

Writing Exercise:

SMALL PLEASURES:

Sometimes poems try to embrace a small moment or pleasure in life – to get the words precise, and freeze time. What are the small pleasures in your life? See if you can make a list of them. Remember, these are small pleasures — an ice-cream cone on a hot afternoon, a phone call from a friend. Rather than write about an entire Sunday, how about that one moment when you are petting the cat’s orange back, sunlight slipping through the window, the small purr of satisfaction. Try to use strong words to convey the power of the small pleasure.

Read the following examples, then try your own.

Reading by the Fire

By Andrew Green

Reading by the fire
In the evening
In winter
After dinner
Is a great pleasure
To behold —
The well-worn wingback chair
For my comfort
The pile of books on the table beside me
A metal floor lamp shining above me
The crack and pop of the wood
The orange and yellow flames
leaping toward the chimney
The rest of the house asleep
Even the dog on the couch dreaming
The newspaper snug in my hands
Outside, the snow falling
And the sound of the wind.

Cat

By Andrew Green

Stretched on the wooden floor,
the cat curls his quick tongue,
a thin flick of pink,
licks his soft white paws
hiding silver sharp claws,
now he yawns,
mouth open wide
like a small dark cave,
his thick orange fur
creates a large shadow
under the window
where the sun stops
to listen to his quiet purr —
like the distant sound
of a lawnmower.