

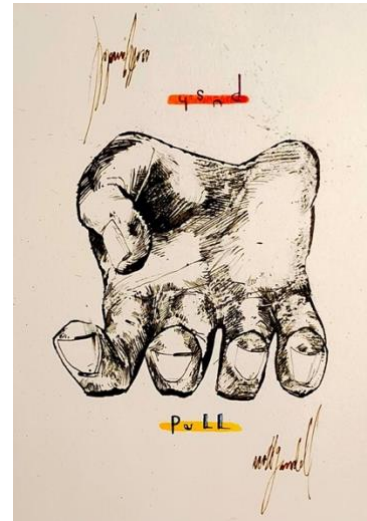
3 Poems (3 minutes)

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Synopsis: Three poems that navigate the shifting terrain of desperation, survival, and the quest to understand happiness from an immigrant perspective. Through economic hardship, a parent improvises to provide for her family. Through different languages, happiness takes on a unique interpretation. With delicately placed, spare language, these poems take the reader down a path illuminated by curiosity and discovery in the face of uncertain times.



Vocabulary

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. scent | 5. dispenser |
| 2. shame | 6. yin and yang |
| 3. poppies | 7. refugees |
| 4. exhaustion | 8. Cantonese |

Pre reading writing prompt

Write about a time when you were in charge of something that mattered to you. Maybe you were leading a big group project, and the deadline was coming up. Or perhaps a family member or friend asked you to “house sit” when they went on vacation. It could be a BIG moment in your life where you really stepped up, or something a little lighter, like taking care of your plants by keeping them happy and healthy. Whatever the situation, what did you do to ensure things went well? Did you experience any unexpected challenges, or did everything run like a well-oiled machine? Who put you in charge of this?

Pre reading discussion prompt (class wide or in pairs)

Do you believe the road to happiness is paved with “tough times.” In other words, do the struggles we face, and the unexpected road bumps we bounce over, shape our ultimate happiness... or diminish it?

Post reading discussion questions (class wide or in pairs)

1. How does the poet use form — line breaks, capitalization, punctuation — to emphasize the bigger message or purpose of these poems?
2. Do you believe that someone with a different background than the writer, say for instance someone that was born in the United States, can still relate to what the author is saying? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the author titles the first poem, “Lesson in Geometry and the Redistribution of Resources”?
4. What is the connection between work and health in the second poem, “Crying Makes You Feel Better”?

Post reading writing reflection:

Pick three words from the vocab list above. With your three selected words, describe what it means to leave something behind. Keep in mind: The thing you are “leaving behind” can be a thing, a place, or an idea. For example, if you’ve ever moved homes, you may wonder what happened to your old house. If you’ve ever changed your mind, maybe you are curious why you drifted away from your old ideas?