Poetry
COLLECTION 7
Poetry
Multimedia Presentation:
Poetry

UNIT 3

Poetry

Writers on Writing



Aimee Nezhukumatathil on Poetry

Aimee Nezhukumatathil (neh ZOO KOO mah tah tihl) was born in Chicago to a Filipina mother and a South Indian father. This interesting heritage has found its way into her poetry along with themes of love and loss. She currently teaches creative writing at the State University of New York, Fredonia.

"You should have seen the look of confusion and even disgust on my friends' faces when I told them we would be having fish for breakfast. Fried fish: the size of our pinky fingers and with heads and eyeballs still intact! This was the morning after a





Unit Resources

Resources for opening and closing the unit

Collection 7 Resources, on-level practice and assessment

Writers on Writing Study Guide, p. 1

- Collection 7 Diagnostic Test
- Collection 7 Vocabulary Review
- Collection 7 Summative Test

On Course: Mapping Instruction

Teacher One Stop™, on-level lesson plans and all print resources

Formal Assessment, Benchmark Test 4

ThinkCentral Online Assessment, Collection Diagnostic and Summative Tests

ThinkCentral Online Remediation

slumber party during my junior high years—wasn't there supposed to be 'fun' foods like jelly-filled donuts or fresh baked muffins? Clean, sweet foods. Nothing with *eyeballs.* It was hard for me to explain to my friends that this was considered normal in the Philippines (where my mother is from) and in fact, a sign of great respect for your guests to be served hot crispy fish and rice for breakfast. Seeing my friends' faces twisted in disapproval made me, at first, disappointed that they wouldn't try something new, but second, mad at *myself* for not describing the delicious fish in such a way as to make it more appetizing and exciting.

Poetry is like one of those bullion/chicken broth cubes that you use to make a giant pot of soup. If you've ever unwrapped the cube and tasted it, you know that it is extremely concentrated with flavor and salt. These pungent cubes can color and flavor the description of something ordinary (water) into the most vibrant and alive way of communicating (a tasty soup). Poetry writing fills in the gaps of understanding an event, a place, a relationship, and even unusual foods. By just *talking* to my friends in junior high, I was not able to describe the delicious and savory fish breakfast. But years later, with *poetry,* I could highlight the sharp-tasty crunch of each bite, the warm and satisfying fullness of the rice—all washed down with a glass of ice cold mango juice: the taste of sunrise.

Even now, when I try to describe, for example, a recent trip to India—how magical it was to shop for saris (the South Indian women's dress) with my grandmother—all the luminous bolts of glossy silks and sateen fabrics from the stacks of cloth on the store's shelves thrown at our feet—I know I can't possibly do it justice. But in a *poem,* when I am compacting/concentrating an experience into thin lines and stanzas, I can be choosy and select all the 'important' and sensory details like the sly winking eye of the shop owner: an asterisk on his face. Or I could describe the gold threads and glass beadwork on silken fabric colored like a robin's egg. These rich details bring that sari shopping experience alive—even to people who have never seen that type of dress before.

If your writing is seasoned with concrete and specific details, no matter how different you think your experience is from someone else's, you will find your way to a tasty connection. And ultimately for me, connection, communicating—that's what writing poetry is all about.”

Think as a Writer

Nezhukumatathil says that poetry allows her to connect and communicate with others. How do you make that kind of connection?

More About the Writer

Aimee Nezhukumatathil studied English, poetry, and creative non-fiction at Ohio State University. She has won many awards for her poetry and creative non-fiction writing. Her book *Miracle Fruit* won the Tupelo Press Judge's Prize. A reviewer of the book said, "Nezhukumatathil ends her best poems with the most striking image…her world comes out that way: sensuous, brightly-colored, and deliciously new." Another reviewer commented that her poems have "great imagination…carefully and colorfully written."

Think as a Writer

- Tell students that in this unit they will read a variety of poetry in which the authors attempt to connect and communicate with their readers.
- Have students share how they connect and communicate with others. How could they do this through poetry? How is poetry different from a short story or from a letter written to a friend?