



## Mini-Workshop: Writing an Ekphrastic Poem in Response to a Visual Work of Art

### What is an ekphrastic poem?

In simplest terms, an ekphrastic poem is one written in response to another art form: a visual work of art; a piece of music or dance, etc. *For purposes of this National Poetry Month mini-workshop, write a response to a visual work of art.* Examples of famous ekphrastic poems are: *Ode to a Grecian Urn* by John Keats; *Nine Nectarines and Other Porcelain* by Marianne Moore; and *The Starry Night* by Ann Sexton.

### Tips for writing an ekphrastic poem

- *Choosing one artwork that you respond to (touches, puzzles, frightens, clarifies) is key.*
- *Go broad or go small:* Write about the scene as a whole—or focus on a specific detail.
- *Choose an approach*—there is no right or wrong way to write your poem:
  1. *Write as an outsider:* Write from the perspective of a “narrator”—how you are moved by the scene or subject depicted in the artwork as an objective observer (not just a description of what you see).
  2. *Write as an insider:* Imagine yourself standing “inside” the artwork, then write in the subjective voice of the person or objects shown.

### Your assignment

1. Select an artwork that moves you from the participating exhibiting venues listed below.
2. Study the artwork online. It might help to jot down notes about the details.
3. When you’re ready, reflect on the artwork you chose, review your notes, then write one poem that reflects your response (How does the artwork affect you? Why?).
4. Keep the poem to no more than 15 lines (not including the title).
5. **By March 25**, send your poem as an attached Word doc directly to the art venue at the appropriate email listed below. Subject Line: Ekphrastic Workshop Poem (Your Name). Venues may choose to display or share some poems.

### Participating art venues

*ArtPace* Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ArtPace>, email: [amireles@artpace.org](mailto:amireles@artpace.org)

*Blue Star* web: <http://bluestarcontemporary.org>, Instagram: @bluestarart;  
facebook.com/BlueStarArt, email: [mari@bluestarcontemporary.org](mailto:mari@bluestarcontemporary.org)

*Say Si* web: <http://www.saysi.org>, Instagram: @saysi\_sa, email: [christina@saysi.org](mailto:christina@saysi.org)

*The Carver Community Cultural Center* web: <https://thecarver.org/poetry>, email: [education@thecarver.org](mailto:education@thecarver.org)