

Journal Prompt:

**What frightens you? No, seriously.
What really frightens you?**

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Oct 20, 2017

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Oct 24, 2017

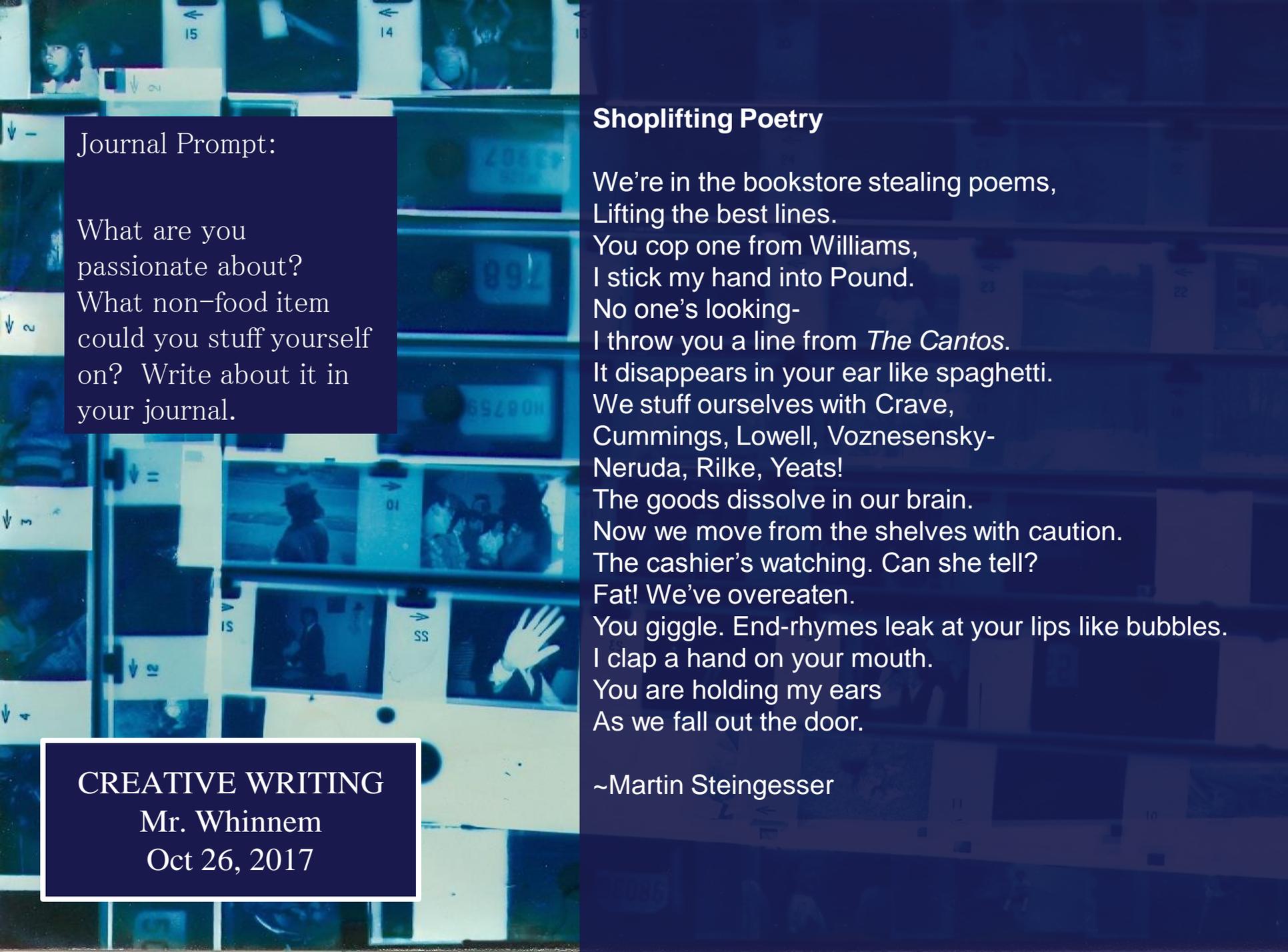
My Dead Goldfish

By Hal Sirowitz

I wanted an alligator for a pet
but my parents got me a goldfish.
When he died my mother flushed him down the toilet.
She said if we bury him in the yard
a cat might dig him up & eat him.
I was mad at my father for using the bathroom
ten minutes after the burial.
He had no respect for the dead.

