

## Writing Deliciously: The Poetry of Food

with Jane Wong

In "From Blossoms," poet Li-Young Lee writes: "O, to take what we love inside,/to carry within us an orchid." In this craft talk, we will delve into the intimate sensory memories and sociopolitical implications that food evokes. How can writing about food open up evocative spaces of comfort, family, memory, shared rituals, and desires? How can writing through and about food strengthen our communities and open up our creative craft? Along with celebrating and exploring food writing by poets and writers such as Audre Lorde and Naomi Shihab Nye, this craft talk will also lead you through a series of delicious writing prompts inspired by food.

Read and briefly discuss Li-Young Lee's poem from ["From Blossoms"](#)

Writing prompt 1:

Write a litany or list poem, thinking about creating an orchard inside yourself, inspired by "O, to take what we love inside,/to carry within us an orchid." Begin your poem with "Within me..." Think of all the food that makes you feel loved, write these down. What are the sensory memories that arise when you think of these foods? Weave those memories into your list. Toward the end of your poem, consider what else you need (literal or abstract) to feel "full."

Read and briefly discuss Naomi Shihab Nye's poem ["The Travelling Onion"](#)

Writing prompt 2:

Go find a vegetable from your pantry or fridge. Take a few minutes with this vegetable. How does it feel? How does it smell? What sound does it make? Do you remember how you acquired this vegetable (i.e. A garden? The grocery store? From a friend?)? In this writing prompt, I want you to write an ode—a celebratory poem—for this vegetable. Inspired by Shihab Nye's poem, begin with imagining how this vegetable traveled here and what this vegetable means to you, weaving in all your sensory details – taste, touch, smell, sound, sight.

Read and briefly discuss Audre Lorde's excerpt from *Zami*

Writing prompt 3: Thinking about the rituals of cooking, connection, and Lorde's memory of using a mortar and pestle with her mother, I'd like you to think of a cooking ritual with someone that brings you comfort. Describe this ritual, step by step, and where it transports you. How does this ritual deepen your relationship with this person?

Read ["What Is Love If Not Rot?"](#) by Jane Wong