

Pen Your Own Poem

American Literature

Name: _____

Instructions:

After studying the modernist poets—what they wrote, why they wrote, how they wrote—your job will be to create your own poem, fashioned in the “modernist” tradition but recast in a contemporary light. That is to say, you must use the tools and conventions of those poets (imagists and objectivists in particular) between the World Wars, but you must choose a subject and style to match the socio-cultural environment of this new millennium. Imagine you are part of a new poetic movement: the “millennium” poets. What sort of poetry does this look like?

Due _____ **at the beginning of class**

Rubric:

You must follow the formatting and submission guidelines:

- Your poem must be typed
- Your poem must be between two and twelve lines
- Your poem must include an original title
- You must staple this sheet to the back of your poem

Your poem must follow Ezra Pound’s three primary rules:

- Explore a single image instead of many
- Use no superfluous language—every word counts, every word should reveal something; no fancy adjectives
- Use concrete language instead of abstract—forget symbolism; tell me what it is

Your poem must also follow the two principles of William Carlos Williams:

- Find beauty and meaning in the “everyday”
- No ideas but things—allow the *object* of the poem to reveal the *idea* behind it; don’t talk about your “feelings”

Additionally, your “millennium” poem must:

- Concerns a subject/image that *defines* your generation and the new millennium
- Show creative purpose

Margins, spacing, punctuation, capitalization, typography, and other such “stuff” is up to you—just make sure that it’s creative, that there’s a reason behind it . . . *and that you can explain those reasons*. Refer to the rubric above to be certain you’ve satisfied the requirements of this assignment.

Total Score: _____