***NCTE 2022,* Friday, 9:30-10:45, 213 CD**

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**Exploring Healing Power of Language Through Writing Poetry**

**Creating a Tree of Hope from the Poems Written**

Think about your students—adolescents going through many issues rooted in their cultural/racial, gender/sexuality, and socio-economic background in addition to the major challenges in connection with their identity search, physical and/or emotional traumas, losses. How will you teach them they are not alone; we are here to help them go through pain, showing them young adult (YA) characters who looks like them and act like them, who are lost, confused, and desperate for love and hope? Combination of YA literature and writing poetry may become a beacon of light for many of your students. Let’s show them how to find hope and rediscover love by writing diamante or sevenling poems.

**The Rules of a Diamante**

A diamante is an unrhymed seven-line poem. There are just a few rules to writing a diamante:

1. Diamantes are seven lines long.
2. The first and last lines have just one word.  
   The second and sixth lines have two words.  
   The third and fifth lines have three words.  
   And the fourth line has four words.
3. Lines 1, 4, and 7 have nouns.  
   Lines 2 and 6 have adjectives.  
   Lines 3 and 5 have verbs.

Here’s an easy way to visualize all three rules:

Noun  
Adjective, Adjective  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Adjective, Adjective  
Noun

The diamante was invented just 40 years ago. It was created by an American poet named Iris McClellan Tiedt in 1969, and has become very popular in schools. Sometimes it is called a “diamond poem” because of its shape. There are two different types of diamantes; synonym diamantes and antonym diamantes.

**A Sevenling**

*A Sevenling* is a poem of seven lines with similar structure to this poem by Anna Akhmatova, written in 1910 in Kyiv, Ukraine:

He loved three things alone:

White peacocks, evensong,

Old maps of America.

He hated children crying,

And raspberry jam with his tea,

And womanish hysteria.

… And he married me.

Here is my example of the sevenling poem based on the theme of hope from Debora Ellis’s young adult novel *My Name is Parvana* (2012):

**Parvana’s Hope**

Her Mom is gone forever,

Her sister’s in America,

And the school is in ruins.  
  
The officer wants her name.

Focusing on numbers to keep quiet,

Parvana holds onto dear memories.

The world sends a savior.

**Try It Yourself:**

To write the sevenling poem, let us carefully examine its structure. The poem has seven lines: two three-line stanzas (tercets) and the final one-line stanza:

* The first stanza should contain three connected or contrasting statements. It can be a list of three details about someone or something, names, choices, or possibilities.
* The second stanza should similarly have three elements (statements, details, names, or possibilities). These may be directly connected, opposed, or unrelated to the first stanza.
* The final, seventh line should present a narrative summary, a kind of a punchline, or an unusual, sometimes oxymoronic conclusion.

As a result of composing, the sevenling might be mysterious, unusual, and hinting that there is more to the story than being told. Neither Akhmatova nor Lumsden established metrical rules for this form of poetry. However, because of its condensed form, some rhythm, meter and/or rhyme would be preferable while not required. There is also no need for a title, but if you have one, go ahead and use it.

**A Tree of Hope**

After drafting poems, ask students to rewrite them on the cut-out leaves and attach these leaves to the drawn out tree on a poster board.

Share the poems among each other and with students in other classes and across the school.