



Spring 2024  
educator's  
guide

ASYMPTOTE



# **EDUCATOR'S GUIDE**

## **Spring 2024 | MIDNIGHT GARDEN**

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Spring 2024 issue of the *Asymptote* Educator's Guide!

Our latest guide contains five unique lesson plans to help you bring exciting and diverse world literature into all sorts of classrooms. Each lesson is paired with poems, fiction, and drama from "Midnight Garden," our Spring 2024 issue, which is available here: <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/apr-2024/>

The first lesson in this guide "Diving into Faroese Literature," encourages students to uncover the layers of meaning in poetry by analyzing themes. "Nature and Humanity," the second lesson, provides students with an opportunity to explore the relationship between mankind and nature using an essay. "Animated Cardboard" uses a short story to explore the relationship between the themes of space and familial identity alongside the author's use of imagery. In "Poetry: Structure and Meaning", students will analyze structure and punctuation to explore the meaning of poems. In the final lesson in this guide, "Exploring the Intersection of Math and Poetry," students will delve into how mathematical concepts are woven into poetic language, analyzing poems to uncover geometric imagery and numerical references.

We realize that the age ranges and instructional contexts for each lesson vary, and so we encourage educators to adjust these lessons to meet their needs and to record these modifications. Your classroom and teaching experiences are valuable to us, and hearing about them helps us improve our formation of the next guide. Please leave feedback and suggestions here: <http://tinyurl.com/asymptoteforedu>.

Finally, if you like what we do and want to get involved, we would love to hear more from you! We are currently seeking contributors willing to share thoughts and experiences about teaching world literature through the *Asymptote* blog which can be found here: <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/>

We'd especially love to read and share anecdotes from the lessons you teach based on this guide or using other *Asymptote* content. Let your stories inspire others! *Asymptote for Educators* is interested in publishing student work as well. If your students have produced excellent responses to the assignments offered in this guide, other work to do with *Asymptote* content, or want to participate in the global conversation about translated literature as it relates to them, we are currently accepting submissions.

If you're interested in contributing, collaborating, or if you'd like to give us additional feedback, please contact us at [education@asymptotejournal.com](mailto:education@asymptotejournal.com).

# Diving into Faroese Literature: Analyzing Themes in Poetry

“from The Karma God” by Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs, translated by Matthew Landrum and Rakul í Gerðinum

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/the-karma-god-marjun-syderbo-kjelnaes/>

The current issue of *Asymptote* features literature from the Faroe Islands, and poems by the author Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs are the focus of the following lesson plan. Students begin by reading the poem “Genesis” and discussing their first impressions. Then through guided exploration and group discussion, students uncover layers of meaning by analyzing the themes present in her poetry. As an extension activity, students read work from more Faroese writers in the issue, further delving into literary themes from the islands.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify and discuss themes in poetry
- Compare several poems and their thematic content
- Create an original writing assignment based on the readings

## Assessment

Class participation

Writing assignment

## Approximate Grade Level

High school students

University students

## Materials Needed

From “The Karma God” by Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs, translated by Matthew Landrum and Rakul í Gerðinum

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/the-karma-god-marjun-syderbo-kjelnaes/>

Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs - Sum rótskot (YouTube video from FarLit with English subtitles)

<https://youtu.be/pCo2xJuYwik?si=Q9UiYVoDxwAgR9gZ>

## Additional Materials

From “Spring Milk” by Rannvá Holm Mortensen Translated from the Faroese by Matthew Landrum and Rakul í Gerðinum

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/spring-milk-rannva-holm-mortensen/>

From “Fire Coral” by Anna Malan Jógvansdóttir Translated from the Faroese by Matthew Landrum and Luciano Dutra

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/fire-coral-anna-malan-jogvansdottir/>

From “one straight line one curved” by Guðrið Poulsen Translated from the Faroese by Randi Ward

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/one-straight-line-one-curved-gudrid-poulsen/>

