

The Poetry of Jacqueline Woodson
Model Selection: Poetry

Two basic elements of poetry are sound and meaning. Poets use **sound devices**—such as rhyme, meter, alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia—to create musical effects with words. Poets use **figurative language**—such as simile, metaphor, and personification—to go beyond the ordinary meanings of words to express ideas or feelings in a striking way. Meaning also becomes vivid and memorable when it is conveyed through **imagery**, or words appealing to the senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

DIRECTIONS: *Read the following passages from “Describe Somebody” and “Almost a Summer Sky.” Then, use the space below each passage to answer the questions.*

I wrote, Ms. Marcus is tall and a little bit skinny. (from “Describe Somebody”)

1. Name two sound effects in the preceding line. Which words are involved in each sound effect?

Eric’s voice was like something
 that didn’t seem like it should belong
 to Eric.

Seemed like it should be coming out of an angel. (from “Describe Somebody”)

2. What figure of speech do the preceding lines contain? What is being compared with what?

You know what I love about trees, Rodney says.
 It’s like . . . It’s like their leaves are hands reaching
 out to you. Saying Come on over here, Brother.
 Let me just . . . Let me just . . .

Rodney looks down at me and grins.

Let me just give you some shade for a while. (from “Almost a Summer Sky”)

3. What figure of speech is most prominent in the preceding passage?

4. In the second line of the preceding passage from “Almost a Summer Sky,” which two words create the sound effect called assonance? Which words create alliteration?
