Teaching Poetry Writing

A Five-Canon Approach

new writing viewpoints

TOM C. HUNLEY

Teaching Poetry Writing
A Five-Canon Approach

Tom C. Hunley
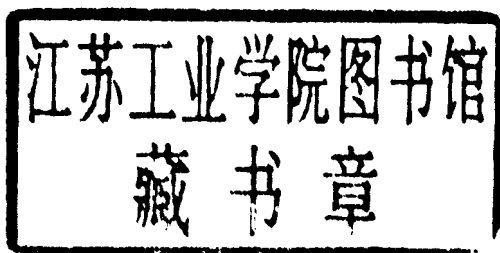
For my teachers, especially the late Wendy Bishop,
who helped me get this book started;
for my students, especially Crystal Fodrey,
who helped me get it finished;
and, always, for Ralaina.

Acknowledgements

Contents

It Doesn't Work For Me: A Critique of the Workshop Approach to Teaching Poetry Writing and a Suggestion For Revision

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by faulty pedagogy . . .

John Undergrad is a second-year college student whose degree will be in Business Management, but he's not all business. While interning at a bank last summer, he received two reprimands for writing poetry on the job. He didn't mind though; the poems came to him, and he felt like he had to jot them down, despite the consequences. He's been a closet poet ever since an encouraging high-school English teacher intrigued him with the irony in Edwin Arlington Robinson's 'Richard Cory' and the rhymed storytelling in Robert Service's 'The Creation of Sam McGee.' John uses an elective on a class in poetry writing, hoping he'll learn more about poets such as Robinson and Service and how to emulate them. He spends weeks listening to discussions, not of published verses by established writers, but of drafts by his fellow students, and he occasionally chimes in, saying 'I like it' or 'It doesn't quite work for me.'

Then his turn comes; he makes twenty copies of a poem he has written, reads it aloud, and waits. The teaching assistant says 'It's a bit sentimental, isn't it class?' One student says 'The long lines are a risk, but you get away with it.' A second student, an English literature buff and the class star, says 'The religious imagery is too Miltonic, and the end rhymes make the poem feel old-fashioned.' John isn't sure what the teaching assistant means by 'sentimental,' he knows he hasn't been trying to 'get away' with anything, he's not sure what 'end rhyme' is, and he definitely doesn't know what 'Miltonic' means. But he has learned workshop etiquette; instead of asking these questions and appearing defensive, he simply says

'thank you for the feedback,' and silently vows never to show his poems to anyone again. He tells his friends in the Business Department that he took a poetry writing class because 'It's an easy "A",' and several of them sign up the following semester.

John's sister, Jane Graduate Student, holds a degree in English Literature with a writing emphasis. She completed three poetry writing workshops at her undergraduate institution, where her work received great praise from two college instructors, and she placed three poems in a local literary journal. She enjoys reading Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and her two instructors, but beyond that she doesn't really 'get' most poetry. Upon graduation from the MFA program, she plans to seek a job teaching creative writing. She looks at what her instructors do in class, and thinks that it would be fun and easy. However, sometimes she doubts herself, as when she gets writer's block and can't seem to get unstuck or when she reads through poems in the local literary journal and can't make sense of them. She is also concerned because she vaguely knows of forms such as the villanelle and the ghazal, but she isn't confident about her ability to identify and define them, much less write them. As an unconscious means of hiding these insecurities and protecting her status as class star, she finds herself using terms such as 'enjambment,' 'pentameter,' and 'metonymy' without quite knowing what they mean.

While John Undergrad and Jane Graduate Student are composites of students I have observed, their fictionalized experiences typify the results of pedagogical methods used in contemporary college classrooms in the United States. The pedagogical methodology most commonly used in American colleges functions more as a convenience for the instructors than as a vehicle for meeting the needs of students. The traditional workshop model of teaching undergraduate poetry writing has gone virtually unquestioned for the past seventy years and has been ratified by hundreds of universities, treated as *the* way to teach creative writing, despite a paucity of studies or empirical evidence or proof. Established in 1931 as a method for teaching elite graduate students, the traditional workshop model does not adequately address or even consider the needs of apprentice writers; it does not encourage instructors to take their jobs or their students seriously; it routinely puts students on the defensive and discourages them from taking necessary, productive risks in their writing; and it fosters unhealthy competition among students that hinders their growth as writers. The typical creative writing teacher who simply has students read their drafts aloud and then leads full-class discussions about these student texts is like a physical education teacher who just rolls out a ball and tells the kids to play. The result is the same: undisciplined students without much technique or skill – and a lot of injuries!

