Process Analysis Paper
By: Brooke Wightkin

Poetry is much more than a collection of rhyming words put together to tell a story. After studying poetry for the past eight weeks I have come to realize that poetry is more like a work of art that portrays intense emotions through the writer's ideas or experiences. I am now able to identify different aspects of poetry and where certain techniques are used and why. Being able to share my own experiences or captured thoughts and ideas through poetry has helped me grow as a writer.

For our first assignment we were instructed to structure the poem as an anaphora and focus solely on imagery. Using an anaphora to structure a poem conveys the sense of emphasis or intensity. In my poem, titled "A World Unknown", I use an original phrase, "In a world unknown" as my anaphora. The inspiration for my poem comes from my travels overseas in Europe this past summer, which provided an excellent opportunity to write while focusing completely on imagery. The use of imagery helps the reader get more involved in the poem and help them envision what I, the writer, was experiencing. For the revision of "A World Unknown" I was asked to consider word choice and order along with possible areas for more line breaks. A specific example where I could consider word choice is in the last line of the second stanza. It is contradictory to describing my fingertips as "slightly saturated". Saturated can be defined as soaked or holding the maximum amount of water, therefore it does not make sense for something to be slightly saturated. Instead I replaced my description with the word damp. Also, I use the same describing word, attract, twice in my poem. Replacing one of the "attracts" with "drawn to" will add more variety to my word choice and a better
understanding. My piece possesses lots of detailed imagery that could use some fine tuning. For example I revised “locals bicker out loud” to “locals bicker an octave too high”. Toying with word choice and imagery can make a sentence go from good to great.

The second assignment was an oath with an emphasis on abstract language, including metaphors and similes. My inspiration for the poem came from my aspirations to someday become a successful business owner. “An Entrepreneurs Oath”, compares an entrepreneur to a coach through an extended metaphor. My original draft was weak and did not portray concrete ideas through abstract language; it used a few clichés as well. Also, the title, “An Entrepreneurs Game” strayed away from the oath aspect of the assignment. In the second stanza I used the cliché, “I am as determined to succeed as you are to breathe”. I transformed this cliché into an original, strong simile, “I am determined to succeed as a rookie is to retire as a benchwarmer”, that relates to the sports theme of the poem. It was also suggested that I try and make the oath aspect more firm and not to be so vague. To do this I added phrases like, “I vow to you” and “I promise”. The line structure isolates words that describe an entrepreneur such as, “Focused” and “Take a risk”. The goal to my line structure was to affirm and make clear what the qualifications are to be successful as a business owner.

Writing a poem through the voice of an engendered animal was the assignment for the third poem. It was a challenge having to avoid writing in silly or immature diction. Keeping a more serious tone, my piece was about a green sea turtle describing the struggle to survive. As a starting point in my revision, I changed
my bland title of “Green Sea Turtle” to “A Fatal Voyage”. By doing this, it makes the reader more interested to read my poem because they do not know exactly what it is about. My first draft was strong and filled with lots of imagery, and consonance. A strong point of imagery in “A Fatal Journey” reads, “Leaving the moistened sand of the beach to the crisp salt water.” This excerpt allows the reader to feel like they are a part of the voyage that the newborn turtles are making. An example of consonance reads, “Strong shell”. For revision I changed the consonance to “Strong, sturdy shell” to make the consonance slightly stronger. This gives the reader a better sense of just how essential the shell is the turtle. During peer revision, it was suggested that I reconsider some of the places where I used enjambment. I added a period at the end of the second stanza to finish the thought and make it concrete, completed though. Considering the second stanza is shorter than the other two, it allows room for more description to be added during revision. To make my second stanza stronger I can add specific examples of how the journey to the sea, that every hatchling makes, is so dangerous.

For the fourth and final poetry assignment we were assigned a sestina. This assignment presented a perfect opportunity for me to write about a human struggle with life, something I have always wanted express. The pattern to a sestina presents a complicated line and stanza structure. It is difficult not to sound too repetitive with thoughts and ideas because the same six end words must be repeated. After receiving feedback from my first draft about adding more imagery, I decided to add descriptive language that would go along with the emotional tone in order to make the ideas not sound so repetitive. I changed a boring line from, “I long to soar along
the clouds” to “I long to soar among the creamy, cotton, clouds”. By adding the
imagery and alliteration, immediately there is more emotion portrayed, which is
ultimately the goal of a poem.

In conclusion, the revision process has made me realize that the first draft is
never perfect and that there is always room for improvement. A change in revision
can be as simple as a change in word choice or turning a line into a metaphor in
order to portray more emotion to the reader. There is always an opportunity to
better yourself and your work as a writer.