

San Diego Poetry of Resilience

The Three Temperaments of Poems: Image, Idea and Music

Usually, the **idea** of a poem in a language, its theme, its meaning, the impulse that compelled the poet to write the poem, is the easiest element to translate.

Image is the next easiest to translate.

Music in one language is seldom able to be translated into another language.

#18
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd:
But they eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thow ow'st;
Nor lose possession of that wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Shakespeare

18
Shall I compare thee to a spotted hog?
Cortland, Poland White, Yorkshire runt,
no—Spotted Hog, county bred, county
ribboned at the fair, the most fair,
as you across from me this summer's
day, your hair zipped short,
the perfect bulb I want to gently rub
and feed you caramels, berries dripped
in cream; cheddar, cheddar, capers,
martinis clear through the night. We all
may trundle on, lines and graying,
missing hair, but you today,
 as long as there are Spotted Hogs
and fairs, live on and on and on.

Idea is what the piece is mostly about, the driving impulse that impelled the poet to write the poem. What Idea is not is a summary of the plot details or action.

Who Will Play The Angel?

by G. C. Waldrep

There was some disagreement among us as to who should play the angel. Peter nominated Nancy because of her long blonde hair, but then Roxanne argued that angels did not have long blonde hair: they had no hair, they were hairless beings. Roxanne suggested Emanuel, who was bald, but who was also an albino. No one had ever heard of an albino angel. Emanuel himself argued that Ernesto should play the angel, because he had once held a job in a typewriter factory, *back when there were typewriter factories, back when there were typewriters. What could be more angelic than that?* Emanuel asked, and we felt he had us there: night was falling; Ernesto it would have to be. Slowly Ernesto lifted his arms, so that we could see his wings. They were smaller than we had expected. Seeing them somehow made us all feel shy.

Maybe this is not the journey we're used to.

Some poets want "the dance of the intellect" to exist deeply in the emotion end of the intellect spectrum, far away from the other end: reason, clarity and meaning.

Good Bones
by Maggie Smith

Life is short, though I keep this from my children.
Life is short, and I've shortened mine
in a thousand delicious, ill-advised ways,
a thousand deliciously ill-advised ways
I'll keep from my children. The world is at least
fifty percent terrible, and that's a conservative
estimate, though I keep this from my children.
For every bird there is a stone thrown at a bird.
For every loved child, a child broken, bagged,
sunk in a lake. Life is short and the world
is at least half terrible, and for every kind
stranger, there is one who would break you,
though I keep this from my children. I am trying
to sell them the world. Any decent realtor,
walking you through a real shithole, chirps on
about good bones: This place could be beautiful,
right? You could make this place beautiful.

The temperament of **Music**. Very few poets pay attention to meter and rhyme in poems today.

Alliteration is the repetition of letters or letter-sounds at the beginning of words usually located near each other.

From Gerard Manley Hopkins "The Windhover"

I caught this **m**orning **m**orning's **m**inion, king-
dom of **d**aylight's **d**auphin, **d**apple-**d**awn-**d**rawn Falcon, in his riding

Assonance is the use of similar vowel sounds in the words of a poem. AEIOU

Amanda Gorman "The Hill We Climb"

"When **d**ay comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending **sh**ade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must **w**ade
We've **b**raved the belly of the **b**east
We've learned that quiet isn't always **p**eace

Consonance occurs where a consonant sound is repeated throughout a sentence.

From: "Out-Out", by Robert Frost

The buzz-saw snarled **d** and rattled **d** in the yard
And made **d**ust and **d**ropped stove-length sticks of wood **d**

Aquarium

by Kim Addonizio

1. The fish are drifting calmly in their tank a
2. between the green reeds, lit by a white glow b

3. that passes for the sun. Blindly, the blank a
4. glass that holds them in displays their slow b
5. progress from end to end, familiar rocks c
6. set into the gravel, murmuring rows d
7. of filters, a universe the flying fox c
8. and glass cats, Congo tetras, bristle-nose d
9. pleocostemus all take for granted. Yet e
10. the platys, gold and red, persist in leaping f
11. occasionally, as if they can't quite let e
12. alone a possibility—of wings, f
13. maybe, once they reach the air? They die g
14. on the rug. We find them there, eyes open in surprise. g

Identical sounds – hard rhymes, **similar sounds - soft rhymes**.