Dave Smith makes a good point when he asks in his book *Local Assays*: 'Doesn't it seem a bit unnatural to begin a workshop of college students by immediately throwing their poems into a public scrutiny and asking that public for a response?'[1] In that book, Smith goes on to discuss a sequence designed to give students practice critiquing texts before actually addressing each others' work, but he stays inside the box of the traditional workshop model, rather than offering a substantive alternative to the process that he has correctly diagnosed as unnatural. *Teaching Poetry Writing: A Five-Canon Approach,* is a book for poetry writing instructors who wish to step outside of the box and consider a paradigm that is quite different from the traditional workshop approach. By following the approach laid out in this book, poetry writing instructors at all levels can ensure that their students are armed with an arsenal of invention strategies, conversant about form and structure, capable of identifying and writing in a variety of styles, equipped to quote large quantities of poetry from memory, and attuned to the oral/aural elements of poetry.

If the traditional workshop model is so ineffective, why do 76% of undergraduate poetry writing teachers still use it as their primary mode of instruction?[2]

There is no sound theoretical basis for using the traditional workshop model at the undergraduate level, or in most of today's graduate workshops, for that matter. The workshop model was not designed with undergraduates or the ruck of graduate students in mind. It was designed for gifted, elite writers who needed very little instruction, though they may have benefited from criticism on their manuscripts.

Wallace Stegner offers a succinct history of the workshop model in his 1988 book *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*. According to Stegner, methods used by Harvard professors Dean Le Baron Russell Briggs and Charles Townsend Copeland led directly to the establishment of the Breadloaf Writers' Conference, initially directed by publishing mogul John Farrar, who hired a faculty that included Robert Frost, Louis Untermeyer, and others who 'lectured, read manuscripts, conducted seminars and workshops, played a lot of tennis, drank too much.'[3] Breadloaf introduced creative writing instruction and the workshop model into the American university system, not as part of the core curriculum, but as a summer program for non-matriculated writers. Other writers' conferences modeled on Breadloaf soon sprang up. Then, with the establishment of the Writers' Workshop at the State University of Iowa under the direction of Paul Engle in 1930, creative writing and the traditional workshop model entered the core curriculum at the graduate level.

In what Donald Justice, the former head of Iowa's program, retrospectively refers to as 'a kind of pyramid scheme,'[4] Iowa graduates founded scores of other programs, offering degrees in creative writing and using the traditional workshop model as the primary or only method of instruction. In her essay 'Duck, Duck, Turkey: Using Encouragement to Structure Workshop Assignments,' Mary Swander succinctly points out the flaws in using the traditional workshop approach with beginning and intermediate writers:

> Paul Engle developed the workshop as a place where young, polished writers could come for a year or two and have their work critiqued. Engle assumed his graduate students already knew how to write. What they needed, he reasoned in this post-WWII era, was a kind of boot camp where they would be toughened up to the brutality of the enemy: the attacking critics . . . When creative writing became 'democratized,' classes in poetry, fiction, and playwriting were offered to students with little developed literary skill. Yet most instructors of creative writing clung to a pedagogy intended for those young writers that Paul Engle had brought to Iowa City in the early days of his directorship: Flannery O'Connor, Constance Urdang, William Stafford, Mark Strand, and Charles Wright.[5]

When a creative writing program is able to recruit students who are already polished writers, perhaps the best pedagogy is one in which the instructor facilitates opportunities for the students to learn from each other. The traditional workshop model seems ideally suited for such interaction. According to Stegner, writing with elite students like Engle's in mind: 'The best teaching that goes on in a college writing class is done by members of the class upon one another.'[6] But as Swander points out, most of us are working with a very different kind of student population, and as such, we need to use a very different teaching methodology.

