

## **eff-able - editing poems workshop**

**led by Sallyanne Rock**

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### **Free write, with prompt word list**

1. light
2. swim
3. dance
4. form
5. hint
6. bend
7. arrow
8. lash
9. spine
10. memory
11. push
12. slip
13. taste
14. skin
15. glitter

## **My Lover Reads Poetry for the First Time**

he begins with application      stops  
*asks wait so why*  
*has the poet gone onto a new line*  
*here what's that about*

I try to explain emphasis    the honour  
of something holding value  
of speed and rhythm  
that natural flow of thought

how do I read the poem    I smile  
make a stupid comment  
about using his eyes    tell him  
the weight of the words is in his soul

**Dale Booton**

**[extract from] speaking out loud**

I bathe in a woman who has the same name my  
father wanted to give me she tastes like  
everything I'm not; we both translate as light  
yet we speak like worms rubbing through the  
territory  
    of one another's underearth     by mistake

my friends change their names often  
    & our mouths mutate  
        it's how we sing *i'm a shape-shifting bitch*  
*you don't know who you lovin'*

    our names reply *you're a wild eternal*  
*honey*  
*& i got you*

in the language of queer names are deities  
that walk ahead of our bodies

//

I elongate the vowels in your name to hold you in  
my  
mouth a moment longer     we bend Fridays until  
they  
snap & I'm pushing my rings back on     fingers  
covered  
in you after spending the night washing     myself  
sacred  
in your fountain     our bodies speak a language  
our  
minds are yet to learn     text me like you hold me  
impossible

**lisa luxx**

## **Unformatted text of Kae Tempest poem**

Duet sometimes when we come together you scream like you are being born I  
sing like I am dying my skin in the morning cool my feet on the boards finding  
my slippers pushing open the gate of the kettle for warmth you are in bed with a  
smile on your sleeping mouth you play arabic music french music madagascan  
music that I've never heard I play uk rappers minimal techno alice coltrane your  
hair is tied up with colourful cloth as you move from the hips through the flat we  
cook for each other we dedicate days to our lovemaking any less than a full day  
and you look at me hurt I maintain a full wave at my neighbours but worry about  
what they hear through the walls aware of how often we wake in the night and  
call out for each other

## **Duplex for the Sick & Tired**

*after Jericho Brown*

A poem can spasm, stretch, but it can let salve in.

There aren't enough pages for the longing.

There aren't enough pages for the longing  
drenched in medicine bottles and ice packs.

Drenched in medicine bottles and ice packs,  
our aches sing beyond joints and stethoscopes in denial.

Those who sing beyond joints and stethoscopes in  
denial, how do the symptoms stack your days?

Let's name the stacks of dangerous symptoms:

News coverage, the state, strangers who say the pandemic is over.

News coverage, the state, strangers who say the pandemic is over  
as I dream about a world that celebrates all of us.

As I dream about a world that celebrates all of us fully,

Let's allow poems to stretch. Let the salve in.

**Kay Ulanday Barrett**

## Activities:

1. Freewrite with word prompts
2. Format a poem with provided text
3. Erasure / distilling a poem
4. Formatting exercise - Deep dive one of your own poems

**Step 1** - read the poem aloud to yourself

**Step 2** - now reformat the poem. Break the lines in different places, play with spacing, punctuation, stanza breaks. How long are your lines? What does this do to the speed at which you read the poem? You could try removing all punctuation and line breaks as in the Kae Tempest poem we looked at.

**Step 3** (only if you finish a draft) - Think about your **title**. What is it doing? Is it summarising the poem and if so do you want it to do that? Or would you prefer the reader to find out about the poem as they read it? How do different titles frame the poem differently?

## Further links and resources on editing poems

Roy Marshall

<https://roymarshall.wordpress.com/2018/10/18/editing-poems/>

Young Poets Network

<https://ypn.poetrysociety.org.uk/workshop/your-top-tips-part-ii-editing-and-redrafting/>

Mouthy Poets

<https://mouthypoets.wordpress.com/2013/05/12/15-points-to-editing-success/>

Dean Atta

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/zone-in/activities/edit-your-poems-dean-atta/>