

## Writing “Sorry” Poems (and Other Poems)

Advice from Ms. Merz’s 6<sup>th</sup> Grade gang



**Anthony:** We thought you might like to know how we wrote our poems. First, we read “This Is Just to Say” by W.C. Williams, in class. It is a really short poem, without many words. We thought: why did he write it? Who was it written to? We decided W.C. was kind of a smart aleck, because he was sorry—but not sorry, too. He would have done the same thing all over again (eat the plums).

**Maria:** We tried to write the same kind of poem: a poem that apologizes, but says why we HAD to do what we did. Mrs. Merz says (we tried to get her to write this, but she wouldn’t) every poem has an “idea.” Other writers can use the “idea” of the poem without copying the words—like using the same box of crayons, but drawing different pictures.

**José:** We wrote about our own memories. And we tried to put in lots of details, like sights, sounds, smells, and feelings.

**Ricky:** My favorite part was using my imagination. Being a hamster for a while was cool.

**Carmen:** I like poems that make you smile, but also make you think, “Yeah, that’s exactly how it is,” like Maria’s poem “What Girls Want.” I like to laugh, so I try to put a little humor in all my poems.

**Raneesha:** You have to tell the truth. Why mess around with stuff that doesn’t matter? A poem is an excuse to speak your mind, and the better you do it, the more people will listen.

**DaRon:** That’s because poetry comes from a different part of you, a part that’s hidden most of the time. You’ve got to say it really well, in the best language you can, because you’re showing your hidden side to the world.

**Jewel:** It was hard to give our poems to the people we wrote them to. Some people ignored them or got upset. (Ricky’s hamster tore his up and made a nest with it.) There was some crying that day in class. There was a poem that solved a mystery, but we didn’t know who wrote it (we still don’t). We were all wondering if this was a good idea or not.

**Tenzin:** Then we started making the poems into a book. And the book became big and solid somehow, like a house we’d built ourselves that other people could walk through. Each poem was like a room you could stay in for a while.

**Anthony:** That’s how I think of a poem now—like a room you build when you need it, to live in until it’s time to leave.