Anna Malan Jógvansdóttir - Psykodrotningin sigur frá (YouTube video by FARLIT)  
<https://youtu.be/tYXB-8lcm68?si=yHL554UrrG77wb2S>

Guðrið Poulsen's Instagram (@gudrid\_poulsen)  
[https://www.instagram.com/gudrid\\_poulsen/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/gudrid_poulsen/?hl=en)

## BODY + LANGUAGE = POLITICS. NORDIC POETRY AT THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY

<https://nordicwomensliterature.net/2016/11/24/body-language-politics-nordic-poetry-at-the-turn-of-the-21st-century/>

### Approximate Length

Lesson One (90 minutes)

### Lesson One

#### Warm up (5 minutes)

Introduce the author Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs by highlighting key points from the Author Biography, listed next to the poem on the *Asymptote* website. Then show the video *Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs - Sum rótskot* (YouTube video from FarLit with English subtitles)  
<https://youtu.be/pCo2xJuYwik?si=Q9UiYVoDxwAgR9gZ>

Although the video focuses on the author's prose, the following lesson centers on her poetry. The three poems are from "The Karma God", titled "Yallah!", "Cleanup," and "Genesis". Have students write down their answer to the following question:

- Based on the video and the poem's titles, what themes do you think the poems will be about?

#### Reading (20 minutes)

Begin by reading the poem "Genesis". Students can read the poem aloud in pairs, alternating stanzas. Then have students discuss their first impressions of the poems with their partner, using the following questions as a guide:

- Which part of the poem stood out the most to you? Why? (For example, maybe you could imagine something, feel something when reading this part of the poem, or questioned the meaning of something.)
- What questions do you have about the poem? Are there any interesting or unfamiliar words? (*Examples: lodesman and lodestar, apocryphal and apocalyptic*)
- Do you notice any interesting use of language in the poem? What effect does it have on you as a reader? (*Examples: alliteration attracts the reader's attention and emphasizes importance, for example wildflower / wallflower, midlife melancholy, silent scream, decay / drifting / dusty*)
- What themes do you think the poem includes? Were your guesses from the beginning of class similar or different to the themes you noticed in the poem?

After finishing the discussion, have a few students share their answers with the class. Alternatively, answers could be collected and shared digitally (e.g., Padlet, Google slides), if desired.

### **Themes (15 minutes)**

Inform students that the translator mentioned how one of themes of the author's poetry book is "Faroese femininity". Ask students to think about the following questions:

- Which phrases do you think refer to the theme of women in the Faroe Islands? Highlight these in the text.
- What do you think the author wants to convey about women and society?

Have a few students share their answers with the class.

### **Translator's Note (15 minutes)**

Read the translator's note. Then students return to the poem, highlighting additional points they have noticed since reading the translator's note. That might be words and phrases, or additional themes that were mentioned in the translator's note: art, news media, worry, faith and religion, sense of place. Have students share ideas with a partner before debriefing as a class.

### **Group work (30 minutes)**

Assign students to read another poem by the author from this issue: one half of the class reads "Yallah!" and the other half reads "Cleanup". Students read the poems, and then in their small groups, discuss themes and supporting lines (highlighted in the previous activity). Also, compare the poem to "Genesis", noting similarities and differences in theme, language, and style. Have students share ideas with the class and take notes on both poems.

Depending on the aims of the class, assign a short writing assignment on the themes in Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs' poetry, or one of the extension activities below.

### **Extension Activities (Optional)**

*Writing Assignment:* Read poems by two other Faroese poets in the April 2024 issue of *Asymptote*. Then write a short essay exploring the themes in the poems of Marjun Syderbø Kjelnæs and at least one other author: Rannvá Holm Mortensen, Anna Malan Jógvansdóttir, or Guðrið Poulsen.