Eye rhyme - bow as in arrow and bow as in lowering your head.

Wright and right - hard rhyme.

Words that “chime” - **off rhyme, near rhyme** - dark/card, drama/armor, aspirin/inspiring.

Remember, if you think of **rhythm** as a flow, **meter** is simply a way of measuring that flow.

A **syllable** is a unit of sound in a word. A word can have one syllable or many

Meter is the groupings of Western language into units of syllables called **feet**

Simply, for this presentation, a poetic **foot** is a unit with at least one stressed syllable and one or two unstressed syllables

When a line of poetry contains:

One foot: Monometer

Two feet: Dimeter

Three feet: Trimeter

Four feet: Tetrameter

Five feet: Pentameter

Six feet: Hexameter

Seven feet: Heptameter

Eight feet: Octameter

Iamb—rising foot with two syllables (describe / include / retract) (arise / return / awake)

Anapest—rising foot with three syllables (and she rode / a white horse) (un der stand / New Ro chelle / Coeur d’A lene)

Trochee—falling foot with two syllables (picture / flower) (happy / Pittsburgh / Memphis)

Dactyl—falling foot with three syllables (annotate an-no-tate) (mann e quin / horr i ble / Buff a lo)

“**Image** is the primary pigment of poetry.”

Carl Phillips: a fragment of a poem in his book “The Rest of Love” In this fragment, the narrator is talking about God:

because I’ve asked he shows me his mercy—
a complicated arrangement
of holes and

hooks, buckles. What else did you think
mercy looked like,
he says and, demonstrating, he straps it on
and takes it off.

Ezra Pound: (image) “something directly apprehended in a flash of perception.”

Type one image: the reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception. The five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste.

Type two image: the reproduction in the mind of any sense perception, not just the physical 5 senses and includes figurative language.

Type one speaks literally, voice of reason, type two speaks poetically, emotionally, voice of passion.

Figurative language is speech or writing that departs from or plays with the literal meanings. It's the spontaneous and instinctive product of feeling.

The main devices of figurative language are simile and metaphor.

A **Simile** uses the words "like" or "as" in its construction. One thing is like another or one thing does something as another does it.

A **metaphor** always has two sides, one is the known (tenor) and one is the thing that makes us think differently about the known (vehicle)

The Even Sea
by May Swenson

Meekly the sea
now plods to shore:
white-faced cattle used to their yard,
the waves, with weary knees,
come back from bouldered hills
of high water,
where all the gray, rough day they seethed like bulls,
till the wind laid down its goads
at shift of tide, and sundown
gentled them, with lowered necks
they amble up the beach
as to their stalls.

Bistro
by Deborah Allbritain

How fragile we've become.
I've got the dog but you no longer mow the grass,
tend the succulents.

I don't know what I want, you say
staring into your pear salad.

I would prefer to climb the magnolia tree,
hover in the candlelit courtyard

than admit how cold my ankles are, how I'm not
the me you loved anymore.

Maybe I could pass you a note or scribble
on my cloth napkin:

My body's car is rusted down from all its water,
only feels something when it talks

to my parents' sweet ashes boxed under the bed.

When the risotto comes, the rules I followed
still vinegar what longs for oxygen.

All poetry, all good poetry, will contain in identifiable amounts, but not necessarily equal amounts, Idea, Image and Music. And if it doesn't, it risks not even getting close to expressing the inexpressible, which is the basis of what we write today.

Poems used in this presentation:

William Shakespeare – Sonnet #18

G. C. Waldrep – “Who Will Play the Angel”

Maggie Smith – “Good Bones” from ***Good Bones***

Gerard Manly Hopkins – “The Windhover”

Amanda Gorman – “The Hill We Climbed”

Robert Frost – “The Windhover”

Kim Addonizio – “Aquarium” from ***The Philosopher’s Club***

Carl Phillips – from ***The Rest of Love***

May Swenson – “The Even Sea” – from ***Nature: Poems Old and New***

Deborah Allbritain – “Bistro” DeborahAllbritain.com

Here’s the writing prompt for this month:

Ekphrastic is defined as “a vivid description of a scene, or more common, a work of art.” Usually, today, it is defined as a poem inspired by a photograph or painting. Often the poem is accompanied by the painting or photo, but not always.

