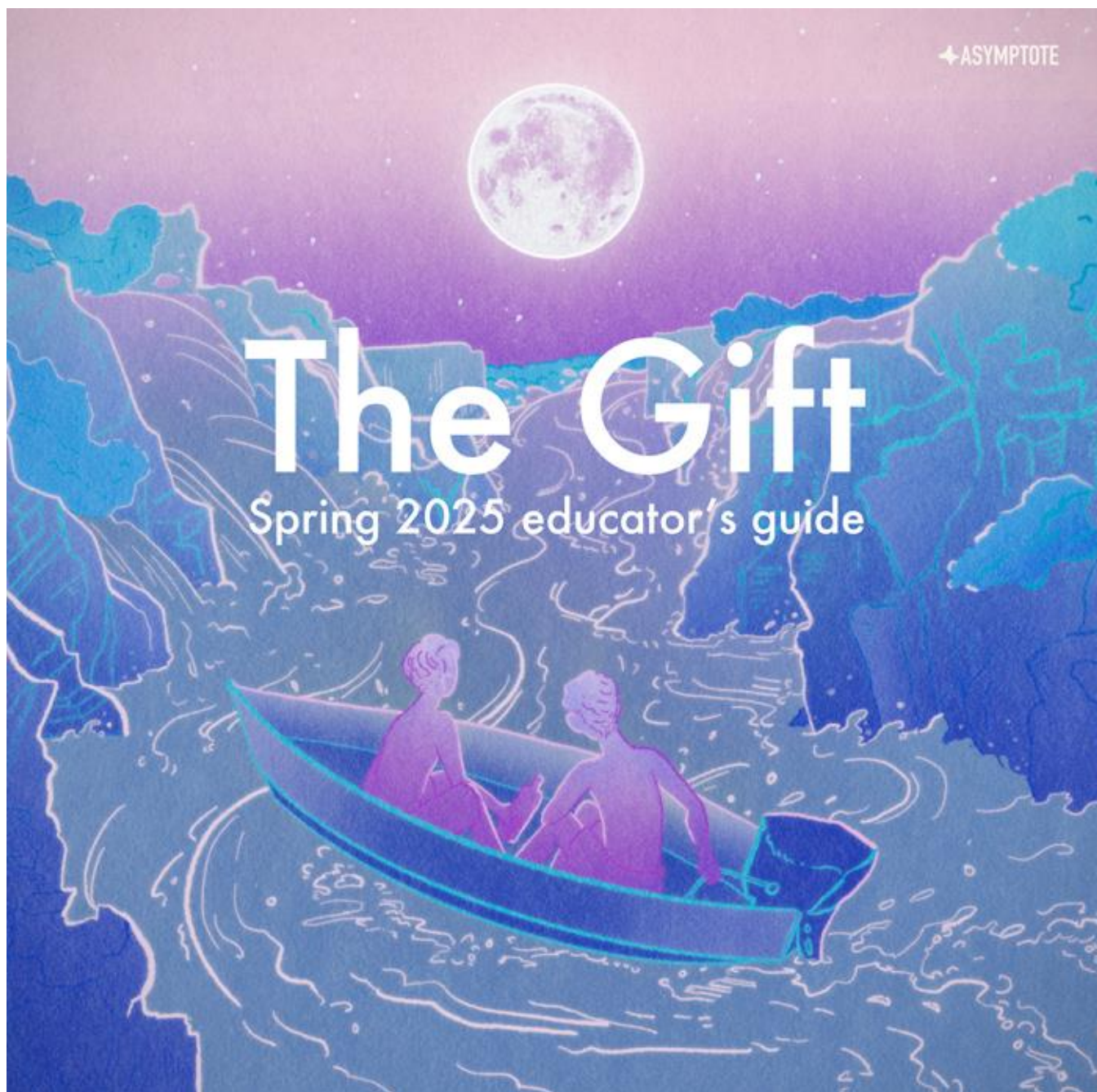


✦ ASYMPTOTE

# The Gift

Spring 2025 educator's guide





# **EDUCATOR'S GUIDE**

## **Spring 2025 | THE GIFT**

### **Table of Contents**

1. Introduction \_\_\_\_\_ 2

2. Bread and Pronouns: "Men and Bread" by Raquel Delgado \_\_\_\_\_ 3

*For high school students*

*For university students*

3. Long Shadows and Ways of Seeing: "Long Shadows" by Marie Luise Kaschnitz \_\_\_\_\_ 6

*For university students*

4. Cultural Memory in the Shadow of War: "Life at the Edge" by Volodymyr Yermolenko and Tetyana Ogarkova \_\_\_\_\_ 9

*For university students*

5. Prose Poems: "Dear i" by Kim So-yeon \_\_\_\_\_ 12

*For high school students*

6. Acknowledgments \_\_\_\_\_ 15

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Spring 2025 issue of the *Asymptote* Educator's Guide!

Our latest guide contains four 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 non-fiction from "The Gift," our Spring 2025 issue, which is available at the link below: <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/apr-2025/>

The first lesson in this guide "Bread and Pronouns" asks students to reflect on the effect of second-person pronouns in creating intimacy and immediacy in literary writing. "Long Shadows and Ways of Seeing," the second lesson, provides students with an opportunity to explore stream of consciousness and objective correlative as literary tools in narrative writing. In "Cultural Memory in the Shadow of War" students will explore the emotions of cultural loss, resistance, and resilience during war through a non-fiction essay. In the final lesson in this guide, "Prose Poems," students will unpack the generic conventions of prose poetry.

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).

# Bread and Pronouns

**“Men and Bread” by Raquel Delgado, translated by Alice Banks**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/men-and-bread-raquel-delgado/>

In these lessons, students will explore the effect of the second-person pronoun “you”. They will examine “Men and Bread” by Raquel Delgado, exploring the ways in which the text’s language portrays the relationship between a daughter and her father. They will then create their own piece of writing.

## Learning Objectives

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

- Make inferences about a text
- Analyse a text for literary devices and linguistic features
- Create their own piece of creative writing

## Assessment

Independent Reading

Comprehension Questions

Creative Writing

## Approximate Grade Level

High School Students

University Students

## Materials Needed

“Men and Bread” by Raquel Delgado, Translated from the Spanish by Alice Banks

