lesson with any of the following activities:

- ◆ Through additional searching and reading, choose a poem that speaks to your loss. Become comfortable with the poem; write it out in your own handwriting, read it aloud and be prepared to read it aloud for the class.
- ◆ Why did you choose this poem? What is the connection between it and you? Write about your choice.
- ◆ Create a poem, using your Do Now free write as a base, but concentrating on making forceful and memorable lines and honing out the best images.
- ◆ Refine your poem still further. How does this new poem express your experience in a way different from your free write?

Lesson Resources

Favorite Poem Project Videos:

- "Facing It" by Yusef Komunyakaa read by Michael Lythgoe
- "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks read by John Ulrich
- "Sonnet 29" by William Shakespeare read by Daniel McCall
- "The Holy Longing" by Johann Wolfgang read by Olivia Milward

The Favorite Poem Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating, documenting, and encouraging poetry's role in our lives.



This lesson was made possible by Lauren Manganiello (Wilmington High School, Wilmington, MA) and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

For more lesson plans, videos, and classroom resources
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