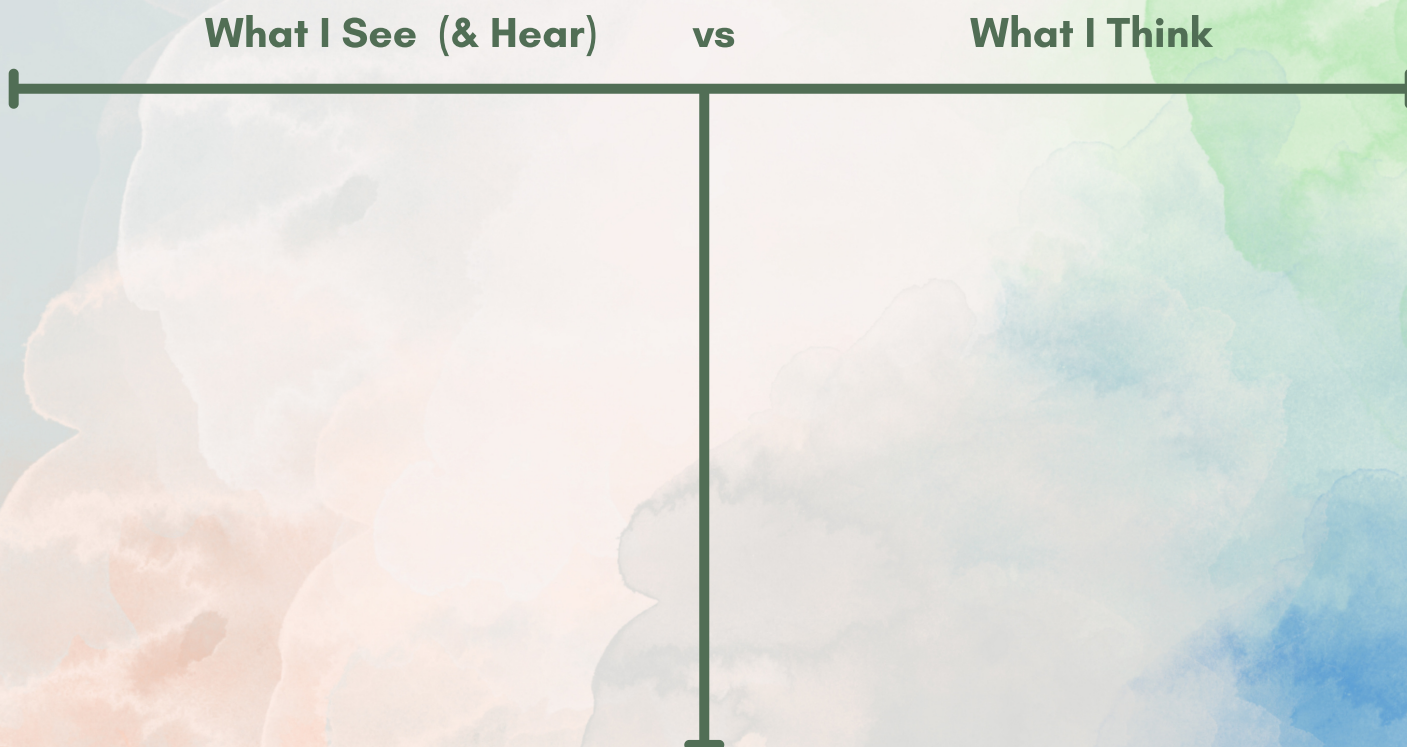


Poetry Painted From Our Connections with Nature

Step 1: Watch the video together. Then go outside and quietly observe for a few minutes before writing.

Step 2: Visual Thinking Strategy - Noticing vs. Thinking



Step 3: Don't forget to expand your color vocabulary!

Step 4: Journal from a variety of perspectives. Include at least 1 prompt involving research. [See "Perspectives to Try When Writing a Poem About Nature"]

Step 5: Using the Visual Thinking Strategy journal entries and the Ekphrastic perspectives, draft a poem using the strongest ideas, language, and feelings.