Reading

- From "Spring Milk" by Rannvá Holm Mortensen Translated from the Faroese by Matthew Landrum and Rakul í Gerðinum  
<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/spring-milk-rannva-holm-mortensen/>
- From "Fire Coral" by Anna Malan Jógvansdóttir Translated from the Faroese by Matthew Landrum and Luciano Dutra  
<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/fire-coral-anna-malan-jogvansdottir/>
- From "one straight line one curved" by Guðrið Poulsen Translated from the Faroese by Randi Ward  
<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/one-straight-line-one-curved-gudrid-poulsen/>

#### Additional Resources

- Anna Malan Jógvansdóttir - Psykodrotningin sigur frá (YouTube video by FARLIT) <https://youtu.be/tYXB-8lcm68?si=yHL554UrrG77wb2S>
- Guðrið Poulsen's Instagram (@gudrid\_poulsen) [https://www.instagram.com/gudrid\\_poulsen/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/gudrid_poulsen/?hl=en)
- More information about 21<sup>st</sup>-century themes in Nordic poetry <https://nordicwomensliterature.net/2016/11/24/body-language-politics-nordic-poetry-at-the-turn-of-the-21st-century/>

*Creative Assignment:* In the translator's note, it is mentioned that in the Faroese literary scene, there was an old boys' club, and one male poet even summarily dismissed the work of women writers on the island. This situation isn't unique to the Faroe Islands or Nordic countries. International Women's Day is a global day held on March 8 each year, and the 2024 theme is #InspireInclusion (see <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/theme>). Create an engaging social media post related to literature that could be shared as part of the campaign. The post might (1) include ideas for ways that individuals and groups involved in writing, literature, and publishing could inspire inclusion; (2) spotlight works of women writers, editors, and publishers; (3) share an original poem; or (4) give related information.

# Nature and Humanity

**“Following the Breath of the Earth” by Aigerim Tazhi (translated from the Russian by Aigerim Tazhi)**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/aigerim-tazhi-following-the-breath-of-the-earth/>

In this lesson, students will examine the relationship between mankind and nature as exemplified in Tazhi’s essay. They will gain a more meaningful insight into the text by first considering text type and genre, and then moving on to an analysis of the natural imagery and key vocabulary Tazhi uses to capture the attention of the reader or spark their imagination. A group presentation task provides the learning outcome of this section. For homework, students are asked to reflect more deeply on the themes of the text by writing their own creative or critical responses.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the text type and genre of Tazhi’s writing
- Pick out the main themes of a text
- Identify key words and natural imagery in a text
- Explain the effect of said keywords and natural imagery
- Provide reasoning for their choices
- Creatively respond to Tazhi’s viewpoints

## Assessment

Class discussion

Group presentation

Independent writing assignment

## Approximate Grade Level

High school students

University students

## Materials Needed

“Following the Breath of the Earth” by Aigerim Tazhi

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/aigerim-tazhi-following-the-breath-of-the-earth/>

## Approximate Length

Lesson One (45 minutes)

Lesson Two (45 minutes)

## Lesson One

Before the lesson, students should have read a copy of “Following the Breath of the Earth” as homework. Ask them to try to identify the genre or text type.

**Warm up** (10 minutes)

*Which genre/text type do you think this is?*

Students share their ideas with the class. High school students may not be familiar with the essay as a text type.



*Is this fiction, or non-fiction?*

Students take two minutes to turn to their partner and identify whether the given text is fiction or non-fiction, then they share their ideas with the class. The 'true' answer probably lies somewhere in the middle. Tazhi is sharing her personal experiences and is writing real-life examples which contrast the attitude of humans towards nature with what she perceives as the real situation; however, she achieves this with the imagery you would normally expect from fiction or poetry.

### **Themes of the Text** (15 minutes)

Tell the students that this essay was written for a panel/conference in the USA. Split the class into groups of around three students. Ask them what they think may have been the title of the panel discussion. This gets them thinking about the text thematically.