Journal Prompt:

Write your own version of a poem like Sirowitz's. Just write about something funny, silly, or pointless that your parents, a teacher, or some other authority figure has done or said.



Journal Prompt:

What are you passionate about? What non-food item could you stuff yourself on? Write about it in your journal.

CREATIVE WRITING
Mr. Whinnem
Oct 26, 2017

Shoplifting Poetry

We're in the bookstore stealing poems,
Lifting the best lines.
You cop one from Williams,
I stick my hand into Pound.
No one's looking-
I throw you a line from *The Cantos*.
It disappears in your ear like spaghetti.
We stuff ourselves with Crave,
Cummings, Lowell, Voznesensky-
Neruda, Rilke, Yeats!
The goods dissolve in our brain.
Now we move from the shelves with caution.
The cashier's watching. Can she tell?
Fat! We've overeaten.
You giggle. End-rhymes leak at your lips like bubbles.
I clap a hand on your mouth.
You are holding my ears
As we fall out the door.

~Martin Steingesser

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

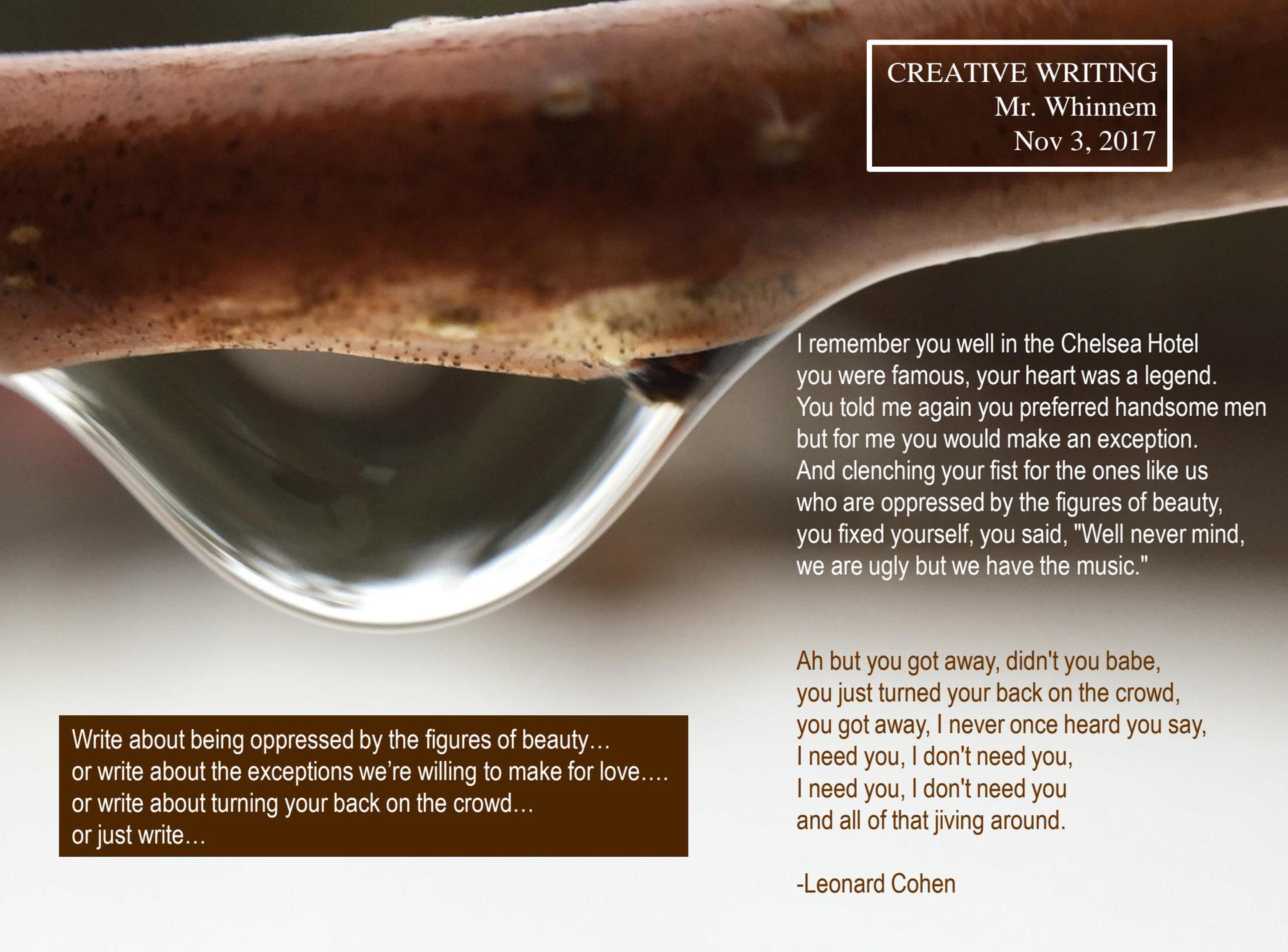
Nov 1, 2017

Journal Prompt:

Consider the person who wrote this personal ad. Respond to the prompt, or write your own version of a similar ad.

The following is an excerpt from a personal ad in the London Review of Books:

Talk to me about your favorite author,
The painting that means the most to you,
What smells remind you of your childhood,
The day you first saw your parents differently,
Your first holiday,
Your favorite place to read,
The last recipe you followed,
The most recent newspaper clipping you kept,
The name of a lover you most recently remembered,
Your favorite stretch of water,
What you like most about Paris or Rome or London,
The last time you fed ducks on a pond.



CREATIVE WRITING
Mr. Whinnem
Nov 3, 2017

I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel
you were famous, your heart was a legend.
You told me again you preferred handsome men
but for me you would make an exception.
And clenching your fist for the ones like us
who are oppressed by the figures of beauty,
