

# Diary: Day Four

## Plenary

Warm up (Ice breaker with names)  
Introduction to Poet Coral Rumble.

## Morning Sessions

### Morning session 1: Coral “The Heart of the Poem”

**Disclaimer:** as this is being written with the notes still on the table at the course venue, the following relies on the unreliable memory of the scribe. More precise material will follow.

Coral Rumble gave a presentation/talk on the essence of poetry. She focussed on five central elements:

- ⇒ **The choice of words:** making one’s partner draw a simple sketch blind, only guided by one’s instructions demonstrated the importance of choosing words well; a string of words associations starting from “tower” demonstrated where our words can take us; Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney’s poem “Digging” showed how a simple word can have a strong effect; telling jokes and working with puns (double meanings of words; wordplay) showed how important timing and playing with the meaning of words can be.
- ⇒ **Placing of words:** the form of poems is important: line breaks, stanzas, formal poems like cinquains, haikus, tankas (to name a few short ones); poems can also be in the form of the content (e.g. concrete poetry)
- ⇒ **Sound:** Rhythm can be a backdrop to a poem (handclapping or snapping your fingers), but there is also word sound (“smooth”, “cut”, “sizzle”) and of course rhyme, alliteration, consonance (words that echo the same sounds) and assonance (words that ‘almost’ rhyme); in both cases the sound similarity can lie in the consonants (dove – live) or in the vowels (sleep – deer)
- ⇒ **Images:** Making a poem vivid by using metaphor and simile to compare an object with something else; “Aunt Julia” is a good example for metaphor; “I Spy with my little eye something like...” a good practice game for making similes.
- ⇒ **Patterning:** the importance of editing a poem, working on it to improve it and make it stronger (Playing with “word clay”).

#### Glasstrophobia

I don't know why but I always seem to get a glass  
w h o s e  
s h a p e  
o f  
f e e r s t h e c o n t e n t a v e r y l a r g e s u r f a c e t h a t  
e v a p o r a t i o n o r e l s e s o m e w h e r e n e a r  
t h e b a s e t h e r e m u s t b e a t i n y  
h o l e t h r o u g h  
w h i c h  
t h e  
w i n e  
s e e p s  
o u t  
a n d  
I  
e n d  
u p  
l o o k i n g  
l i k e a c o m p l e t e p i s s - a r t i s t

### Morning sessions 2

#### Coral

will supply us with the instructions for what she did with her group at a later date.

## Cheryl

demonstrated to her group how she would ‘teach’ the cinquain form to a classroom of young children. The teachers, in role as pupils, looked in-depth at the construction of a cinquain, ascribing particular content as well as syllabic rules to each line formation. We wrote a group cinquain together and then wrote several more individually. The rules followed were:

line 1 (2 syllables) should tell the subject of the cinquain	Teacher
line 2 (4 syllables) tells how the subject appears	So humourous
line 3 (6 syllables) tells the purpose/action of the subject	Always running around
line 4 (8 syllables) tells the feeling of or towards the subject	Burnt out but, in the end, still proud
line 5 (2 syllables) tells the subject again in a new way (echo)	Poor guy

Everyone presented their cinquain reading it twice. Then we looked briefly at the construction of a haiku (three lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables) and also at the Tanka (a haiku with an additional two lines of 7, 7 syllables in response to the first three).

**Haiku:**                                      The old fallen tree  
    lies like a corpse on the road  
    dead but not buried

response, forming **Tanka:**      Mother Nature has to learn  
    to take care of her child

## Franz

The pairwork activity **The Backbone of the Poem** is based on partners swapping their respective sheets first composing a column of words by word association then writing a line of poetry “around” the word in the column that they hadn’t written. The resulting poem is given a title and then read out with oomph.

For **Whacky similes** all participants sit in circle and complete in turns the table below, first the left-hand column then folding it over and completing the simile on the right with as detailed a phrase as they can (development from making up details about the list of items in the suitcase from yesterday).

As _____ (Adj. e.g. cold)	as
_____ (Adj.) enough	to
To _____ (Vb, e.g. run)	as if
a _____ (noun)	like a
a _____ (Noun person e.g. woman)	is like

Finally we wrote a **Real Haiku**, which has to contain a reference to time and to nature (bug, plant, child). Each participant wrote a reference to time on a pink slip and a reference to nature on a yellow slip, threw them into the centre and then pulled one slip each. These expressions had to be in the haiku. To make it more fun play on words is possible, e.g. to think of spring as, say, a bed spring.

## Afternoon Sessions

### Coral:

Her info will be supplied when it is sent to us.

### Cheryl and Franz: Working to Rule(s)

First we wrote a poem of **ten lines with nine rules**. Three were given:

1. First and last line must be the same.
2. The last two lines must rhyme.
3. One line is in a language other than English.

The remaining rules were made up by the participants. They included a line without “o”, a line about food/weather/love, a line with at least three words starting with the same sound, a line with only three letter words, a line with only verbs, etc.

Working with rules and ending a poem with same line it began prepared us for writing a **pantoum**. As all lines are repeated (a full poem for half the price), it is a good form for a poem about an obsession. We brainstormed some obsessions then picked a theme (Session A Someone waiting in vain for a phone call from a partner; Session B thoughts of the child who is always picked last when teams are formed) and brainstormed sentences that went with the theme (as full sentences are easier for this form). The sentences were written twice on strips of paper and these were arranged according to the Pantoum form.

Practical considerations:

a) brainstorm the sentences in one lesson, then type them up and hand out the photocopied strips in the following sessions for the students to assemble. Reading aloud is important. If there are enough strips so that not all need to be used, variations occur when the students choose. It’s also interesting how different sequences of the same material result in different moods.

### Form

line A	Naked in front of a full-length mirror,
line B	you roll and press those folds of flesh,
line C	think about Rubens' women, and
line D	how the critics call them art.

line B (repeated)	You roll and press those folds of flesh,
line E	relishing yet another mocha.
line D (repeated)	How the critics call them art,
line F	inspires a new perspective.

[line E (repeated)  
line G  
line F (repeated)  
line H...]

line Y	Relishing yet another mocha,
line C (repeated)	think about Rubens' women;
line Z	inspire a new perspective
line A (repeated)	naked in front of a full-length mirror.

([www.absolutewrite.com/specialty\\_writing/pantoum.htm](http://www.absolutewrite.com/specialty_writing/pantoum.htm))