

Protest Poetry Workshop - Participant Handout

Massachusetts Poetry Festival 2025

Theme: Each Voice is an Act of Resistance

Duration: 60 minutes

What to Expect

This is a space for truth-telling, creative resistance, and community. Together, we'll explore the power of protest poetry-how it transforms emotion into action and gives voice to the unheard. We'll read, discuss, write, and share in solidarity. All levels of experience are welcome. You'll be invited to write and, if you feel called, to share.

Workshop Flow

- 0:00-0:05 - Welcome & Intention Setting
- 0:05-0:10 - Watch: Audre Lorde's 'Power'
- 0:10-0:25 - Discussion: What Makes Protest Poetry
- 0:25-0:35 - Writing Time
- 0:35-0:45 - Sharing (Small Groups or Lightning Round)
- 0:45-1:00 - Reflection & Call to Action

Key Messages

- All poetry evokes emotion-but protest poetry provokes action.
- Protest poetry gives language to injustice and refuses erasure.
- Speaking is a form of resistance. So is listening-but we call it witnessing.
- When someone shares a poem, listen with your whole body. You are witnessing-not critiquing-but holding their truth with care.

Writing Prompts

- They came for us without warning-write what cannot be erased.
- Write a poem for someone whose voice is being silenced.
- Write about class as you've lived it. How has it shaped your access, your struggle, your identity-or what's been expected of you?
- Fascism is already here. What will your voice defend now, in this moment of urgent threat?
- What issue burns in your chest the most? Write a poem that demands your reader do something about it.
- Write a poem fueled by your passion. What do you care so deeply about that staying silent feels impossible? Channel that urgency into a call to action.

Sharing

Sharing is optional. If you feel called to share, you'll have the opportunity to do so in a small group (4-5 people) or in a lightning round where each person offers a single powerful line.

You are never required to share. We ask that when others do, you witness them-not just with your ears, but

with your presence. This is not critique. This is reverence.

Closing Reflection

- What line or image are you carrying with you?
- How will you keep resisting-with or without poetry-this week?