

POETRY NOW!

"Extended Metaphor" poem

Mad Dog

Like a great yellow dog, the sun
laps up the water in the creeks,
and his hot panting breath curls the corn
and sears the pasture brown.

He runs wild through the dry summer
as if no master could whistle him back
or drive him to cover
in a kennel of clouds.

by James Hearst

© James Schell Hearst (1900-1983). Hearst was a farmer, teacher, and poet who was sometimes referred to as "the Robert Frost of the Midwest." He published many volumes of poetry and taught at University of Northern Iowa for thirty-four years. Every year, a literary journal called the North American Review awards the James Hearst Poetry Prize in his honor.

Poetry Idea

This poem uses what is called an Extended Metaphor. In other words, it doesn't just compare the sun to a dog, it tells you *all the different ways* the sun is like a dog, using the same metaphor throughout the poem.

1. Choose a subject (for instance, a clock) and then compare it to something else (a queen). It may take you a while to find the right metaphor (comparison) to use--it has to be a strong one that will hold up to "extension."
2. Start with simple statement of your metaphor, with a bit of description. "The clock is like a queen, high on a royal throne."
3. Then think about different ways your subject is like your metaphor: "Distant and unblinking, it rules our lives, / silent hands moving serenely over the numbered hours."

4. You can get a little silly with the characterization if you want: "It never stutters, or trips, or pauses in confusion, / bestowing instead a blank smile, a merciless eye / on its squirming subjects."

5. Have fun! When you think about, anything can be compared to anything (well, almost . . .).

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