



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2001 Volume III: Reading and Writing Poetry

The Poet's Eye

Guide for Curriculum Unit 01.03.10
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“The Poet’s Eye” is designed for high school creative writing students (meeting daily in 40-minute blocks) to cover a period of one semester, or approximately eighteen weeks. National and state literacy standards have been taken into account in the writing of this unit, which are reflected in its interdisciplinary approach that combines poetry, philosophy, even physics into the mix of writing poetry. And why not? Physics sans mathematics is poetry, or as Gary Zukav reminds us in his 1979 American Science award-winning book, *The Wu Li Dancing Masters*, “Physics, in essence, is simple wonder at the way things are and a divine (some call it compulsive) interest in how that is so. Therefore, the mission of this unit is to instill, activate, and recharge a sense of wonder for our students.

The spine of the unit upon which unit sections are structured (and as indicated by its title) addresses perspective: How we see the world around us; How we can open our minds to different points of view; How we can distill these visions down to essences or essential qualities. “The Poet’s Eye” introduces students to several poetic devices: imagery, metaphor, concrete and abstract terms, oxymoron, stanza, personification, apostrophe, echoes and rhyme. It also covers several poetic forms: acrostic, list poetry, ode, renga, haiku, sonnet, and cento.

As mentioned above, it is the quality of wonder that this unit attempts to address. In this regard, we will look for this quality in our class work. What paradoxes and surprises do our poems reveal? Do we see critical thinking in the work? Is it provocative? Do the poems evoke emotion? And most of all, have we truly used our poet’s eye to look again, and again?

(Recommended for Creative Writing, grades 9-12.)

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