

The Mississippi Poetry Podcast Supplement

Ep. 15: Christie Collins

1. Listen (14 minutes). Play *The Mississippi Poetry Podcast w/ Christie Collins*

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

Materials Needed: notebook, pen/pencil

Writing Exercise:

Sound (which can include rhyme, meter, the use of repetition, the way words echo each other, or anything having to do with the way we hear a poem)—is a powerful poetic tool. A poem can use sound to add interest, to enhance meaning, to build tension, or to direct focus. In her poem “Nesting,” for example, Christie Collins uses rhyme and repetition to evoke the sound of birdsong. This exercise is designed to help participants pay close attention to sound and what it can do for a poem.

Invite participants to think of a place where you might hear a lot of unique sounds—this might be a baseball game, a NASCAR race, the beach, a zoo, etc.—and how they could use sound to create the feeling of that places. Onomatopoeic words can work well here (like, for the beach, the *shhhhh* of waves or the *cawcaw* of seagulls), but encourage participants to think, too, about the way the words work on the page. How might they use rhythm or repetition or structure to help enhance the poem’s meaning?

Example:

Beach Day

Hush hush hush

say the waves.

I am watching my sons fill bucket after bucket.

Hush hush hush

I am worrying about the waves crashing near them

Hush hush hush

I am worrying about the sun against my skin

Hush hush hush

I am worrying like always, but I am listening to the waves
and they are saying Hush hush hush.

3. Share (5-10 minutes)

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

Related Materials:

Christie Collins’s website: bychristiecollins.com/

“Nesting”: ekphrastic.net/the-ekphrastic-review/nesting-by-christie-collins

Baby elephants sitting on laps: youtube.com/watch?v=eqMwak7HSGQ

