

## HANDOUT

### SUMMARY:

#### Word choice:

- sound: quality (soft or hard sounds), repetition, word length
- mood
- gender
- connotation (positive or negative)
- focus on passages of high emotion or high drama

#### Rhythm:

- vary tempo
- to increase speed
  - establish rhythm and add syllables
  - lengthen words and sentences
  - soften punctuation (dashes, exclamation points, commas, question marks)
- to slow tempo
  - use monosyllabic words
  - shorten sentences
  - full stop punctuation (periods)

#### Image control:

- use metaphor and simile only where a strong response is important
- decide purpose of image: what mood is being intensified?
- choose the “telling detail”, what’s most unique and vivid about the image
- use related vocabulary both before and after metaphor/simile to extend its effect

#### Write for the reader:

- A writer’s work is judged not by her intention, but by the reader’s comprehension.

How Do I Love Thee?—Nancy Herkness—Page 2  
Using Techniques of Poetry to Strengthen your Prose

**1. Word choice:**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<b>Mood</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Connotation +/-</b>
Rose	Rolls with r. Rounds lips into a kiss, uses tongue in zz sound	Sensual, romantic, sexy, not innocent	F-woman's proper name	+ cultivated plant
Dandelion	Bouncy—repetition of d 's and n's pulls ear along. Polysyllabic, very rhythmic.	Cheerful, bright, childlike	M-fancy dresser; king of beasts	- weed
Red				
Scarlet				
Saunter				
Stride				
Small				
Magnificent				
Broccoli				
Oyster				



**From Poem #656**  
**By Emily Dickinson**

The name—of it—is “Autumn”—  
The hue—of it—is Blood—  
An Artery—upon the Hill—  
A Vein—along the Road

**Prose example: from *Atonement* by Ian McEwan:** Fretting, concentrated thought, reading, looking, wanting—all were to be avoided in favor of a slow drift of association, while the minutes accumulated like banked snow and the silence deepened around her.

**3. Metaphor/simile exercise:**

Choose a mood. Invent a metaphor or simile to support the mood. Close your eyes and picture the image to find the telling detail: color, motion, temperature, etc. Write 1 or 2 sentences including the metaphor/simile. Use vocabulary both before and after which strengthens your image and thus intensifies your mood.

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*Nancy majored in English at Princeton University, graduating with honors. In addition to her academic work in literature, she was accepted into Princeton's Creative Writing Program. Her senior thesis was a volume of original poetry.*

*Winner of the Golden Leaf, Aspen Gold, and Write Touch Readers' awards for excellence in published romance, Nancy was also chosen as one of three "Best Up and Coming Authors" for 2003 in *Affaire de Coeur's* Readers' Poll.*