Here is a specific prompt about old photos. We all seem to have them, an old family album, a box of photos in the garage or something you found in an antique shop. Often, we don't know who these people are. Or why they were being photographed.

My two poems relates to specific people that are known to me and have inspired the poems. I didn't need to provide the photo because it was less important to the poem. With the poem by Deborah Allbritain, she has no idea who the people are or why they are on the roof and has let her imagination run off. The attached photo supplies the inspiration for the poem and helps the reader enjoy the poem. These poems also serve an example of poems inspired by Idea and poems inspired by Image: I am inspired by the temperament Idea and Deborah by Image.

Be inspired by these poems, or the poems in the presentation. Perhaps by a photo you dig out of the old shoebox in the garage. Send your poems to me. Use the link on the website.

“Snows Corner Road, Orrington, Maine,” is unpublished. “Oahu, 1973,” was published in my book, ***Miss Desert Inn***. And “The Neighbors Across the Way,” by Deborah Allbritain, is from her manuscript ***Ancestors***.

Snows Corner Road, Orrington, Maine

by Ron Salisbury

In 1937, he's leaning against the hood, baggy
work pants, rough boots and no shirt, no
undershirt, wiry, left hand on the hood

ornament, right holds the cigarette,
probably Chesterfield. Who took this photo?
Probably she did, squinting down into
the box Brownie, my sister in a clothes basket
at her feet. In six years I'll be born, WWII
raging outside the window of their small
house in Maine. It's because of his back
and kidneys he'll be here not being killed
in France or Belgium. I wasn't planned
unlike my sister. Maybe they already
knew they weren't good at it,
that far too complex story of family.

Oahu, 1973

by Ron Salisbury

Somewhere in a shoe box,
there is a photo of two six foot
Las Vegas showgirls on Oahu,
arms around a wrinkled Japanese
fisherman on the North Shore,
his surf rod gripped tight, barely
five foot, grin splitting his sun-brown
face: my wife, the one on the left.

Some snafu in scheduling
and the Folies Bergere
had to shut down for a month.
The casino sent everyone to Hawaii
to keep the show intact including
husbands, boyfriends
slathered in sun block,
wielding cameras, coupons
for luaus, free drinks at tiki bars.
No tops, just G-strings
for the girls, tan lines stood out
like raccoon eyes in klieg lights.

The entrance to the assisted living
has a planter pot on either side
of the front door, a poor example
of a Greek amphora, crudely crafted,
not like those pulled from the Aegean.
Each pot has a fake concrete cord
down the middle, pulling the amphora
into two long halves, a peach, I think,
or Jan when she bent over
to pick up a shell on Oahu's North shore,
the fisherman transfixed with his rod
held overhead as the fish swam away.



The Neighbors Across the Way
by Deborah Allbritain

Sometimes they stood on the peak, staring out. Sometimes they sat on the gable, feet dangling. People had different theories as to the reason. Our teacher said we had overactive imaginations and that no one in their sound mind would recite scripture or fly kites from their roof tops.

My mother thought the man meant well and was merely teaching the children bravery. *After all*, she said, *they don't have a mother*. My grandfather speculated that not only were they *closer to the breath of God*, but they could also spot the wall clouds and green sky of a tornado.

The day I summoned enough courage to cross the road and ask the man myself, I pulled the bell, but no one was there. Through the peep hole, an empty room— except for a ladder and three sets of wings collapsed on the floor like fallen doves. Come spring, we heard from the postman

that the family had moved into the widow's cottage on Barnum Pond. The boy had developed such a fear of heights he could not complete his lessons. There was even a rumor that he had stopped growing. And his sister, with her luminous hair, had become so confused that she claimed her name was no longer Emily, but Seraphina.

We all prayed that by living closer to the ground, the children might have a chance at reaching full potential. When I got older and couldn't sleep, I would gaze out my dormer window waiting for something but not sure what, only that it was possible.

