

Crafting Dreams into Poetry
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The Haden Institute
Feb 2022

The Haden Dream Leadership Program gives us many different pairs of eyeglasses through which to look closely at our dreams for both spiritual and intellectual sustenance and growth. My objectives for this presentation include the following:

To discuss and demonstrate how crafting our dreams into poetry can help facilitate spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth.

To take a close look at how some of our most revered poets and spiritual teachers have used both free verse and fixed-forms for bringing the unconscious offerings of dreams into consciousness.

To discuss and model ways for using the art and craft of poetry in both one-on-one dream work and group dream work.

Many poets who are traditionally free-verse poets find themselves at times turning to both ancient and contemporary uses of fixed forms.

In this workshop we will explore the many reasons a poet might turn to form.

We will also take a close look at both familiar and not-so-familiar forms and discuss techniques to help make those forms best serve the subject matter, theme, and tone of a poem.

A Visitor

My father, for example,
who was young once
and blue-eyed,
returns
on the darkest of nights
to the porch and knocks
wildly at the door,
and if I answer
I must be prepared
for his waxy face,
for his lower lip
swollen with bitterness.
And so, for a long time,
I did not answer,
but slept fitfully
between his hours of rapping.
But finally there came the night
when I rose out of my sheets
and stumbled down the hall.
The door fell open

and I knew I was saved
and could bear him,
pathetic and hollow,
with even the least of his dreams
frozen inside him,
and the meanness gone.
And I greeted him and asked him
into the house,
and lit the lamp,
and looked into his blank eyes
in which at last
I saw what a child must love,
I saw what love might have done
had we loved in time.

Bag Of Mice

I dreamt your suicide note
was scrawled in pencil on a brown paperbag,
& in the bag were six baby mice. The bag
opened into darkness,
smoldering
from the top down. The mice,
huddled at the bottom, scurried the bag
across a shorn field. I stood over it
& as the burning reached each carbon letter
of what you'd written
your voice released into the night
like a song, & the mice
grew wilder.

Free Verse

Nick Flynn

The Embrace

You weren't well or really ill yet either;
just a little tired, your handsomeness
tinged by grief or anticipation, which brought
to your face a thoughtful, deepening grace.

I didn't for a moment doubt you were dead.
I knew that to be true still, even in the dream.
You'd been out--at work maybe?--
having a good day, almost energetic.

We seemed to be moving from some old house
where we'd lived, boxes everywhere, things
in disarray: that was the story of my dream,
but even asleep I was shocked out of the narrative

by your face, the physical fact of your face:
inches from mine, smooth-shaven, loving, alert.
Why so difficult, remembering the actual look
of you? Without a photograph, without strain?

So when I saw your unguarded, reliable face,
your unmistakable gaze opening all the warmth
and clarity of you--warm brown tea--we held
each other for the time the dream allowed.

Bless you. You came back, so I could see you
once more, plainly, so I could rest against you
without thinking this happiness lessened anything,
without thinking you were alive again.

Free Verse

Mark Doty

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St. Peter Said, "That's Good Enough," and He Walked Through

After my father died, he came to me
in a dream, and in a voice, raspy, some
where between a bad Brando and Bogey,
asked if I would accompany him

to the gate, talk him into heaven. It was
cold. March. And night. I didn't
want to go, could think of nothing to advance
his cause, so rose sulking and petulant

and followed him. Saint Peter, flustered, got
out of bed. Name one good thing, he said, waiting.
Finally I recalled the mutilated dog
he once shot to put out of its misery.

We stood there at the weatherless gate, still
strangers, odd pair out of sync until...

The Needy

You're boring, Cathy, said the girl in my dream.
I listened, surprised, from my end of the phone.
She was slow and overweight, about thirteen.

She was just being honest, not trying to be mean.
But I couldn't help feeling slightly dethroned.
You're boring, Cathy, said the girl in my dream.

I had been her mentor forever it seemed.
A program for kids from unstable homes.
She was slow, overweight, almost thirteen.

The sweetest thing once I had ever seen.
I bought her nice clothes, even a birthstone
Ring. I'm boring now, said this girl in my dream.

Her house was a shambles, but mine was clean.
Her mama a slattern, her daddy--plain gone.
She's slow! And overweight! About thirteen

years she'd lived in that mess. Jesus! I mean,
I saved her! At least toss me a bone!
But *You're boring, Cathy*, said the girl in my dream.
She was slow, overweight, just turning thirteen.