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/men-and-bread-raquel-delgado/>

“An Ode to the Second Person” by Nell Stevens

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/12/18/stuck-on-you-an-ode-to-the-second-person/>

## Approximate Length

Lesson One (60 minutes)

Lesson Two (60 minutes)

## Lesson One

### Warm up (10 minutes)

Display this quotation from “I Capture the Castle” by Dodie Smith on the board:

“I write this sitting in the kitchen sink.”

Ask students to change the “I” to “you”. How does it change the meaning of the sentence? What effect does it create?

Discuss the benefits of using the second person and write students’ answers on the board.

### Independent Reading and Analysis (40 minutes)

Introduce the text by reading the translator's note.

Students read the text independently. It would be useful to number the paragraphs.

Once students have read the text, give them a handout with the following questions:

- Who do you think the second-person pronoun “you” refers to in the first paragraph? What is the effect of the pronoun throughout the story? Does it change?
- The narrator uses listing throughout the story to add specificity and detail to the story. Find 3 different examples and elaborate on their effect. (*Direct them to paragraphs 1, 5, 6*)
- Look at the sentence structure of the third paragraph. What effect does the repetition have?
- What is the effect of the rhetorical questions in the fourth paragraph? How is this reinforced by the adverb “for sure” that follows?
- How would you describe the tone of paragraph 6? Find examples to support your answer.
- In paragraph 7, how does the narrator turn the image of “blue overalls” into a hostile metaphor for “class shame”? How does the interrogative tone reinforce this?
- In paragraph 9, the writer uses the sibilant words “desperation”, “obsessively”, and “carelessly” to illustrate her emotional relationship to her father. What do we learn about their relationship and what is the effect of the sibilance?
- What kind of father-daughter relationship do we see in paragraph 19 and what is the effect of the temporal shift here?
- The line “The salary from the factory was double the one from the quarry” (paragraph 23) is significant to the paragraph that follows. How does the improvement in material conditions for the father radicalise his personal life? Look at the shift in pronouns from “you” to “we”.
- How is this complicity ruptured in the paragraph beginning with “Tears for trivial things”? Analyse the sentence: “Before you, I no longer felt like me, but like us.”
- How does the writer use bread as a symbol in the story?

