POETRY JOURNAL GUIDELINES

Poetry is often one of the most underappreciated and misunderstood forms of literature. As we head into the poetry unit of this course, it should be your goal to gain an appreciation and understanding of poetry that you did not previously have. As mature readers, you should leave yourselves open to the ideas that poetry has to offer.

In order to help you appreciate and understand the poetry that you will be reading for this class, you will be asked to complete a weekly poetry response journal for the weeks we devote to poetry. These journals will get you to think about some of the poems you have read. Each poetry journal must be 1 typed page (single spaced). Of course, these journals will be evaluated on quality and not quantity, so be sure to show that you have been thinking about the poems.

NOTE: Choose a poem that is unfamiliar to you and that we have not discussed in class.

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Here are the questions that you must address for the poems that you choose to write about. Follow the format below, and be sure to answer ALL of the questions thoughtfully and completely. Choose any poem within the assigned weekly readings, and remember that your journal should be a minimum of 1 typed page (single spaced).

Your Name ________________________________
Date ________________________________
English 110, Section ??
Poem Title “Poem titles go inside quotation marks.” Author _______________ Page # __________

1. On the surface, what is the poem literally about? This would be a literal summary, a very brief synopsis of no more than 4-5 sentences in which you simply restate the poem (in your own words). No personal opinions or interpretations should be included here.

2. What do you think the poem reveals on a deeper level? This would be your initial interpretation of the poem’s deeper meaning, some of the “hidden” ideas, themes, and issues that you think exist within the poem.

3. The speaker of the poem should not be confused with the poet/writer of the poem. Who do you think are the poem’s speaker and his/her intended listener/audience?

4. What do you think is the speaker’s attitude towards the subject that he/she is speaking about? What causes you think the speaker has such an attitude? Explain by considering the speaker’s tone, choice of words, etc.

5. Write down a question that you think the poem raises. Then, in a few sentences, go on to try to answer the question that you have just asked.

6. Select 2 individual quotes (lines, words/phrases, or images) from the poem and respond/react extensively to them in a log. For example, think about how the line/lines or images that you have chosen cause you to react. What is particularly intriguing, effective, or bothersome in those lines or images? Discuss the quotes/images in as much detail as you can. Be sure to show depth and insight in your thinking.