

Directions: Apply the TP-CASTT strategy to one poem of your choosing.

Poem: _____ Author: _____

T- TITLE	What predictions can you make by looking at the title?	
P- PARAPHRASE	On a literal level, what is happening in the poem?	
C- CONNOTATION	Where does the author include layers of meaning?	
A- AUTHOR'S ATTITUDE	How does the author feel about the subject?	
S- STRUCTURE	What is the structure of the poem? Are there stanzas, shifts, spacing, etc.	
T- TITLE	Now that you've read the poem, how is the title significant?	
T- THEME	Consider the subject of the poem. What is the author's message about that?	

"Dreams" by Langston Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.*

	Tone / Attitude or reflections on access to the American dream.	2-3 Poetic Devices employed by the poet (see list below)
Poem 1		
Poem 2		
Poem 3		
Poem 4		
Poem 5		

Poetic Devices / Literary Terms

- Rhyme
- Meter
- Imagery
- Diction
- Anaphora
- Repetition
- Catalog
- Parallel structure
- Vernacular
- Figurative language
- Personification
- Rhetorical question
- Allusion

American Dream Poems

(Poem 1) Asian American

Why are we here?

We are here because we are sons to fathers who led their families through the jungles of Laos,

Escaping a genocide that I bet none of you here knows about,

We are here because Little Boy and Fat Man were dropped on the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima,

And out of 21,000 soldiers only 216 were taken as prisoners at the Great Battle of Iwo Jima

We are here because our villages were completely burned down to the ground,

And although we tried to stay strong

There was no way to convince the others that we were not Viet Kongs

We are here because our great grandfather heard about the Golden Mountains protected by the white demons

But as they came over,

They were confronted by an era of great hysteria in this land we call America

We are here because we were born in the muddy refugee camps where card board papers partition each living space

We are here simply because we are in search of a better place

And who are we?

We are the doctors in your hospitals

We are the students getting A s in you classrooms

We are the bad drivers in the streets

We are the stereotypes that you want us to be,

But most importantly we're not just Asian American

We're Hmong American, Chinese American, Japanese American, Vietnamese American,

Korean American, Thai American, Mien American and Laotian American,

And you can see us rolling in those vans

Or a nice car

But we know who we are

The question is "Do you know who you are? And where you come from?"

— Tong Thao

(Poem 2) I'm Sitting In My History Class

I'm sitting in my history class,
The instructor commences rapping,
I'm in my U.S. History class,
And I'm on the verge of napping.

The Mayflower landed on Plymouth Rock.
Tell me more! Tell me more!
Thirteen colonies were settled.
I've heard it all before.

What did he say?
Dare I ask him to reiterate?¹
Oh why bother
It sounded like he said,
George Washington's my father.

I'm reluctant to believe it,
I suddenly raise my *mano*.²
If George Washington's my father,
Why isn't he Chicano?

— Richard Olivas

¹ reiterate: to repeat or restate

² *mano*: hand in Spanish

(Poem 3)

Ellis Island

Beyond the red brick of Ellis Island
where the two Slovak children
who became my grandparents
waited the long days of quarantine,
after leaving the sickness,
the old Empires of Europe,
a Circle Line ship slips easily
on its way to the island
of the tall woman, green
as dreams of forests and meadows
waiting for those who'd worked
a thousand years
yet never owned their own.

Like millions of others,

I too come to this island,
nine decades the answerer
of dreams.

Yet only one part of my blood
loves that memory.
Another voice speaks
of native lands
within this nation.
Lands invaded
when the earth became owned.
Lands of those who followed
the changing Moon,
knowledge of the seasons
in their veins.

— Joseph Bruchac

(Poem 4)

Bilingual in a Cardboard Box

Soy Mexicano
I'm an American

Puedo cantar canciones del corazón
I am mute

Puedo ver los colores de la puesta del sol
I am blind

Puedo escuchar las voces de los pajaritos cantando
I am deaf

Soy indígena bailando al cielo que llora
I'm forever seated in a chair with wheels

Todos me respetan
I'm labeled by pointing fingers

Tengo mucho dinero
I live in a cardboard box

Estoy riéndome con el mundo alegre
I am sad

Salgo con mis amigos
I am alone

Estoy soñando
and I don't want to wake up!

— Javier Piña

(Poem 5)

Kitchenette Building

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,
Grayed in, and gray. "Dream" mate, a giddy sound, not strong
Like "rent", "feeding a wife", "satisfying a man".

But could a dream sent up through onion fumes
Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes
And yesterday's garbage ripening in the hall,
Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms,

Even if we were willing to let it in,
Had time to warm it, keep it very clean,

Anticipate a message, let it begin?

We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!
Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,
We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.

— Gwendolyn Brooks

Poetry Term Definitions

Allusion - A reference made to a well-known person, event, or place from history, music, art, or another literary work

Anaphora - Repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginnings of two or more clauses or lines

Antithesis - a figure of speech that uses opposition or contrast of ideas

Catalog poem - A poem that uses repetition and variation in the creation of a list, or catalog, of objects or desires, plans, or memories

Diction - Writer's choice of words; helps convey voice and tone

Figurative Language - Imaginative language or figures of speech not meant to be taken literally (metaphor, simile, hyperbole, etc.)

Imagery - Descriptive language used to create word pictures; words and details that appeal to 1 or more of the 5 senses

Meter - Pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry

Parallel Structure - Grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence, so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased for emphasis

Personification - Figure of speech used to describe something as having human qualities

Repetition - Use of any element of language (sound, word, phrase, line or stanza) more than once

Rhetorical Question - A question that is asked for effect or one for which the answer is obvious

Rhyme - Repetition of sounds at the ends of words

Vernacular - the language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region