After the students have thought of a title, have students come to the board one by one to write their chosen title on the board, until all groups have written their title on the board. Have them compare and discuss each other's titles, with each group explaining why they chose a certain title. Maybe they have all picked up on the main theme being nature, or maybe they are all different.

Next, read the translator's note as a class. You could read the note to them, or put it up on a smartboard, or hand out a printed copy. How does the 'real' theme 'Nature on Edge' compare with the students' ideas?

### **Key Words/Natural Imagery** (15 minutes)

Split the class into two halves. If necessary, split these halves into groups again. One half of the class will focus on drawing out around 10 keywords from the text, and the other half of the class will focus on the natural imagery in the text.

Keywords group: Re-read the text and highlight any words you think are important to the themes of the text. From these words, select a list of 10 you think are the most important or useful. Prepare to explain to the class why you chose these words, and look up definitions or explanations where necessary.

*Answers could include: nature, universe, infinite, bystander, destroyer, urbanised, inseparable, nomad, harmony, to merge, appreciation, etc.*

Natural imagery group: Pick out three to five main instances of natural imagery as used in the essay and describe their effect(s) on the reader.

*Examples may include: the night sky, a sand dune in the desert, desert sand on windowsills, rain on our cars, an oasis of fruit trees, etc.*

For the next lesson, make sure the students are prepared to present their findings to the rest of the class. You could have each group create a slideshow presentation as a homework task or ask them to create handouts.

### **Lesson Two** (45 minutes)

## Warm-Up (15 minutes)

Start the lesson with a general discussion of the text as a class. This will help to jog the students' memories and to create a sense of the text being more 'present' in the classroom. Questions could include:

1. How does Tazhi understand humanity's relationship to nature? How far do you agree with this view?
2. Have you ever had a similar experience to the one Tazhi describes at the start of the text? Which insights did it offer you?
3. How do you think Tazhi's background may have influenced her views?
4. Do you have any examples of you or your family being connected to nature?
5. What does God mean to Tazhi?
6. What point does Tazhi make about 'human nature'?

## Group Presentations (20 minutes)

Allow each group time to present their findings on keywords and natural imagery from the text to the rest of the class.

If you have more than one group for each task, you could start from the weakest groups to the strongest for each, asking each consecutive group **only** to add what the group(s) before have not covered. This means that they will all also have to pay attention!

Allow time after each presentation for questions or discussion.

## Writing Task (10 minutes)

Describe and explain the following creative or critical writing tasks to the class. You could either create a handout for them or write them on the board and have them copy. Tell them to try to make use of the keywords and natural imagery picked out from Tazhi's text as a basis or inspiration for their own texts.

They could make a start planning and collecting ideas at the end of the lesson if there is time, or complete the task wholly as homework.

## Critical Task

Write a response to Tazhi's essay with your own view on humanity's relationship with nature (500 words).

- a. Include examples from your own life and/or family.
- b. Include examples from your home country/culture.
- c. Include what, in your view, humanity could do to improve this relationship.

## Creative Tasks

1. Tazhi opens with an experience she had in nature looking at the night sky from a sand dune in the desert. Write a short piece of fiction or auto-fiction (memoir) about the first experience you had with nature where you had some kind of deeper insight (500 words).

- a. Where were you? Use creative imagery to describe the landscape
- b. How did this experience make you feel?

- c. c. What were the insights you gained?
- d. d. What impact has this had on your life?

2. Alternatively, write a poem about this experience.

# Space and Secret Selves

**“Animated Cardboard” by Michela Murgia, translated by Taylor Yoonji Kang**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/animated-cardboard-michela-murgia/>

In this lesson, students will explore the relationship between the themes of space and familial identity alongside the author’s use of imagery. They will examine *Animated Cardboard* by Michela Murgia, exploring the ways in which the story’s imagery creates spatial meaning. They will also analyse the ways in which the author’s linguistic choices queer the narrative. In the second lesson, students will examine the links between secrecy and identity, using the ideas of Murgia’s text to produce a piece of creative writing.

## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the lessons, students should be able to:

- Identify literary techniques in a short story
- Analyse a story for literary devices and linguistic features
- Make inferences about a story’s meaning
- Respond to Murgia’s piece creatively

## **Assessment**

Independent Reading

Comprehension Questions

Creative Writing

## **Approximate Grade Level**

University Students

## **Materials Needed**

“Animated Cardboard” by Michela Murgia. Translated from the Italian by Taylor Yoonji Kang

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/animated-cardboard-michela-murgia/>

## **Approximate Length**

Lesson One (60 minutes)

Lesson Two (60 minutes)

## Lesson One

### Warm up (5 minutes)

Introduce the story by writing the title 'Animated Cardboard' on the board and ask the class to predict what the story could be about.

Ask students for feedback, noting keywords on the board.

### Independent Reading (35 minutes)

Students read the story independently.

As they read, they should make notes on the following guiding questions.

Write the guiding questions on the board:

- Highlight examples of similes and metaphors of space and comment on the effects
- Highlight shifts in pronouns and comment on their effects
- Highlight examples of euphemisms and comment on their effects
- Re-examine the examples you have highlighted. Which ideas of the narrator's identity and feelings can you infer from these examples?

Students read the first two paragraphs of the translator's note, returning to the story to add to their notes.

*Possible answers include: Pronoun shifts highlight the way in which the body becomes a space to negotiate; there are also racial connotations here. The metaphor of 'in the closet' queers notions of the family and personal identity.*

### Class Analysis (15 minutes)

Students share their notes as part of a whole-class analysis. Capture their ideas on the board.

Guide the analysis using the following prompts:

- In the opening paragraph what is the effect of the narrator's use of hyperbole regarding ageing?
- How does the narrator use humour to deflect from the grief of loss?
- What effect does the shift in pronouns from *it* to *he* to describe the package have?
- How does the narrator's body become the site of pain and grief? Look at the line "It happened like it did to Cossiga and the skin around my eyes: it all came crashing down suddenly."
- The narrator describes the cutout as a "totem of a very tall child". How is this linked to her own son?
- How does the narrator feel about euphemisms such as 'sexually ambiguous'? How does this connect to the writer's attitude towards masculinity?
- Look at Part 3: What are the connotations of the Narnia metaphor?
- How does this develop in Part 5? E.g. "we're also the Narnia of some other."
- Look at Part 7: What is the effect of temporal shifts as the couple make love?

### Plenary (5 minutes)

Students use the whole-class analysis to answer the following question: How are space and identity connected in *Animated Cardboard*?

*Possible answers include: The narrator's body ageing is a metaphor for disintegration and the grief of loss; Closets become a site for transformation and concealment (this is linked to sexual identity). Fictive space (Narnia) functions as a site of hope and possibility.*

## **Lesson Two**

### **Warm up (15 minutes)**

Recap learning from the previous lesson. Ask students to share their answers from the plenary. Collect their answers on the board.

### **Class Discussion (10 minutes)**

Ask students why the narrator feels it is necessary to keep the cardboard cutout a secret.

- What does it mean to be 'in the closet?'

### **Independent Writing Task (25 minutes)**

1. Students will use the examples of the metaphors of space they highlighted in the previous lesson and attempt to create their own. Students will then incorporate these metaphors into longer piece of creative writing:
2. Write the line "We're also the Narnia of some other" on the board. Ask students to produce a piece of creative writing about an encounter with a secret self/other using this line as a prompt.

### **Plenary (5 minutes)**

Ask a student to read their creative writing aloud to the class.

