

Prepositional Phrase Poetry

Night Rise

~Susan Astor

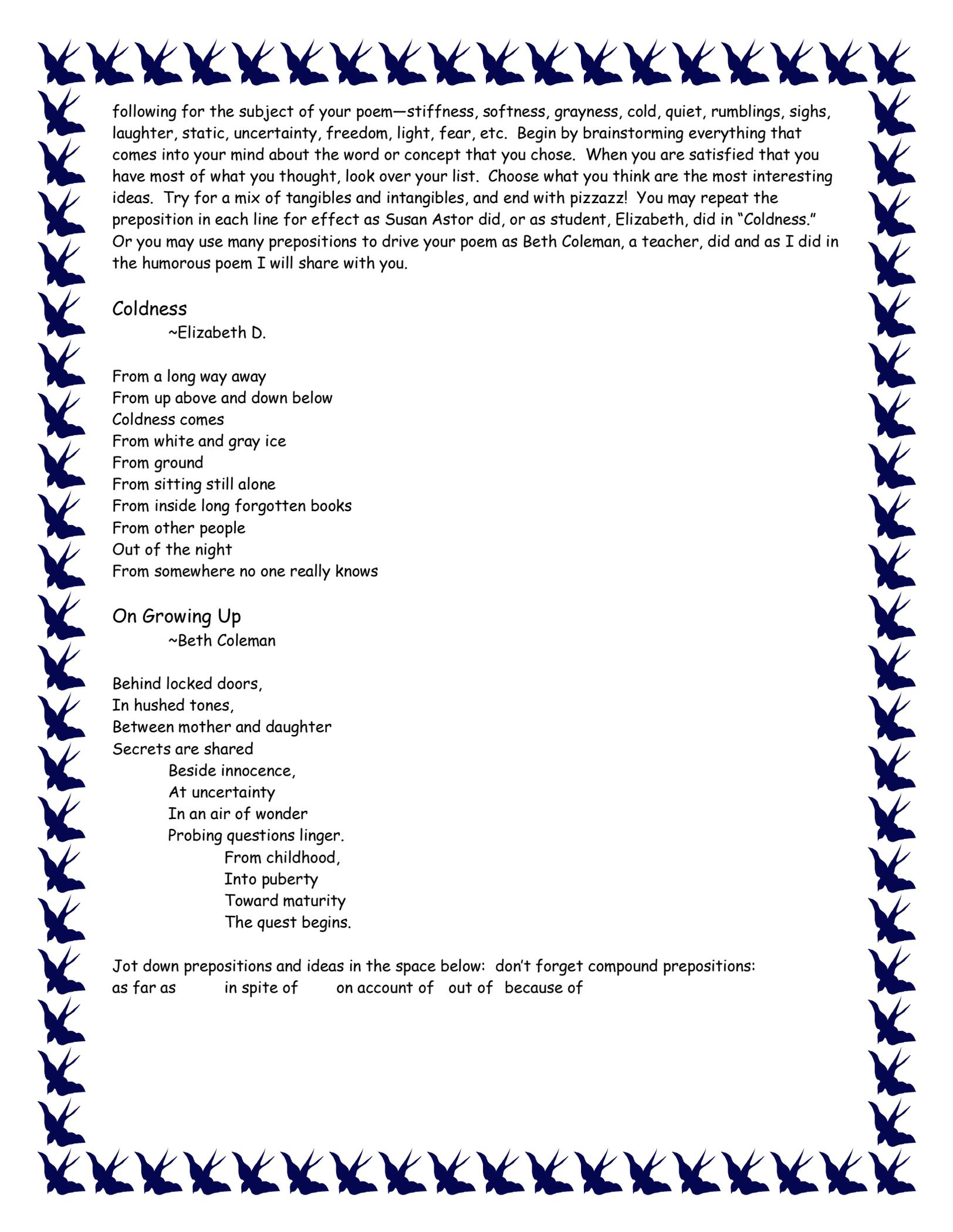
From where it has been night all day
The darkness comes
From storm sewers and wells
From one-eyed caves
From tunnels and the undersides of stones
From chimneys and pots
From drawers and boxes
From sockets, pockets, safes
Out of the coldest cavities of oceans
From the trunks of sunken ships
From the pores of coral
From the mouths of fish
Out of our own dilating pupils
From knotholes, worm holes, root holes
Out of cocoons and pouches
From the hollow cells of bees
From subways, cellars, crevices
From boots inside the closet
From the space between the molecules
From the space between the stars.

This, as you notice, is somewhat of a list poem. What lines strike you as the best? What sound and figurative devices add punch to the poem? Something grammatical stands out as well... This is a poem constructed from prepositional phrases.

In case you missed learning prepositions in elementary school, I'll refresh you. The prepositional phrase is a group of related words beginning with a preposition and ending (in most instances) with a noun or pronoun which is called the object of the preposition. A prepositional phrase relates to a word or words outside of itself in the sentence. The entire phrase may function as an adjective phrase or an adverb phrase. The minimum number of words in a prepositional phrase is two (preposition and noun or pronoun, the object of the preposition) but it may have any number of words beyond two. The prepositional phrase may be found anywhere in the sentence. In your poem most of the lines will consist of prepositional phrases.

Just for fun, you will see that I underlined the prepositional phrases in the above paragraph. Obviously, they are ubiquitous in our language. I'll share the little kiddie book, *Under, Over, By the Clove,r* along with a few helpful overheads to lock this grammar loveliness into your minds. You will need to keep a list of prepositions handy to use in your poem.

Now, for the assignment: Darkness, itself, cannot be touched, cannot be handled, but it comes from tangible places like the boots inside the closet. If you were to consider the places where it has been daytime all night, where might you say that light comes from? From where does fidgeting come? From where does dryness come? For starters, you could consider one of the



following for the subject of your poem—stiffness, softness, grayness, cold, quiet, rumblings, sighs, laughter, static, uncertainty, freedom, light, fear, etc. Begin by brainstorming everything that comes into your mind about the word or concept that you chose. When you are satisfied that you have most of what you thought, look over your list. Choose what you think are the most interesting ideas. Try for a mix of tangibles and intangibles, and end with pizzazz! You may repeat the preposition in each line for effect as Susan Astor did, or as student, Elizabeth, did in "Coldness." Or you may use many prepositions to drive your poem as Beth Coleman, a teacher, did and as I did in the humorous poem I will share with you.

Coldness

~Elizabeth D.

From a long way away
From up above and down below
Coldness comes
From white and gray ice
From ground
From sitting still alone
From inside long forgotten books
From other people
Out of the night
From somewhere no one really knows

On Growing Up

~Beth Coleman

Behind locked doors,
In hushed tones,
Between mother and daughter
Secrets are shared
 Beside innocence,
 At uncertainty
 In an air of wonder
 Probing questions linger.
 From childhood,
 Into puberty
 Toward maturity
 The quest begins.

Jot down prepositions and ideas in the space below: don't forget compound prepositions:
as far as in spite of on account of out of because of