

Getting Started on Your Art Park Poem

by Fleda Brown*

1. Spend five full minutes looking at your object. This could be a sculpture or something in nature. Walk around it. Don't think about it and don't talk. Just feel what it's like to be near it.
2. What colors are there? What do those colors remind you of (another object in your memory)?
3. Describe the shape in terms of something else you know, like a sliding board, a pickle, a bear's claw....and so on.
4. What emotion does the shape seem like to you? Happy, sad, guilty, angry, wistful, itchy, restless, afraid, shy.....and so on.
5. Find some moment in your past when you felt like this object. Describe it in two or three sentences (this is just material you'll use when you put your poem together).
6. What event in the world today does this object make you think of?
7. If you could wear this object, where would it fit on your body?
8. If you could throw this object, would it fly? What would it look like sailing through the air?
9. Does something about this object remind you of a person you know well? In what way?
10. Choose the most interesting (to you) answer on your list and begin your poem with that. This will be your first line or lines.
11. Then one-by-one, see how many of the other answers you can make fit into your poem. Your poem doesn't have to follow any particular pattern. It doesn't have to rhyme.
12. When you have a first draft finished, ask yourself
 - a. if each line ends in the best place.
 - b. if the whole poem will give a reader some sense of what this object means to you.
 - c. if you have shown your feelings about it with the best words you know, colorful and lively words.
 - d. if you have avoided generalizations, such as "It seems to represent world peace to me."