I try to read the name of your perfume by Tania Pryputniewicz

I dodge unmasked walkers on the Silver Strand,
rebreath stale breaths beneath the pajama fabric

of my mask. Toddlers in oncoming strollers
stare. Yesterday, unmasked, I could have smiled

at them. Sunlight slips over the kestrel sculpture
made of spoons in my father's house. Anderson Cooper

shows viewers the divot in the haircut he gave himself. Cuomo
broadcasts sweating from basement quarantine. We binge-watch

Joe Exotic, Fleabag, Ozark. The coyotes on the Russian River
yip by night, prehistoric silver sips. People in Marin

howl now too, I'm told. I pull tarot's Tower card, the Lovers
next. Chile, Iceland, Denmark, India, San Diego, Mexico

and Maine: Facebook Live, Snatum Kaur's morning circle, guitar
in her arms. We chant, we sing from home: 700, 800, 1k the counter

counts, thread of heart emojis like a diver's bubbles on the screen,
our upraised palms to sky. For Father on a ventilator. For Auntie

who won't ever see one. For Grandma living with her two dogs
in Texas. For the pregnant mother in ICU. For the twelve pages

of Boston obituaries. For the ER doctor who took her life. Three
times we hold our breath, once for the self, once for the circle's

every prayer, a third time for time itself, all beings, every heart
beating despite suspended breath. I dream in perpetual zoom,

gallery view. I see you, propped on pillows, your dresser behind you.
I try to read the name of your perfume, the spines of the books

(I try to read, continued)

on your shelf, forget to unmute my audio when my turn to speak,
my house shrunk, a wooden star afloat on a sea the red tide churns

bioluminescent blue, a tsunami's curling wave at every sill.
I hold my breath, raise my palms to the ceiling, and sing.

Trato de leer el nombre de tu perfume by Tania Pryputniewicz, tr. Marjha Paulino

Me alejo de caminantes sin mascarilla en Silver Strand
respiro, de nuevo, alientos rancios bajo la pijama de tela

de mi mascarilla. Chiquillos en cochecitos se acercan mirando.
Ayer, sin cubrebocas pude haberles sonreído.

La luz del sol se resbala sobre la escultura del halcón
hecha de cucharas en la casa de mi padre. Anderson Cooper

le muestra a los espectadores el agujero del corte de cabello
que él mismo se hizo. Las transmisiones de Cuomo sudando por la
cuarentena en el sótano. Maratoneamos con Joe Exotic, Fleabag,

Ozark. Los coyotes en el Russian River se quejan en la noche,
prehistóricos sorbos de plata. La gente en Marin allá ahora,

eso me han dicho. Saco la carta de La Torre del tarot, Los amantes
después. Chile, Islandia, Dinamarca, India, San Diego, México

y Maine: Facebook Live, el círculo matutino de Snatam Kaur, la guitarra
en sus brazos. Coreamos, cantamos desde casa: 700, 800, 1k el conteo

sigue, línea de emojis de corazones como las burbujas de un buzo en la pantalla,
nuestras palmas hacia el cielo. Por el padre en el respirador. Por la tía

quien no verá uno. Por la abuela viviendo con sus dos perros
en Texas. Por la mujer embarazada en terapia intensiva. Por las doce páginas

(Trato de leer, continued)

de obituarios de Boston. Por la doctora de Emergencias que se quitó la vida. Tres veces
retenemos el aliento, una vez por uno mismo, una vez por el círculo de cada orador,

una tercera vez por el tiempo mismo, por todos los seres vivos, cada corazón
latiendo a pesar de la respiración detenida. Sueño en un zoom perpetuo,

vista en la galería. Te veo, apoyado en almohadas, tu armario detrás de ti.
Trato de leer el nombre de tu perfume, los lomos de los libros

en tu estante, olvido desactivar mi audio cuando me toca hablar,
mi casa se encogió, una estrella de madera a flote en un mar la marea roja

agita el azul bioluminiscente, la ola circular de un tsunami en cada alféizar.
Retengo mi aliento, elevo mis palmas al techo, y canto.

Published at Borderless / Bilingual:

<https://bilingualborderless.com/2021/01/14/poems-by-tania-pryputniewicz-poemas-de-tania-pryputniewicz/>

Prompt 1, Ekphrastic challenge: The link above takes you to a collage made by Corinne Stanley in response to “I try to read the name of your perfume” and the two additional poems. Use the imagery in the collage as a starting point for your own poem about your pandemic experience from micro (your body, family, house) to macro (city, country, planet).

