

How Writers Write Poetry 2015

CLASS SEVEN • Discussion Topics

How to use these questions:

These discussion questions are based on the video and required reading for each class. You can use them to lead a discussion with your group, or you can use them to think about the class videos and readings on your own. You do not have to use them in the order given below, and you do not have to use all of them. Onward!

Class 7 Questions for Beginning Writers

Choose one or more of the options below to discuss with your group:

From Micah Bateman and Lauren Haldeman's talk:

Micah and Lauren discuss the fertile possibilities of using the “I” of a poem as a mask, an imaginary substitute-self that will not only show us something new in our experience, but lead us to feel experiences we cannot have. What do we mean when we say (for instance) that poetry can help us imagine being a rock or tree? Does poetry do something different when its mask, or its imagined experience, is that of an inanimate object?

Optional assignment preparation question for beginning writers:

Choose an object in the room around you and imagine that you are that object. How does it see itself, and how does it see the world around it? How does it perceive you? When you are finished, consider how your perspective on that object may have changed.

From James Galvin's talk:

James Galvin mentions that both poets and readers of poetry should bring passion to the table. What does it mean for you as a reader of poems to bring passion to your reading? How can you be a passionate or impassioned reader of a poem?

Optional discussion activity: Read through some of the poems in the Class 7 Readings document. Which one of these most clearly evokes passion in you when you read it? What craft elements of the poem are most effective in creating that passion?

Class 7 Questions for Experienced Writers

Choose one or more of the options below to discuss with your group:

From Micah Bateman and Lauren Haldeman's talk:

Micah and Lauren discuss the idea of using the “I” of a poem as a mask, a created persona from which you can create a deeply-felt emotional experience in a poem. How might this created persona lend you a necessary distance when trying to write about your own emotional experiences? Why might that distance be necessary? What opportunities does that



mask/persona offer you when writing about your own experiences that you might not have when writing about those experiences in a more direct way?

From James Galvin's talk:

James Galvin speculates that poetry might, in some sense, be a response to the deep knowledge that we are going to die. Does this ring true for you? Read through some of the poems in the Class 7 Readings document. Do you sense this knowledge running through any of them?