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# 7 Subjects of Highly Effective Poems

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## 7 Subjects of Highly Effective Poems

TREVOR ZUIDEMA

After centuries of studies on aristocratic focus groups, the Council on Literature with a Capital “L,” Poetry Division (CLCLPR) announced Wednesday that all good poems contain at least one of the following subjects:

1. love—how neat it is, especially with someone you can have sex with.
2. flowers—how pretty they are and how nice they smell.
3. birds—pretty too but in a more mobile way than flowers. (A combination of the above subjects would be preferred, i. e. “My love is swift as a bird/ pretty as a flower.”)
4. plants, water, anything naturey—Poets never tire of writing about greenery and the ilk, mainly because, without jobs, they need a low rent place to live and for that, the country suits just fine.
5. war—how bad it is because people get hurt and die and how it can be avoided if we all just got together and tried to love one another right now. (Praising war in an ironic tone has been deemed acceptable by CLCLPR after decades of heated debate.)
6. victimhood—very popular with the last three generations or so. The CLCLPR considers victimization to be a subject of literature with a lower case “l” but due to the pervasiveness of this subject, it deserves comment. The following is a brief

how-to guide for writing on victimization:

First, pick an event in your life in which you thought you were treated unfairly. Your childhood is a good place to start.

Second, think long and hard about that event. Try to remember every last detail and if your memory is too hazy, make it up. It’s called creative license.

Third, look through the lenses of your newly discovered victimhood and become aware that the

results of every event has somehow been determined by your past experience of victimization/alienation/marginalization/repression.

Fourth, it is now the most logical step to show that you are an extremely courageous, determined, strong-willed person to even be able to put on socks in the morning after all that you've been through.

Fifth and finally, announce that there is a healing going on but also emphasize that it will be a long process which allows you the freedom to write about your trauma whenever you choose. Say that dredging up the past is part of this healing process.

The CLCLPR has noticed that more modern poets tend to be female. Although the cause of the gender imbalance is uncertain, the CLCLPR proffers the following possible explanations.

One, women are more adept at the language arts.

Two, women have a better grasp on subjects one, two, three, four and six.

Three, poems are meant to be about feelings, which men have in small quantities aside from hunger and anger.

In lieu of these hypotheses, another subject in the lower case "I" vein has become:

7. Womyn—why they are vastly superior to men. Let's face it, womyn are prettier, smarter (especially in communicating their feelings) and the mothers of all people. And now, thanks to the advent of modern science, men have become obsolete. Right now there are enough sperm in the banks to fertilize two generations of our eggs and God, She knows that men need little incentive to spill their seed, those dirty little wankers.

—excerpt taken from "The Millennium Report," CLCL Journal, Dec. 1999.

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