The traditional workshop model provides established writers with a source of income that leaves them plenty of time for their own writing. However, a convenience for teachers certainly does not equal a beneficial experience for students. Daniel Menaker states: 'There is general agreement among professional writers and editors that . . . these [workshop-oriented] curricula are of extremely dubious value, except perhaps to the institutions themselves.'[7] And yet the workshop continues to gain ground to the point where it is now assumed that it is the core of any serious writer's training. As Bruce Bawer puts it in his 1998 essay 'Poetry and the University:' 'In the last decade or so, as a matter of fact, many people in the poetry world have begun to take it for granted that the only serious way

of preparing for a career as a poet is to enter a university creative-writing program.'[8]

If the traditional workshop model entered American academies as a method for teaching elite graduate students, why do so many undergraduate poetry writing instructors employ it?

According to Swander, the workshop model has been perpetuated, despite its ineffectiveness with beginning and intermediate students, because 'young teachers tend to model their mentors.'[9] This is highly plausible, as a partial explanation. Given the lack of attention given to creative writing pedagogy in nearly all graduate creative writing programs in the United States, it is natural for young teachers to model the teaching methods of their mentors, even when teaching under very different circumstances. The workshop model has been perpetuated in undergraduate classrooms largely because of the lack of attention to teacher training and pedagogical theory within MFA programs. Many creative writing instructors use the traditional workshop model because they haven't received any pedagogical training as part of their degrees and they pattern their beginning undergraduate classes after the workshop-style classrooms taught by their own mentors. In her 2001 study 'Professional Writers / Writing Professionals: Revamping Teacher Training in Creative Writing Ph.D. Programs,' Kelly Ritter surveys twenty-five English departments that offer the Ph.D. with creative dissertation option, finding that only four of them (University of Georgia, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Western Michigan University, and The University of Louisiana-Lafayette) offer any kind of pedagogical training for creative writing teachers: 'Even though nearly all new Ph.D.'s in creative writing have taught in their field, they more than likely have never been guided through that teaching; more than likely they have stumbled along, without formal, professional training or guidance.'[10] If students at the doctoral level receive no training on how to teach in their chosen field, think of how much harder it must be for Master's students and newly minted MFAs to effectively teach creative writing. David Starkey recalls the problems he encountered while trying to teach beginning poets via the traditional workshop model:

> [I] was allowed to teach the beginning poetry workshop, which I tried to run as a graduate workshop . . . [A]ssuming that my students were bursting with poetry they could hardly wait to write down, I discussed invention activities only in passing and their poetry reflected this neglect. Quite simply, I was unprepared for the job I thought I'd been trained to do. [11]

In the introduction to *Colors of a Different Horse*, a collection of essays about creative writing instruction, Hans Ostrom hypothesizes that creative writing teachers' resistance to theory and pedagogy springs from a 'writers first' ethos and reliance on 'validation through performance and testimony.' He then notes the lack of teacher training in the creative writing field: 'Performance and testimony are natural fallback positions in the absence of training.'[12]

Eve Shelnutt laments the 'passivity' that most creative writing instructors exhibit when it comes to seeking new methods of instruction: 'The assumption could easily be that most teachers of creative writing find the workshop format effective because it is the only format they know.'[13] It is astounding that in an era in which rhetoric/composition instructors have vigorously experimented with new teaching methods and published their findings, their colleagues across the hall continue to passively adapt inherited methods of teaching their craft. Virginia Chestek observes that '. . . at a time when lower-level composition courses are increasingly process-oriented . . . The processes by which creative writing students initially develop their ideas and assemble them into these final products are largely ignored.'[14]

The traditional workshop model is based largely on the convenience of its instructors and it does not address or even consider the needs of apprentice writers. Marie Griffin expresses this concern in a letter to the editor of the *The Writer's Chronicle*, (then *AWP Chronicle*), published in its September 2000 issue: 'It is unfair to blame writing programs for every literary disappointment, but some of these programs would do far more to enlighten writers of the 21st century if they honestly looked at the needs of beginning and emerging writers.'[15] While the traditional workshop model ostensibly promotes student-centered classrooms, with students interacting in a circle rather than passively listening to lectures while sitting in rows, in practice it is more often teacher-centered, catering to the professor's need to perform professorial duties in as expedient a manner as possible before returning to his/her own writing. In her afterword in *Colors of a Different Horse*, Wendy Bishop relates a horror story from her days working on a masters degree in creative writing: 'This teacher, in the years I studied with him, returned no annotated texts, gave no tests, shared no grading standards, kept to no schedule or syllabus, designed no curriculum. That's the way it was: master knows, disciples wait for enlightenment'.[16] This disregard for students hardly sounds like a student-centered classroom.

