4 Craft Strategies to Notice in *The Leaving Morning* (And Why)

Julie Patterson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/iypw_articles

Part of the Creative Writing Commons, Curriculum and Instruction Commons, and the Elementary Education and Teaching Commons

Recommended Citation


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Indiana Partnership for Young Writers at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@butler.edu.
KATHY COLLINS
Reading Workshops for Real Classrooms
Don't miss our 2013 Fall (and why) by Julie Patton, writer-in-residence
Saturday, November 9
at the IPS Butler Lab School
Drawing on the power of books, Sharing ideas and showcasing some of the best practices of grades 1-3 is how to teach students across multiple grade levels. A limited number of flexible learning styles that are very competitive and inviting. Check the best strategies for their conditions or similar strategies in their own writing.

4 Craft Strategies to Notice in The Leaving Morning (and why)
By Julie Patton, writer-in-residence

Writing workshop teachers use exemplary texts ("touchstone texts") in the curriculum. By reading these texts over and over with students, invite students to share what they notice about the craft of these texts, point out new craft strategies that students are ready to comprehend, and invite students to notice these or similar strategies in their own writing.

The best touchstone texts are sophisticated enough to work well across multiple grade levels and in the first grade and—still one of the most frequently—touchstone texts that were used. The Leaving Morning by Angela Johnson. Here are just a few of the brilliant craft strategies my students and I have noticed in it:

Retell. It’s easy to spot retell in The Leaving Morning, most notably the title phrase itself, but the fun part of noticing this with students is hearing their hypotheses as to what author Angela Johnson chose to repeat. "She wanted to show it wasn’t just any old cold coin, was third grade.

A fifth grade student read even deeper: “Because that’s how it feels to move. You can’t stop thinking about it. Leaving just keeps bouncing around in your head all the time.”

Readers will also often notice repeated lines and phrases. The key to using repetition effectively in your own writing, however, is thinking about why those words and phrases were chosen by the author. What is the author trying to convey in those words? Why are they important enough to repeat? When students can form smart hypotheses about why the author of the touchstone text used repetition, they can move the next move to using repetition with intention in their own work.

Word Choice
One of my favorite conversations with middle and upper grade students often stems from our conversation about repetition. About Angela Johnson describes the leaving morning, she repeats slight variations of the phrase I left on the window. The first time this phrase appears, it is written “She pressed the ice against the cold window while I left cold coins on the pane.” I ask students what a window is, and then they don’t know. Why didn’t Angela Johnson use the phrase she wanted to use? Why would she want to know the meaning of ‘cold’?” I want to say glass or window pane.” Because the perfect phrase is: No accident that it sounds like pain. This sentence appears in the opening lines of the story, and the coin, pain, is pivotal in setting the tone and mood. As readers, we know right away that the leaving in this story is going to be painful, sad.

Onomatopoeia or Sound Effects
Students who want to show off how smart they are like to use the term onomatopoeia in this conversation. Because they know that a vocabulary word they are supposed to know in language arts, 1. onomatopoeia, 2. prefer to talk about the effects or sound words, because honestly I can’t spell onomatopoeia to write it on a noticing chart. And seriously, I have the highest degree attainable in creative writing and have never used the word once. Many elementary school language arts classes. Like in the other conversations described, what is most notable is that students can articulate why Angela Johnson put the sound effect in the street sweeper at the beginning of the story. "Sssshhhshsh...” What does that sound effect add to the story or reveal about it? When I asked one fourth grade class, I heard, “It’s like the whir sound, so we know it will be a quiet story.”

"Or a sad story. It’s like the author is crying and someone is comforting her.”

"Maybe she’s going somewhere where they don’t have street sweepers, so that’s what she’ll remember about the old place years from now.”

I don’t want students to just say, “I know what that’s for.” I want them to think about why the author Johnson use a word that her audience might not the word, pane, is pivotal in setting the tone and mood. It’s no accident that it sounds like pain. This sentence appears in the opening lines of the story, and this one appears in the opening lines of the story, and this one describes the leaving morning, she repeats slight variations of the phrase I left on the window. The first time this phrase appears, it is written “She pressed the ice against the cold window while I left cold coins on the pane.” I ask students what a window is, and then they don’t know. Why didn’t Angela Johnson use the phrase she wanted to use? Why would she want to know the meaning of ‘cold’?” I want to say glass or window pane.” Because the perfect phrase is: No accident that it sounds like pain. This sentence appears in the opening lines of the story, and the coin, pain, is pivotal in setting the tone and mood. As readers, we know right away that the leaving in this story is going to be painful, sad.

Onomatopoeia or Sound Effects
Students who want to show off how smart they are like to use the term onomatopoeia in this conversation. Because they know that a vocabulary word they are supposed to know in language arts, 1. onomatopoeia, 2. prefer to talk about the effects or sound words, because honestly I can’t spell onomatopoeia to write it on a noticing chart. And seriously, I have the highest degree attainable in creative writing and have never used the word once. Many elementary school language arts classes. Like in the other conversations described, what is most notable is that students can articulate why Angela Johnson put the sound effect in the street sweeper at the beginning of the story. "Sssshhhshsh...” What does that sound effect add to the story or reveal about it? When I asked one fourth grade class, I heard, “It’s like the whir sound, so we know it will be a quiet story.”

"Or a sad story. It’s like the author is crying and someone is comforting her.”

"Maybe she’s going somewhere where they don’t have street sweepers, so that’s what she’ll remember about the old place years from now.”

I don’t want students to just say, “I know what that’s for.” I want them to think about why the author Johnson use a word that her audience might not