

How to Write A Poem

One

Pick a thesis. A thesis is different from a topic. For example, *cake* is a topic. *Danger masked by sweetness* is a thesis.

Two

Jot down some words that are verbs or nouns, adjectives straight down the page. Demystify the poet's myth and start with a list.

hidden
craving
hunger
taste
dessert
fat
icing
dangerous
glutton
sin

Three

Next to each word on your list, write another word that begins or ends with the same consonant sound, then another word with the same vowel sound. Then write some words that almost rhyme. Roll it together in your mouth and taste the sound.

Hidden bitten butter better
raving craving raging changeling
strangling strangeness dangerous gluttonous
gelatinous stop us sipping icing splicing sass;
my bitter
butter ass.

Four

Look at all the words and add more to the score or so inscribed in black on the sepia page. Never write a poem with red ink. Enough blood's been spilled as it is. No one is looking for a reminder that this is you. That you are the christ in every line saying *take this, all of you and drink from it.*

Five

Cross the shit parts out. Scratch

away a cliché word. Then scratch
a line. Then catch a glimpse of
yourself in the mirror and be reminded
that your words are the same as your face:
swollen, broken, misunderstood.

Cross it all out. Write new better words
in the margin
circle something
draw an arrow
make it work.

Make it sweet like a cake and just as hard to digest. Make it
hurt. Spill your guts and watch
the white frosting turn back into eggs and
lard and petroleum jelly. Flush it
all, the shit and the poetry and the puke.

Watch it spin and then do you job
all put together on moleskin

Zero

Bitter butter Betty Crocker.