Prompt 2, Tarot Poetry challenge: This prompt invites you to consider the Ace of Cups card in the tarot deck, a card that carries an image of a cup overflowing with love and light. Here it is paired with the poetic form of the aubade. Poetry Foundation defines an aubade as, “A love poem or song welcoming or lamenting the arrival of the dawn.” Here is a word cloud of deck maker associations for the Ace of Cups: *Loving, healing, balancing, flowing, appreciating, feeling, opening, pleasing, receiving, accepting, grieving, crying, believing, offering, bathing, wishing.*

Louise Bogan’s poem, “Leave-Taking” is an aubade. An aubade can be a letter written at dawn to the lover one is leaving at first light. Returning to the domain of your own heart, you enshrine the state of love/sorrow/any aspect of the experience with the beloved in the aubade. Write your own aubade about returning to the domain of your own heart or address the dawn in any way you wish.

Leave-Taking by Louise Bogan

I do not know where either of us can turn

Just at first, waking from the sleep of each other.

Read the rest of the poem here:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/15668/leave-taking>

Alternately, try writing a haiku. The Ron Salisbury poem below, from his Poem-a-Week newsletter, expresses the Ace of Cups theme beautifully. In this compact and beautiful love poem, the timeless, ageless field of night provides sanctuary where the beloved and the beloved within can meet as equals.

Love's Braille by Ron Salisbury

I see with my fingers
at midnight you are still
young and so am I

Prompt 3, Ancestral theme-based prompt:

The pandemic-driven divides we face (due to COVID-19 pandemic, politics, and race relations) find us in a time of collectively excavating and re-examining societal structures. Both poems above use mathematics as a means to bear witness. Evie Shockley's haiku series draws Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Langston Hughes into the conversation in "statistical haiku (or, how do they discount us? let me count the ways)" (from *The new black*, Wesleyan University Press, 2012). Natalie Diaz, in "American Arithmetic" (from *Postcolonial Love Poem*, Graywolf, 2020) also uses statistics in this love poem of sorts rife with the tension of desire despite erasure and threat of annihilation. Consider your ancestral lineage and inheritance. What were the arithmetic's of your ancestral leavings and arrivals (to and from which lands, countries, and cultures)? Look for the pattern-breakers in the ancestry or family history; choose one ancestor to focus on in the first stanza of your poem. What was lost, sacrificed, gained? In the second stanza, consider what you carry forward and what you alter. Or try writing a series of haiku, after Shockley, to distill your observations.

**statistical haiku (or, how do they
discount us? let me count the ways)**

by Evie Shockley

only 3 of 100 black boys
entering kindergarten will graduate college—
in the night sky, shooting stars

every day a black person
under 20 years old commits suicide—
plucked magnolia blossom's funereal perfume

a black man is 700% more likely
than a white man to be sentenced to prison—
scattered thundershowers in may

(statistical haiku, continued)

every 3 minutes
a black child is born into poverty—
pine needles line the forest floor

—after langston hughes's "johannesburg mines"

American Arithmetic **by Natalie Diaz**

Native Americans make up less than
one percent of the population of America.
0.8 percent of 100 percent.

O, mine efficient country.

I do not remember the days before America—
I do not remember the days when we were all here.

Police kill Native Americans more
than any other race. *Race* is a funny word.
Race implies someone will win,
implies *I have as good a chance of winning as—*

We all know who wins a race that isn't a race.

Native Americans make up 1.9 percent of all
police killings, higher than any race,
and we exist as .8 percent of all Americans.

Sometimes race means run.

I'm not good at math—can you blame me?
I've had an American education.

We are Americans, and we are less than 1 percent
of Americans. We do a better job of dying
by police than we do existing.

When we are dying, who should we call?
The police? Or our senator?

(American Arithmetic, continued)

At the National Museum of the American Indian,
68 percent of the collection is from the U.S.

I am doing my best to not become a museum
of myself. I am doing my best to breathe in and out.
I am begging: *Let me be lonely but not invisible.*

In an American city of one hundred people,
I am Native American—less than one, less than
whole—I am less than myself. Only a fraction
of a body, let's say *I am only a hand—*

and when I slip it beneath the shirt of my lover,
I disappear completely