

The Mississippi Poetry Podcast Supplement

Ep. 9: Derrick Harriell

1. Listen (14 minutes). Play *The Mississippi Poetry Podcast w/ Derrick Harriell*

2. Write (10-25 minutes, as time allows)

Materials Needed:

notebook, pen/pencil

Writing Exercise: Valuing the Senses

In discussing his poem "Optometrist," Derrick Harriell talks about "taking the time to really, really value sight." Using this encouragement as a jumping-off point, participants will choose one of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) and write a gratitude poem for that sense. Ask participants to consider the following: what does that sense allow them to do? What are some specific ways that particular sense brings pleasure? What are some of their favorite ways to experience that sense? Encourage participants to be specific, and to explore the individual ways that they have experienced their chosen sense.

Example:

I am grateful for the tang of vinegar on beach fries.

For the clarifying burn of horseradish.

I am grateful for the way a spoonful of cookie batter transports me to my yellow childhood kitchen and my mother next to me.

For the warning sour of the turned orange juice.

For hot apple cider. For sweet tea.

For the chill of a cherry sno-ball and then its syrupy melting.

3. Share (5-10 minutes)

If time and comfort levels allow, invite participants to share their poems!

Related Materials:

Derrick Harriell's LSU Press page: <https://bit.ly/3diErtH>

View of Mt. Hood from Portland: <https://on.doi.gov/3QuJWUK>