Unfortunately, stories such as this one are commonplace in creative writing workshops, in which tenured or visiting instructors commonly shirk real teaching and substitute a cult of personality. In an essay entitled

'Passion, Possibility, and Poetry,' Dave Smith rightly suggests that students need some training before they can adequately respond to each others' writing. He then falls back on the claim that teaching writing, like writing itself, is a mysterious process: 'The process of teaching writing, and of writing . . . is more intuitive than rational. If it were not so, if we had a formula, what results we could expect from every student.'[17] I share Smith's enthusiasm about the possibilities of poetry and the potential in students. I vigorously disagree with his inference that teachers of creative writing can't demystify their craft and learn innovative, effective ways to teach creative writing. We can do this, and our students need us to do it.

Taking our students seriously means getting serious about reviewing and revising our pedagogical practices

The traditional workshop model fails to take creative writing instruction seriously, and it does not take students seriously. In *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*, Wallace Stegner famously responds to the question 'In your judgment, what is it that most needs to be done for students?' by stating 'They need to be taken seriously.'[18] When instructors don't bother with lesson plans, syllabi, explicit grading policies, exercises aimed to help combat writer's block, exercises designed to give students the proper terminology needed for critiquing each others' work, and so on, are students really being taken seriously? Or are they being treated as an inconvenience, an odious chore that pays the bills and takes away from the professor's 'real work' of writing poetry?

If creative writing instructors fail to take their teaching and their students seriously, no one will take creative writing seriously as an academic discipline. Wendy Bishop quotes an undergraduate as defining creative writing as 'anything you felt like putting down on paper.' Bishop goes on to state: 'In her [the student's] world view, students in creative writing classes seemed launched on a teacherless field-trip . . .'[19] This is a common view around academia, and it's not an unfair one. Students sign up for creative writing classes as electives because they view the classes as easy A grades and they view creative writing, especially poetry, as a chance to vent artlessly about their feelings.

Just as students tend to view creative writing classes as easy As, our colleagues in other disciplines view creative writing as a light discipline, and this won't be repaired until creative writing teachers get serious about making classes more rigorous and pay attention to advances in pedagogical theory. Also, would-be writers need to be introduced to the disciplines involved in the vocation to which they are considering committing themselves. Rather than creating writers who are dependent on writers'

groups and workshops, we need to teach writers the tools they'll need as committed, productive writers. As Stegner states on pages 32–33 of *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*:

> It [writing] should be taken as seriously as the search for the rep-licating machinery in the DNA of the E.Coli virus x 170. Rigor is what we are talking about, a responsibility to a certain kind of truth and to observed reality. The worst writing classes with which I have had any experience have been the soft ones – the mutual-admiration societies . . . [20]

Stegner isn't alone in his observation that the traditional workshop model fails to adequately prepare apprentice and emerging writers for the hard work involved in their chosen vocation. Bawer states: '[T]hey [young poets] need to learn discipline; they need a sense of literary tradition, of form, of poetry as craft.'[21] None of these can very efficiently be transmitted in a classroom that follows a pedagogical model that assumes students already possess this knowledge and discipline.

Many creative writing instructors who teach according to the traditional workshop model, fearing time-consuming confrontations with students, opt to praise student work liberally in the hopes that these students will leave happily and quickly, leaving the instructor more time for writing. Others believe that their main function as teachers is to encourage students to generate as much work as possible, reasoning that the students will improve with practice. Others may even view the workshop as a therapy session more than a vehicle for education. Workshops that do not emphasize technique risk encouraging students to pass off chopped prose diary entries as poetry. Citing a backlash against the elitism of the high modernists, Bawer observes: '[P]ost-Beat poets have encouraged young people to think of poetry as something that requires not craft or intel-ligence or talent so much as sincerity. Just write what you feel, the idea goes, and you have a poem.'[22]

While well-meaning workshop leaders who are too kind and gentle do damage to students by failing to prepare them for the rigors of the writing life, the traditional workshop model is perfectly suited to the even more insidious practice of punishing necessary risk-taking, rewarding safety and conformity, and routinely putting writers on the defensive. Anyone who has enrolled in a handful of different workshops has encountered that professor whose words are like a hot stove – the students learn not to write in a given way for fear of being scorched. Bawer addresses the effect of putting student writers on the defensive, giving a fine description of much contemporary poetry and the people who write it:

> [T]heir authors are trying desperately to avoid expressing a recognizable human feeling . . . They're poets who avoid attempting difficult forms or rendering complex emotions for fear of exposing their limitations, who avoid sensitivity itself for fear of crossing the line into sentimentality.[23]

Phyllis Gebauer recommends that student writers undergo training on how to receive feedback. In 'Criticism – The Art of Give and Take,' Gebauer offers advice on how to withstand workshop comments, which she calls 'taking it.' Her suggestions for how to go about 'taking it' include 'Be aware that you might not hear right,' 'Learn to recognize a personal attack and rise above it,' and 'Don't waste time and energy trying to defend yourself.'[24] The benefits of the traditional workshop model do not merit all of this stressful preparation. We should not teach the kinds of classes that make students feel like they need a training manual on self-protection before they enter the classroom doors.

The prominent compositionist Peter Elbow describes another ill effect of the traditional workshop model's focus on critique of drafts at the expense of all other aspects of the writing process. While the traditional workshop model affords student writers the opportunity to hear a multitude of suggestions about changes that they might make to their work, it makes no serious attempts to endow them with the revision strategies that could enable them to make those changes. Elbow describes students leaving a workshop session intending to rewrite, but instead stuffing their work in a drawer, too discouraged to ever return to it. I wonder, what percentage of workshopped poems actually get profitably revised? I suspect that, rather than improving a particular piece of writing, a workshop session is just as likely to completely destroy it while dampening its author's enthusiasm and drive. The end result, according to Elbow, is that 'next time we have the impulse to write, we're just a bit less likely to pick up the pen.'[25]

Students often lack the terminology needed to intelligently critique each others' writing, even after participating in several different workshops. In *Craft So Hard to Learn*, James Whitehead explains how the lack of terminology at places such as University of Iowa led to the creation of form and theory classes at graduate level:

> I discovered from being in workshops as a student – several places, most especially at the University of Iowa – that there was a little difficulty with a common ground for vocabulary, and in knowledge of certain traditions and modalities in both poetry and fiction. Now this is a little more acute in poetry, of course; for the terminology of poetry is a little more ancient and a little more complex, by way of being derivative from Latin and Greek sources.[26]

Yet creative writing instructors continue to use the traditional workshop model, patterned after the University of Iowa program that Whitehead mentions, on undergraduates who have far less working terminology for discussing each others' writing than graduates students at elite graduate institutions. Eugene Garber describes the predictable result: 'I have been in workshops where the commentary was so groundless, stupid, and hurtful that I swore I'd never have anything to do with another one.'[27] Many committed writers, like Garber, have repeatedly promised themselves that they would not put themselves through more workshops, only to go back on those promises because of the widespread myth that workshops provide the primary means for writers to develop their craft.

An Alternative: The Computer-Assisted Five-Canon Approach

Committed teachers of creative writing need to experiment more with alternatives to the traditional workshop model, and we need to more regularly share our successes and failures with each other via journals devoted to creative writing pedagogy and panel presentations at conferences. I am encouraged by the recent success of *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, based in the United Kingdom, and the Australian online journal *Texte*, but there is a need for a journal of creative writing studies in the United States as well. One result of the dialogue that takes place in these journals, I hope, will be that teaching creative writing using the traditional workshop model will soon seem as backwards as teaching composition using the modes of discourse. I am putting forth one alternative to the traditional workshop model, offering it not as *the* way to teach poetry writing to undergraduates, but as one viable alternative.

My alternative to the traditional workshop method is twofold. First of all, while instructors who use the traditional workshop model devote most or all available class time to discussions of student texts, I propose limiting critique of drafts to (1) one-on-one conferences with the professor, held twice each term or thereabouts, at the individual instructor's discretion, and (2) virtual workshopping in which students critique each others' drafts via online discussion threads using listservs or course management systems. Second, in the absence of time-consuming workshop sessions, I propose spending class time applying the five canons of classical rhetoric—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—to poetry writing. In this model, rather than spending most or all class time critiquing drafts as products, poetry writing teachers spend approximately equal amounts of time on each of these canons, or parts, of composition. I

also propose that students receive training on how to critique each others' work before they do so online.