### **Class Analysis (10 minutes)**

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

Possible answers include:

*The second-person pronoun “you” refers to the narrator’s father. However, their relationship is marred by indifference, hostility, and distance. Rhetorical questions and adverbs create a sense of uncertainty around the narrator’s memory; does she truly remember? There is a generational divide between daughter and father; her tone shifts to aggression as she undermines her father’s working-class pride. The narrator longs for an intimate relationship with her father and the sibilant use of words underscores her desperation. The writer suggests that an improvement in material conditions is directly linked to an improvement in social and familial conditions; the inclusive plural pronoun “we” reinforces a growing connection between them. The play with pronouns highlights the narrator’s emotional isolation, gesturing towards the way in which a desire for connection shapes her identity. Bread is a symbol for her father’s working-class pride, values, and perspective.*

## **Lesson Two**

### **Warm up (5 minutes)**

Remind students of key ideas from the previous lesson. Revisit the effect of the second-person pronoun “you” in the story.

### **Class Reading (15 minutes)**

Read the following text as a class: “Stuck on You: An Ode to the Second Person” by Nell Stevens

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/12/18/stuck-on-you-an-ode-to-the-second-person/>

Ask students what they think the purpose and benefits of writing in the second person are.

### **Creative Writing (30 minutes)**

Ask students to compose a piece of writing about a significant person in their lives. They must address them using the second-person pronoun “you”.

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

Students reflect on their writing. They may not wish to share their writing. Instead, ask students how using the second person made them feel. Did it create intimacy or pathos?

# Long Shadows and Ways of Seeing

**“Long Shadows” by Marie Luise Kaschnitz, translated by Jennifer Busch and Audrey Delphendahl**

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/long-shadows-marie-luise-kaschnitz/>

In this lesson, students will learn to read through observation. They will read “Long Shadows” by Marie Luise Kaschnitz, exploring the ways in which the narrator presents a snapshot of her life through free observations and sensorial details. This will be an introduction to the literary technique of stream of consciousness, and the literary device of objective correlative. They will then create their own piece of writing that reflects the stream of consciousness technique.

## Learning Objectives

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

- Make inferences about a text
- Analyse a text for literary devices and linguistic features
- Create their own piece of writing

## Assessment

Independent Reading

Comprehension Questions

Creative Writing

## Approximate Grade Level

University Students

## Materials Needed

“Long Shadows” by Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Translated from the German by Jennifer Busch and Audrey Delphendahl

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/fiction/long-shadows-marie-luise-kaschnitz/>

Stream of Consciousness

<https://www.ndsu.edu/pubweb/~cinichol/252/WoolfEssayonStream%20of%20Consciousness.htm>

Objective Correlative

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/education/glossary/objective-correlative>

“Mrs. Dalloway” by Virginia Woolf (Chapter One)

<https://almabooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Mrs-Dalloway.pdf>

## Approximate Length

Lesson One (90 minutes)



## Lesson One

### Warm up (10 minutes)

Display these two quotations, one from *Long Shadows* and the other from *Mrs. Dalloway* on the board:

"I'm going my own way, says Rosie one day after luncheon, adding, as a precautionary measure, into town to buy postcards, picture postcards for my schoolfriends, as if she would dream of writing silly little cards to the foolish dolts in her class, Greetings from the deep blue Mediterranean Sea, how are you, I am fine." (extracted from *Long Shadows*)

"Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—fresh as if issued to children on a beach." (extracted from *Mrs. Dalloway*)

Prompt the students to spot similarities or dissimilarities with respect to the narrative voice and perspective. Do the lengths of the sentences indicate something? What effect does the length of these sentences create?

