Amanda Duncan

August 6th, 2021

End of Summer Report

This summer I got the opportunity to research repetition in poetry. I found that repetition can be used not only to create rhythm within a poem, but also to create new meaning. This is really important in poetry because it allows the poet to express themselves and allows the readers to understand the poem in different ways. The goal of this project was to gain more knowledge about villanelles, pantoums, and crown of sonnets –– three forms of poetry that use repetition. This would allow me to understand the forms better and how they work. Another goal of this project was to gain experience in these repetition forms to better develop my repetition skills as a poet. I wanted to write at least two poems in each form.

In order to meet my goals, I had to look into their backgrounds and read the works of other poets who used these forms. After finding out more behind the importance of repetition that I’ve highlighted before, I spent at least a week on average for each form. By the time I got to the crown of sonnets, I knew a lot more about repetition and what I wanted it to do for my poems (I wanted it to build meaning through each use on top of establishing a pattern), and I realized that the crown of sonnets would not meet the purpose of my project. The crown of sonnets only repeats seven lines out of the 98 required. The repetition seemed to be a bit too subtle for my project, so I turned to a new form for help, the ghazal. I was able to learn a lot about its history and even write in its form. Unfortunately, due to the tight time constraints I’d given myself, I wasn’t able to write two poems in the ghazal form that I’d set out to do. However, this taught me a lot about my limits as a writer and how to set goals and time blocks that work better for me. Below are a couple of the poems I wrote this summer.

*Identity*

*Sometimes I don’t think I know her,*

*so I playback her smile, curled on her face.*

*I’m still trying to figure her out.*

*Did you hear the way she’d talk?*

*Fast and tall-taled, barely pausing to breathe.*

*Sometimes I don’t think I know her.*

*I never saw anyone else take turns being held down*

*and rise up kicking to shoot a goal in their face.*

*I’m still trying to figure her out.*

*Sometimes I stare her hard in the mirror*

*making note of sad eyes, how those lips no longer curl.*

*No, I don’t think I know her.*

*So you see, it’s hard now to listen to her talk*

*of the future, when I know she dreamed so big before.*

*Still, I’m trying to figure her out.*

*I want to take her in my arms and never stop apologizing,
and I want to grab her by the arms and scream,* ***Wake up!***

*Sometimes I don’t think I know her,*

*I’m still trying to figure her out.*

*Unconditional Love*

*Can I say that our home doesn’t feel like mine? Would you love me?*

*Is it possible – do you think – could you still love me?*

*When I sing the teapot song again, show how my arm is*

*my handle and my hand is the spout, do you still love me?*

*If I called you out, asked you to own up to missing*

*every single game I had, would you still love me?*

*When I ask you, Are you mad at me? even though*

*you already said, No, do you still love me?*

*If I told you no instead of giving you however much*

*you needed from me this time, would you still love me?*

*There’s a girl in the mirror that looks more like you these days–*

*I can’t stand the sight of her face. Do you still love me?*

*When I called you every day for a month, said I love you*

*to ease my fear that you’ll forget me, did you still love me?*

*I wanted to beg you to stay, make you choose between me or*

*your dream of owning a business, but would you still love me?*

*If you saw your daughter curled in the tub under the cold*

*water pleading with herself, would you still love me?*

This project is really important to me and what I intend to do here at Albion College. I want to be able to take another poetry class and produce work that uses repetition in the ways I’ve learned this summer, and also in new and fresh ways. Before this project, the ways I used repetition were more trite than useful and creative. Now I believe I can create more poems that say what I intend to as opposed to the past. Part of being a writer is continuously honing your craft and I think this summer was a big help towards that. I know it’s possible to be a good writer, but you can always be better and that’s something I take to heart. I plan to take the works I’ve done over the summer and polish them a bit more before preparing for an Elkin Isaac presentation in the spring. I want to thank you for the opportunity this summer to research repetition. I couldn’t have created these poems without your support.