

REVISION

Jane Hancock

I want them to take a verb
And put it on stage with a bevy of other verbs
Like a chorus line
And have it audition for a part in the sentence
And win the role because it fits the mood.

I want them to take the nouns
And put them in two piles
Blah and specific
And toss the generic ones into the trash
Never to escape
Because they are all alike
And keep the ones that are most unique
And perfect for the part.

I want them to take the images
And add something to make the nose twitch
And the mouth water
And the ears tingle
And the body quiver
So that every sense swims in the ink on the page

I want them to take the story
And change all the past tense verbs to present
So that yesterday becomes today
And we are living in the moment
And then change them all back again if it doesn't work.

I want them to switch roles, point of view
So the personal becomes fiction
And the fiction is believable
And first person is third
And third is first
Just to see which sounds better.

I want them to take a microscope
And search for moments
To explode, to slow down,
To show not tell
To brighten with figurative language
Until their readers feel the passion of the writer.

I want them to start strong
Captivating their audience
With wondrous words and compelling ideas
Holding them hostage until the last line
And after.

But they just want
to get it done
and turn it in.

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My thanks to Billy Collins for the inspiration: "Introduction to Poetry."