

What's in a Name?

1. Along the left-hand side of the screen or piece of paper, write your name (first, middle, last) vertically. . .

J

O

N

J

A

M

E

S

R

I

C

C

I

O

2. Next, write three words for each letter. The words can be as straightforward, scientific, or nonsensical as you'd like. Think of them as ingredients for your sound soufflé.

J = jeans, jumping jack, jangly

O = octopus, orchid, oboe

N = nightgown, Nebraska, nettle

J = jade, jukebox, joystick

A = azure, avian, alto

M = muzzy, Medusa, meatloaf

E = episode, electroplate, eddy

S = Sousaphone, stipple, Shreveport

R = rigatoni, retro, roommate

I = integer, Idahoan, inclement

C = cow, crooked, crockpot

C = cackle, Caesar, castle

I = iffy, impulse, iodine

O = oaten, omnivore, ozone

3. Like any good recipe, let your word ingredients sit as we enjoy some good poetry . . .

Lucie Brock-Broido

Autobiography

It is only three o'clock & already I'm alone
Listening to the lovers next door
Like Patsy Cline & her Man
Throwing barebacked wooden furniture
Like the real life bicker of true love.
I love that hands-on,
Die-while-you're-dark-haired-still
& young, fists curled to desire,
Take Me kind of love.
They'll make love without apology
& I'll be left to the afternoon
& the autoerotic sounds of my American voice
Getting it all down.

Soft Sound: “v” Love

Short O . . . “uh”

Contrasted with the harder sound of c / k / ck

clock Short A . . . “ah”

Like Long I

Cline Long I

barebacked . . . the alliteration of “Bs” is likewise percussive

First A functions like “Ai” in Air, second A short,

bicker Short I . . . “ih”

dark etc.

curled

Take

kind

make

autoerotic (longest-syllable word of the poem, and all five vowels at that!!)

American

Your Favorite Word and its Letter-Level Opposites

1) Chlorine

Hard C Ch

Long O

Long E

So . . . contrast with Softer Consonants

+ short vowel sounds (with a few long ones thrown in for good measure)

fossil fossil (“ah”)

vessel vessel (“eh”)

Cecil C converted to S

melody short e, and the o sounds like “uh”

Now, put your favorite word and its letter-level opposites together . . .

Throw other words into the mix . . .

- 1) chlorine-haunted fossil
- 2) the swimming pool as vanity vessel for chlorine
- 3) chlorine melody on the Y’s full-blast radio
- 4) tile noir, film by Cecil B. Chlorine

One More Sound Trick: Line 9

Q. what do you notice about the sounds?

A. The line is composed entirely of one-syllable words.

Boom Boom boom boom boom.

Take Me kind of love.

There is an authority to one-syllable strings, a directness.

Keep this sound idea in your poetry toolkit . . .

Quick Review:

- 1) Listen for what the letters are doing at the line level: what tensions do they create? Contrasts? hard / soft, and for vowels, long / short. Alliteration? Humor? (remember tongue twisters?)

Busy Beaver Binge-watches Boss Soprano in Bowling Green: Bada buckeye bada bing.

What a Wednesday: woke a wishing well; worried, watered my Winnebago.

- 2) The monosyllabic line and its impact on tone.
(directness, precision of word choice)

Harryette Mullen

Any Lit

You are a ukulele beyond my microphone
You are a Yukon beyond my Micronesia
You are a union beyond my meiosis
You are a unicycle beyond my migration
You are a universe beyond my mitochondria
You are a Eucharist beyond my Miles Davis
You are a euphony beyond my myocardiogram
You are a unicorn beyond my Minotaur
You are a eureka beyond my maitai
You are a Yuletide beyond my minesweeper
You are a euphemism beyond my myna bird
You are a unit beyond my mileage
You are a Yugoslavia beyond my mind's eye
You are a yoo-hoo beyond my minor key
You are a Euripides beyond my mime troupe
You are a Utah beyond my microcosm
You are a Uranus beyond my Miami
You are a youth beyond my mylar
You are a euphoria beyond my myalgia
You are a Ukrainian beyond my Maimonides
You are a Euclid beyond my miter box
You are a Univac beyond my minus sign
You are a Eurydice beyond my maestro
You are a eugenics beyond my Mayan
You are a U-boat beyond my mind control
You are a euthanasia beyond my miasma
You are a urethra beyond my Mysore
You are a Euterpe beyond my Mighty Sparrow
You are a ubiquity beyond my minority
You are a eunuch beyond my migraine
You are a Eurodollar beyond my miserliness
You are a urinal beyond my Midol
You are a uselessness beyond my myopia

Mullen's Patterns: Fashion Forwards

You are a beyond my

is the runway . . .

U

M

Mullen's nouns

are the outfits

U / M

Writing Prompt . . .

Begin with one of the following runways

I am _____ in lieu of _____

You said _____, I replied _____

Dress the runway in the word ingredients from your name poem.

*Think about alliteration, letter-level similarities, and contrasts.

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I am Nebraska in lieu of Medusa

I am jumping jack in lieu of joystick

I am Caesar in lieu of azure

I am iffy in lieu of eddy

I am octopus in lieu of oboe

I am castle in lieu of crockpot

I am stipple in lieu of impulse

I am rigatoni in lieu of retro

I am avian in lieu of nettle

I am Sousaphone in lieu of Shreveport

But wait, there's more . . .

A behind-the-scenes letter-level reveal . . .

I am Nebraska in lieu of Medusa

I am jumping jack in lieu joystick

I am Caesar in lieu of azure

I am iffy in lieu of eddy (don't forget, the sonic effect of
two iambs that have similar sounds)

I am octopus in lieu of oboe (contrasting O sounds)

I am castle in lieu of crockpot

I am stipple in lieu of impulse

I am rigatoni in lieu of retro

I am avian in lieu of nettle

I am Sousaphone in lieu of Shreveport

**After your first draft, color code your letter patterns.
Sometimes we *hear* the poem better with our eyes!

*** For a longer poem, add more words to your name bank.

**** Perhaps this exercise becomes a poem all its own.

OR . . .

It gives you a few great lines to use in other poem drafts
and revisions.

Closing Prompts

- 1) Try the second “runway” phrase in the spirit of Mullen. Add more words to your name bank.

- 2) Also, see the first “runway” draft through.

- 3) Write your own “Autobiography” in which the “I” is privy to the goings-on of its neighbors. Details of these goings-on ultimately give us greater insight into the “I,” telling portions of its life story via the accounting of others.

Use a word you keep returning to, similar to Brock-Broido’s “love.” What are the letter qualities of this word? Long vowels, short vowels? Soft consonants? Hard consonants? Offset the danger of repeated-word lull by contrasting letters in the words surrounding it.

Please feel free to share your drafts with me:

jonriccio@gmail.com

Questions?

Closing Thoughts on Your Writing Playlist . . .

- 1) Did you notice any patterns when listening to music?
 - a) did certain songs or musical styles correspond to days where you focused on first drafts?
 - b) the middle part of putting a poem together (return to the draft, splicing more words in)?
 - c) revision?
 - d) submission?

Try the following:

For the next seven days that you write, “program” your sessions with the corresponding playlists:

Day 1	Draft	(Draft Music)
Day 2	Draft	(Draft Music)
Day 3	Middle Revisit	(Middle Revisit Music)
Day 4	Middle Revisit	(Middle Revisit Music)
Day 5	Revision	(Revision Music)
Day 6	Revision	(Revision Music)
Day 7	New Draft	(Draft Music)

Did the corresponding music / task make for a more productive writing session? Are there other phases of your writing? (new playlist!)

Thank you for your eyes, ears, and time.