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## Sacred Lucidity: Embodied Identity Through the Lens of Poetry

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# **Sacred Lucidity; Embodied Identity through the Lens of Poetry**

**by Abby Peyton Laporte**

# What is your identity?

I am a white female with mental illness. I am a poet. I am a survivor of gendered violence. I am in recovery from anorexia. I am spiritual.

→ Who are you?

→ What are some of the stories or feelings in your own selfhood?

# Confessional Poetry:

“Confessional poetry is verse in which the author describes parts of his or her life that would not ordinarily be in the public domain.

The prime characteristic is the reduction of distance between the persona displayed in a poem and the author who writes it.”

- Oxford Research Library, Literature

## What you will hear from me, today:

- Analysis of Sylvia Plath, Lucille Clifton, and Rupi Kaur
- Excerpts of my creative component
- Action steps for adding the benefits of poetry into your life

# Sylvia Plath and identity exploration through poetry

## Mirror

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful ,  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.  
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.  
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

# Lucille Clifton and identity exploration through poetry

in salem

*to jeanette*

weird sister  
the black witches know that  
the terror is not in the moon  
choreographing the dance of wereladies  
and the terror is not in the broom  
swinging around to the hum of cat music  
nor the wild clock face grinning from the wall,  
the terror is in the plain pink  
at the window  
and the hedges moral as fire  
and the plain face of the white woman watching us  
as she beats her ordinary bread.

# Rupi Kaur and identity exploration through poetry

(from Kaur's book, milk and honey)

p. 124

your voice  
alone  
drives me  
to tears

p. 150

you must enter a relationship  
with yourself  
before anyone else



## Two poems from my creative component, Sacred Lucidity...

→ “Faded Madness” (p. 18)

→ “Be Present Forever” (p. 15)

by APL

# **Faded Madness**

medication dreams of me  
Big Pharma saved my little life

my grand existence, hobbled by the ultimate safeguards  
and yet  
I inhabit the same lunatic, here.

cracks in the concrete became a childhood obsession  
stepping for the feeling of an even footprint-  
at all times-  
I believe in

angels

magic

martians

time travel

I became my self when I took their pills  
spilling ideas over into this bronze bowl of the now

God cannot create such a dilemma- I play between the realms

so, I straddle timelines  
and sift the sands of spacetime  
rupture the wormholes of the cosmos until I become dizzy

I saw a thin red-looking crack on the wall of the psychiatric ward  
it become my most sincere destiny. Now, the medicines inhabit *me*.

# **Be Present Forever**

Just so much to touch, like cobwebs and a spider's freshest home  
each spun thread in contact with another  
the online abundance of ideas, like a woven net  
high fidelity truth unearthed each moment  
because this is infinity  
and you are its steward  
its observer  
its guest.

# How can you add more poetry into *your* life?

- Obtain a poetry anthology/collection that includes a variety of authors. Read it until a poem speaks to you - in its power of relatability or contrast to your own identity!
- Get ready to write, and then pour forth *whatever is on your mind*. Trust the process, and trust that your intuition will create whatever you need, in that moment.
- Attend events: compete in poetry slams, or just listen at an open mic. Whichever variation resonates with your soul!
- Remember: confessional poetry is a discovery or creation of new information about humanness. Enjoy this radical renewal of self!

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