you fixed yourself, you said, "Well never mind,
we are ugly but we have the music."

Ah but you got away, didn't you babe,
you just turned your back on the crowd,
you got away, I never once heard you say,
I need you, I don't need you,
I need you, I don't need you
and all of that jiving around.

-Leonard Cohen

Write about being oppressed by the figures of beauty...
or write about the exceptions we're willing to make for love....
or write about turning your back on the crowd...
or just write...



CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Nov 7, 2017

Journal Prompt:

Consider what Dee Remy says below and write to it. Agree or disagree, let your thoughts run away...just respond.

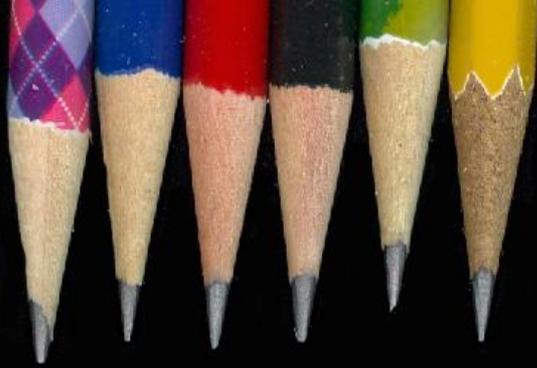
Alternately, you could respond to the painting at left, Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror*. (1932)

“Mirrors are perpetually deceitful. They lie and steal your true self. They reveal only what your mind believes it sees”

— Dee Remy, *There Once Was A Boy*

Where would you most
like to be right now?

Describe the place in as much
detail as you possible can.



“The Unwritten” by W.S. Merwin

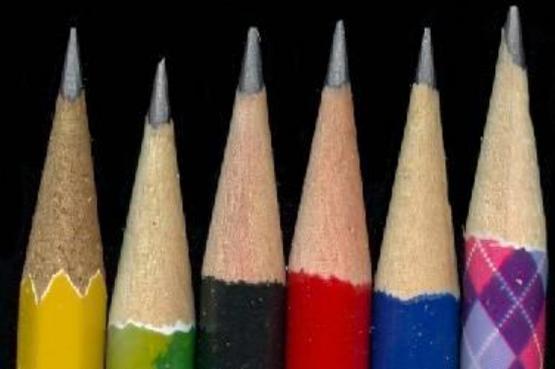
Inside this pencil
crouch words that have never been written
never been spoken
never been taught
they're hiding
they're awake in there
dark in the dark
hearing us
but they won't come out
not for love not for time not for fire
even when the dark has worn away
they'll still be there
hiding in the air
multitudes in days to come may walk through
them
breathe them
be none the wiser
what script can it be
that they won't unroll
in what language
would I recognize it
would I be able to follow it
to make out the real names
of everything
maybe there aren't
many
it could be that there's only one word
and it's all we need
it's here in this pencil
every pencil in the world
is like this

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

November 16, 2017

Journal Prompt:
Begin your prompt
with “Inside this
pencil” or “Within
this pen” or “From
my hand” or a
similar phrase of
your own choosing.



Deserving Song
by Lori McKenna

I don't deserve anything I get;
things just come easy to me,
like the sun in the morning on a blanket of clouds
and other things that you don't see.

I don't deserve my family.
I am the youngest, and they all love me.
And I don't feel pain, but I don't feel free sometimes

And I will shatter because I don't bounce.
I feel weight on my shoulder
from something that weighs just an ounce,
like life since the moment that we met.
Well, I don't deserve anything I get.

I don't deserve anything I get;
I am self-centered and weak.
And I don't feel your pain or your emptiness
or feel sorry for you when you bleed.

**Journal Prompt: What things
in your life do you take for granted?**

CREATIVE WRITING
Mr. Whinnem
November 20, 2017

I don't deserve my body;
well, it may not be perfect,
but it works for me.
And I can walk, and I can see the sky.

But, I will shatter because I don't bend.
And all that I know is that you're my friend,
and I love you more than any record ever set.
But I don't deserve anything I get

Well, I don't deserve anything I get;
people just take care of me.
I'll never be sorry for the way I see you;
I'm just sorry for the way you see me.

'Cause I will shatter and I will break.
And I'm usually the first one to make a mistake;
oh, but God only gives us as much as we can take I guess.
But I don't deserve anything I get.
I don't deserve anything I get.

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

-Mary Oliver

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

November 27, 2017

Journal Prompt:

Start your journal entry with the words: “You do not have to be” and continue the thought in your own words.

Falter

I went to high school with that kid
He was even strange back then
The type whose eyes don't leave the floor - blend in with the cement

Well, I felt so bad for that kid
One day I saw his face turn green
And as he tumbled to the floor the thought of reaching out never occurred to me

Why don't we open up
Knowing that we all falter
When will we learn - to reach out for each other

He lived out on the edge of town
And I'm pretty sure he had a brother
It seemed that boy could walk for days I suspect to avoid his mother

And I always knew he had it bad
Tougher than any of us others did
Still I never asked him how he was doing what could I do - I was just a kid

So, now he's the new town bum
He talks to himself and picks up cans all day
And when my kids ask me about him - what'll I say, what'll I say?

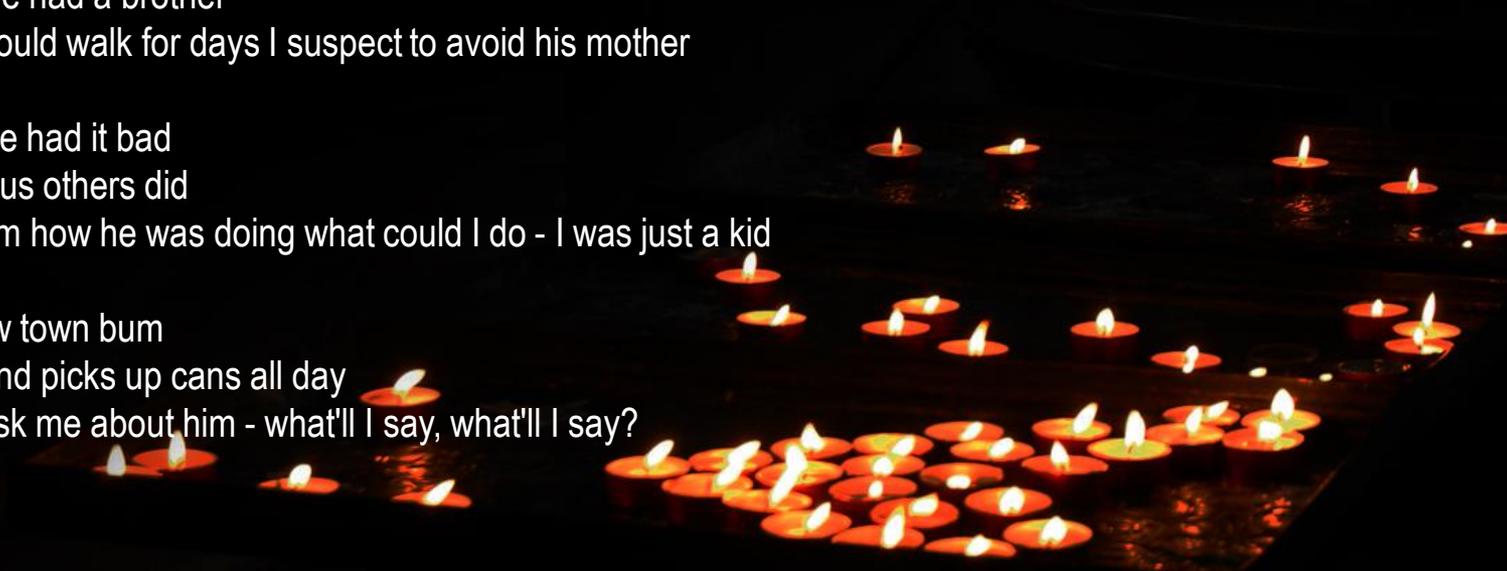
Lori McKenna
Singer/Songwriter

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

December 1, 2017

Journal Prompt:
Write a story of
regret.



Journal Prompt:

We've all had moments when we feel awkward. Drawing upon that, please write your own version of a *snork* poem.

snork by anonymous

that time, you know,
when you looked up
and saw me and smiled?
see, you took me by surprise and
what happened was that
i tried to smile back too quick
and it came out as a
snorky noise in my throat.

and then there was that time
you walked in on me while
i had my pant leg rolled up
cause i was scratching a big bug bite.
i slammed my knee into the desk
trying to get my leg down fast enough
and that's why my face was red
when you asked me
for help with the computer.

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Dec 7, 2017

and then early this morning
i was thinking that i might see you
and that i might actually
say the right thing for once,
so what i did was,
i tried on three shirts before
i found one that i almost liked.

so if you see me
in the parking lot
fumbling with my car keys
and you say hello to me
just know this:
what i'm trying to say is
"i have a terrible crush on you,"
though all i'll really get out is,
"this weather's weird,
huh?"





CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Dec 11, 2017

“To pay attention,
this is our endless
and proper work.”
-Mary Oliver

Journal Prompt:
What are the most
important things
to pay attention to?

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Dec 13, 2017

today I held a stone
flattened and round
with small lines
that might or not
be stripes or paths

I speculate its use
a worry stone
a wishing stone
a skipping stone
or one rescued yesterday

from a ramble
along the three mile river
the sanctuary trail
or one from the garden
at Queset House

it lies in my palm
I turn it over and over
as I consider
the winding paths
and the coincidence

of stone and flesh
of past and present
or a leaf-strewn trajectory
that is lost in some mist
that is swallowed in fog

were I to skip it across
the smooth water
behind the dam
would the vanishing
circles tell a story

would the trail
of decreasing circles
be memories
old and nearly forgotten
or yet to be created

would the smoothing
ripples slow my pulse
loose my mind to dream
my heart to measure
the long span of circles

Journal Prompt:

**Write in your journal
about things that “might
or might not be...”**

Kathryn Dunlap

Journal Prompt: This is some pretty abstract stuff. Write to the abstraction. Write your own abstract reaction.

