

## Ms. Napoliello's "Introduction to Poetry" TPCASTT Annotations

### **Title:**

Perhaps this poem is going over what poetry is and/or should look like. It may be presenting the basics and foundation of poetry.

### **Paraphrasing:**

I ask them to look at a poem  
and hold it towards brightness  
like a projector

or listen closely to its colony.

I say put a mouse in its lines  
and watch him examine his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room  
and feel through the darkness for light.

I want them to glide  
across the top of a poem  
waving to the author on the other side.

But they only want to  
hold the poem down  
and torment a revelation out of it.

They begin with abusing it  
to find its meaning.

### **Connotation:**

- Parallelism with the beginning lines of the stanzas "I ask..." "I say..." "I want..."
  - This pattern feels familiar, as it reinforces the idea that Collins is nearly begging his students to interact with poetry in the way he wishes
- Polysyndeton in the shift of punctuation in lines three and five.
- Each stanza is metaphorical and uses imagery and personification.
  - "Hold it up to the light like a color slide" -- you can practically see the brightness to this approach
  - "Press an ear against its hive" -- you can hear the chaos and swarm of busy bees. They are at work, they are at the center of what it is that they do.
  - "Drop a mouse into a poem" puts an image in your mind of a lab rat. You watch him try and fail repeatedly to solve the maze until he finds his solution.
  - "Waterski[ing] across the surface of the poem..." "waving" uses imagery with both sight and touch, and reinforces a calm and inquisitive tone established at the beginning of the poem
  - His mentions of "tying with a rope" and "beating with a hose" activate our sense of touch and reinforce a shift in tone. He has gone from feeling curious to feeling angry due to the actions of his students.

- Personification of poetry: something that can be abused
  - There is irony in this shift as well; what he wants his students to do and what they actually do are drastically different.
    - The ultimate irony lays in the fact that we need to analyze poetry in order to understand poetry. Perhaps Collins is begging the question, where is the line? How do we understand poetry for its meaning yet appreciate it for its truth?

**Attitude/tone:**

At first, his attitude is calm, curious, relaxed. His metaphors are never deep at the beginning of the poem, as they beg the reader through use of imagery to look at things through a surface-level perspective. His attitude shifts to solemn, angry, disappointed with the last two stanzas of the poem. This reinforces that there is a shift between what he wants his students to do and what they actually do.

**Shifts:**

- There is a shift in tone at the last two stanzas
- There is also a shift in capitalization with line 12 “But all they want to do...”
  - This alludes to the shift in tone. “But” itself is a word that triggers the thought of a shift, as it brings in a new perspective. The capitalization of this word is a shift as well, and Collins is telling us to pay attention
- There are shifts in punctuation
  - Most of his stanzas end in periods
  - Lines three and six are the only stanzas that do not end in periods
    - This tells us that the thought from the previous line is pouring into his next line. It is one continuous idea; his use of polysyndeton reinforces that.

**Title:**

The poet is a man of authority over the subject and over the “they” he repeatedly refers to. The title itself sounds like the name of a class, or perhaps the name of a unit. It is clearly academic-based, so this is about a professor or teacher introducing the “they,” his students, to poetry and being frustrated with the outcome.

**Theme:**

Do not twist poetry to make it something it's not, but enjoy it for its beauty and ambiguity.

Ultimately, this poem exhibits imagery and Collins’ wonderful use of subtle humor and irony. The voice is the frustrated poetry instructor who just wants his students to feel and experience the poem, while the students want the “right answer.” The teacher tries to explain the poem through imagery that is metaphorical: poetry as a color slide, a hive, a mouse in a maze, a dark room with a light switch, and waterskiing. Each of these perspectives focuses on a different aspect of poetry: perspective, sound, meaning, realization, and the literal. Despite his efforts, the students want to torture the poetry until it reveals itself. Perhaps, the great irony is that we are doing exactly that, rather than feeling or experiencing this poem, because the poem requires explication to understand Collins’ meaning.