

27.

Another Anaphora Prompt

In case you didn't know: "Anaphora (uh-NAF-er-uh) is a Greek term for an ancient poetic technique. It simply means to begin each line, or every few lines with the same word or phrase. Repetition is the basis of all form in poetry, and anaphora is repetition at its most basic. The repetitions can create an effect that is both incantatory and mysterious. The repetition can hold a wild list together. "

(from Miriam Sagan in *Unbroken Line: Writing in the Lineage of Poetry*)

Write a poem with quite apparent anaphora.

You might begin with: "What I meant to say was...."

Whenever you get to the end of a thought, repeat that line "What I meant to say was...." and then start off on a new tack.

The End of Poetry

Enough of osseous and chickadee and sunflower
and snowshoes, maple and seeds, samara and shoot,
enough chiaroscuro, enough of thus and prophecy
and the stoic farmer and faith and our father and 'tis
of thee, enough of bosom and bud, skin and god
not forgetting and star bodies and frozen birds,
enough of the will to go on and not go on or how
a certain light does a certain thing, enough
of the kneeling and the rising and the looking
inward and the looking up, enough of the gun,
the drama, and the acquaintance's suicide, the long lost
letter on the dresser, enough of the longing and
the ego and the obliteration of ego, enough
of the mother and the child and the father and the child
and enough of the pointing to the world, weary
and desperate, enough of the brutal and the border,
enough of can you see me and can you hear me, enough
I am human, enough I am alone and I am desperate,
enough of the animal saving me, enough of the high
water, enough sorrow, enough of the air and its ease,
I am asking you to touch me.

Ada Limón
in *The Hurting Kind*

Try Human

Forget perfection.
Go for messy, learning
tender, whole.

Forget brand new.
Embrace cracked,
broken open, worn,
rich with story.

Forget polished.
Choose rusted,
Textured, nuanced, real.

Please cease
this intimidating flawlessness
and become generous
in sharing your sacred wound.
Forget Divine—
try human.

Chelan Harkin

Nest Filled

Use your whirling wings to find the right tree.
Use your pert eye to choose the level limb.
Use your nimble feet to cherish the hospitable fork.

Use your fearless beak to gather twigs, leaves,
and thistledown to weave your basket-house
open to the wuthering sky.

Use your body to be the tent over tender pebbles,
lopsided moons. Then wait—warm, alert, still
through wind and rain, hawk-shadow, owl night.

Use your life to make life, spending all you have
on what comes after. And if you are human, a true
citizen, fully awake, then learn from the sparrow

how to build a house, a village, a nation. Use instinct to find the right place. Use thought to know the right time. Use wisdom to design the right action.

In the era of stormy weather, build your sturdy nest, and fill it with the future.

Kim Stafford

List of possible Anaphora starting places (the possibilities are endless):

It is possible...Don't be afraid of....In the dark...I am afraid of...What disturbs me is...In dream...I've never told anyone...What splits me open is...Poetry is...I'd like to forget...We do not have to...How come...The question was...The answer is...Easily...Silently...I love...I wonder...Remember....Night is...Waves...Do you....When will...Where did...Looking for...Still thinking of...Under the...She knew...I never noticed...In between... I never enjoyed...In the eyes of... After the...What if...Tomorrow...Yesterday...Now...The poem began...Behind the curtain...Love is...Death might be...Just because...I want to tell you...I believe...Just once...Begin with...Lean in...Once more...