

Experimental Poems Exegesis

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Writing Across Cultures 2106LHS

Exegesis

In an interview with the ASU Hispanic Research Center (2013), Urayoán Noel discusses the importance of form and language in his poetry to have fun creating something new in an unfamiliar context. This is how I approached the creation of my suite of five poems. Each piece uses a different technique as a direct interpretation of a *Hi-Density Politics* (Noel, 2010) poem or indirectly through inspiration from a line, motif, or theme. For example, 'Keeping Afloat' (Hope, p.2-3) is a homophonic translation of 'Co-op city' (Noel, 2010, p.21), 'Iris Little' (Hope, p.6) is an anagram of the Trill Set II (Noel, 2010, p.70) poem, and 'All About the N+7' (Hope, p.7) uses the aleatoric formula N+7. 'Flarfing Around in Trumpworld' (Hope, p.4-5) is a flarf that parallels the political themes, such as in 'Sitibodis,' (Noel, 2010, p.54-56) whereas 'Christmas Poem Collage' (Hope, p.8) is a cut and paste of a line from different Christmas poems inspired by 'african noel.coachella valley snow,' (Noel, 2010, p.47-48).

'Keeping Afloat' (Hope, p.2-3) opens my collection because the surface level embodies having fun with form and language. The structure of 'Co-op city' (Noel, 2010, p.21) and its mix of Spanish and English words drew me to create a homophonic tribute. Also, as with Noel's poetry in this collection, there is a deeper meaning behind the words if the reader looks. I used a rhyming generator (Rhyme Finder, n.d.; RhymeZone, n.d.) occasionally to choose syllabic rhymes and half rhymes that were witty and slightly nonsensical that could also tell the story of the pressures of the corporate world (combined entity, prison, Businessmen keeping afloat, all out not yet) (Hope, p.2) and some outlets for pent-up frustration (drugs, prayer, and nature) (Hope, p.2-3).

The second poem 'Flarfing Around in Trumpworld' (Hope, p.4-5) is a deliberately controversial story of the businessman turned president, Donald Trump. It uses the self-assertiveness of automatic writing (Goldsmith, 2008) as a narrative, and the intentionality of mannerist writing (Goldsmith, 2008) through specific Google search terms (Sullivan, 2011). This technique is not without its flaws, however. The fluid

nature of the internet means paywalls may later block the information originally available or it could change. Sometimes I found I had misinterpreted a subtitle as an opening paragraph. Other times, they were opinion pieces. In the spirit of being 'flarfy,' (Sullivan, 2011) I choose to keep these lines as they supported the whole and resonated in the workshop feedback.

As 'Iris Little,' (Hope, p.6) the third poem, was an anagram of the second Trill Set poem (Noel, 2010, p.70), it received little feedback, except that it needed more clarification of its anagrammatical nature. To rectify this, I changed the title to be an anagram of Trill Set and added a brief explanation. I choose this technique as it is another way to (mis)interpret words without using translation software (Noel, 2010, acknowledgments & notes) as Noel had done. I found it necessary to use two different online anagram generators (Inge's Anagram Generator, n.d.; Wordsmith.org. n.d.), as they produced varied results, and ran complete sentences through each. While this took longer for the results to come back, they were of higher quality. Some, such as 'Magana Magana Magana Magana' and 'non-gnome but gnome buT' (Noel, 2010, p.70), elicited illogical word combinations. I broke the sentence into smaller phrases and ran them through the generators separately, which produced better results.

The fourth poem, 'All About the N+7' (Hope, p.7) was going to end the suite as someone suggested this ties the suite together. This technique created a humorous, yet sometimes confusing, outcome that many readers may be unfamiliar with. I wanted to finish on a more familiar tone, so shifted its order. I experimented with a large and small dictionary from an online N+7 generator (Spoonbill-a, n.d.; Spoonbill-b, n.d.), as well as two physical dictionaries (Moore, 2010; Turner, 1984) to see which option worked best. Doing so also helped to identify the nouns to change, which is the whole point of this compositional procedure; to alter the poem's meaning while still linking to the original.

I selected 'What it's all about' (Noel, 2010, p.33-34) as there were a good number of nouns without being overwhelming. Using the physical dictionaries allowed me to massage my word choices to influence the result even more. For example, some words, such as limp and back (Moore, 2010), have multiple entries. This allowed me to choose whether I counted them as one word or two, affecting the seventh word, which improved cohesiveness if it was also a noun. I left my changes as capitalised word to break up the otherwise all capitals.

'Christmas Poem Collage,' (Hope, p.8) completes the poetry quintet. The seasonal imagery and 'african noel. coachella valley snow,' (Noel, 2010, p.47-48) line 'Ozark trail northpole tents no dr. seuss how the grinch stole Christmas of noel gift and dont you wish you girlf! riend was hot like me,' inspired this piece. In the acknowledgments (Noel, 2010, acknowledgements & notes), Noel describes this work as developing from found poems (Poets.org, n.d.), which reminded me of the cut and paste, or collage technique.

In keeping with found poems (Poets.org, n.d.), I refashioned some lines to remove a word to improve the rhythm and flow. I created three stanzas of three rhyming couplets, totalling twenty-four lines, the date of Christmas Eve. Drawing on my history, as Noel does in his poems, I sourced single lines from different Christmas poems from today and as far back as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I wanted to mix contemporary poets and writers with more traditional ones to create an unusual yet oddly comforting blend reminiscent of the poetry people are more familiar with, providing a nice way to finish.

I designed the order to be witty, facetious, nonsensical, quirky, and nostalgic to start on a light-hearted note, then move into humour and shock to confuse the reader, and end on a more reassuring tone. I did this using the mannerist, automatic, and aleatoric techniques of homophonics, N+7, anagrams, flarfs, and a collage relating to specific *Hi-Density Politics* (Noel, 2010) poems or inspired by them.

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