Discuss, and write students' answers on the board.

### Independent Reading and Analysis (40 minutes)

Introduce *Long Shadows* by reading the translator's note aloud. Introduce the terms "stream of consciousness" and "objective correlative" (refer to the Materials Needed section for more information on the terms) and urge the students to read the text independently through them.

Once students have read the text, ask them to think through these questions individually. They may write down full answers for class discussion later:

- What is on Rosie's mind?
- How is Rosie feeling when we are introduced to her? Highlight three words or lines that convey her mood.
- What impact do the run-on sentences have on you?
- Can you identify two lines where Rosie yearns for freedom?
- What lines convey sensory details?
- What lines in the narrative correlate with a shift in Rosie's mood, and why?
- How does the narrative technique aid in making known what was hidden all along?

### Class Analysis (30 minutes)

Students share their notes as part of a whole-class analysis.

Possible answers include, respectively:

- *Boredom, and the desire to be free.*
- *She seems slightly irritated, her mood made known through phrases like "silly geese", "family is such a bother", and "I'm going my own way."*
- *The long sentences indicate the unfiltered feelings of the character as and how she is experiencing them. I feel like I am a part of her, and seeing things through her.*
- *The two lines that indicate Rosie's spontaneity are, "being alone makes everything big and strange and gives a sense of sole ownership", and "I do not need an escort."*
- *Lines like "at ease in her own sun-oil-gleaming skin", and "honey-sweet, herb-bitter Macchia shrubs."*



- *The narrative shifts from a care-free mood to something sinister through Rosie's reflective voice. We know danger lurks when we read the lines "Pan creeps after the nymph..." and then, "What's the matter with him, she thinks, what does he want? She wasn't born yesterday but it surely can't be that, he's at most twelve years old, a child." We are with Rosie when the seed of danger plants itself in her head, and we know what Rosie is thinking, her danger is the reader's danger.*
- *Through the literary choice of stream of consciousness, and objective correlative, the danger of plausible sexual assault is made known to the readers. References of the wolf from a fairy-tale, long white teeth, and the basilisk pronounce the connection.*

### **Assign Homework (10 minutes)**

Ask the students to reflect on the story and encourage them to write a piece (not more than 600 words) that incorporates the stream of consciousness narrative technique.

# Cultural Memory in the Shadow of War

from “Life at the Edge: Ukraine, Culture, and War” by Volodymyr Yermolenko and Tetyana Ogarkova, translated by Tetiana Savchynska, Dominique Hoffman, and Lyubov Kovalchuk

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/life-at-the-edge-ukraine-culture-and-war-volodymyr-yermolenko/>

This lesson explores the emotions of cultural loss, resistance, and resilience during war through the lens of Volodymyr Yermolenko and Tetyana Ogarkova’s powerful essay “Life at the Edge: Ukraine, Culture, and War.” Students will analyse how emotion is conveyed, engage in discussion, and contribute to a collaborative research project on cultural heritage sites impacted by conflict. Through reflection and inquiry, students will consider the significance of memory and the preservation of culture.

## Learning Objectives

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

- Closely read and discuss a nonfiction text
- Explore the use of emotion in written and visual media
- Analyse the impact of war on cultural institutions
- Conduct independent research on the topic

## Assessment

Small group discussion

Short writing assignment

Independent research

## Approximate Grade Level

University students

## Materials Needed

from “Life at the Edge: Ukraine, Culture, and War” by Volodymyr Yermolenko and Tetyana Ogarkova, Translated from the Ukrainian by Tetiana Savchynska, Dominique Hoffman, and Lyubov Kovalchuk

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/life-at-the-edge-ukraine-culture-and-war-volodymyr-yermolenko/>

Ed Sheeran – 2step featuring Antytila [Official Video]

<https://youtu.be/OJ2B4Fb7xQQ?si=1F0NziNIIFASJXZp>

## Further Reading (optional)

Librarianship in times of conflict by Alice Prochaska (UKSG)