Step 6: Draft a short poem that captures your strongest ideas. Share with others!

Perspectives to Try When Writing a Poem About Nature

Ekphrasis is writing about art. Ekphrastic poets often bring to life different aspects of a work of art in their poems. Borrowing from that tradition, respond to 3-5 of the prompts below. Use at least one prompt that requires research. Vary the prompts so that you are not repeating ideas.



Write about **your experience** of looking at and being in the location. What is **your reaction**? What emotions are felt here?

Relate the natural space to something else it **reminds you of**.

What do you **see vs** what do you **think**? (Use the Visual Thinking Strategies Chart)

Which voices have been missing from this space throughout history? (Do some **research**.) Explain why those voices are absent.

Speak directly to the space, or an object, or a creature here.

Write a **dialogue** among objects or creatures in this space.

What is the **mood** of the space? List the feeling words that capture this location. How does it impact your experience with it?

What **argument** could you make about the place? How does the location support your argument? What **research** supports your argument?

Write **in the voice of** any object or creature (seen or unseen) in the natural location. If you're not alone in the space, imagine how others might be experiencing the place. Compare and contrast experiences.

Describe any object or creature (seen or unseen) in the natural location.

Research this setting. What historical events are associated with it? Who may have **rejoiced** here? Who may have **mourned** here?

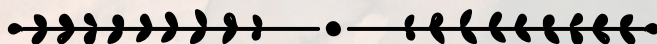
Why did you choose this space? Do you have personal history here? Include that experience.

Imagine how this location changed over time. Do some **research** to understand what caused those changes and who was impacted.

Make the space a **setting** for a story or of a dream.

Other than you, who else has been in this space? (Do some **research**.) What was their experience?

What **argument** could you make about the place? How does the location support your argument?



Additional Resources for Nature Poets

Baughner Janée J. *The Ekphrastic Writer: Creating Art-Influenced Poetry, Fiction and Nonfiction*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2020.

Dungy, Camille T. (Editor). *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*. University of Georgia Press, 2009.

Yenawine, Philip. *Visual Thinking Strategies Using Art to Deepen Learning across School Disciplines*. Harvard Education Press, 2014.

Nature Poem Models

"Nature" Is What We See

Emily Dickinson

"Nature" is what we see—
The Hill—the Afternoon—
Squirrel—Eclipse— the Bumble bee—
Nay—Nature is Heaven—
Nature is what we hear—
The Bobolink—the Sea—
Thunder—the Cricket—
Nay—Nature is Harmony—
Nature is what we know—
Yet have no art to say—
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

The Gray Heron

Galway Kinnell

It held its head still
while its body and green
legs wobbled in wide arcs
from side to side. When
it stalked out of sight,
I went after it, but all
I could find where I was
expecting to see the bird
was a three-foot-long lizard
in ill-fitting skin
and with linear mouth
expressive of the even temper
of the mineral kingdom.
It stopped and tilted its head,
which was much like
a fieldstone with an eye
in it, which was watching me
to see if I would go
or change into something else.

Hummingbird

Robin Becker

I love the whirl of the creature come
to visit the pink
flowers in the hanging basket as she does

most August mornings, hours away
from starvation to store
enough energy to survive overnight.

The Aztecs saw the refraction
of incident light on wings
as resurrection of fallen warriors.

In autumn, when daylight decreases
they double their body weight to survive
the flight across the Gulf of Mexico.

On next-to-nothing my mother
flew for 85 years; after her death
she hovered, a bird of bones and air.

Mercy Beach

Kamilah Aisha Moon

Stony trails of jagged beauty rise
like stretch marks streaking sand-hips.
All the Earth has borne beguiles us
& battered bodies build our acres.

Babes that sleep in hewn rock cradles
learn to bear the hardness coming.
Tough grace forged in tender bones—
may this serve & bless them well.

They grow & break grief into islands
of sun-baked stone submerged in salt
kisses, worn down by the ocean's ardor
relentless as any strong loving.

May they find caresses that abolish pain.
Like Earth, they brandish wounds of gold!