

Imagery

When telling a story, writers have many tools at their disposal. One of the most powerful is to paint a picture in the audience's mind with imagery. Using figurative language, authors can transform events and places and turn them into visual or colorful additions to the story. That is imagery.

This can be a word or phrase that describes how something looks, sounds, feels, tastes, or smells. When authors attempt to create a specific image in the reader's mind, they are using imagery. Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas.

Look at the poem "Give Me The Splendid Silent Sun" by Walt Whitman.

Give me the splendid silent sun, with all his beams full-dazzling;
Give me juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red from the orchard;
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows;
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape;
Give me fresh corn and wheat—give me serene-moving animals, teaching content;
Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars;

Notice all the sensory phrases my buddy Walt Whitty uses to grab the attention of your five senses. I bet your ears were buzzing and your sniffer was going after reading that, weren't they? Some of these sensory phrases include:

silent sun, with all his beams full-dazzling
juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red
field where the unmow'd grass grows
trellis'd grape
serene-moving animals
nights perfectly quiet

All of these phrases paint a picture in your head. And that, my friend, is imagery at work.

Through the use of imagery, authors create scenes that jump out, grab you, and draw you into the story. Keep an eye out for examples of imagery when reading poetry.