<https://insights.uksg.org/articles/10.1629/uksg.639>

The year in conflict: The world’s heritage sites faced destruction in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan by Tessa Solomon (Art News)

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/world-heritage-sites-faced-destruction-middle-east-ukraine-sudan-1234728425/>

Wonderful Monuments Destroyed by War

<https://blog.msc-sahc.org/wonderful-monuments-destroyed-by-war/>

Israel has damaged or destroyed at least 13 libraries in Gaza by Dan Sheehan (LitHub)

<https://lithub.com/israel-has-damaged-or-destroyed-at-least-13-libraries-in-gaza/>

The decimation of Polish Libraries in The Second World War (Biblioteka Narodowa)

<https://www.bn.org.pl/en/news/4695-the-decimation-of-polish-libraries-in-the-second-world-war.html>

### **Approximate Length**

Lesson One (50 minutes)

Lesson Two (50 minutes)

## **Lesson One**

### **Warm up (5 minutes)**

Introduce the title of the reading: *Life at the Edge*. Ask students: What would you associate with the phrase *Life at the Edge* (e.g. physical danger, creative resilience, emotional extremes, national borders)? Why?

### **Reading (20 minutes)**

Have students begin reading the first part of the piece “Life at the Edge: Ukraine, Culture, and War.”

The translator states that the essay “... conveys some of the complex emotions of living in wartime: grief, pride, and hope.” Have students highlight a sentence from the text which they think powerfully conveys grief, pride, hope, or another emotion. Pair students with another student who chose the same emotion. Students share their highlighted sentences and discuss why they have chosen them.

### **Class Discussion (20 minutes)**

In plenary, ask for several students to share highlighted sentences for each emotion. Ask students to identify any techniques that the writer may have used to convey these emotions (e.g., imagery, simile, metaphor, repetition, contrast, sentence structure). Wrap up the discussion by asking students: Do you think one of these emotions (grief, pride, hope) is dominant in the piece or are they explored equally?

### **Assign homework (5 minutes)**

Finish reading the remaining sections of the text, “Reality” and “Culture”. Write answers to the following questions for homework:

- In this piece, how is the phrase “life at the edge” or the word “edge” used? Is this similar or different to your ideas from the beginning of class?
- What examples of destruction are given in the text? What examples of resistance and community building are given within the text?
- Why is cultural heritage targeted in war? What role do books, schools, theaters, and libraries play in society?
- Can you think of any other contemporary or historical examples which connect with this essay?

## Lesson Two

### Warm up (15 minutes)

Begin by briefly recapping the previous class. Introduce the music video (link in the Materials section above): In 2022, Ed Sheeran and the Ukrainian band Antytila collaborated on a new version of “2step”, and parts of the video were filmed in the ruins of a theater called House of Culture, which is mentioned in the last part of the text, “Culture”.

Watch the video and discuss the following questions:

- What emotions does the video evoke in the viewer? How are these emotions conveyed? Are these emotions similar or different to those conveyed by the text?

### Discussion (25 minutes)

Students discuss their written answers to the homework questions in small groups, and then in the whole class discussion.

### Assign Research Activity (10 minutes)

For homework, students research specific examples of the wartime destruction of cultural sites. Depending on the class, students might conduct research according to geographical location (e.g. Afghanistan, Cameroon, Mali, Iraq, Japan, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine) or time period (e.g., current conflicts or historical conflicts, such as World War II). For example, possible research topics include the looting of museums in Sudan or the destruction of libraries in Poland during WWII. Optional additional reading materials are listed in the Further Reading section above.

Share information about this site to a Padlet on the topic. Suggested information to include:

- names of sites destroyed and images, if available
- a short description of the sites and their cultural significance
- important dates or historical context for the conflict
- the impact of this destruction on the country’s cultural heritage
- preservation efforts, rebuilding initiatives, policy proposals, etc.

