

The Mississippi Poetry Podcast Supplement

Ep. 11: James Dickson

1. Listen (16 minutes). Play *The Mississippi Poetry Podcast w/ James Dickson*

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

Materials Needed:

notebook, pen/pencil

Writing Exercise: Noticing the Little Things

In the poem he shares on the podcast, James Dickson describes a clover chain left on a school stairwell—a small, unremarkable object it would be easy to overlook. But Dickson’s speaker looks closely and spots not only the object, but what it represents: the “harmless mischief” of the person who placed the chain, and the tenderness of the students who let it be.

Invite participants to spend three minutes looking around the room—they might want to walk around, or simply observe from where they’re sitting—and choose some small detail that suggests something larger. For example: pink eraser bits on the floor might indicate how hard someone has been struggling with a particular assignment, or a bin full of extra snacks on the desk could suggest a teacher’s care. Write a short, spare poem that, like Dickson’s, uses that detail as a jumping-off point for a larger observation.

3. Share (5-10 minutes)

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

Related Materials:

Description of Kokopelli: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kokopelli

Poetry Foundation on Basho: poetryfoundation.org/poets/basho

Waffle House menu: wafflehouse.com/lunch-and-dinner-nutritionals/

Review of *Some Sweet Vandal* (MS Books Page): msbookspage.wordpress.com/2022/07/14/some-sweet-vandal-by-james-dickson/

