

Lesson Plan for *Poetry International 17*

For upper division undergraduate or graduate literature/poetry workshop

Prepared by: Jen M. Lagedrost

Introduction:

We learn about poetry by reading poetry. Learning about poetry helps us connect with and understand more of our human existence and our global community.

Poetry, like every art form (music, photography, dance, painting, theatre, novels, etc.), is highly diverse. Not all poems are alike, just as not all songs are alike; you do not have to like all of poetry to engage with and learn from poems, just as you do not love every song that comes on the radio, and some you prefer for different reasons at different times.

Focus:

Caribbean Feature in *Poetry International 17*

What can a close study of poets from other countries contribute to our knowledge of poetry?

What can this kind of study contribute to our understandings of culture, language, and art?

How can a study of poetry from a particular country inform our own writing?

Prior Homework:

Read the introduction to the Caribbean Poetry Feature, by Ishion Hutchinson, in *PI 17*, pages 116-117. Jot down a few notes about how Hutchinson describes Caribbean poetry (in what ways does he characterize poetry from the Caribbean?) including your questions and responses. Read the poems in the feature, pages 118 – 157. Come to class prepared to discuss two or three aspects of Caribbean poetry as described by Hutchinson's introduction at work in the poems of the feature. Keep in mind elements of poetry (image, assonance, form, voice, dramatic situation, diction, and tone).

In Class:

- 1.) Whole class discussion of the feature introduction (Ishion Hutchinson's identification of Caribbean poet/poem elements: *poetry of memory; grafting culture of one place onto culture of another; poetry of pristine clarity that transforms through the recollection of ordinary things; Caribbean experience; fissured, uneven reality of Caribbean consciousness; public and private voices; varied, urgent, voices; etc.*
- 2.) Whole class discussion about poems, which stood out, what features stood out, what about the poems corresponded with I.H.'s introduction (How do the claims he makes take shape in image, assonance, form, voice, dramatic situation, diction, and tone?).

- 3.) Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss in each group one of the poems in depth. Teacher assigns a poem to each group. Spend 15 minutes in each group doing a close reading of the poem, reading it aloud and noting its elements.
- 4.) Reconvene: one at a time, each group will read its poem aloud (one or two readers) and present their discussion and analysis of how the poem speaks for Caribbean culture, what it contributes, what its elements are, and what we can learn from it both as a cultural piece and as a poem of particular voice and location that can inform our own writing.
- 5.) Questions / Comments

Homework:

Write a poem that takes up one or two of the elements examined and discussed in the Caribbean poetry feature. Include a short paragraph describing what element(s) you worked with and how they affected the writing of the poem.