

# Dare to Be a Chair...

or stone...or star...or car...or wind...**Metaphorical Me**



Pair share about the kind of person who is metaphorically a stone. How does she/he first appear? Are first impressions really lasting impressions? What does the whole metaphor mean? Do you know some stones? Are you one? What are you metaphorically? Brainstorm a bit before you write your own poem.

## Stone

Go inside a stone  
That would be my way  
Let somebody else become a dove  
Or gnash with a tiger's tooth  
I am happy to be a stone.

From the outside the stone is a riddle  
No one knows how to answer it.  
Yet within, it must be cool and quiet  
Even though a cow steps on it full weight,  
Even though a child throws it in a river;  
The stone sinks, slow, unperturbed  
To the river bottom  
Where the fishes come to knock on it  
And listen.

I have seen sparks fly out  
When two stones are rubbed,  
So perhaps it is not dark inside after all;  
Perhaps there is a moon shining  
From somewhere as though behind a hill—  
Just enough light to make out  
The strange writings, the star-charts  
On the inner walls

~Charles Simic, from *147 Ways to Teach Poetry*

As you probably discovered in your pair share, Simic's poem is effective because it seems to grow from the writer's temperament. On the surface he seems Phlegmatic, but we see hints of Choleric, and then we are left wondering if Melancholy is perhaps the best choice. What phrases point to all this? Why is Sanguine not the best option?

Now you are almost ready to write your Metaphorical Me poem. You could dare to be a chair, and if you were, what kind of chair would you be? What would you look like? Where would you be located? Who would sit or lounge on you? How do you feel under various situations? Who manufactured you? What is your future? What are you worth? Will you undergo changes? You will need to brainstorm extensively for metaphorical matches. It would be fun and helpful to complete the Metaphorical Me questionnaire on the back as you are thinking about what your metaphorical avatar might be. Let Simic's poem inspire you or look at some sample poems in the *Mirage* and *Making Waves* student literary magazines in our room.

In addition, remember Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*? This is another example of Metaphorical Me but it's set up more like a prose fable picture book rather than a poem (although it does sound a bit like free verse) If you'd rather model on this, that's fine.

Since I'm an English teacher, you know a definition is coming up to help you:

**Metaphor** is the most important and wide spread figure of speech in which one thing, idea, or action is referred to by a word or expression normally denoting another thing, idea, or action so as to suggest some common quality shared by the two. This **resemblance is assumed** as an imaginary identity rather than directly stated as a comparison. Referring to a man as *that pig*, or saying *he is a pig* is metaphorical, whereas saying *he is like a pig is a simile*. Metaphors may be **verbs (a talent blossoms)**, **Adjectives (a novice is green)**, or **idioms (throwing the baby out with the bath water)**. Learn and use metaphors to strengthen your writing, but **don't mix metaphors** (those vipers stabbed us in the back) because they are ridiculous.

## Metaphorical Me Questionnaire

Be sure you have reasons for the answers you give.

1. My first name is
2. It means
3. And it sounds like a
4. If I were a color nestled in a box of crayons, I'd be
5. If I were a car I'd be
6. As a cartoon, I'm
7. If I were not flesh and blood, I'd be made of
8. If a breeze blew by, you'd smell
9. The weather forecast of me would be
10. If I were a meal the menu would surely include
11. If I were music you'd hear
12. If I were an animal I'd make the sound of  
And feel  
And people would call me my pet/animal name of
13. If I were a game I'd be
14. Located on a map I'm
15. My geometrical shape is
16. The smallest thing I'd ever be is
17. And if I expanded as large as I pleased I'd be
18. If I were a movie I'd be titled
19. If Barbara Walters asked me what tree I'd be, I'd say
20. And something else not mentioned here that I'd probably be is

**Bonus grammar question:**

**Why did I use the construction *If I were...* instead of *If I was...*?  
Aren't singular subjects supposed to take singular verbs**