Marsha Waldman – ELA Lesson Plan
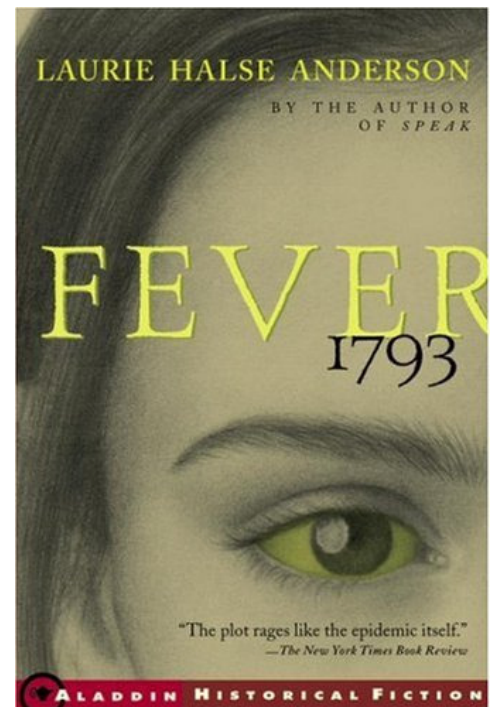
Found Poetry in Fever 1793

Overview
Students compose found poems based on descriptive passages they have chosen from **Fever 1793** by Laurie Halse Anderson. They pick out words, phrases and lines from the prose passage then arrange and format the excerpts to compose their own poems.

This lesson uses **Fever 1793** as an example, but would work well with any fiction using language rich in poetic techniques.

This lesson plan was adapted from ReadWrite, Think, *Found Poems/Parallel Poems*

Rationale
This process of recasting the text they are reading in a different genre helps students become more insightful readers and develop creativity in thinking and writing. While this lesson may seem to focus on writing, the primary objective is to make students more aware of the extent to which techniques usually associated with poetry are regularly used in fiction. It will encourage them to read fiction more closely, conscious of the author's art.

Student Objectives
Students will:

- Review the basic techniques of poetry.
- Select a particularly descriptive passage in a piece of prose fiction.
- Identify significant words, phrases and sentences in the passage.
- Arrange the excerpts into a found poem.
- Revise found poems.
- Recite poems, sharing with classmates.

Instructional Plan
Resources

- Copies of **Fever 1793**
- Large print excerpts for motivational activity
- Overhead projector and acetates with sample passages and found poems
- Copies of Found Poem Instructions
- Copies of Rubric

Preparation
- Students will be well into reading **Fever 1793**
- Prepare sample passages and poems

Instruction and Activities

Session One

1. Introduction: **Fever 1793** has passages that are so rich and moving that they are like poems. We are going to find some of these poems in the text today.
2. Motivational activity: the following lines are printed on separate pieces of paper, in large type. Student volunteers hold up the sheets while their classmates instruct them to arrange themselves in order to create a poem. Students explain their reasons for placement; for example, images go together, one line seems to wrap it all up, lines have a similar rhythm.

> The rhythmic turning of the wagon wheels
> The beat of his heart
> The hum of insects in the barley fields
> My head rested on his chest
> Blended in a lullaby

3. Define found poem:
   A found poem takes existing writing and reshapes it, reorders it, and presents it as a poem. Like a collage created from words, found poetry is often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems. The writer decides how to break up the lines and arrange them on the page.
4. Discussion: What are we looking for?
   a. A passage with a clear theme or message of its own.
   b. A passage that uses poetic techniques.
   c. Review poetic techniques and provide handout
5. Using sample passages displayed on an overhead projector, step students through the process of composing original found poems, using the Found Poem Instructions.
6. Assignment: students search through the text, select a passage, and write a found poem. Finish for homework

Session Two

1. Students work with a partner for a peer editing session, using the <u>Found Poem Instructions</u> to make suggestions for improvement.
2. Students share their found poems with the class. Students make positive comments regarding one another's work.

Closing:

Remind students to look for the poems within other genres whenever they read.

Assessment:

Evaluate the students' poems based on the rubric.

NY State ELA Standards

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

1. Listening and reading for literary response involves comprehending, interpreting, and critiquing imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on
personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, and recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.

Students:
- read and view independently and fluently across many genres of literature from many cultures and historical periods
- identify the distinguishing features of different literary genres, periods and traditions and use those features to interpret the work
- recognize and understand the significance of a wide range of literary elements and techniques, (including figurative language, imagery, allegory, irony, blank verse, symbolism, stream-of-consciousness) and use those elements to interpret the work
- understand how multiple levels of meaning are conveyed in a text

2. Speaking and writing for literary response involves presenting interpretations, analyses, and reactions to the content and language of a text. Speaking and writing for literary expression involves producing imaginative texts that use language and text structures that are inventive and often multilayered.

