**Genre Exploration Project**

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A Beautiful Cycle

I don’t think about where I learned,

How I felt and how I yearned.

To be able to follow after my mother

By placing one foot in front of the other.

The faces I made when I took that first step

Are ones that my mother will never forget.

Well time has passed and things have changed

And now my role has been rearranged.

I’m a mother of a beautiful girl

Who it seems like just yesterday entered this world.

It’s hard to believe that a whole year has passed

And it’s been just one month since we experienced at last

That day when my daughter took her first step

And the day that I won’t ever forget.

By placing one foot in front of the other,

She was able to follow after me, her mother.

How wonderful I felt and how I had yearned

To be able to experience it with her when she learned.

The cycle repeats generation to generation

To anxious parents all over the nation.

A beautiful cycle it is indeed

And one I can’t wait to repeat.

Empty

The house doesn’t feel the same with you gone.

The walls close in.

Will this feeling go away?

When will I get to see you again?

Your daughter is too young to understand.

Her handprint is still on the glass

As she watched your plane pull onto the runway.

The tears fall down my cheeks and I try to push on.

I will make it through this.

We will make it through this.

You have left before.

When you return we will be happy again.

Happy and no longer empty…

FULL.

Life’s Special Gifts

A walk in the park when the wind brushes your cheek

A relaxing afternoon where the sun rays you seek

Walking on the beach with your toes in the sand

Or watching a ladybug crawl across your hand

The way that the clouds turn into shapes in the sky

And the feeling you get on a mountaintop so high

The leaves of the trees changing colors in the fall

The springtime sounds likes a beautiful birdcall

Nature is beautiful and all around

Just take the time to notice and appreciate the sounds

These are life’s special gifts each unique in their own way

Look around and be thankful each and every day!

**Writer’s Memo**

As a first grade teacher, finding ways to incorporate different genres in the classroom is important and essential to shaping the learning for my students. One way I enjoy doing this is through our daily poetry journals in the morning. Since poetry is something that I use so often, I thought it would be the perfect genre for me to explore. I enjoy searching for academically relevant poems for us to use, as well as ones that are fun and interesting. I myself used to enjoy writing poems as a child but sadly forgot my passion as I grew up. I decided that I wanted to rekindle this passion and try to find a way to incorporate it into my classroom in a different way than I am already doing. The poem that I am choosing to focus on is called *The Beautiful Cycle*. This poem is one that I plan to place in my daughter’s scrapbook album. The audience would be anyone who chose to read her album, and therefore would know the voice behind the poem.

 The idea that I wanted to write my poem on was my daughter learning how to walk. Taking her first steps was a moment that I wanted to find a way to capture the feelings and emotions behind it. It is something that many of us take for granted but such an important chapter in a child’s life. I used this mentality when I was reading my poem back to myself. When there were places that I wanted the reader to feel that type of emotion, and I didn’t get that, I tried to change it to get that feeling across. For me, poems are more powerful when you can feel the emotion the author had behind them. Also, with the poem having rhyming, there was a rhythm that I wanted the reader to catch on to as well. By reading it out loud to myself, I was able to catch places where the rhythm I wanted was missing. I had to change words to lengthen or shorten the line to make it match the rhythm I wanted.

 One thing that I learned from reading the Heard book was that poetry doesn’t have to rhyme, it doesn’t have to have rhythm, and it can just be words as they flow from your mind. I took this knowledge into writing my poem. It was interesting because even though I knew that, I still found myself sticking to including rhyming words, and keeping a steady rhythm.

 From my own experience with writing poetry, studying it, and rekindling my passion, I have decided that I am going to try to find ways to have my students write more of their own poems. I did that during my genre project, while I was writing my own poems, and my students really enjoyed it. Through our poetry journals, they knew that poems don’t have to rhyme or have rhythm, but I enjoyed having them practice writing their own and seeing that first hand. I will be incorporating individual poetry writing in my classes more often in the future. I was always afraid because I thought it would be too difficult of a task to ask first graders to do that. This course has taught me how to feel more confident in writing poetry myself, and thus the confidence I have in my students to do the same has definitely improved as well.

 Overall, this genre project allowed me to reignite a passion that had fizzled out. I found ways to express the emotions I feel about raising a daughter, being married and anything else that goes on in my life. It is relaxing and I even try to write small poems in my journal each night. I have learned that writing poetry is a way for me to end my day with a release of both positive and negative feelings about my day.

**First Draft:**

We don’t think about when we learned,

What we were feeling and how we yearned.

To be able to follow after our mothers

By placing one foot in front of the other.

The things we did when we took that first step

Is one that our mothers will never forget.

Well time went on and things have changed

And now our role is rearranged.

I’m a mother of a beautiful girl

Who only recently entered this world

It’s hard to believe that a whole year has passed

And it’s been just one month since we experienced at last

That day when my daughter took that first step

And the day that I won’t soon forget.

By placing one foot in front of the other,

She was able to follow after me, her mother.

I was so happy to experience the day

Of watching my baby head on her way!

**Second Draft:**

We don’t think about where we learned,

What we were feeling and how we yearned.

To be able to follow after our mothers

By placing one foot in front of the other.

The faces we made when we took that first step

Is one that our mothers will never forget.

Well time went on and things have changed

And now our role is rearranged.

I’m a mother of a beautiful girl

Who only recently entered this world

It’s hard to believe that a whole year has passed

And it’s been just one month since we experienced at last

That day when my daughter took that first step

And the day that I won’t ever forget.

By placing one foot in front of the other,

She was able to follow after me, her mother.

How I felt and how I yearned

To be able to experience when she learned.