# Poetry: Structure and Meaning

**“Wild Death” by marwin vos, translated by Frances Welling and Nguyễn Thi Mai**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/poetry/wild-death-marwin-vos/>

In this lesson, students will explore the ways in which structure and punctuation can create meaning in a poem. They will examine three poems by marwin vos, evaluating the ways in which the poet’s structural and linguistic choices contribute to the meaning of the poems.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the lessons, students should be able to:

- Identify structural techniques in a poem
- Analyse a poem for structural and linguistic features including punctuation
- Make inferences about a poem’s meaning
- Evaluate the effects of a poet’s structural choices

## Assessment

Close Reading

Comprehension Questions

## Approximate Grade Level

High School Students

## Materials Needed

“Wild Death” by marwin vos, translated by Frances Welling and Nguyễn Thi Mai

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/poetry/wild-death-marwin-vos/>

## Approximate Length

Lesson One (60 minutes)

## Lesson One

### Warm up (5 minutes)

Introduce the poems by reading the third paragraph of the translator’s note to the class. Ask the students why punctuation is significant in writing. What effect could a lack of punctuation have in a poem?

Collect their answers on the board.

### Close Reading (30 minutes)

Students read the poems aloud in pairs.

Students then reread the poems individually.

As they re-read, they should complete the following tasks:

- Put the poems in order of pace: Fastest - Slowest
- Add punctuation where you think it belongs in the poems
- Add capital letters where you think they belong in the poems

Once they have completed the tasks, students re-read the changed poems and answer the following questions:

- How did you decide which poem had the fastest pace?
- How are the poems different with added punctuation and capital letters?
- Do you prefer the original or revised poems? Explain your choice.

### **Class Analysis (15 minutes)**

Students share their notes as part of a whole-class analysis. Guide the analysis using the following prompts:

- What effect does the absence of punctuation have in “lament pieces”?
- How does the poet achieve different paces in the poems?
- Why do you think the poet chooses not to capitalise the pronoun ‘i’?
- Why does the poet include a period and question mark in “binding pieces 2”?
- What is the effect of the – in “lament pieces”?
- What effect does the line-spacing have?
- Do they look like poems?
- What is the effect of the juxtaposition of images in the final poem?

### **Plenary (10 minutes)**

Students use the whole-class analysis to answer the following question:

How successfully do the poet’s structural choices contribute to the feeling of loss in the poems?

*Possible answers include: The poet destabilises language to convey the loss and pain the poetic persona feels. The absence of punctuation accelerates the pace of “lament pieces”, signalling towards the extremity of the geopolitical injustices and creating a sense of urgency. In “blinding pieces” (1) the poet uses natural imagery and a reflective / elegiac tone to create a sense of mourning. In the final poem, the poet contrasts imagery to illustrate the dissonance between the body and scientific intervention.*



# Exploring the Intersection of Math and Poetry

**“Geometry” and “Buddhist Pine” by Chen Yuhong, translated from the Chinese by George O Connell and Diana Shi**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/poetry/two-poems-chen-yuhong/>

In this lesson, students will explore the intersection of mathematics and poetry through the lens of Chen Yuhong's poems "Geometry" and "Buddhist Pine." Students will examine two poems by Chen Yuhong, evaluating how the poet's structural and linguistic choices contribute to the meaning of the poems. Students will delve into how mathematical concepts are woven into poetic language, analyzing the poems to uncover geometric imagery and numerical references. Through guided discussions and activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of how mathematics can enhance the beauty and meaning of poetry and explore the beauty, complexity, and orderliness of both disciplines.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the lessons, students should be able to:

- Identify structural techniques in a poem
- Analyze a poem for structural and linguistic features including metaphor and imagery
- Develop critical thinking skills through close reading and interpretation of poetic texts.
- Understand the interdisciplinary connection between mathematics and poetry
- Creatively or critically respond to Yuhong's poetry

## Assessment

Close Reading

Comprehension Questions

Class discussion

Creative writing

## Approximate Grade Level

High School Students

## Materials Needed

“Geometry” and “Buddhist Pine” by Chen Yuhong, translated by George O Connell and Diana Shi

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/poetry/two-poems-chen-yuhong/>

## Approximate Length

Lesson One (50 minutes)

Homework (45 minutes)

Lesson Two (60 minutes)

## Lesson One

### Pre-lesson activities

Students read the poems “Geometry” and “Buddhist Pine” by Chen Yuhong, translated by George O Connell and Diana Shi.

