

Writer's Idea Box: when I think of...
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Repetition is the primary way of creating a pattern through rhythm. Meaning accrues through repetition. One of the deep fundamentals of poetry is the recurrence of sounds, syllables, words, phrases, lines, and stanzas.

—poets.org

Writing Warm-up

Make a list using the prompts below. Set a timer. Write for three minutes.

Favorite food, relative, place, game, friend, color, teacher, clothing, hobby, book, pet...

First boy or girlfriend, first job, first car, first experience of intimacy, first marriage, first injury...

Things, people, or situations you dislike...foods, weather, smells, places, experiences...

Many of the sound devices of poetry (alliteration, assonance, consonance) depend on recurrence. Metrical patterns are established by recurrences, and so are poetic forms ...and refrains. — poets.org

Writing Sample:

I suggest reading the writing exercise and it's sample writing then read the complete writing sample on page three to get the feel for how to write in the suggested form.

- *how completely i believed*, d. ellis phelps (see page 3)

Writing Exercise

Try writing a poem in stanzas that repeats the line “when i think of” and each new stanza begins with the last line of the previous stanza. Use any word from the word bank you created in the warm-up as a beginning. Let the poem take you where it wants to go, which may be in any direction and away from the original subject. For example, if I were to choose a favorite food to begin, it might begin like this:

when i think of mexican food
i think of crispy corn toastaditas
and a skinny calico kitty
my new husband and i found
by the dumpster at the restaurant
we loved

when i think of love

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i think of my first husband
& how i loved him a handsome
gentle man who practiced medicine
played the guitar bought me a house
and a new car

when i think of cars
i think of my dad
who bought me my first one

~Work-in-progress, © d. ellis phelps

*please note: any poem written in this format must be attributed as “after Viktoria Venezuela.”

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how completely i believed

—after Viktoria Venezuela

when i think of my mother's brother
i think of san antonio where he lived
for the 1968 hemisfair
my mother my father
my three-year old brother
in south texas felt:
the charm now tarnished
my father bought me there

how we were there

how the august heat
how it made me sweat

when i think of charm
i think of my uncle his broad grin
anyone over how he got his
start on san antonio's KONO radio
—his voice: a deep croon
to new york city—to the big time

how he could win

how he went on

how he never came home

when i think of new york city
i think of my mother & i
standing in front of the ritz
holding hands looking up
nothing but tall buildings
—a patch of sky
to a broadway show
from the third row

how my uncle treated us
how we could see the spit fly

when i think of the third row
i think of singing
my father my brother & i
sat there each sunday listening
to the preacher preach

how my mother

how we could see the spit fly
how we sang

—my mother and i

how completely i believed

the words of the hymns
then

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