

A Poetry Exercise Using a Poem by Kenneth Koch

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To My Heart at the Close of Day¹

KENNETH KOCH

At dusk light you come to bat
As Georg Trakl might put it. How are you doing
Aside from that, aside from the fact
That you are at bat? What balls are you going to
hit
Into the outfield, what runs will you score,
And do you think you ever will, eventually
Bat one out of the park? That would be a thrill
To you and your contemporaries! Your mighty
posture
Takes its stand in my chest and swing swing swing
You warm up, then you take a great step
Forward as the ball comes smashing toward you,
home
Plate. And suddenly it is evening.

Read the Kenneth Koch poem above with your students, then ask them to imagine what type of game their own heart or lungs or stomach would play. Following a brief class discussion about this, ask them to answer the following questions before they begin to write their own poems inspired by “To My Heart at the Close of Day.”

1. *What part of the body are you writing to and about?*

2. *What is your body part doing? Is it playing a sport? A game?*

3. *What time of day is it? What is the weather or light like?*

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