

# HIDDEN MEANINGS: CREATIVE FICTION, NON-FICTION, AND FACTS

## FINAL SESSION—ASSIGNMENT

Below are the assignment questions for this session

Try the following with your text:

**Whatever you pick, try to read it as if it is new to you.** Even if you were working on it just a few days ago. Really try to let yourself see it anew: maybe print it out and take it away from your desk and read it in a park, in a cafe, on a bus. Maybe read it out loud to yourself, or ask a friend to read it out loud to you. As you read it, take a break after each paragraph (maybe even closing your eyes) and consider these things: are there images coming to you? Are you noticing repetitions of the same words? Or similarities in the words you use to describe thoughts or actions or emotions or details of your scenes? Try to find the places where your writing has already begun to form patterns, where you may already be moving into the use of image to suggest the central meaning of your work.

**If you have trouble noticing any of these things, try another way:** read it back to yourself again, paragraph by paragraph, taking a break between each one, and consider these things: are you noticing a dominant emotion? Is there a descriptive detail that really stands out? Are your characters moving in quick or slow ways? Are you narrating quickly or slowly? Are there rows of long sentences, or of short ones?

**If you didn't see any strong patterns, but you noticed a single moment that you like:**

If you found a moment where you have described something perfectly, a moment where your character has moved or spoken in a way you love - think about why you like that moment so much. Then try to find a way to expand on it, to experiment with how it could be signaled earlier in the work or echoed later. This may not feel easy or obvious, and you don't have to force it to be obvious.

Or, if the moment you love is a short, sharp sentence, look at what surrounds it. If it is surrounded by long, flowing narration or lengthy dialogue, is it saying something different from the lines around it, something unexpected? Is it saying something important that sums up those lines around it? If so, are there other places where something unexpected or important could be said in a short, sharp line? If you try highlighting these interesting moments by using a

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short sentence and surrounding that sentence with longer lines, you might find that the pace of your narrative is now moving in a pattern that supports the arrival of each important moment.

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