



# “Between The Lines – Poetry and Imagination”

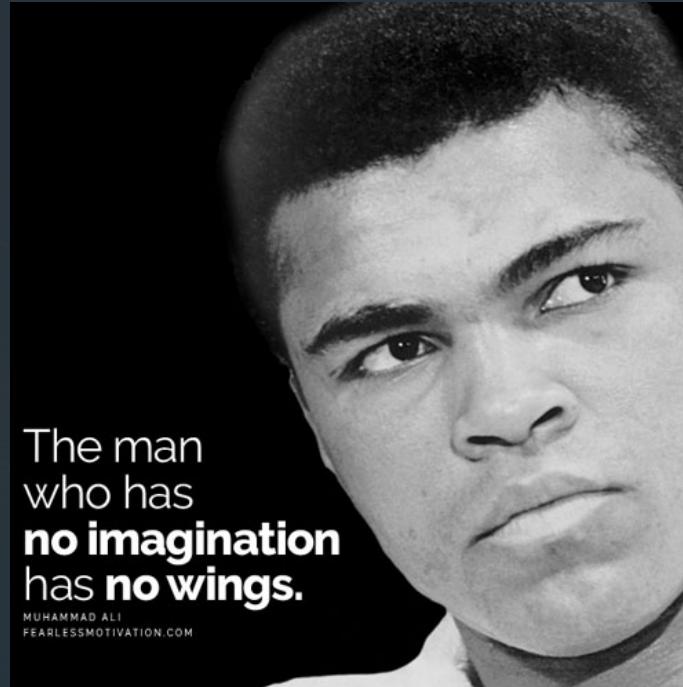
During this engaging workshop, Tom Cannon (Poet Laureate of Oshkosh) and Jeffrey McAndrew (Poet Laureate of North Fond du Lac) will delve into how poetry can assist in navigating challenging times.

Writing poetry aids in **understanding our emotions** and pinpointing issues that may seem overwhelming. Expressing our feelings through writing can bring us **profound relief**.

Furthermore, **revising our poems helps us refine and structure a strategy to cope with life's challenges**. Our speakers today will share a few of their poems they wrote during difficult times and lead you, the audience, through creating writings of their own.

# INTRO

- Welcome to our presentation!
- Speakers: Tom Cannon and Jeffrey McAndrew. Who are we?



# OVERVIEW OF OUR TALK

## Purpose of the Workshop

- Explore how poetry can help us navigate challenging times
- Understand the therapeutic benefits of writing poetry
- Learn how to express emotions through poetry
- Develop strategies for coping with life's challenges

## Todays Takeaway

- Imagination and poetry gives us a better perspective on life

# THE POWER OF POETRY

- Poetry as a form of self-expression
- Ability to capture emotions and experiences (Tom shares a poem)
- Provides insight and understanding

In writing about Paul, I got to a positive thought:

Yet he is with me still.

I yearn to sit with Sally  
and talk about him.

# WRITING POETRY AS THERAPY

- Writing as a means of processing emotions(Jeffrey shares 2 short poems about his son Stephen's struggle with his health)
- Finding relief through self-expression
- Poetry as a tool for self-discovery

# TOM CANNON'S JOURNEY

- Brief background on Tom Cannon's personal challenges
- Examples of poems written during difficult times

# JEFFREY MCANDREW'S PERSONAL JOURNEY

- Brief background on Jeffrey McAndrews' personal challenges
- Examples of poems written during difficult times (Jeff reads his new poem called "Mom Is Fading Away".)

# A thought to consider

We often begin writing poetry to express sadness. Find a need to express our feelings during hard times through poetry. And its good to express it.

Then as poets, we are on the lookout for things to capture with poetry. We are focused on seeing the beauty around us. The great thing is you find what you are looking for.

This also transfers to editing poems. We take a look at our sad poems and as we transform it, we might just find the beautiful side to the story.

Imagination finds the answers we seek!

# Workshop Exercise : Exploring Your Emotions

- Attendees will be given a prompt to reflect on their current emotions.
- Encourage attendees to write a poem based on their reflections
- Write on one of the following: Mixed feelings at the holidays, a break up, loss of a loved one, feeling sad that someone you love is sick or a vacation that turned in a different direction
- Write the beginning four lines of the poem, doesn't have to rhyme.
- (Challenge: do not use any abstract words love, anger, worry)

# WRITING POETRY AS THERAPY

“Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what’s inside you, to make your soul grow.”

