

Writing Poetry

an assignment and a drill



by Miles Mathis

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Before we get to the poetry lesson, we'll start this paper with some blurbs from my email. I get some stunners, as I have admitted before, but it has been an especially good couple of months, so I thought I would share some of them:

Just wanted to let you know, I am sure people tell you things like this all the time. If sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night, I will reach over to the side of the bed where I have a few binders of my favorite of your essays about the fakes. I will pull one out, turn my side of the bed, put the light on and read an old essay (I don't have a smartphone or device) and read until my eyes get tired and then go back to sleep. The other night I re-read a couple of my favorites, the Jonestown essay, the Patton, the Alan Turing, and of course the Beer Hall Putsch. Cheers to you :)

Since I began reading your papers I stopped getting nightmares.

Miles you are Miles ahead of everyone. I stopped reading and listening to everything else and just reread your papers over and over.

You aren't just the smartest person alive, you must be the smartest person who ever lived. How does that feel?

Looks like you are famous now.

You changed my life Dude. Everything makes sense now. I can read just about anything and see through it. Don't ever stop doing what you do, we need you.

They should just give you all the Nobel Prizes back to about 1950 in all categories. Although I guess you would throw them all in the trash.

I don't think the history of debate has ever seen anything like your takedowns, including the most recent on Ron Unz and his choir. Brutal doesn't even begin to describe it. It's like watching Kong wade into a pack of hyenas and jackals. Or more like watching Kong wade into a pack of Smurfs and Teletubbies.

Very flattering, so thanks everyone. I do appreciate the support. I also doubt that other writers get mail of quite that . . . flavor. I sort of doubt that any Joe Rogan or Ron Unz fans have suggested they are the smartest guys that ever lived. I should also tell you that I believe a lot of my email is being intercepted, so if you have sent me polite email and I haven't replied, that may be why. I reply briefly to almost everyone except obvious trolls or those who swamp me with multiples. But, opposite to expectation, I get far fewer emails now than I did a few years ago, before Google started censoring me. I should definitely get out of protonmail, but I think they are all compromised. I tried Yandex last year and that was a disaster, since they couldn't even talk to many Western servers, I guess because they are Russian. I refuse to move to Google, Microsoft, or Yahoo, since they are also censoring me. CIA is my nemesis and CIA runs the Internet, so I guess it is a miracle I get any email at all. That said, I have no reason to think my POBox is compromised. I seem to be getting all your physical mail there. Everyone who has asked for a confirmation has gotten one, so nothing has gone missing so far. Again, thanks. The latest fund drive was very successful, and the Unz spike came on the tail end of it, making it even better. I can make it through Christmas without starving, and my cats will remain fat and happy.

OK, it is November 1, and I have already written 100 papers for this site this year, not including guest writers or my science site. Which of course is an average of ten a month. So I am on schedule for another 120 this year, same as last year. You may be expecting a paper about the election, but that is the last thing I want to talk about. I am sick to death of it and wish both candidates would go back to Pluto or Nibiru or wherever and leave us alone. The only thing I saw worth commenting on this week was a quote from the *New York Times* claiming that if Trump won, the mainstream media in its current form was finished. True, but even more true if the Dems steal the election again. That will be far worse for the *New York Times* and similar places, since it will tank their credibility down from 15% to zero. We are told by the alternative press that the mainstream press is attacking half the country, but they are actually attacking about 85% of it, even now. All the polls and statistics are faked, to make you think the race is tight when it isn't. Kamala would get less than 20% of any real vote, and a large part of that is people who would vote for a dead parrot if it was blue. Most people voting Dem aren't voting for Kamala, they are voting *against* Trump. The "for Kamala" vote is about 5%. So remember that when the fake votes start coming in.

