FROM READING TO RESPONSE: YOUR OWN WAY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

As Carolyn Forché eloquently observes in an interview in The Language of Life, poems give us a way to bear witness not only to our own experience, but to the experiences of others. Think of someone you know who cannot or simply will not speak for him or herself, either a family member or personal acquaintance or an historical figure. In writing a poem in the voice of such a person, you have the opportunity to articulate what they may not have found a way to say, or, simply to record their voices for posterity. When you have selected a speaker for your poem, consider a story they might want to tell, of a specific incident or moment of importance to them. Attempt to tell this story in a poem of no more than 15 lines. This will be a challenge, but, keep pruning away. The story must appear in vivid "outline" as Robin's story does in the account of his first trip. And try to speak using the words your character would use. However, don't overdo it, and be careful trying to create a dialect; it can easily be overdone so that your character will turn into a caricature!

Five Kentucky Poets Laureate: An Anthology
HANDOUT JS-5

FROM READING TO RESPONSE: YOUR OWN WAY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

As Carolyn Forché eloquently observes in an interview in The Language of Life, poems give us a way to bear witness not only to our own experience, but to the experiences of others. Think of someone you know who cannot or simply will not speak for him or herself, either a family member or personal acquaintance or an historical figure. In writing a poem in the voice of such a person, you have the opportunity to articulate what they may not have found a way to say, or, simply to record their voices for posterity. When you have selected a speaker for your poem, consider a story they might want to tell, of a specific incident or moment of importance to them. Attempt to tell this story in a poem of no more than 15 lines. This will be a challenge, but, keep pruning away. The story must appear in vivid "outline" as Robin's story does in the account of his first trip. And try to speak using the words your character would use. However, don't overdo it, and be careful trying to create a dialect; it can easily be overdone so that your character will turn into a caricature!