



Author Asks

from Julia Story,
author of Post Moxie

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- 1** How does form create meaning in the poems? What is the purpose of one stanza per page?
- 2** So many of the images in the poems come from dreams. How does the dream imagery affect the tone or meaning of the poems?
- 3** Do you see any patterns in the references to Christianity in the poem?
- 4** I have always thought of *Post Moxie* as one long poem. How does the meaning change if it is viewed as separate poems rather than stanzas?
- 5** Do you see a narrative in the poem? Several? If so, what is (are) it (they)?
- 6** I wrote this poem over the course of a year and the stanzas appear in the order in which they were written. Is there evidence of a chronology in the poem?
- 7** Does the tone shift anywhere in the poem? Between sections? Within stanzas? What is the effect?
- 8** How does *Post Moxie* compare with other books of prose poems you've read?
- 9** I'm aware of a great deal of pronoun shifting in the poem. What is the effect of this?
- 10** How would you describe the speaker of the poem? Is there only one?

Writing Exercises

How-To Poem

I have done this exercise with the work of several authors (have had the most interesting success with Marie Howe imitations):

Write a 10-point list titled "How to Write a Julia Story (or author of your choice) Poem." Think about diction, imagery, sound, line, form, tone, etc. as you create your list. Then write an imitation poem using your rules. It isn't necessary to imitate content in this exercise.

The Nightwatchman's Party (based on Roger Weingarten's "Party of the Century")

This exercise is for a class or group of poets. I have each student bring to class four or five books on a variety of subjects: religion, physics, Barbie, the Civil War, knot-tying, etc. All of the books (at least 20 for a class of 15) are placed in a central location, and each student has fifteen minutes to create word/phrase lists using the books. Once each person has his or her list, they try to use at least a third of the words to write the first stanza of a poem called "The Nightwatchman's Party." After composing a ten-line stanza, they trade with another student, who then writes the next ten-line stanza, and so on. At the end, each student should have a rough 30-line poem with 3 authors and a lot of collaged detail. The final step is revision, each student takes his or her poem home to tighten or revise it. Part of the next class is spent reading these and discussing the process and results of collaboration and collage.

Suggested Reading

The World Doesn't End, Charles Simic
The Branch Will Not Break, James Wright
My Life, Lyn Hejinian
Edificio Sayonara, John Yau
Invisible Bride, Tony Tost
A Green Light, Matthew Rohrer

What the Living Do, Marie Howe
Some Trees, John Ashbery
The Descent of Alette, Alice Notley
The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara
Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Carl Jung
Owning Your Own Shadow, Robert A. Johnson

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