Villanelle

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Ruminations on a Dream of Ruby and Rosi and Sissy Spacek

I'm talking with my friend Ruby
about not wanting to go home.
What she hates most, she tells me, are the slippers
she has to polish for them everyday at five. My sister Rosi
is somewhere out partying with Sissy Spacek.
Someone lends me a car to drive myself home. But my feet

are cramped. I can barely maneuver the pedals. A few feet
at a time is all I can go. It's dark, so dark, and Ruby
can't go with me, says she has a date. Somewhere out in Space—
that's where everything seems to be—home,
our mothers and fathers, dead for years. Now Rosie.
And waiting, always to be polished, those dreaded slippers.

My little town was excited when The Ruby Slipper
opened up. *A decent restaurant!* we all cried, though our feet
kept ghosting past until it closed. The kind of place Rosie
would have loved, and Ruby's
husband, too, were they not dead. *Gone home*
to be with Jesus, or so Ruby says. Remember Sissy Spacek

in that movie called *Carrie*? Spacek
plays a girl whose mind can send things flying—Slippers,
and tiaras, tables, chairs, and saxophones, while at home

her mother's begging Jesus to save her daughter's soul, a feat
it takes a crucifix to accommodate. When Ruby's
husband died I drove five hours to be with her. The roses

I stopped along the road to buy were coral. Rosi
was too sick to travel with me. *Sissy*,
she'd phoned to say before I left, *please tell Ruby*
I'm sorry I couldn't come. She, too, was slipping
away from us, though no one knew. My feet
ached during the funeral. Later at Ruby's house

I took off my shoes. We talked past midnight of home,
the town we'd both managed to escape, then she rose,
took my hand, and led me to her old piano, her feet
and hands still agile against the pedals and keys. Sisters.
Like sisters we had always been. *That* had never slipped
away. Though it seemed all else had. Yet here, still, Ruby

and me. In two months they'll lower my sister Rosi
six feet too many down as I, too, begin to long for home,
begin groping all around for those ruby slippers.

Sestina

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CSB

Darning the Wounded Tongue

Half-dog, half-camel, with bottomless eyes,
the creature kneels beside me like a sphinx.
Erect, tall in a Queen Anne chair, I gaze
ahead. Neither of us makes a sound.

The creature kneels beside me in a pale room,
silvery light casting peace around us.
Neither of us makes a sound. She opens
her mouth, revealing one wound on her tongue.

The light casts peace as evenly as stitches
lined up on a needle, its long arc
revealing a deep wound on her tongue; it
isn't bleeding. I pick up fine white yarn

and needle—a long arc hovering, silent,
above the deep, oval wound, which is not
bleeding but yearning for the fine white yarn.
Slowly I begin to sew it up.

The oval hole, deep as the brown eyes trained
on me, accepts my stitches, unflinching.
Sewing up the gaping wound, I'm relieved
these sutures do not hurt. As I sew and

sew without flinching, without ceasing
the ancient rhythm seems to heal me, too.
Thankful that these sutures do not hurt,
I sense an old truth rising from our bond

just before waking, as if the creature
testifies: The world can be mended.

Pantoum

Gail Tyson

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More Weight

They'd take her child away, unless he *shed* **more weight**.
But every time he cried, she *fed*. **More weight**.

My little niece too light, and snow not dense enough,
I squeezed myself behind her on the *sled*: **more weight**.

So thin her body cannot warm itself, she picks at the meager
salad on her plate. Her greatest dread—**more weight**.

How many have passed through courts that never proved
their guilt? Yet all still now quite dead. **More wait**.

One stone on old Giles Cory's chest. Another. Then a next.
Confess, confess! the crowd cried out. But all he said: **More Weight**.

