



MINDFUL POETRY MOMENTS

created by
THEWELL

This poetry lesson was created by The Well offering students and teachers alike the chance to pause and reflect on poetry's ability to encounter ourselves, the world, and the mystery of each other.

Poem: "A Blessing"*

Poet: Samyak Shertok, read by Samyak Shertok

Written: 2024

"A Blessing" is a feast for the senses, with the speaker describing a delicious meal his father ("Apa") has offered for others. This offering brings all sorts of amazing feelings and memories for the speaker.

DAY 1: This poem is about a wonderful meal cooked by the poet's father for others. Even if you don't know the ingredients, pay attention to the imagery – the sounds and the sights of the ingredients being cooked, shared, and eaten – and imagine what this dish might taste like.

DAY 2: Think about a meal that a loved one cooks for you. How do they make it? What does it look, smell, and taste like? Imagine your favorite dish while you listen.

DAY 3: Eating or even thinking about food engages our senses. As you listen today and you think about either this meal or one of your favorite meals, notice: Can you smell it? Can you taste it? Can you hear the meal being cooked?

DAY 4: A blessing is something that brings well-being to others. This poem centers food as a wonderful blessing. Other than food, what are some other simple blessings we can offer to one another?

DAY 5: On our last day with this poem, think about a blessing you can offer to others.

ABOUT THE POET

SAMYAK SHERTOK'S poems appear in Best New Poets, Cincinnati Review, Gettysburg Review, Iowa Review, and New England Review, among others.

POETRY PROMPT

Recall the everyday gifts and actions people make and do for you like making an amazing meal, doing your laundry, or tending the garden. Write out the "recipe" or steps for doing that action and what it feels like to experience that action, gift, or offering that someone does for you. Be descriptive and use all of your senses.





A Blessing

After Li-Young Lee

BY SAMYAK SHERTOK

Twice a year Apa cooked his “monk’s half-moon” dish: pumpkin blossom
lamb curry—first crackle the fenugreek seeds in ghee, stir the thinly sliced
baby pumpkins translucent, add a concocted paste of wild herbs
soaked in buttermilk overnight, drop the smoked fatted lamb pieces,
pour bone stock, let the fat begin to melt, then spread the flowers whole
on top until they’re dreaming—but before offering it to us over steamed rice,
even before his gods, he’d serve those who were not home, place the filled
clay bowls on the edge of the smoldering hearth in a half-ring,
always bigger portions than for those politely waiting around him
with clean wet hands, which made me wish I were not there
but forgot all about it as bite after bite dissolved in my mouth,
each mouthful lusher than the last, more ravenous for the next:
salt, cliff-forged flesh, aged smoke, foraged fragrance, rain-honeyed dark,
earthed moonmilk, petrichor pistils, butter gossip of the butterflies, fire
of the fireflies, summer, sweet summer, sweet impossible summer—



... is to improve
... connectedness, and
... through arts integration, movement, and healing-centered practices



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RESPONSE/PRACTICE

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Be descriptive and use all of your senses.



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... mission is to improve the mental and emotional well-being, and effectiveness of all citizens through movement, music, and healing