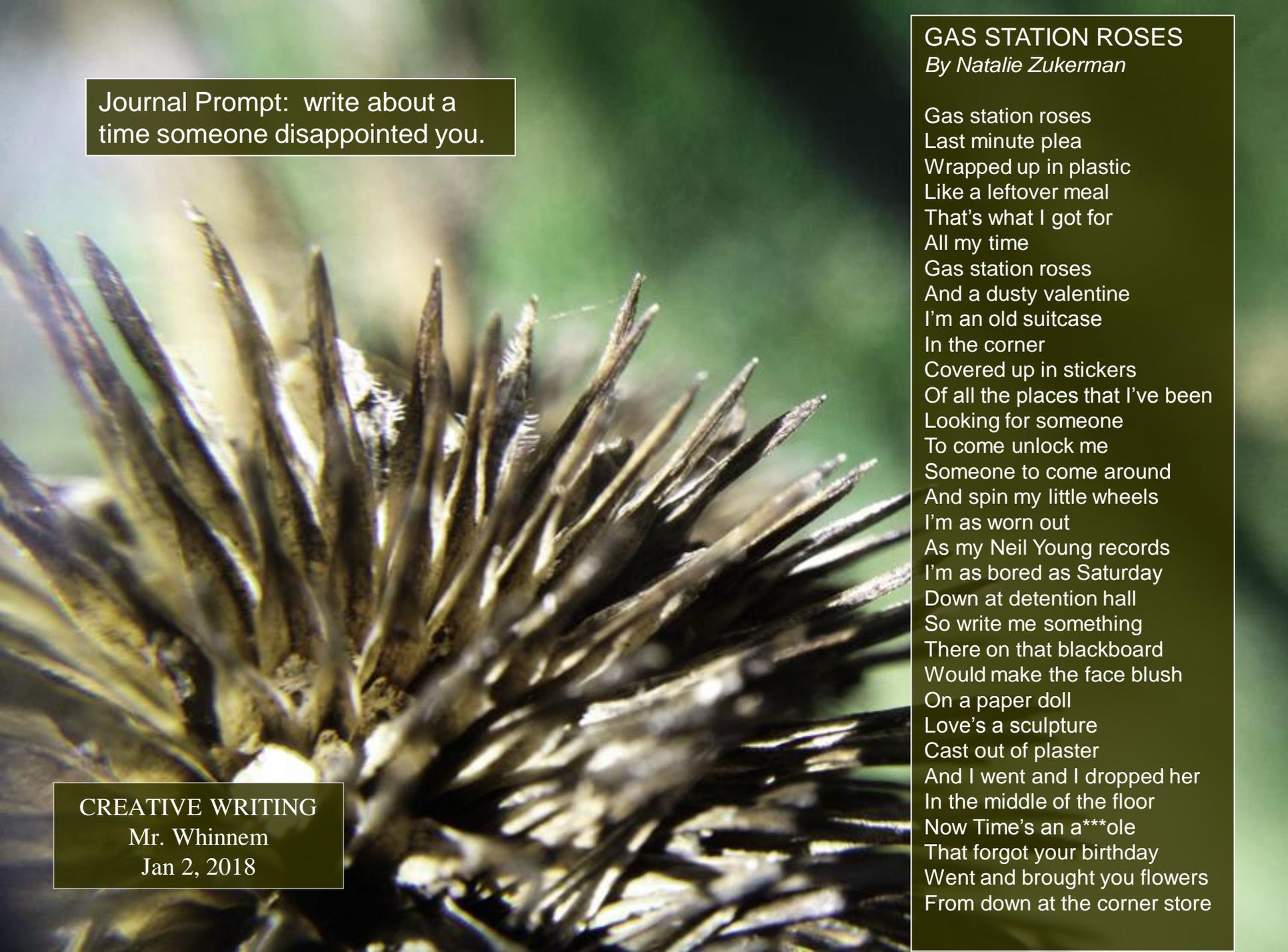
Or, if you'd rather, write about the many mysteries of the world.

The Jigsaw Wheel

The rain formed puddles that shone
metallic shiny round the perimeter,
Shadows showed the light unknown
mysteries of the world,
Yellow bones ridged with white line
wrinkly greenish blurry,
Window of a car going fast
colorful magical flashing carousel lights,
The child awaits the arrival of her parents

CREATIVE WRITING
Mr. Whinnem
Dec 15, 2017

**HOLIDAY
BREAK**



Journal Prompt: write about a time someone disappointed you.

GAS STATION ROSES

By Natalie Zukerman

Gas station roses
Last minute plea
Wrapped up in plastic
Like a leftover meal
That's what I got for
All my time
Gas station roses
And a dusty valentine
I'm an old suitcase
In the corner
Covered up in stickers
Of all the places that I've been
Looking for someone
To come unlock me
Someone to come around
And spin my little wheels
I'm as worn out
As my Neil Young records
I'm as bored as Saturday
Down at detention hall
So write me something
There on that blackboard
Would make the face blush
On a paper doll
Love's a sculpture
Cast out of plaster
And I went and I dropped her
In the middle of the floor
Now Time's an a***ole
That forgot your birthday
Went and brought you flowers
From down at the corner store

CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Jan 2, 2018

A photograph of a person playing a guitar, overlaid with a blue tint. The person is wearing a dark, polka-dot shirt. The guitar is a dark color, and the person's hands are visible on the fretboard and strings. The background is dark and out of focus.

I Am in Need of Music

Journal Prompt:
**Tell me why you
love music.**

CREATIVE WRITING
Mr. Whinnem
Jan 4, 2018

I am in need of music that would flow
Over my fretful, feeling fingertips,
Over my bitter-tainted, trembling lips,
With melody, deep, clear, and liquid-slow.
Oh, for the healing swaying, old and low,
Of some song sung to rest the tired dead,
A song to fall like water on my head,
And over quivering limbs, dream flushed to glow!

There is a magic made by melody:
A spell of rest, and quiet breath, and cool
Heart, that sinks through fading colors deep
To the subaqueous stillness of the sea,
And floats forever in a moon-green pool,
Held in the arms of rhythm and of sleep.

Elizabeth Bishop



CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

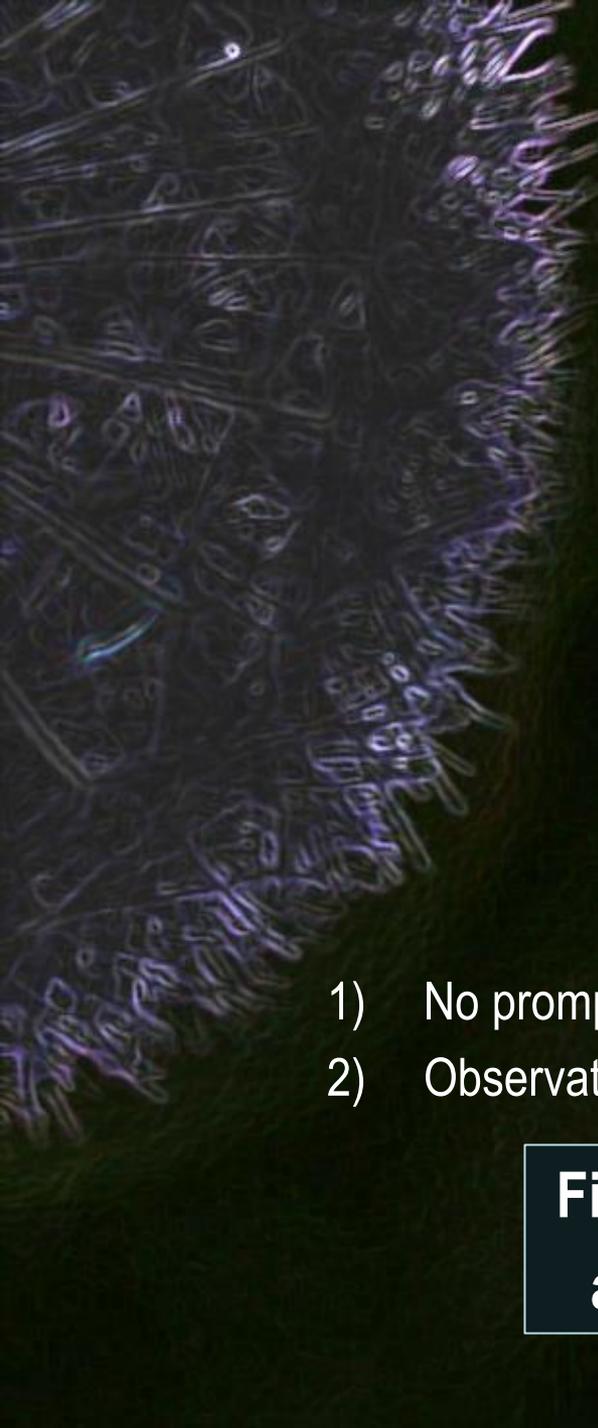
Jan 8, 2018

Elegy

By Linda Pastan

Somewhere a poem
is waiting for me
to write it: in the jewelry box,
coiled into an old ring
or stopping the hands
of a watch;
in the vanishing barn, risen
to the top of the pail
to be skimmed off;
or in the tree outside
engraved in green ink
on the underside of a leaf.
In my old room
the white curtains blow
like ghosts of themselves
over the sill;
under the bed misplaced words gather
to grab my helpless ankle.
It is a poem
the child I was hides
in the ear of the woman
I have become: a poem
whose lines were the lines
of my father's face.

