10H Remote Learning Assignment #3

1. Read each of the following poems. You can find them with a simple google search\*:

Olive Oil by Paul Suntup

Knowledge by Philip Memmer

Fast break by Edward Hirsch

Current by Stuart Dybek

I am Going to Start Living like a Mystic by Edward Hirsch

Vintners by Andrew Bennett (\*not online, but pasted at end of this

document)

1. All these poems are written in **unrhymed couplets**. A couplet is a 2-line stanza, and unrhymed couplets don’t rhyme. That’s obviously obvious, but it’s notable because for most of the history of poetry, all couplets rhymed. Other than that, unrhymed couplets follow the same principles as free-verse… almost.

It is often the case, not always, that unrhymed couple feature some kind of pairing. In my poem, there is the pairing of my grandfather and I performing manual vineyard labor on opposite sides of a row—it is my intention to suggest a kind of spiritual pairing of the two of us, grandfather and grandson, through this shared productive time together, intensified by the fertile and verdant surroundings.

Unrhymed couplets can either speed up or slow down the pacing of poem, depending on how they are managed. In my poem, I want slowness.

And similarly, they can either expand or collapse time. They can splinter an instant into smaller fragments, or something like that. That’s another effect I’m going for in my poem.

So, go back and reread those other poems, and ask yourself: what is achieved or suggested by couplet-ing of these lines? How does it affect pacing and movement? How does it play into the poem’s plot, or thematic concern?

Yet, unrhymed couples—like any form—should be at least as much in the service of the writer as the reader. Sometimes a form like this can *help you write a poem*—help you get the words, the experience, the images, the narrative, on the page—with no intended effect whatsoever. That’s fine too. Any form or restriction that *helps you produce a draft of a poem* is worthy of your deployment. If it comes out awkward, but has something salvageable in it, you can always go back and *change the form* among other revisions.

1. **Write 2 more poems of your own. At least one of them should be in unrhymed couplets. The other may also be in unrhymed couplets, but could be another form with which you are familiar**. Borrow the moves of one of the above, or go your own way. The *topics*, based on your nominations and votes, are: **rant** and **city-on-a-rainy-night**. Interpret these prompts however you’d like

\***If you accept this mission, share poems with me by Friday 3/27\***

**Vintners**

Bees inebriated on late August

ripeness, us on the smell.

No need for gloves

should fingertips or knuckles

brush these bright revelers.

Clippers in hand, we pile

cluster upon cluster--

each purple grape bloated

and bellyaching with its own sugar--

kicking our bins down the row,

vines gripping each other in gospel prayer.

1. Bennett