

PV Log: (circle one) **Poem** / **Movie** / **Picture** / **Lyric**Date 2/5/14Title "Valentine for Ernest Mann"Author / Director / Naomi Shihab Nye

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

Class assignment, given to us by Mr. Shakely

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

This poem has three main parts. The first part states that poems can't be ordered and served on a silver platter, emphasizing that poems take many drafts and perfect poems do not come easily. The second part says that poems hide. Poems hide in everyday things we may not notice regularly. The third part tells the story of a man who gave two skunks to his wife for Valentine's Day because they had beautiful eyes, but his wife becomes frightened and dislikes the gift. He sees beauty in the skunks where others do not, showing that beautiful things can be hidden.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

The theme of this poem is hidden beauty. Poems do not just show up randomly out of nowhere, and an author cannot just magically write a perfect poem on the first try. Poems have to be dug up and discovered, just like beautiful things can hide behind masks and must be discovered. One Train Hides Another, and one mask may hide something beautiful. This poem brings a "don't judge a book by its cover" type of message with it.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

This poem is set up like a story, and it is written in a prose-ish sort of manner. The narrator addresses the reader personally and refers to the reader as "you" and the things belonging to the reader as "yours." It makes the reader feel included in the stories of the poem, and it gives it a more personal feel.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

This poem is one of my favorite poems from this semester. It is way too common in our society to judge something as ugly before getting to know it. Half the time, we are just too plain lazy to go digging to find the beauty. The other half of the time, we think that it won't be worth it to find the beauty. In reality, there are often great personal rewards for doing the work to find the beauty in things, and I think that people should spend the time to do so.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)

A Valentine for Ernest Mann

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"
and expect it to be handed back to you
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.
Anyone who says, "Here's my address,
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.
So I'll tell you a secret instead:
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,
they are sleeping. They are the shadows
drifting across our ceilings the moment
before we wake up. What we have to do
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife
two skunks for a valentine.
He couldn't understand why she was crying.
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."
And he was serious. He was a serious man
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly
just because the world said so. He really
liked those skunks. So, he re-invented them
as valentines and they became beautiful.
At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding
in the eyes of the skunks for centuries
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we reinvent whatever our lives give us
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock
in your drawer, the person you almost like, but not quite.
And let me know.