Even if Trump wins, I don't expect any cleaning of the swamp. I expect Trump to blow more kisses to the CIA and Goldman Sachs and Israel and Pfizer. So that won't change. What has changed irrevocably is the Government's loss of the media. They have broken their main instrument of

propaganda. The mighty Wurlitzer is kaput and Trump doesn't have the tools to fix it. In that article, the *New York Times* implies they will have to move to some planB, but there is no planB. The honeymoon is over and there is no rebuilding the relationship. You can't propagandize people who won't believe anything you tell them.

The rulers have only two ways out of that hole: 1) huge concessions to the people, to regain trust, or 2) a quick dive into total tyranny—the Mordor solution. They seem to have chosen #2, since we have seen the WEF and other places praise the Chinese model. They see that as far short of Mordor and workable. But they are missing two things: a) they themselves don't want to live in China, so if they turn the US and Europe into China, where are they going to hide? b) Americans and Europeans are not Asians, and have not been brought up on that model. Asians were raised with huge levels of discipline even before Communism came along, but Westerners never were, and especially aren't now. Faced with that future, Westerners would either resist or balk. Very few of them would accept it, even with high levels of violence and force. Even a prison relies on compliance. If all the inmates refuse to bust rocks, make license plates, or follow orders, you have a total breakdown. At that point you don't have a Chinese model, you have an African model, and the rulers don't like the African model, since it isn't profitable. Right now, Africa is highly profitable only as a source of natural resources, like minerals, but that relies on rich nations buying the minerals. If the whole world becomes like Africa, the worldwide economy breaks down. Africans have very little excess wealth to tax or steal. Like Native Americans, they have almost nothing the Phoenicians want except mineral rights. So moving the world to the African model is the last thing they should want. The Western model was far more profitable in every way, way beyond the Chinese model, since we had far more disposable income. So it is hard to believe the Phoenicians want to move us to the Chinese model. It makes no financial sense.

As I keep telling them, they should be reversing into the 1950s model as fast as their little feet and big noses will carry them, since that is where they maximized profit/stability at the same time. To do that requires they regain trust, and they cannot regain trust without huge concessions. Instead of empty mouthings of democracy and freedom, they have to re-install *real* democracy and freedom. If they can't become benevolent overnight, they at least have to quit being so transparently malevolent. They have to reverse the sled, drive it down from Mount Crumpet, and give back the presents they have stolen during the night, making some effort to be less green and Grinchy. Nothing else will do.

That's my pre-election warning, straight from the Muses. But the main reason I am on this page today is to talk again about poetry. How's that for a gear-switch? I do that on purpose, with full intent, since poetry is the farthest thing away from current politics I can think of. Plus, poetry is what I am actually working on this month, to maintain sanity. That, and double doses of my beautiful cats. So I am including you in my regimen for your own benefit. I am showing you exactly how it is done.

Am I blowing off steam by writing poems about my hatred of politics and news? No, of course not. As with my art, my poetry is not political at all. It is an escape from all that. It is another part of me altogether, almost another person entirely. It is not “me against the world” or “me against Modernism”, it is just ME. Me alone. It is the art and poetry I would be writing if I lived on another world entirely, a world where I could just feel without reacting. The Moderns will tell me that makes it inauthentic or cowardly, but I believe it is just the opposite. It is not hiding in a pretend world, since as I have proved the world we live in is the pretend world. The world we live in is the inauthentic and cowardly world. So I am being most authentic when I am avoiding that world as much as possible. To say it another

way, my reality is far more real than the fake reality taught to us. The only time I actually see reality is when I look within. My dreams are far more real than the nightmare world we are inhabiting, since they are not polluted with all its lies and corruptions. The Moderns have taught us we must accept the lies and corruptions to be authentic, but that is upside down to the truth. Accepting the corruption does not make us authentic, it only makes us corrupt. The Moderns can keep all the uglinesses, I will keep living among my beauties and truths.

