

# Verse Stories

- “A verse story forces me to both characterize and move the story forward with less words than a text in straight prose. As a result I think I do a better job in picking the right words, images, and metaphors. I'd like to say that you need (and get) the same qualities in a prose story but oftentimes (for me) the sheer weight of prose gets in the way of the emotion that I feel I can share when writing in verse. **By distilling each feeling in a verse story down to a single line, I am able to get a laser-like focus on the emotional honesty of the story.**”
  - *Susan Taylor Brown, verse author*

# Your Goal?

- “Poetry cuts to the bone of the moment with an emotional image used as a knife.”

# MAKING VERSE

Judith watched as Kenneth, the man she had been in love with for what seemed like years, slowly and affectionately intertwined his long, slender fingers with the petite fingers of another girl's hand. Judith closed her eyes to block out the image, but the scent of coffee—rich, bold, and bitter—still lingered in the air, and the knowledge that it was his coffee was enough to make the inside of her mouth taste and feel like cotton. Kenneth and the other girl remained silent, but the silence spoke volumes about how intimate the moment between them was. A large, painful lump was beginning to form inside of Judith's throat, making it hard to breathe, and she felt as though she might suffocate if she did not flee from the room. Her legs were frozen, however, and would not budge, leaving her with the faintest hope that perhaps the rest of her would soon become just as numb.

I walk behind my biggest nightmare  
Unseen, undetected  
Just a mold of their snuggling shadow  
Almost a part of them, but just one decision too late

My love from another life  
Intertwines his fingers  
With the girl that is not me

My despair tastes like the coffee in the air  
rich, bold, bitter;  
No, I take it back – coffee jumps the heart, stirs the soul;  
This feels like a cotton sock jammed in my throat  
Remnants of last week's sweat putrid on my tongue –  
No chance to breathe or jump or stir.  
No reason to breathe or jump or stir.