POETRY

Critical Comments

Students may misunderstand some comments about content or form, so try asking questions about a troubling area, using the comments as a jumping off point.

Content: What the author writes on the page

- Sensory details
  - Why is this image important to the poem?
  - Could you describe this image more?

- Figurative language
  - Could you use a metaphor for this image?
  - Why did you use personification for this detail?

- Journey
  - What do you want the readers to focus on?

Form: How the author writes a particular stanza

- Layout and white space
  - Why is this poem organized this way?
    - Is this poem a sonnet, haiku, or ballad?
  - Why did you stop the stanza here?
  - Why is there a line break here?
  - Why did you use this rhyme scheme?

- Sound and rhythm
  - Are you using these words to create a specific sound?
  - Are you writing in a certain meter?

- Punctuation
  - Why didn’t you use punctuation in this piece?
  - Did you use this punctuation to get a certain reaction from the reader?
POETRY

Personal Comments

These comments may hint towards helpfulness but stop before they get there. The best way to go about these comments is to rephrase them into something more constructive that addresses a content or form issue.

“Boring.”

• **Rephrase:** “This stanza fell a little flat for me.”
• **Question:** How can you keep the reader in this moment?

“I don’t like this part.”

• **Rephrase:** “This stanza isn’t working because…”
• **Question:** How can we make this stanza more…?

Hearts, stars, or check marks

• Hearts may be nice to see, but does the author have any idea what this means?
• Is this mark used elsewhere in the poem that hints towards a meaning?