I do *concede* the external world. If I didn't, I wouldn't spend so much time fighting it. The world is real in that sense, and I have never tried to deny it. Many of my science papers are about that, you know: the belief in the raw existence of this world. It is not a hologram or projection and its reality is *important*. Important because no science or art can be done without complete belief in the external world. However, conceding the external world exists is not equivalent to accepting it as is, much less to bowing to it. I concede that I must deal with the world, but the world must also deal with me. The influence goes both ways. As an artist, it is not up to me to be influenced, it is to influence. I was not born to be corrupted by the world, I was born to solve problems and create beauty and meaning. As far as possible, **I am here to uncorrupt the world.** I will not do that by listening to corrupt people or following them. I will not do that by creating corrupt or decadent art or poetry. I will do it by following my own inner voices and trusting them.

But I didn't come here to give you that sermon. It sort of wrote itself, out of the blue. I let it stand. I came here to give you a lesson, as if you were a young poetry student in a writing class. The creative writing classes have been eviscerated on purpose, so young people aren't being given any good advice, in my opinion. Everything they are told is upside-down to any truth of art. They are told not to read any classical poetry, but to read only Modern poetry. All the great poets of the past, including Shakespeare, are generally looked upon as sentimental rhymers. If they are mentioned, it is only as examples of what to avoid. Same thing we see in painting, where all classical artists are dismissed as shallow illustrators or court lickspittles. I have always been dismissed in that category, though they go one better now, claiming realists are just photocopyers. As if there is no more to what I do than a Xerox machine. Anyone can do that, we are told. Except that they can't. The Moderns can't do anything I do, in any field, and they know that. So they can only survive by claiming they don't want to. Though they do. We all know they would give their right arms to do what I do.

Well, as my student, you don't have to give your right arm. You just have to open your eyes and your ears and look and listen. You have been sold a falsehood on purpose. A reversal. A topsy-turvy world. Everything you think is true is false and everything you have been told is bad is good. Poetry is not about creating some Modern nullity of small personal reflection or everyday experience. It is about avoiding that sort of pitiful moan like the plague. You have been taught that the world doesn't need another Shakespearean sonnet, but what the world really doesn't need is another *New Yorker* poem about a moldy ham sandwich. What the world of poetry most needs is a poem so astonishingly beautiful it makes a Shakespearean sonnet look like a moldy ham sandwich. A tall order, yes, but we have to start somewhere. That order at least puts us on the right track. That's the kind of pep talk you need from a teacher, not the Modern recommendation you aim low to prove your meekness or commonality.

Real artists never aim low, for one thing. You aren't writing to ingratiate yourself to the failed poets posing as editors at some magazine, you are writing to impress the gods of poetry, the ghosts of Horace and Sappho and Basho and Hopkins and Keats.

But let's say you are already a wasted poet of some natural talent and depth, and you are here for more than a pep talk. You want an assignment or drill. Well, I have that, too. One of the things I like to do to prep for a poem is go by hand through a large dictionary. I have a two-volume shorter Oxford dictionary that I use for this, since it helps pull up some uncommon words. That's about half the lesson here: find some words that haven't been masticated to death in the mouths of a billion swine. The other half is finding poetic looking and sounding words. If you want to use them, you have to first find them. You will say that sounds weird: shouldn't you look up the words you need when you need them, not just grab pretty words at random? No, that would be like saying you don't need to know anything about color until you need a specific color in a painting. As a poet, you are fundamentally a wordsmith, so the more you know about words, the better. This is your job. Going through the dictionary looking for good words is one of your primary jobs, and the idea it isn't is what is perverse.

Besides, we have already admitted this is a drill. It is part of your education, so if it is a bit academic, that is to be expected. You have to fundamentally change the way you look at not just poetry, but education itself, and this is part of that. You have to ditch the Modern idea that everything academic is old-fashioned and a hindrance. You are taught that poetry just hisses out of your head like a burp, but it doesn't. It is hard work. Like learning to paint, it requires years of practice and large amounts of knowledge. Art isn't a human right or an equal-time guarantee. It is an accomplishment, and as such is rare.

