

Poetry Now!

Pantoum

Spring is the Time

Spring is the time for eggs:
soft air and sprigs of green.
Bright lemon sun,
wet nights singing.

Soft air and sprigs of green,
Snug nests and puddles.
Wet nights singing,
feathery days.

Snug nests and puddles--
new life, new hope.
Feathery days,
yellow as yolk.

New life, new hope.
Bright lemon sun,
yellow as yolk.
Spring is the time for eggs.

JOYCE SIDMAN

© Joyce Sidman 2008 This poem is from a book of mine that hasn't been published yet (and may never be), which is all about eggs!

Poetry Idea

This poem is called a pantoum, one of my favorite poetry forms (I've used it in *Dark Emperor*, *Butterfly Eyes* and *This Is Just to Say*). You might notice how repetitive it is. In a pantoum, the second and fourth lines of a stanza are repeated as the first and third of the next stanza. You are allowed to reword the lines slightly if you wish. Most classical pantoums rhyme in an *a-b-a-b* pattern, but mine usually don't rhyme at all.

1. Choose a subject that you think about a lot (maybe even obsess over).

2. Start with a very simple statement that sums up how you feel about this subject: "Chocolate is my favorite sin." This first line will also be your last line, because in a pantoum, the first and third lines of the first stanza are flipped to be the second and fourth lines of the last stanza. Are you freaking out about now? Don't. Please keep going—it's really fun.

3. Brainstorm some other simple phrases about your subject. "It is never far from my thoughts." "So smooth and melty." "All shapes and sizes."

4. Play around with them a bit, then start forming your first stanza, knowing that you'll be repeating the second and fourth in the next stanza. Keep going, playing around with the order of the lines. Then use your first and third lines and the second and last lines of your last stanza. It practically writes itself!!

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