USING ART TO CONSTRUCT A LUNE POEM

Poetry uses evocative language and form to communicate an idea or an experience. There are many forms and structures for poetry, all of which can be easily researched online. This lesson plan highlights the examination of art as a creative catalyst for the writing of a one of those poetic forms, a lune poem. There are also several excellent web sources for poetic forms. Additionally, an excellent reference book is *The Teachers & Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms*, edited by Ron Padgett and published by the Teachers & Writers Collaborative.)

South Philly (Mattress Flip Front)
2001 (negative); 2003 (print)
Zoe Strauss, American, born 1970
Chromogenic print
Image: 6 7/8 x 10 1/8 inches (17.5 x 25.7 cm) Sheet: 8 x 10 3/8 inches (20.3 x 26.4 cm)
Currently not on view
2003-104-8
Purchased with funds contributed by Theodore T.

Curricular Areas:

English Language Arts

Grade Level:

Adaptable for multiple grade levels.

Common Core Academic Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-12.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

Art Images Required:

There are many works of art that can be used to create poems; the *Looking to Write, Writing to Look* teaching kit contains 25 such works. Linking to any of these suggested works will provide background information and additional teacher resources. Many of these works of art can also be found on the ARTstor database (http://library.artstor.org/library/welcome.html). To locate them enter a key word from the title of the work in the search box, followed by a comma and the word "Philadelphia."

For more information, please contact Education: School & Teacher Programs by phone at (215) 684-7580, by fax at (215) 236-4063, or by e-mail at educate@philamuseum.org.

Lesson Process:

1. Begin by reviewing any forms of poetry that your class has previously studied. Explain that the lune poem is another type of structured poem. One popular version of lune poem involves just three lines and eleven words. The first line uses three words, the second line uses five words, and the third line uses three words. (View a printable worksheet for the lune poem.)
2. Display the Horse and Man Armors image (view 2 of 16). Have the class take a quiet minute to observe the image. Instruct students to make two lists of words that describe the work--one list for "facts" and the other for "feelings." (NOTE: You can also find a "zoomable" image for the horse armor and the man armor).
3. At this point, review some information about the armor (available from the Teacher Resources tab on the Museum website). After a brief discussion, have students add more words to their lists.
4. Direct students to winnow down their lists until about five "facts" and seven "feelings" remain. (If students have a problem cutting enough words, have them ask a partner for suggestions.)
5. The lune poem should be structured as follows: Select three "facts" for the first line. Then select three "feelings" for the third line. (Shift order and selection of words for each line to find the best combination.) The second line requires three words; these words should connect the "facts" and "feelings" from lines 1 and 3. (Refer to the online worksheet.)
6. You can follow this same process with another work. (Suggestion: *South Philly (Mattress Flip Front)* by Zoe Strauss.)
7. Note that you can adjust the structure of the lune poem to suit your classroom needs. For example, if you would like to allow students to use phrases along with single words their poems might sound more fluid—although they may not be making as exacting a selection of words.

Assessment:

1. As a creative exercise, traditional assessment of poetry should only involve the actual rules of the poetic form. Students may write or discuss the choices they made as they constructed their poems. How did their poems relate to the work of art? Why did they select specific words or phrases? Did they have any ideas or themes they were trying to convey in their poems? Consider some sort of display. Perhaps poems from the students (lune poems and other forms) can be added to the school website, blog, or Wikipedia page. Poems can also be printed and bound into a class anthology.

Enrichment:

1. To further supplement practice working with structured poetry, students may try a haiku. Haiku poets traditionally write about everyday experiences, especially those related to nature. Like a lune poem, a haiku is written in three short lines. Traditionally, the first line has just five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third line has five (although this often varies). Display *Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons* by J.M.W.Turner. Brainstorm for words and phrases that describe what you might see, smell, taste, or touch if you could be there. Use these words to create a haiku.

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2. Another popular poem format is the walk poem. This poem involves an imaginary walk through a work of art and then writing about the journey. The most basic form focuses on what the poet sees during the walk. However, more challenging forms can focus on a journey that results in some sort of revelation, or a poem whose length, style, and shape mirror the length, style, and shape of the painting. Try a walk poem with *Railroad Bridge, Argenteuil* by Claude Monet or with *Yabu Lane below Atago* by Utagawa Hiroshige I. (The Museum website contains Teacher Resources for both of these images.)