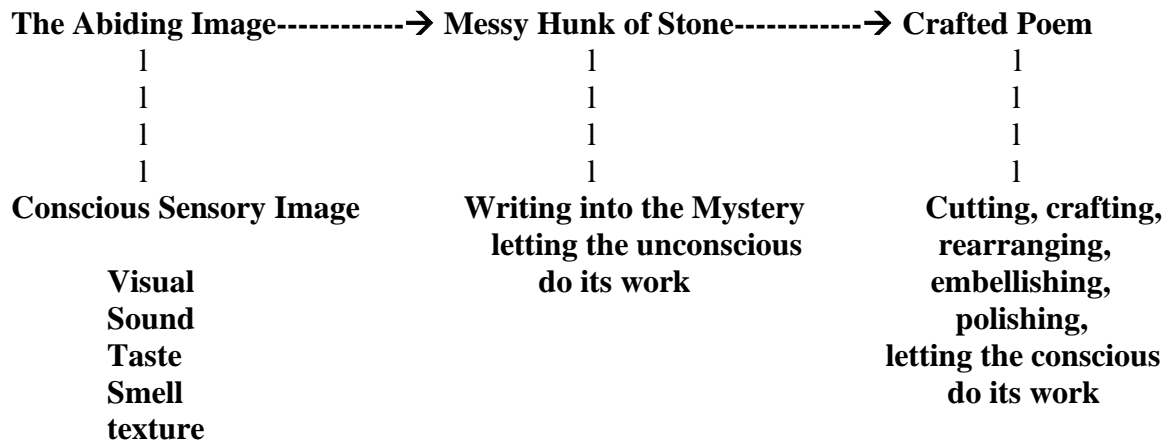
Drunk nights. Father. Mother, two brothers dead. The bridge.
Pray, Cathy, someone said. She did. **More weight**.

Ghazal

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THE POETIC PROCESS ACCORDING TO CATHY



Line					6
Line	7	(repeat	of	line	4)
Line					8

Continue with as many stanzas as you wish, but the ending stanza then repeats the second and fourth lines of the previous stanza (as its first and third lines), and also repeats the third line of the first stanza, as its second line, and the first line of the first stanza as its fourth. So the first line of the poem is also the last.

Last stanza:

Line	2	of	previous	stanza
Line	3	of	first	stanza
Line	4	of	previous	stanza
Line 1 of first stanza				

Ghazal (Persian)

A Ghazal is a poem that is made up like an odd numbered chain of couplets, where each couplet is an independent poem. It should be natural to put a comma at the end of the first line. The Ghazal has a refrain of one to three words that repeat, and an inline rhyme that preceedes the refrain. Lines 1 and 2, then every second line, has this refrain and inline rhyme, and the last couplet should refer to the authors pen-name... The rhyming scheme is **AA bA cA dA eA** etc.

Villanelle (French)

A Villanelle is a nineteen-line poem consisting of a very specific rhyming scheme:

aba aba aba aba aba abaa.

The first and the third lines in the first stanza are repeated in alternating order throughout the poem, and appear together in the last couplet (last two lines).

One of the most famous Villanelle is "Do not go Gentle into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas.

Sestina (French)

The sestina is a strict ordered form of poetry, dating back to twelfth century French troubadours. It consists of six six-line (sestets) stanzas followed by a three-line envoy. Rather than use a rhyme scheme, the six ending words of the first stanza are repeated as the ending words of the other five stanzas in a set pattern. The envoy uses two of the ending words per line, again in a set pattern.

First stanza: 1..2..3..4..5..6

Second stanza: 6..1..5..2..4..3

Third stanza: 3..6..4..1..2..5

Fourth stanza: 5..3..2..6..1..4

Fifth stanza: 4..5..1..3..6..2

Sixth stanza: 2..4..6..5..3..1

Concluding tercet:

middle of first line ..2, end of first line ..5

middle of second line ..4, end of second line..3

middle of third line ..6, end of third line

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Sonnet (English, Italian)

A Sonnet is a poem consisting of 14 lines (iambic pentameter) with a particular rhyming scheme:

Examples of a rhyming scheme:

#1)	abab	cdcd	efef	gg
#2)	abba	cddc	effe	gg
#3)	abba	abba	cdcd	cd

A **Shakespearean** (English) sonnet has three quatrains and a couplet, and rhymes **abab cdcd efef gg**.

An **Italian** sonnet is composed of an octave, rhyming **abba abba**, and a sestet, rhyming **cde cde or cdc dcd**, or in some variant pattern, but with no closing couplet.

Usually, English and Italian Sonnets have 10 syllables per line, but Italian Sonnets can also have 11 syllables per line.

French sonnets follow in this same pattern, but normally have 12 syllables per line.

Minute (American)

The Minute Poem is a rhyming verse form consisting of 12 lines of 60 syllables written in strict iambic meter. The poem is formatted into 3 stanzas of **8,4,4,4; 8,4,4,4; 8,4,4,4** syllables. The rhyme scheme is as follows: **aabb, ccdd, eeff**

Terza Rima (Italian)

A Terza Rima is a poem with an eleven syllable count in each line and a rhyming scheme of **aba, bcb, cdc, dd**.

Notes