Journal Prompt:
Where do stories
wait for you?



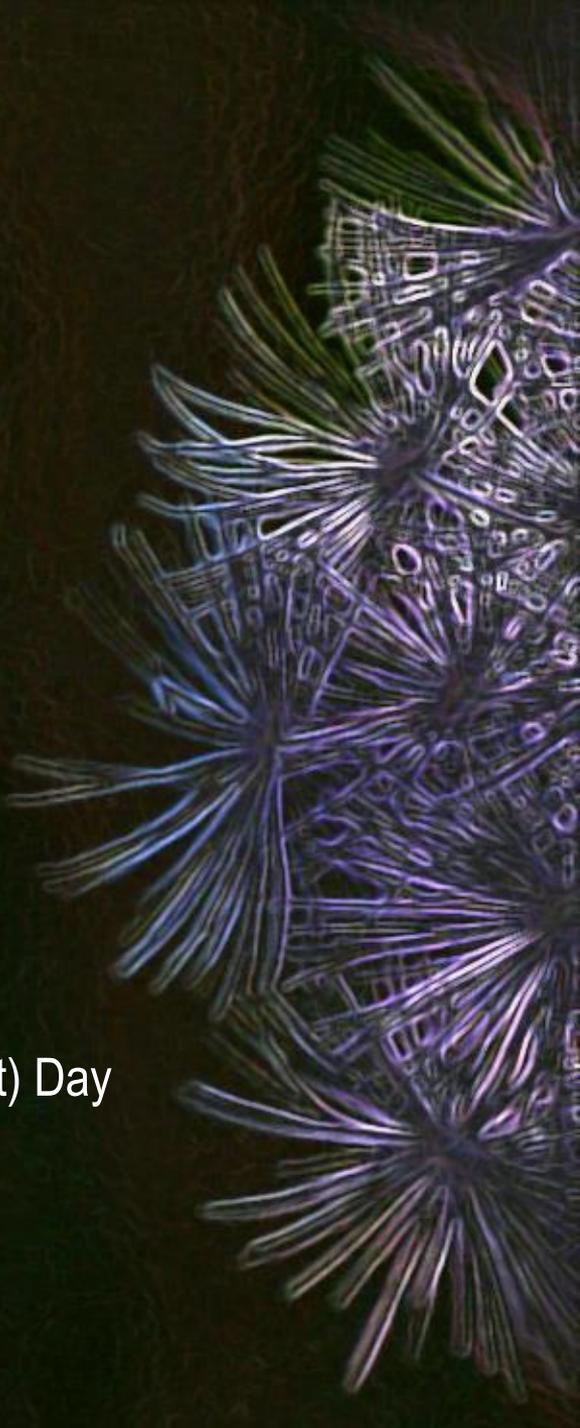
CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Jan 10, 2018

- 1) No prompt
- 2) Observation Essay – Peer Revision (Blue Sheet) Day

**Final, printed essays are due
at the start of next class!!!**



CREATIVE WRITING

Mr. Whinnem

Jan 12, 2018

Welcome Morning

There is joy
in all:
in the hair I brush each morning,
in the Cannon towel, newly washed,
that I rub my body with each morning,
in the chapel of eggs I cook
each morning,
in the outcry from the kettle
that heats my coffee
each morning,
in the spoon and the chair
that cry "hello there, Anne"
each morning,
in the godhead of the table
that I set my silver, plate, cup upon
each morning.

All this is God,
right here in my pea-green house
each morning
and I mean,
though often forget,
to give thanks,
to faint down by the kitchen table
in a prayer of rejoicing
as the holy birds at the kitchen window
peck into their marriage of seeds.

So while I think of it,
let me paint a thank-you on my palm
for this God, this laughter of the morning,
lest it go unspoken.

The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard,
dies young.

Anne Sexton

Journal Prompt:

Take a moment and
reflect upon what
you have to be
thankful for.