

Reading response: poetry and performance

[Profession](#), [Poet](#)



Reading Response: Poetry and Performance The of your Institute Reading Response: Poetry and Performance It is a well known scientific fact that while reading out silently to yourself, you hear your own voice inside your head. So reading something to yourself, while being enjoyable, is not the real experience, similar to what I discovered after carrying out the prescribed exercise. We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks seems to be a neat little ditty without much meaning to it. It has a lilting rhyme to it and is fun to read. But you cannot really appreciate the depth of the poem when you come across it on paper. However, listening to the poem recited by the poet along with its background took it to another level altogether. It did not change my perception of the poem as much as formed it. The background of the poem helped the words fall into place: it helped me make sense of what Brooks meant by lines such as ‘ we left school’ and ‘ we jazz June’. Also, Brooks’ rhythmic delivery of the piece made it seem much better than my own rendition inside my head, perhaps because she recited it the way it was meant to be recited. Similarly, despite being eerily haunting on its own - a child’s memory of times spent with his father - My Papa’s Waltz benefits a lot by being recited by Theodore Roethke, its creator. When I read the poem on its own, I was moved by the simple power of the words: the way they seemed to effortlessly rhyme, or at least sounded similar in my head; the way they fell into place so there was a rhythm to the poem; and how the whole scene was created using four stanzas of four lines each, perfectly painting the picture of a young boy with his father before bedtime. The recording, I must admit, made the words seem even more powerful than before, the rhythm crisper, the scene more vivid and alive. Being pretty

straightforward even in print, the second poem was easy to comprehend without the need to listen to an audio recording. I do agree from my experience with the first one that recitation may form or change your perception of a poem. After all, badly performed cover versions usually do put us off the real song, so it is with poetry and its reading. In my opinion, hearing a poem recited aloud adds, rather than take away, from the experience. Instead of it being visual only, it becomes audio-visual. The best way to explain this would be to perhaps compare a two-dimensional or flat image with a three-dimensional or 3D image; an architectural blueprint with a finished scale model is a good comparison too in this regard. There is a 'sense' of depth in the two-dimensional image but depth only comes when you look at that picture in a certain way; whereas, in a three-dimensional image or a scale model, actual depth is apparent from the first glance. Speech adds the third dimension to a flat piece of art. References Brooks, G. (1960). We real cool. Retrieved March 23, 2011, from [http://www. poets. org/viewmedia. php/prmMID/15433](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15433) Roethke, T. (1942). My papa's waltz. Retrieved March 23, 2011, from [http://www. poetryarchive. org/poetryarchive/singlePoem. do? poemId= 9505](http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoem.do?poemId=9505)