This five-canon process was extrapolated by ancient Greek and Roman scholars from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and used in handbooks devoted to teaching students to compose speeches. It is easily adaptable to poetry writing instruction and it is in fact a perfect model for teachers of under-graduate poets. Invention, in classical rhetoric, drew on topics or set formulas not only including the familiar modes such as comparison/contrast and cause/effect but also including puns and other idea-generat-ing techniques. Types of invention commonly practiced in contemporary composition classrooms include free writing, clustering, Kenneth Burke's pentad (which analyzes events in terms of act, agent, scene, agency, and purpose), the five journalist's questions, and tagmemics (a systematic method of analyzing a unit of information three ways: as a particle or static unit, as a wave or dynamic unit changing over time, or as a field or unit seen in context of its relationship to other units).[28] Invention exercises can enhance creative writing classes, and they frequently have, most often at the beginning of the term before critique of drafts takes over the bulk of class time. In *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus described a speech as a living thing, calling invention 'in language what bones are in an animal's body, that which must be firm lest all else collapse.'[29]

Earlier I related David Starkey's discovery that he couldn't just expect novice writers to bring in poems to discuss in workshop because they needed assistance producing drafts. Apprentice writers – and experienced writers as well – often feel the urge to write something but aren't sure how to begin, and almost all writers know the frustration of writer's block. This is where classical rhetoric's first canon, invention, becomes an invaluable tool for the poetry writing classroom. Joseph Moxley makes this point in his essay 'Creative writing and composition: Bridging the gap.'

> By focusing primarily on revising and editing, the workshop fails to address prewriting strategies. Given that many professional writers such as Donald Murray report that they spend as much as 85 percent of their time searching for ideas and rehearsing possible alternatives, our omission of prewriting strategies is troublesome.[30]

Arrangement occurs in rhetoric when 'the arguments devised through invention are placed in the most effective order.'[31] It is 'the art of ordering the material in a text so that it is most appropriate for the needs of the audience and the purpose the text is designed to accomplish.'[32] In the poetry writing classroom, this would involve attention to form and structure, which is currently taught as a separate 'Poetic Technique' or 'Form and Theory' course in many Master's programs and not taught at

all to most undergraduate poets. Erasmus, continuing with his speech-as-living-body analogy, stated that arrangement 'is in language what the sinews are in an animal's body, joining the parts of the speech in the proper manner.'[33]

Style, like invention, has been profitably adapted by some creative writing teachers, though not enough. It is 'the art of producing sentences and words that will make an appropriately favorable impression on readers or listeners.'[34] The practical study of style consists of exercises designed to generate figurative language; attention to word choice; sentence-level considerations such as diction, syntax, and structural variation; and stylistic imitations of rhetors or writers that one admires. To Erasmus, 'this is in language what flesh and skin are in the body, and gives a seemly covering to the bones and sinews.'[35] Spending too much class time (often the entire class) critiquing student poems uses up precious time that could be spent on stylistic analysis and imitation of model poems.

In her essay 'The Model Poem,' Maura Stanton points out that '[e]xercises based on model poems not only result in better poems from the students, but also train them to think like poets.'[36] However, at the end of the same essay, she laments: 'In a one semester poetry writing class, when most of the time is spent discussing students' own work, I may be able only to teach a handful of great poems.'[37] If Stanton were following the computer-enhanced, five-canon model rather than the traditional workshop model, she would have a lot more class time available for the stylistic imitation exercises that she would like to be leading.

In *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*, Wallace Stegner states: 'It is . . . common practice to send a student out to learn a particular technique by studying a particular writer who was good at it: Joyce, say, for stream of consciousness or Conrad for the tricks of multiple narrators.'[38] This practice is nowhere near common enough, and that in a busy world, it makes sense to spend class time on stylistic analysis and imitation, rather than squandering it critiquing drafts by student writers who have received little or no formal training on how to produce those drafts.

Poetry existed as an oral art long before written cultures emerged, and the classical canons of memory and delivery can help connect student writers to that great tradition. In a discussion of the role of these canons in classical rhetoric, Bizzell and Herzberg point out: 'The sensual power of word magic to create belief was perhaps most potently felt while rhetoric was still employed largely in oral genres . . .'[39] In classical systems, rhetors studied mnemonic devices, such as making rooms in a house stand for parts of a given oration, enabling them to memorize their own speeches and those of others. 'For example, a rhetor could mentally connect the intro-duction of his speech to the porch of a house, the background narration