If possible, in a future class or for homework, wrap up the lesson by having students reflect on classmates’ contributions, leaving comments on the Padlet:

- How are these examples similar or different from one another and from those described in the essay?
- What perspective do you have on the final line of the piece, “Can we stop it?”

### Note

A related lesson plan, *Creating Art in Times of Crisis* can be found in the Winter 2023 Educator’s Guide

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/assets/educational/asymptote-guide-for-educators-2023-winter.pdf>

# Prose Poems

## “Dear i” by Kim So-yeon, translated by Inye Ha

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/dear-i-kim-so-yeon/>

In this lesson, students will explore the genre of the prose poem. They will examine “Dear i” and “Another Version” by Kim So-yeon, exploring the ways in which the prose poems play with the genres of both poetry and prose. They will then write their own prose poem.

### Learning Objectives

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

- Identify features of prose, poetry, and prose poetry
- Analyse a text for features
- Create their own prose poem

### Assessment

Independent Reading

Analysis Questions

Creative Writing

### Approximate Grade Level

High School Students

### Materials Needed

“Dear i” by Kim So-yeon, Translated from the Korean by Inye Ha

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/dear-i-kim-so-yeon/>

“Occupational Front” by Song Seung Eon, Translated from the Korean by Stine An

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/occupational-front-song-seung-eon/>

### Additional Resources

Defining features of Poetry and Prose:

<https://www.britannica.com/art/poetry/Poetry-and-prose>

Definition of Prose Poetry:

<https://www.britannica.com/art/prose-poem>

### Approximate Length

Lesson One (60 minutes)

## Lesson One

### Warm up (10 minutes)

Ask students to define and give examples of:

“Poetry”

“Prose”

Write the definitions on the board. Note that the Cambridge Dictionary defines prose as: “written language in its ordinary form rather than poetry”.

Ask students what marks the difference between the two. Are they in opposition?

### **Independent Reading and Analysis (25 minutes)**

Give students a copy of the poems "Dear i" and "Another Version".

Students read the texts independently.

Once students have read the texts, ask them to determine whether they are poetry or prose. They should write down reasons for their choice.

Write the term "Prose Poem" on the board. Ask students how this might be defined.

Agree on a class definition that you write on the board.

Display the following quotation from Charles Baudelaire on the board:

"Which of us has not, in his moments of ambition, dreamed the miracle of a poetic prose, musical without rhythm or rime, sufficiently supple, sufficiently abrupt, to adapt itself to the lyrical movements of the soul, to the windings and turnings of the fancy, to the sudden starts of the conscience?"

Ask students if this aligns with their definition of "Prose Poem". Students can amend their definition accordingly.

Students then answer the following questions:

- What stylistic features of poetry do you observe in these prose poems?
- What stylistic features of prose do you observe in these prose poems?
- How do these prose poems engage with or subvert expectations of what a prose poem is?
- How do these prose poems engage with your own personal identification of prose poetry?

Ask students for their feedback. Write answers on the board.

### **Creative Writing (15 minutes)**

Explain to the students that these poems originate from South Korea and have been translated from the Korean.

Display the following sentence from the translator's note on the board: "The tie between the past and the present is described as tenuous and yet evocatively intertwined, recreating continuously what once was and what is now."

Give students the following topics to write their own prose poems on and ask them to use the above idea as it applies to their own culture/experience in their work:

- Identity
- Family Relationships
- Friendship
- Time
- Hope

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

Ask students to share their poems with the class.

Return to the agreed definition of "Prose Poem" on the board. Do they want to make any changes to it now that they have written their own prose poem? Amend the definition accordingly.

**Extension Activity**

Students read “Occupational Front” by Song Seung Eon; a prose poem also translated from Korean:

<https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/occupational-front-song-seung-eon/>



## **FEEDBACK**

Thanks for taking the time to read our Spring 2025 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!

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Educational Arm Director: Sarah Nasar

Educational Arm Assistants: Mary Hillis, Sonakshi Srivastava, and Devi Sastry

Special thanks to Editor-in-Chief Lee Yew Leong