- Kurt Vonnegut



# Why Make Powerful Poetry? (1 of 1000 reasons)

**Matthew Lieberman**  
Psychologist at UCLA

**“Brain scans on volunteers showed that putting feelings down on paper reduces activity in a part of the brain called the amygdala, which is responsible for controlling the intensity of our emotions.”**





# Revising



Take out articles, adjectives while avoiding weird speech patterns.  
Find words you can take out- phrases you can say in one word.  
How is it going to sound- soothing words, harsh words. Which words will have similar sounds.



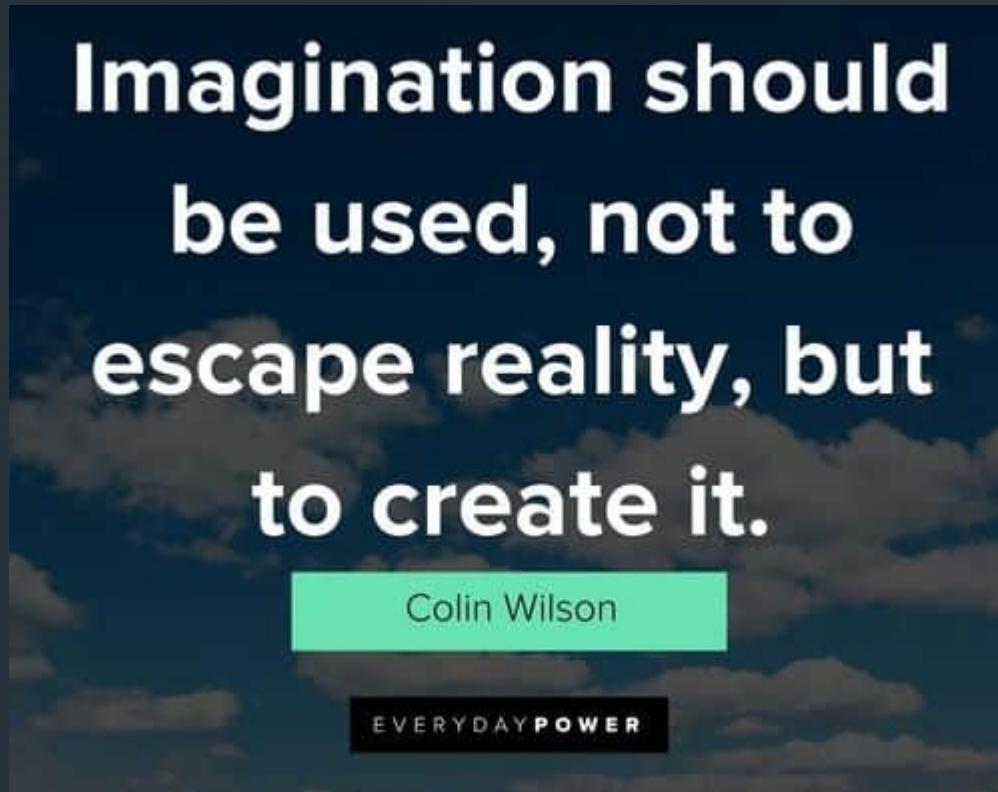
How Does it look and sound  
Does the 1<sup>st</sup> draft tend to a certain form?  
Are the lines help the reader hear it and the emphasis of words.



Replace any abstract words that made it into the poem (words like "love," "hate," and "fear") and replace them with concrete words –specific or unique  
Decide where the white space belongs

# CONCLUSION

- Recap of key points discussed
- Encouragement to continue exploring poetry as a tool for navigating life's challenges
- Thank you all for coming! ☺



**Imagination should  
be used, not to  
escape reality, but  
to create it.**

Colin Wilson

EVERYDAY POWER

# HOW TO CONTACT TOM AND JEFFREY

Jeffrey: On Facebook: “North Fond du Lac Poet Laureate” site

“Wordsmith Writers Club”

On X(formerly Twitter): @numinous19

On Instagram: Jeffrey.McAndrew

Tom Cannon: On Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/ThomasCannonAuthor/>

On Instagram: @Tcbcannon @Oshkosh\_poet



The End

# Back up activity

Freewrite: Write for a few minutes on your favorite childhood place (or anything else). Describe it using the five senses. How did you feel when you were there? Why do you think its important to you

- Do a free write on a task you like to do or hate to do. Just write the process of it. What happens. What you experience with your 5 senses.
- Now decide what that task represents to you. Re write, including either what you are thinking.
- Or what the task can represent as a life experience

# Back up quick activity

What is a phrase that you say or hear often?

Rewrite your first poem and after each line, write that phrase after it.

That's your refrain!