I find it is best to go into this assignment with no preconceptions. No idea what you are going to write about. Just grab words because of how they look and sound. You can sort them later. This is a great learning experience, because it teaches you to look at the words mainly as art objects. You aren't even too concerned about what they mean, though you will ignore words that can't be fit to poems. You don't need technical scientific words, for instance, no matter how pretty they are, since you won't be able to use them. This drill forces you to look at the words separated from their meanings, as only sounds in the air and shapes on the page. Modernism has taught you poetry isn't about that, but it IS about that, and always was. Making it not about that has not clarified or purified poetry, it has only impoverished it. No, you don't want poetry *only* about that, since that is shallow, but you want poetry that is *also* about that. Modernism has told us it is either-or, but it isn't. Art is both. Art is anything and everything you need to do as an artist. You shouldn't overload a poem just to be clever, but on the other hand you shouldn't limit a poem just to fit a milieu or a set of self-appointed critics. Poetry has bottomed-out due to Modernism and it needs to be raised back up.

To say it again: you are allowed to do anything you need to do to create a beautiful poem. There are no rules to that, especially not negative rules. There are no "thou shalt nots" in art. Except "thou shalt not create weak art". The only reason not to do something is because it doesn't work. The only limit to maximalism is that it doesn't work. If it is too much or over the top, you will know without some milquetoast Modern critic telling you. Poetry is still about subtlety and restraint—it always will be—but that doesn't mean you have to be pinched and boring.

What I do in the first round is find and write down about thirty new words that I don't often use and that haven't been used by many classical poets. Then I study that list for words that seem like they could go together: words that share a theme or a feeling or a taste. I pull out those words and start riffing on them, creating some possible lines. Before long, I find that this set of words will suggest a

poem to me. Once I get an idea of the subject of that poem, I go through the dictionary a second time, looking for more words that fit that subject or theme, so that I have them to pull in if necessary in later stanzas. Amazingly, I find I can usually fit in most of the original thirty by the time I am done, which is sort of uncanny, almost as if the Muses of poetry sent them to me.

You may think that sounds like rationalizing, but I really have found that it works like that. I think that if you are open to it, it may work for you as well. In this way, it is sort of like the library game you may have heard about, since it has gotten some press recently. In that one, you go into a library and wander the stacks aimlessly for a while, never consulting the card catalog, until, as if by magic, some book that is perfect for you falls at your feet or catches your eye. You may even open the book to a specific page, which has something poignant to say about your life on that day. Spooky, but in a good way. All I can say is that I have had that experience many times. Maybe it only happens to artists, or maybe it can happen to anyone, I don't know. Most people probably block the experience, by actively not believing in it, while those who think it is possible find it commonplace. The definition of faith.

Anyway, your first efforts at building poems this way may be somewhat stilted and artificial. But if you keep at it you will be able to refine the process, avoiding words that are too arcane, technical, or florid. The words have to fit in a line, after all, and you don't want them drawing too much attention on their own. Any word that is unknown to a reader will have that effect initially, so don't be too hard on the word. Think how it will look to a reader upon a second or third reading, once he knows what it means and how to pronounce it and so on. If it is still too florid on a third reading like that, best ditch it. Otherwise, it is not your problem. You aren't writing poetry for eight year olds, or the mental equivalent. If it fits your eye it doesn't have to fit everyone else's. Don't try to write up, since that is snooty, but never write down, either, since that is even worse. Write at your own level and others will join you, someday if not today.

The great thing about this drill is that it gets you started. Sometimes that is the most important thing. I no longer have trouble getting started, but you might. For example, when I wrote this today, I had pretty much nothing. I had the idea to write about poetry and the idea to tell you about the dictionary game. When I started I thought, damn, that will get me about two sentences, then what? But as you see, I got five pages out of it and another ripping plug for the Muses. Not surprising, since they wrote most of this while I blinked and drank coffee.