**The Tucson Poetry Society Critique Guidelines**

Revised by Hank Dallago

Critiques are nothing more than comments and an important way to improve our writing. Feedback (giving or receiving) should always be expressed in a kind and professional manner.

**Use the “Oreo Cookie Method.” The process involves the following:**

* Open with an honest and positive comment about the poem that states what you liked, and what you feel worked well in the poem.
* Follow-up with how the poem can be strengthened. Be specific and offer practical solutions in a constructive and suggestive manner. Remember we are here to support each other.
* Conclude with positive encouragement. Talk about the poem’s potential or the elements you found most meaningful or engaging that will help the writer on their writing journey.

**Suggestions or guidance on how to PROVIDE a critique:**

* **Politely phrase your suggestions and always explain why.** Don’t say things like, “This is boring or a bad topic.” Rather say, “This line is awkward /moves slowly/ etc. because…”
* **Make suggestions or ask questions.** Use phrases like: *Have you thought about this? Have you considered that? What if you approach it from a different angle? Etc.*
* **Never be negative or critical of the writer.** Talk about the work NOT the individual.

**Suggestions or guidance on how to RECEIVE a critique:**

* **Don’t take it personally.** Listen to the comments and know the suggestions are about improving your writing. Writing and critiquing is a process, and each revision improves the work. When someone critiques your poem, it is your work that they are evaluating, not you.
* **Listen and be open to suggestions.** Being open to look at your work in a different light can spark new inspiration and lead you to become a better poet. If you find that a suggestion doesn’t resonate with you, feel free to ignore it, or write it down and consider it later.
* **Take comments with a grain of salt.** Remember, every person comes from their own experiences and as a result sees the world through their own eyes. Their views might not be your views. You are the creator of your work, and you are the one who decides if and how to implement comments and suggestions. A good rule of thumb is when two or more people make the same comment about your poem, it’s something you should consider and think about more carefully. Make revisions of your poem and submit again for comments.