

## Creative Writing

Mr. Monsen

Poetry Unit

### Directions:

- 1) Read all of the poem assignments in this packet.
- 2) Choose **two** poem assignments to complete.
- 3) Write those three poems in your notebook first. You can use the slashing prose skill to write your poems if that makes it easier.
- 4) Type these three poems up like the samples in this packet and put them in a folder. They will be counted as part of your 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Portfolio.

## Creative Writing

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### Poetry – “I Am” Poem

**Directions:** Read the following directions and write your own “I Am” poem.

If someone asked you “Who are you? What do you represent?” How would you respond?

An “I am...” poem is an autobiographical poem. It is *personal*—it *reveals* something about the person writing the poem. An “I am...” poem is a poem that describes family, hobbies you enjoy, foods you like, your strengths and/or weaknesses, and anything else you believe represents who *you* are. “I am...” poems can be serious, humorous, touching, silly – anything you feel represents you, and your identity.

### Brainstorming

**Directions:** Please *honestly* answer the following statements about yourself.

1. I think my two main personality traits are...
2. Something(s) that I am most curious about is/are...
3. The sounds I love are...
4. My greatest hopes and dreams are...
5. I love to pretend that...
6. The thing(s) that make(s) me happiest is/are...
7. The thing(s) that make(s) me saddest is/are...
8. My biggest pet peeve(s) is/are...
9. The thing(s) I value most is/are...
10. Something(s) that make(s) me cry is/are...

### “I Am” Poem Format

**I am** (two special characteristics you have) – these should be adjectives

**I wonder** (something you are actually curious about)

**I hear** (a particular sound) – be descriptive

**I see** (a sight which had made an intense impression on you)

**I want** (an actual desire)

**I am** (the first line of poem repeated)

**I pretend** (something you actually pretend to do)

**I feel** (a feeling you have about something)

**I touch** (a particular touch which has made an intense impression on you)

**I worry** (something that really bothers you)

**I cry** (something that makes you very sad)

**I am** (the first line of the poem repeated)

**I understand** (something that you know to be true)

**I say** (something that you believe in)

**I dream** (something that you actually dream about)

**I try** (something that you really make an effort towards)

**I hope** (something that you actually hope for)

**I am** (the first line of the poem repeated)

## Creative Writing

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### Poetry – Past to Present

**Directions:** Read the following poem and notice how the time shifts from past to present as the poem progresses. Now, write a simple poem that starts in the past but ends in the present. Keep it in chronological order but include at least two shifts in time. Keep it simple.

### Phone Call

by Ralph Fletcher

In kindergarten  
we played house  
got married  
and had 99 kids.

In first grade  
you told me first  
when you peed  
in your pants.

Remember that summer  
we glued apple seeds  
onto popsicle sticks  
and tried selling them?

Now you want to go out?  
To the movies?  
Like on a real date?  
Well, ah, um: sure.

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### Poetry – Defining Moment

**Directions:** Read the following poem, and notice how the author reveals her thoughts about a “defining moment” in her life. Write your poem where you describe a moment like the one the author describes in her poem.

#### Defining Moment

By Carolyn Brunelle

Few of my fears  
ever came to fruition,  
but God knows  
they kept me awake at night  
and on my knees.  
And none of those tears  
changed a thing,  
they just made  
ME sick;  
robbing me  
of precious moments.  
When I found peace  
in my inner world,  
oddly enough  
peace began to rule  
in my outer one.  
Relationships healed  
because I let go  
of the past,  
the unmet needs;  
the expectations,  
held on to what I still had  
and made that better.  
I managed to overcome  
not by my might or strength  
but because I put an end  
to war and let it go.  
Then, and only then,  
did I truly begin to live.

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### Poetry – Forward–Reverse Poem

**Directions:** Read the sample Forward–Reverse poem below. Notice how the author describes one scenario when you read the poem forward, but then switches it when you read it in reverse. Pick a topic to write about and write a poem like the one you read below.

#### **The Lost Generation**

by Jonathan Reed

*I am part of a lost generation.  
And I refuse to believe that  
I can change the world.  
I realize this may be a shock, but  
"Happiness comes from within"  
Is a lie, and  
"Money will make me happy"  
So in thirty years, I will tell my children  
They are not the most important thing in my life.  
My employer will know that  
I have my priorities straight because  
Work  
Is more important than  
Family  
I tell you this:  
Once upon a time  
Families stayed together  
But this will not be true in my era.  
This is a quick fix society  
Experts tell me  
Thirty years from now, I will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of my divorce.  
I do not concede that I will live in a country of my own making.  
In the future,  
Environmental destruction will be the norm.  
No longer can it be said that  
My peers and I care about this Earth.  
It will be evident that  
My generation is apathetic and lethargic.  
It is foolish to presume that  
There is hope.  
  
And all of this will come true unless we reverse it.*

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### Poetry – Pivot Questionnaire

**Directions:** Read the following sample Pivot poem. Then read the questionnaire and answer all of the questions in your notebook. Lastly, choose one of your answers and use it as an inspiration for a poem.

