

Poetry Writing Workshop  
Instructor: Christopher Luna  
June 22, 2025]

Student: Mike Garofalo

Introduction

Christopher Luna,

Thanks for the 6/22 writing prompts and examples. [Three new poems](#) were written by me for this lesson.

I can't come to the Zoom class on 6/23, because I am attending a big party for my daughter's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday. I will see you at the Cave on 7/10, and both of your Zoom classes on 7/14 and 7/28.

I've been reading "*The Complete Poems of Ted Berrigan*," 750 pages, edited by Alice Notley. Expanding my poetic sensibilities. His *Sonnets* were baffling.

I have had considerable interest in [Zen Buddhism](#) since 1961. So, I was sympatico with your Poet's Sangha analogy. Good Karma deeds by you.

Keeping working,

Mike Garofalo

Prompt 1: Write a poem about your understanding of our Nation and its culture or history. Write a poem that expresses anger towards the rich.

## ***Right-Wrong Wings Flapping***

Some rich and poor people stumbling  
into Right Wing flights:

of fabricated fears—  
of wild masses marching  
to Black Lives Matter

or Queers in incorrect bathroom toilets  
or immigrant criminals at distant doors  
or hungry children at *free* school lunches  
or Wokes leaving their Church's pews in droves  
or foreign inclusions in Sesame Street PBS

and renaming military bases after Yankees  
and showing mixed marriages on TV ads  
and threats to buying more machine guns  
and worries over too many Chinese Dolls  
and fearing that good women might lead

these advocates of inequality  
these devotees of Fox New celebrities  
these worshipers of a rich Orange man's drivell  
these desperate poor folks wanting to be rich  
these flag wavers buying autographed Bibles

Cheering Loudly: '*Amerika, Gott mit uns!*'  
white power rich-poor Jesus freak frauds  
voting for convicted criminals.

*Citicizing Relentlessly Ruthlessly*  
all believers in saving Trees

even Joe Biden dying of cancer in bed  
even women seeking medical care

even popular singers incurring their ire  
even all previous Presidents  
even Social Security paying their rent.

Bizarre American Behaviors  
now favor rich white Dictators.  
Who will raise the Confederate Flag again  
Over Capitols of rural Red States  
Down with Old Glory, Up with Hate.

Prompt 2. Write about a subject or philosophy that is challenging  
to make poetic. Non-appearance of the *sacred*.

It is hard  
to think poetically  
with **Wars destroying lives**  
and civilian property---  
malevolence alive

### **Snapshots of war on TV**

snippets of car crashes  
latest news about rich celebrities  
more commercials to sell you more things  
leading to ten sporting events: Again.

Splashes of information keep us hypnotized.

In the New School of the Trivial  
we are Sophomores in stride

flip-flopping in flash editing  
swamped Dummies in Data Tsunamis.

My mind working overtime:  
a speeding bike without brakes  
a rolling rock tumbling down  
a super-alert consciousness drained  
a can't-quit-motor speeding on.

Listening to the News  
about the **War in Iran:**  
Israel demolished the  
Shi'a Regime's military, the  
USA bombed it's nuclear sites.

I'm not upset to see Iranian  
proxies and the Iranian Shi'a  
Regime undermined. Proxy  
terrorists like Hamas, Hezbollah,  
Levant, Baathists, [Sunni-Isis-Al-Qaeda]

Have openly stated their aims  
to terrorize and destroy  
Israel, the USA, and other Nations.  
Good Riddance!

Nevertheless, since Iran posed  
no immediate existential threat  
to the USA; the decision by King Trump,  
to bomb Iran, without meeting with Congress,  
is another example of his  
ignorance and incompetence.

Likewise, our own Christian Nationalists

Seek to Rule us Secular Woke Folks.  
But we don't need or want  
More religious zealots In Charge;  
Favoring a *Separation* of Church and State.  
Religions are sometimes a *violent disgrace*.

Prompt 3. Use self-righteousness to own your past.

I listened to another say  
what I resisted to hear  
what was alien to me  
what outlined my ire  
what I wanted to fight  
  
But then I settled down  
loosened my blockhead mind  
  
Thought things over patiently,  
listened more carefully,  
saw matters from other sides,  
respected the integrity  
and sincerity of other kinds  
  
Of thinking outside my closed boxes  
of my habits of opinions needing overhaul.

Sonnets in 5 2 5 2 format.

