

Diamond Johnson

Poetry 2

Professor Kicak

November 29, 2023

Final Portfolio

1. Original Bad Poem

****Did not receive comments back****

The Dress

I once owned a dress
that was yellow and red.
Filled with memories
and stains from my drinks.

I gave you this dress
that seems so worn out.
You can hardly walk in it,
maybe you could use it as a jacket.

You now own a dress,
if you could call it that.

The idea

is that the universe is within our pen.
Ink is the energy we poets expel our vile vomit.
The feeling of not knowing
what to say but having everything to mention.
Always picking the truth but hungry for the dare.
The cosmos creates our individual brains and cores
that bleed through the pen.
Letters turn into words

into stanzas

into passionate stories that

never truly cease, even after death.

2. Workshop 1 Poem

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Poetry 2

08 September 2023

I Will Never

be a white rose,
beautifully grown n' grounded.
I will never be a garden,
able to nurse n' protect.

I will never be an oak,
reliable n' sought by others.
I will never be the sharp green blades,
determined n' piercing towards success

I will never be the sapphire tarp,
ajar n' eternal.
I will never be the soil,
supportive n' unceased.

I will never be the ever-flowing hydrous
needed for survival n' naturally gifted.
(I will forever be the moonlace bud)
(waiting for a chance to prove myself wrong.)

you might be doing this too much
good consistent
diction

why move away
from nature and to something
plastic

okay, this seems
to be the heart
of the poem. What
does moonlace bud do?
Why does the character
identify

-Liz

Night Blooming Cereus

Noon

Midday sun, a vibrant tint,
In the warmth, her blossom grew.
Petals stretch, a sunlit play,
A symphony of light through the day.

6:00 PM

Evening whispers, a subtle sigh, As colors
deepen beneath the vault. A cactus harbors
a rare secret, waiting for a chance to prove herself.

8:00 PM

Her petals unfurl like celestial lace,
a fragrant waltz in the quiet span.
In the stillness of the silent air, she blooms unseen.
A fleeting beauty in the cosmic night, surrounded by sand and other cacti alike.

12:00 AM

She treads softly in the midnight hush,
a fragrance sweet, on zephyrs rides.
Through moonlit gardens, she softly flows,
The Night Blooming Cereus enchants the night.

3. Poem for individual meeting

Diamond Johnson
Poetry 2

What contemporary issues
are you grappling with?

Flourish after Lucille Clifton.

syntax
(grammar)
stanza
structure

won't you celebrate with me
what I have become
after the weeds? i had no tools,
delivered from Eden
golden and innocent.
what is my why?
i learned how to be soft
while securing my temple,
no longer to eat an arbitrary
pomegranate from the serpent.
my new ivory roots bind to lift me towards
the vault of heaven; come celebrate
with me that every day i flourish,
even in the most broken places.

I bet you can do better

this is the challenge

temptation

careful - otherworldly

end in the earthly

finances/class
race
gender*

- Cutting Greens
- Blessing the Boats at St. Mary's

Nicole Sealey

Tracy K. Smith

Natasha Trethewey*

4. Couplet Poem

Diamond Johnson
Professor Kicak
Poetry 2
24 September 2023

Couplet Poem

A Season's Symphony

The air grows crisp, with whispers of the cold,
yet warmth persists in cider and hearth.

The hefty aroma of apple orchards fills the air,
as the leaves don their robes of red and gold.

Whiffs of warm cinnamon cloves,
taint the nostrils with spice and merry.

Hollowed pumpkins line the streets while,
cobwebs carefully stretch over gateways.

The softest kiss of salted caramel
awakens the writers and dreamers.

Such comfort in silvery skies and
maple-kissed terrains.

She wears her colors proudly to
emphasize the "good" in goodbye.

this is an "expected" word. Can you find something else?

cool word - totally unexpected - implied?

better words?

pretty imagery

We don't get a character introduced until the 2nd to last line. Is she more important?

A Season's Symphony

Music is within the seasons embrace

A symphony of nature, a rhythmic grace. Fall wears her cloak proudly to emphasize the *good* in goodbye.

The hefty aroma of apple orchards fills the air, as the leaves don their robes of cherry and honey. Whiffs

of warm cinnamon cloves taint the nostrils with spice and merriment. Hollowed pumpkins line the streets

while cobwebs carefully stretch over gateways. The softest kiss of salted caramel awakens the writers and

dreamers. Such comfort in silvery skies and maple-kissed terrains. The air grows brittle, with whispers of

the cold, yet warmth persists in cider and hearth. Nature's melody, a seasonal song where each note, a

memory, lingers. So, let the music play in autumn's embrace, A harmony of change, a lyrical flow

as seasons dance and melodies glide in the orchestra of nature, let the hearts remain warm.

5. Blank Verse Poem

Diamond Johnson
Professor Kicak
Poetry 2

Beyond The Labels

The flawed cliché of Black Women laid
A web of bias, misconceptions made.
As though a single story could define,
the souls wrapped in the shroud of ebony.

"Angry Black Woman," they may often say,
Reducing passions to a cliché's sway
But depth of feeling is a human right,
Expressions of emotion, day or night.

"Strong Black Woman" is another dull mold,
Yet vulnerability in us holds.
(Strength's not our burden, it's our choice to bear,
With grace and courage, our soul births a flare.

"Jezebel" lurks a harmful label cast,
As if our choices warrant judgment fast.
Freedom of desire is ours to claim,
In love and mutualities, sweet name.

The formula, like chains, we seek to break,
For we are universal, no mistake,
Beyond these labels, our true selves reside,
Rainbows of identities, not to hide.

- opportunity for metaphor

next draft consider
focusing on one ideal word
so you can go deep

- cool idea

- you don't have to rhyme in
blank verse, but it's
nicer

next time you
can scrap the
blank verse part
and do what you like

Beyond The Labels

But why must we fit into a single box?

Such flawed cliches of Black Women with
It is as though a single story could define
ebony.

bodies battered, and identities unfairly marked.
the souls wrapped in the shroud of

Angry Black Woman,

they claim, as we simply express
our expectations, emotions, and earnings.

Strong Black Woman

they repeat. Implementing a
devoid of vulnerability.
Strength's not our burden, it's our choice to bear,

Jezebel

they harmfully say, as if our choices
warrant judgment fast.
Freedom of desire is ours to claim,
In love and mutualities, sweet name.

The autonomy of us is not something to pawn with.
Our true selves lie beyond the labels that
they impose. It is up to us to define our story that
does not fit into just one box.

6. Workshop 2 Poem

Diamond Johnson

Professor Kicak

Poetry 2

The Overturn of Roe - Prose Poem

but what if the baby grew up to cure cancer
or was the next president?

and who's to say what i do with my vessel? you choose
the unknown life, deeming it more important than the
one standing before you. you debate what the woman
should be, do and become. you would not dare dictate
a man's body, for those ships are always harboring things
that are "useful." the shouting for life is quiet in the lines
to adopt, to foster, to house, to nurse, to protect the ones
already here but quick to yell "you women will regret it!"
so what? i have a baby so you can kill them yourself with
bullets in ten years? controlling my autonomy to keep your
damn god happy. i abort the idea of having my life led by
strangers. it is my life, my fight, my right, my body, my choice.

"What if I..."

L could point out
the things the
woman could
do

Really like the specifics
here

prime for
metaphor

feels like it's
attacking the
reader

oh! metaphor
Could you expand
that

feels too
much like
an op-ed

There's an amazing poem
called "what I never told
you about the abortion"

Sharon Olds
writes a lot
about this kind of
stuff

-liz

Overturn of Roe

*but what if the baby grew up to cure cancer
or was the next president?*

But what if the 20-year-old girl you deny abortion cures cancer?
you debate what the woman should be, do, and become. you would not
dare dictate a man's body, for those ships are always harboring things
that are "useful."

Abortion is a selfish choice

and who's to say what i do with my vessel? you choose
the unknown life, deeming it more important than the
one standing before you.

you will regret it

No woman can call herself free who does not control her own body.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?

the shouting for life is quiet in the lines to adopt, to foster,
to house, to nurse, to protect the ones
already here.

controlling my autonomy to keep your
damn god happy. i abort the idea of having my life led by
strangers. it is my life, my right,
my body,
my choice.

7. Workshop 3 Poem

Diamond Johnson
Poetry 2
The Act

Round of applause, you played your part too well. Nonetheless,
you changed characters mid-play from the one you auditioned
as. You unstitched my spirit while I was learning how to
sew her back whole. An ancient artifact torn by your
coarse hands.

Scarlet silk strands in nimble fingers dance,
sewing back what time held dear.
Ignored my gut because what does she know?
Apparently, All.

what is "the part"

look at you deploying meter like a pro!

who is this?

me?

holy cow - that's great!

These are possible doorways into context

The actual conflict that has caused the unstitching and restitching need to be explored

-Liz

The Act

You were so sure of who YOU were.
Who WE were.
Our embrace always taking center stage.
Never
to
take
a
bow
without
the
other
in
hand

until - - one day, - - - your - - - - once - - unsoiled hands - - - were - - - -
stained - - - with - - - foreign - - - ones. *Round- - - -of- - - -applause,*
- - - you played- - -your- - part- - too well. - - -Nonetheless, you - - - - -
altered - - - -personalities - - mid-play - - - from - the- -one- - - -you - -
auditioned with. - - You - - unstitched - - - - her - -spirit - - - - while -
she - - -was - -learning - - - - how - -to- -sew - -her - - back - - - whole. -
An - - - ancient - - - - artifact - - - - - torn - - by - - - - your coarse - - - - -
hands.

Scarlet silk strands in nimble fingers dance,
sewing back what time held dear.
Ignored that damn gut because what does she know?
Apparently, All.

8. Poem of Gratitude

Diamond Johnson

Poetry 2

Ode To The Gift of Sight

Such grateful coffee eyes

entangled with caramel crescent swirls,
glossed with curiosity and wonder.
Through the looking glass, I perceive,
the grandeur of pain and pleasure.

With grateful eyes

i witness life and love.
The small lens unfolds the grand world.
I see the beauty of Earth, its gem-like pearls.
My ability to paint a canvas of its vibrant hues.

With grateful eyes

i see into his chestnut gaze.
In stares exchanged, connections are made.
A silent conversation, yet our emotions declare.
Such foreign language that oddly strikes home.

With grateful eyes

thank you for being my quiet guide.

I underlined all the abstract concepts - it's a lot. You might consider which ones you could develop into more specific concepts

→ what makes them curious?
what inspires wonder?

→ what causes pain & pleasure

→ is this still the eyes "painting"?

what is happening between these two people?

It's possible your poem begins here

I really like your form the repetition and structure are nice

The Window To The Soul

<p><i>Such grateful coffee eyes</i></p> <p>In his chestnut gaze, a world unfolds, a story told in time. Stares exchanged, bridges quietly laid, connections wove in the quiet hue.</p>	<p><i>With grateful eyes</i></p> <p>A silent conversation, hearts amuse. A dance of emotions on an intimate stage. Words unspoken, yet feelings proclaim, In the language of glances, a love affair.</p>
<p><i>With grateful eyes</i></p> <p>Such a foreign language, yet oddly understood, is a dialect of the heart, uniquely sown.</p>	<p><i>With grateful eyes</i></p> <p>Through brown sugar hues, a tender light, the depths of gaze, a familiarity roams, Embracing the soul, where love finds its home.</p>

Reflective Response

Upon reflecting on my journey in creative writing, I am struck by the profound and enlightening evolution of aesthetics, style, and technique. During my time at the University of South Florida, I have had the opportunity to engage with diverse reading materials, refine my drafting process, and develop effective revision strategies. This transformative experience has deepened my understanding of the craft and shaped my unique voice as a writer.

Identity

In the early stages of my creative writing studies, I encountered challenges in finding my distinct identity. My previous education had instilled in me the belief that poetry (and other forms of creative writing) had to follow a specific format, but I soon learned that there are many forms of poetry and no single correct way to write it. I also delved into classic literature and fiction, recognizing themes and styles that sparked my imagination and began to shape my writing style and aesthetic.

One pivotal aspect of my growth in my aesthetic was a conscious effort to explore voices outside my comfort zone. Authors like Jericho Brown's *The Tradition Book* helped me venture into experimental literature, exposing myself to unconventional narrative structures and avant-garde techniques. This allowed me to expand my creative horizons and develop a more nuanced understanding of the art of writing.

During the final revision of my poems in Poetry 2, I experienced an essential moment in my growth as a writer. I received valuable advice that my revision did not need to be perfect and that I could experiment with it. This newfound freedom gave me the confidence to push boundaries and explore new possibilities. As a result, I discovered a passion for implementing spacing within my poems and creating more extended forms of poetry. I have always enjoyed writing long and drawn-out pieces, whether in creative writing or communications. I also realized the visual importance of a piece matters to me because of how much I love designs. By acknowledging these passions of mine, I decided to implement them

within my poetry and not feel pressured to shorten my work. Breaking away from the traditional mold of what poetry should look like allowed me to create my unique style.

In addition, my drafting process underwent a significant refinement. Initially, the writing lacked focus, with ideas scattered randomly across the page. However, I realized that a structured approach could enhance my creativity. Specifically in fiction, I began pre-writing exercises, such as freewriting and mind mapping, to clarify my thoughts before diving into the drafting process. These exercises helped me streamline my ideas and understand the power of deliberate pacing and sentence structure to evoke specific emotions. By experimenting with sentence length and rhythm, I created a nuanced atmosphere that reflected the mood of my writing. This newfound awareness of the interplay between form and content became a cornerstone in shaping my evolving aesthetic.

Revision

As a creative writer, the revision process has been crucial to my growth. Initially, my revisions were focused on surface-level improvements such as grammar and syntax. However, as I progressed in my studies, I realized the potential of profound revision. It involved scrutinizing the subtleties of language, refinding character motivations, and interrogating the thematic core of my work.

Engaging in peer workshops and receiving constructive feedback was instrumental in honing my revision skills. I learned to discern valuable critique from subjective opinions, empowering me to make informed decisions about the direction of my work. My revision process was once approached with fear of it not being perfect. However, it became an opportunity for refinement and elevation. I developed the habit of setting aside completed drafts, allowing time to gain perspective before revisiting and revising with a fresh mindset.

Moreover, studying literary theory also provided me with a critical lens to analyze my work. Concepts like intertextuality and postmodernism influenced my understanding of literature's existence in conversation with other works. This awareness prompted me to infuse layers of meaning into my writing, creating a narrative that resonated beyond the surface.

Aesthetic and Style

As I developed my writing skills, I made a conscious effort to cultivate a unique authorial voice. At first, my writing mimicked the style of my favorite authors or even other students' style, lacking the authenticity that comes with a truly individual voice. Through experimentation and self-discovery, I gradually uncovered the oddities that set my writing apart. Whether it was a love for vivid imagery or a tendency towards extreme spacing, I learned to embrace these quirks as an integral component of my style. I noticed I love writing in numerous genres of creative writing, like romance, mystery, racism, politics, etc.

One specific moment I remember is when I revisited a short story I had written called *The Sanctuary* in the early stages of my creative writing journey in my junior year and was struck by the stark contrast between the original draft and the revised versions. The characters were simpler, the narrative more purposeful, and the language more evocative. It was a tangible testament to the growth fostered by diligent study and practice.

Conclusion

As I reflect on my past experiences, I recognize that this retrospective analysis has laid the groundwork for my ongoing development. With an awareness of the constantly evolving landscape of creative expression, I am eager to venture into uncharted territories, question established beliefs, and continue to hone my craft. My journey in creative writing, characterized by its ups and downs, has equipped me with a versatile skill set and instilled in me a deep admiration for the boundless potential inherent in storytelling.