### Sample Poem

#### **It Slipped**

By Jillian Murphy

Tattered clothes and  
muddy sneakers,  
tangled hair and  
grass-stained knees,  
our youth, a blank canvas  
that we surely made a mess  
of, now  
didn't we?  
And we'd bite our tongues  
when yelled at  
or made fun of,  
only letting those three words  
linger in our minds,  
because soap left  
a bitter taste in our mouths.

But innocence is  
impermanence,  
profanity adding emphasis  
to sentences without  
leaving an open mouth to clean,  
and the words we let  
litter our thoughts,  
roll off of our tongues like  
the morning dew on grass.  
Because  
it's easier  
to say  
"Go \_\_\_\_\_ yourself."  
eyes bloodshot, and tearing,  
than it is to admit,  
to explain  
that you hurt me.

### Pivot Questionnaire

1. What is your favorite word?
2. What is your least favorite word?
3. What turns you on creatively, spiritually or emotionally?
4. What turns you off?
5. What is your favorite curse word?
6. What sound or noise do you love?
7. What sound or noise do you hate?
8. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?
9. What profession would you not like to do?
10. If Heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the Pearly Gates?

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Poetry – Sacred Place

**Directions:** Read the following poem and notice how the author reveals his thoughts about his “sacred place”. Now, write a poem about a place that sacred to you. Make sure you include concrete examples of why it’s important.

The Sacred  
By Stephen Dunn

After the teacher asked if anyone had  
    a sacred place  
and the students fidgeted and shrank  
  
in their chairs, the most serious of them all  
    said it was his car,  
being in it alone, his tape deck playing  
  
things he’d chosen, and others knew the truth  
    had been spoken  
and began speaking about their rooms,  
  
their hiding places, but the car kept coming up,  
    the car in motion,  
music filling it, and sometimes one other person  
  
who understood the bright altar of the dashboard  
    and how far away  
a car could take him from the need  
  
to speak, or to answer, the key  
    in having a key  
and putting it in, and going.

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Poetry – Symbolism

**Directions:** Read the following poem and think about what object is being symbolized. Then write your own poem in your notebook where you symbolize an object from your life throughout the poem.

**Mother to Son**  
*by Langston Hughes*

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.



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Poetry – Crush Poem

**Directions:** Read the following poem and notice how the author creates a sense of tension through his use of words and storytelling ability. Now, write a poem about something you've done to attract someone of the opposite sex. Write in present tense.

**The Note** by Ralph Fletcher

I write you a note  
unsigned  
folded and tucked  
inside the novel  
you've been reading  
*Lord of the Flies* or  
*Huckleberry Finn* my  
heart pounding so hard  
I can't see straight.

Next day in homeroom  
your eyes look different.

All I want to say is:  
don't worry about  
any hidden meanings  
or crazy symbolism  
like in English class.

This note means  
only what it says:

Springtime  
and I wish I knew you

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### Poetry – Tone Poem

**Directions:** Read the following poem and notice how the author using certain words to create the tone of the poem. Now, write a poem about something or someone that invokes anger. Tell the story and incorporate the angry tone by using similes and metaphors with language that connotes anger.

#### The Victims

by Sharon Olds

When Mother divorced you, we were glad. She took it and  
took it, in silence, all those years and then  
kicked you out, suddenly, and her  
kids loved it. Then you were fired, and we  
grinned inside, the way people grinned when  
Nixon's helicopter lifted off the South  
Lawn for the last time. We were tickled  
to think of your office taken away,  
your secretaries taken away,  
your lunches with three double bourbons,  
your pencils, your reams of paper. Would they take your  
suits back, too, those dark  
carcasses hung in your closet, and the black  
noses of your shoes with the large pores?  
She had taught us to take it, to hate you and take it  
until we pricked at your  
annihilation, Father. Now I  
pass bums in doorways, the white  
slugs of their bodies gleaming through slits in their  
suits of compressed silt, the stained  
flippers of their hands, the underwater  
fire of their eyes, ships gone down with the  
lanterns lit, and I wonder who took it and  
took it from then in silence until they had  
given it all away and had nothing  
left but this.

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### Poetry – “These I have Loved” Poem

**Directions:** Read the following “These I Have Loved” poem and then try to imitate its style and write your own.

Excerpt from “The Great Lover” by Rupert Brooke:

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;  
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust  
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;  
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;  
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,  
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;  
Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon  
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss  
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is  
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen  
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;  
Furs to touch;  
The good smell of old clothes; and other such  
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
Hair’s fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
About dead leaves and last year’s ferns...

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Poetry – Nature Poetry

**Directions:** Read the following nature poems and notice how the author describes the simple beauty in nature around him. Pick a place that you have visited and write a short poem with vivid imagery describing the place and its impact on you and/or the world.

**Nothing Gold Can Stay**

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

- Robert Frost

**The Oak**

Live thy Life,  
Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
Living gold;

Summer-rich  
Then; and then  
Autumn-changed  
Soberer-hued  
Gold again.

All his leaves  
Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough  
Naked strength.

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson