

The Mississippi Poetry Podcast Supplement

Ep. 14: Ann Fisher-Wirth

1. Listen (14 minutes). Play *The Mississippi Poetry Podcast w/ Ann Fisher-Wirth*

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

Materials Needed: notebook, pen/pencil

Writing Exercise:

In her discussion of revision, Ann Fisher-Wirth talks about learning to love the act of cutting words and lines from a poem draft. This exercise is designed to help participants become comfortable with this kind of editing.

Invite participants to freewrite for five minutes on a specific topic (a season or month works well for this—for example, a five-minute freewrite about October). A freewriting session should be low-stakes and uncensored. Participants needn't show anyone what they've written—the idea is just to keep the pen or pencil moving and to write down whatever comes into their heads on the selected topic. They might find themselves listing memories, using fragments, going on tangents (a crisp October night leads to a fall carnival, which leads to a lengthy memory of being stuck at the top of a Ferris wheel, etc.)—anything is fair game!

At the five-minute mark, ask participants to stop writing and count up the number of words in their exercise. **Then ask them to cross out exactly half of those words.** What's left is the poem. It's a challenge to identify unnecessary words, and even more challenging to remove some seemingly necessary ones—encourage participants to be brave in their editing! This exercise demonstrates the power of concision, and how this sort of editing can help create a stronger, stranger, and more vital piece of writing.

3. Share (5-10 minutes)

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

Related Materials (next page):

[Ann Fisher-Wirth's website](http://annfisherwirth.com/about/): annfisherwirth.com/about/

[Mississippi, by Ann Fisher-Wirth and Maude Schuyler Clay](http://ipgbook.com/mississippi-products-9781609405601.php): ipgbook.com/mississippi-products-9781609405601.php

[Ann Fisher-Wirth interview](http://32poems.com/prose/ann-fisher-wirth-an-interview-by-serena-agusto-cox/): 32poems.com/prose/ann-fisher-wirth-an-interview-by-serena-agusto-cox/