Students highlight words, phrases, and images that directly or symbolically evoke mathematical concepts or ideas.

*These could include: triangles, polygons, pyramids, spheres, symmetry, light, shadow, focus, whole, decipher, quarter, inverted, edge, time, space, ambiguous, three chi tall, peaks, balanced, antithesis, white paper*

### Introduction (20 minutes)

#### Think - Pair - Share

Students compare highlighted words with their partners.

Students re-read the poems “Geometry” and “Buddhist Pine” by Chen Yuhong, translated by George O Connell and Diana Shi

Ask students to share with a partner their thoughts regarding how math and poetry may relate to each other. Some ideas could include:

- *Structural similarities*
- *Analyzing structured patterns (math - equations, formulas, and geometric shapes; poetry - meter, rhythm, rhyme, pace)*
- *Analyzing meter and rhythm to reveal the poem's pace, tone, and mood*
- *Analyzing the rhyme scheme to highlight the poem's structure and musicality.*
- *Analyzing patterns to convey meaning*
- *Precision of language: Used in both to convey complex concepts*
- *Attention to detail*
- *Ability to communicate effectively.*
- *Creativity and Expression: Both are forms of creative problem-solving*
- *Imagery and Symbolism: In mathematics, geometric shapes and symbols represent complex concepts. In poetry, metaphor, simile, allegory, etc. are used to create symbolic meanings. Both disciplines engage the imagination and invite readers to interpret and explore deeper layers of meaning.*
- *Order and Beauty: Mathematics is often associated with order, symmetry, and elegance, while poetry is celebrated for its beauty, rhythm, and musicality. Both disciplines strive for aesthetic appeal, whether through the elegance of a mathematical proof or the lyrical quality of a poem.*

### Class Analysis (30 minutes)

Each pair of students presents their findings. Lead a whole-class discussion of the student's findings and the intersection of math and poetry.

Guide classroom discussion and analysis of the poems using the following prompts:

- How do the poems use geometric imagery to convey the complexity and beauty of the natural world?

- What effect do these mathematical elements have on the meaning and/or our interpretation of the poems?
- Compare and contrast the use of geometry in "Buddhist Pine" with that in "Geometry."
- How do the structural and linguistic choices made by the poet contribute to the overall aesthetic and thematic qualities of the poems?

### **Homework (45 minutes)**

#### **Creative Writing: Geometry-inspired Poetry**

Students write their own poems inspired by geometric shapes and patterns found in nature as seen in the two poems by Chen Yuhong. Encourage students to experiment with language and imagery to convey their interpretations of geometric concepts poetically.

### **Lesson 2 (60 minutes)**

Use this lesson to have students share their own work.

Students pair up in partners or small groups depending on class size. One person reads their work to their partner or group.

After reading, the presenter shares their thoughts regarding their experience of thinking about writing poetry with this interdisciplinary lens.

- How did experimenting with language inspired by mathematics and patterns inform the way they approached the work?
- How did it inform the way they saw the world around them? Did looking for mathematical imagery and patterns change the way they saw the world around them?

Their partners or group provide feedback using the following guidelines:

- What was the effect on the reader of the intentional weaving together of seemingly disparate disciplines (math & poetry) to create a piece of art?
- What imagery was created in the poem using mathematical concepts, words or ideas?

At the end of the lesson, ask volunteers to read their poems aloud and for some group members to present their thoughts and feedback to the rest of the class.

## **FEEDBACK**

Thanks for taking the time to read our Spring 2024 Educator's Guide. We hope you found it useful and engaging.

Have questions, comments, critiques, or testimonials?

Please leave your feedback at <http://tinyurl.com/asymptoteforedu>. We look forward to hearing from you!

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