Students:
- present responses to and interpretations of literature, making reference to the literary elements found in the text and connections with their personal knowledge and experience
- write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice

Found Poem Instructions

1. Select a passage that has rich language and strong emotions that focuses on a single theme.

2. Carefully re-read the text you have chosen, and look for 50–100 words that stand out in the prose passage. Highlight, underline, or copy words and phrases that you find particularly powerful, moving, or interesting. Keep them in the order that you found them.

3. Look back over your list and cut out everything that is dull, or unnecessary, or that just doesn't seem right for your poem.

4. Make any minor changes necessary to create your poem. You can change punctuation and make little changes to the words to make them fit together (such as change the tenses, possessives, plurals, and capitalizations).

5. Read aloud as you arrange the words! Arrange the words so they make a rhythm you like. Test the possible line breaks by pausing slightly. If it sounds good, it's probably right. Make any deletions or minor changes.

6. Pay attention to line breaks, layout, and other elements that will emphasize important words or significant ideas in the poem.

7. You can also put key words on lines by themselves.

8. When you're close to an edited down version, if you absolutely need to add a word or two to make the poem flow more smoothly, to make sense, to make a point, *you may add up to two words of your own*.

9. Choose a title—is there a better title than "Found Poem"? You might want a title that emphasizes your theme.

10. Rewrite your final version on a separate page.

11. At the bottom of the poem, tell where the words in the poem came from.

Instructions adapted from "Found and Headline Poems" from Getting the Knack: 20 Poetry Writing Exercises by Stephen Dunning and William Stafford.

Found Poems Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Focus on One Theme	The entire poem is related to a distinct theme.	Most of the poem is related to the one theme.	Some of the poem is related to the theme.	No attempt has been made to focus on a theme.
Use of Details	The poem uses effective details from the original prose passage that go beyond the obvious or predictable.	The poem uses effective details from the original prose passage.	The poem uses obvious or predictable details from the original prose passage.	The poem does not use details from the original prose passage.
Logical Progression or Sequence	The poem is presented in a logical sequence.	The poem is presented in a logical sequence, but includes 1–2 items out of order.	The poem is presented in a logical sequence, but includes 3–4 items out of order.	The poem is presented out of sequence or with an unclear order.
Clear, Consistent Tone	The poem maintains a consistent tone that clearly and effectively communicates the writer's attitude toward the subject.	The poem maintains a consistent tone that usually communicates the writer's attitude toward the subject.	The poem maintains a consistent tone but does not effectively communicate the writer's attitude toward the subject.	The poem does not maintain a consistent or clear tone.

Basic Poetry Techniques

- **Imagery:** word or sequence of words representing a sensory experience
  - *Example:* "bells knelling classes to a close" (auditory)

- **Simile**: a comparison of two things using like or as
  - Example: She is beautiful *like* the morning sun.

- **Metaphor**: a comparison of two things *without* using like or as
  - Example Lies are a friend to some.

- **Personification**: an inanimate object is given human like characteristic
  - Example The trees *danced* in the wind.

- **Hyperbole**: a great exaggeration
  - Example She ate a *mountain* of mashed potatoes.

- **Alliteration:** at the beginning of words, there is a repetition of consonants
  - Example: The **s**wimmer's **s**kin **s**izzled in the **s**un.

- **Assonance**: anywhere in the words, there is a repetition of vowels
  - Example: Please b**a**ke me a d**a**te c**a**ke.

- **Consonance**: anywhere in words, there is repetition of consonant sounds
  - Example: Wri**t**e a grea**t** paper on by the due da**t**e.

- **Onomatopoeia**: words that sound like the name of the word
  - Example: The cereal *snapped, crackled, and popped*.

- **Repetition**: words or phrases are repeated
  - Example: **Because there is** hope, **because there is** love, **because there is** beauty, I can go on

- **Rhyme**: sound alike endings of words
  - *End rhyme*: At the end of lines, words rhyme.
    - Example: Jars and cans lined the **rack**;
      They tumbled down on my **back**

  - *Internal rhyme*: Words that rhyme are in the middle of the line.
    - Example: I carry a gold **locket** in my **pocket**.

CHAPTER THREE

August 16th, 1793

Oh then the hands of the pitiful Mother
prepared her Child's body for the grave . . .
— Letter of Margaret Morris
Philadelphia, 1793

Dead? Polly's dead?" I couldn't have heard her properly. "Polly Logan?" The sweat on my neck turned to ice and I shivered. "Our Polly? That can't be."

I tried to remember the last time we had played together. It was before she started working for us. Last Christmas—no, well before that. Her family had moved to Third Street at least two years ago. She had been a cradle friend, the girl I played dolls with. We sang nonsense songs together when we churned butter. I could see it then, my small hands and Polly's together on the handle of the churn. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes.

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Sample Found Poem:
      In Memory of Polly

She had been a cradle friend,
The girl I played dolls with.
We sang nonsense songs together.
We churned butter,
My small hands and Polly's
Together
On the handle of the churn.
I took a deep breath.
And closed my eyes.
Dead? Polly's dead?
Our Polly?
The sweat on my neck turned to ice.
I shivered.
That can't be.

From Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson