**A.O.W. # Due: Friday! Name: Hour:**

1. Chunk the article into manageable (2 paragraphs max.) pieces. Number them. Don’t forget the title/opening!
2. Highlight at least three words you are not familiar with or that are important and define them on the graphic organizer.
3. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the left side of the text (each chunk) with questions and/or comments that demonstrate interacting with the text. You may also include any confusion you have.

 Complete the attached graphic organizer to analyze author’s craft.

**Is Poetry Dead?** By [Alexandra Petri](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/alexandra-petri/) January 22, 2013  *The Washington Post*

Poet Richard Blanco at the presidential inauguration. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

Inaugural poet Richard Blanco said that his story is America’s story.

If that’s the case, America should be slightly concerned. Mr. Blanco is a walking example of the American dream — as he eloquently puts it, “the American story is in many ways my story — a country still trying to negotiate its own identity, caught between the paradise of its founding ideals and the realities of its history, trying to figure it out, trying to ‘become’ even today — the word “hope” as fresh on our tongues as it ever was.”

He has overcome numerous obstacles, struggled against opposition both internal and external — in order to excel in poetry, a field that may very well be obsolete. I say this lovingly as a member of the print media. If poetry is dead, we are in the next ward over, wheezing noisily, with our family gathered around looking concerned and asking about our stereos. Still I think there is a question to be asked. You can tell that a medium is still vital by posing the question: Can it change anything?

Can a poem still change anything?

I think the medium might not be loud enough any longer. There are about six people who buy new poetry, but they are not feeling very well. I bumped very lightly into one of them while walking down the sidewalk, and for a while I was terrified that I would have to write to eleven MFA programs explaining why everyone was going to have to apply for grants that year. The last time I stumbled upon a poetry reading, the attendees were almost without exception students of the poet who were there in the hopes of extra credit. One of the poems, if memory serves, consisted of a list of names of Supreme Court justices. I am not saying that it was a bad poem. It was a good poem, within the constraints of what poetry means now. But I think what we mean by poetry is a limp and fangless thing.

Poetry has gone from being something that you did in order to “Write Your Name Large Across the Sky” and sound your barbaric yawp and generally Shake Things Up to a very carefully gated medium that requires years of study and apprenticeship in order to produce meticulous, perfect, golden lines that up to ten people will ever voluntarily read.

Or is this too harsh?

We know, we think, from high school, the sort of thing a poem is. It is generally in free verse, although it could be a sonnet, if it wanted. It describes something very carefully, or it makes a sound we did not expect, and it has deep layers that we need to analyze. We analyze it. We analyze the heck out of it. How quaint, we think, that people express themselves in this way. Then we put it back in the drawer and go about our lives.

The kind of poetry they read to you at poetry readings and ladle in your direction at the Inaugural is — well, it’s all very nice, and sounds a lot like a Poem, but — it has changed nothing. No truly radical art form has such a well-established grant process. I understand that this is the point when someone stands up on a chair and starts to explain that poetry is the strainer through which we glimpse ourselves and hear the true story of our era. But is it? You do not get the news from poems, as William Carlos Williams said. Full stop. You barely get the news from the news.

All the prestige of poetry dates back to when it was the way you got the most vital news there is — your people’s stories. “The Iliad.” “The Odyssey.” “Gilgamesh.” All literature used to be poetry. But then fiction splintered off. Then the sort of tale you sung could be recorded and the words did not have to spend any time outside the company of their music if they did not want to. We have movies now that are capable of presenting images to us with a precision that would have made Ezra Pound keel over. All the things that poetry used to do, other things do much better. But naturally we still have government-subsidized poets. Poets are like the Postal Service — a group of people sedulously doing something that we no longer need, under the misapprehension that they are offering us a vital service.

“Poetry is dead,” playwright Gwydion Suilebhan tweeted Monday. “What pretends to be poetry now is either New Age blather or vague nonsense or gibberish. It’s zombie poetry.” There is no longer, really, any formal innovation possible. The constraints of meter have long been abandoned. What is left? It is a parroting of something that used to be radical. It is about as useful as the clavichord. There is no “Howl” possible or “Song of Myself.” There is no “The Waste Land.”

As someone who loves print books, I hate to type this and I hope that I am wrong. I want to hear the case for poetry. It is something that you read in school and that you write in school. But it used to be that if you were young and you wanted to Change Things with your Words, you darted off and wrote poetry somewhere. You got together with friends at cafes and you wrote verses and talked revolution. Now that is the last thing you do.

These days, poetry is institutionalized. Everyone can write it. But if you want a lot of people to read it, or at least the Right Interested Persons, there are a few choked channels of Reputable Publications. Or you can just spray it liberally onto the Internet and hope it sticks.

Or am I being too harsh? Something similar could be said of journalism, after all.

And whenever people say this about journalism, they note that people have an insatiable hunger for news. Journalism in its present form may not continue, but journalism will. It will have to. Otherwise where will the news come from? And this might be the silver lining for poets. The kind of news you get from poems, as William Carlos Williams has it, must come from somewhere. And there is a similar hunger for poetry that persists. We get it in diluted doses in song lyrics. Song lyrics are incomplete poems, as Sondheim notes in the book of his own. If it is complete on the page, it makes a shoddy lyric. But there is still wonderful music to be found in those words. We get it in rap. If we really want to read it, it is everywhere. Poetry, taken back to its roots, is just the process of making — and making you listen.

But after the inaugural, after Richard Blanco’s almost seventy lines of self-reflection and the use of phrases like “plum blush” — which sounded like exactly what the phrase “poem” denotes to us now — I wonder what will become of it. I don’t know where the words that will define us next will come from. But from Poetry Qua Poetry With Grants And Titles? Hope may be as fresh on our tongues as it ever was.

But is poetry?

1. **Author’s claim (what he/she wants us to believe—OPINION + REASON):**
2. **. Text Evidence for claim *with MLA*: \*\*TE= proof: stats, facts, examples**

**\*\*MLA= author’s last name in parenthesis at the end of each piece of TE: “Blah-blah-blah” (Author’s LAST name).**

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 (inform, persuade, give opinion, etc.)

1. **The author’s main purpose is** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**because**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 **(Be specific)**

1. **The author’s main audience is** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. The author establishes a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **tone** (**look at word choice**) through the following techniques (refer to technique list, but make it **specific**) a.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and c.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. **3 words I didn’t know (or are ESSENTIAL words) WITH DEFINITIONS**

A.

B.

C.