

Gifts to the Imagination

Our lives have limits; there are always disappointments. One thing I've done when I can't have something I want is to give myself a gift in my imagination.

Give yourself a gift in your imagination. Make it as fabulous and weird as you like. (After all, it costs you nothing more to have a fabulous imagining than a pedestrian one.) Anything's fair game: an imaginary being, an imaginary place, an imaginary object, an imaginary situation. Don't imagine money; imagine what money can't buy.

Now bring your readers with you. How does it sound? How does it taste? How does it smell? How does it move? How does it touch your skin? Use as many senses as possible to describe your imaginary gift. Don't explain; just explore.

Now let go of your gift. You no longer control it. Let it morph into something you didn't entirely expect. How do you know it has changed? How does it surprise you? Keep using your senses to show this change to your readers.

For examples of poems heavy with imagination, take a look at the following:

Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky":

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/42916>

Mark Strand's "Eating Poetry":

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/52959>

Charles Simic's "Watermelons":

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/watermelons>

Kaylin Haught's "God Says Yes to Me":

<http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2011/04/17>

Sandra Beasley reading "You Were You," a first-person poem in the voice of a jukebox:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qC27-0uBwc>

Various French surrealist poems in translation:

<http://www.alb-neckar-schwarzwald.de/surrealism/surrealism.html>