

## The Cinematic Eye: Writing Image-Driven Poems

The art of poetry is created through the media of language, music, and image. As writers, it is often our impulse to start with language, seeking out beautiful rhythms and clever turns of phrase. This exercise asks the poet instead to start with image, allowing concrete objects to generate the poem's language and music.

Choose a film that you find visually compelling. It could be a contemporary blockbuster or a cult classic or the screwball comedy you happened to catch on the late, late show. What you're looking for in a film is not the action or the dialogue, but the visual components. If you watched the film with the sound off, what would stand out? Make a list of the images that haunt you—the landscape, perhaps, or an interesting object on the dresser, or a costume, or a facial expression, or a well-constructed shadow. List anything that glimmers out at you.

Highlight the images that you find most interesting, selecting as many or few as you find useful. At this point, you have options: you could collage the pieces together without comment, or you could interweave a secondary moment from your own life to put into conversation with the film's images. Try both. See what happens. At this point, let the music and language begin to exert their pull.

Examples and Sources of Inspiration:

Poems from <http://flavorwire.com/217236/our-favorite-poems-about-movies> (especially **"Film Noir"** by Nicholas Christopher and **"The James Bond Movie"** by May Swenson)

*The Complete Book of Kong: Poems*, by William Trowbridge

**"Dear John Wayne"** by Louise Erdrich

<http://www.westga.edu/~mmcfar/Louise%20Erdrich.htm>

**"Queen Kong"** by Carol Ann Duffy

<http://apoemaday.tumblr.com/post/38397097694/queen-kong>