

Journalism/Creative Writing Extended Project Poetry Track

Step Five: Outline

At this point, we have all the meat of your collection thought through. But before we start writing, we need a detailed outline with as much information as you can come up with. We're going to use what you've planned yesterday and make sure we have all of the information together on one super detailed outline.

You need to decide what kind of outline works best for your writing style. There is no hard-and-fast right and wrong. Some writers just want a simple bullet-pointed list of the progression of the plot with the character reveals, subplots, etc., woven in (for narrative collections), or bullet-pointed lists of basic topic outlines for each poem (for thematic collections). Some poets want a more organized outline, using the Act 1, 2, 3 with sub lists (using roman numerals or A, B, C, etc.) within (like taking notes in history class). Some writers use a hybrid of the two as needed. Figure out what works for you and in your journal/on your laptop create as detailed of an outline as possible.

Within your outline, you'll want to include: (for narrative collections:) overall plot, subplots, character details (when things get revealed), red herrings, etc., (for all collections:) how many poems, basic premise of each one, what you're wanting to include in each, reoccurring themes/symbols/motifs, how you're communicating the ideas, etc. You'll have three days to work on this, so take your time. The more you plan/outline now, the easier (and more cohesive) the writing process will be for you later.