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Tuesday, October 25, 2011

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The Learning Network

Teaching & Learning With The New York Times



September 1, 2011, 2:45 pm

Poetry Pairing | Crystalline Weather

By [KATHERINE SCHULTEN](#)



Fred R. Conrad/The New

York Times [Go to related Nov. 27, 2001 article about the weather that autumn »](#)

To honor the coming 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, this week's [Poetry Pairing](#) couples Kenneth Goldsmith's "[Metropolitan Forecast](#)" with an article from November 2001, "[Weather Won't Give New York What the Calendar Says Is Here.](#)"

Poem

Kenneth Goldsmith is perhaps best known for his work "Day," in which he transcribed every word of a mundane day's issue of The New York Times into a 900-page book. For his work "The Day," he did the same exact task to The New York Times of Sept. 11, 2001. Hence, even the innocuous news reports and weather are loaded with fact, fear, and emotion, making us aware that language is never simply an innocent carrier of meaning but is wildly variable depending upon context and framing.

— Poetry Foundation

Metropolitan Forecast

By Kenneth Goldsmith

D8 | the new york times tuesday, september 11, 2001

Metropolitan Forecast

today Less humid, sunshine

High 79. Noticeably less humid air will filter into the metropolitan region on. Brisk winds from the northwest. High pressure building east from the Great Lakes will promote mainly sunny skies.

Daytime readings will peak in the lower 80's.

tonight Clear, lighter winds

Low 62. Skies will be clear overnight as high pressure crests near the Middle

Atlantic Coast. Humidity will remain low, and temperatures will fall to around 60 degrees in many spots.

tomorrow Mainly sunny

High 76. Sunshine and just a few clouds will fill the sky. Breezes will turn and blow from the south ahead of a cold front approaching from Canada.

Times Selection Excerpt

In "[Weather Won't Give New York What the Calendar Says Is Here](#)," a piece written on Nov. 27, 2001, Andy Newman reports on an unseasonably warm fall at a time when the events of Sept. 11 were never far from thought:

The end of summer came and went. Clocks fell back and the days shortened. The cutout witches and goblins in the windows gave way to fantailed turkeys and now prancing reindeer. But though the sun slants ever lower in the sky, it is still, more often than not, awfully warm out there, and it is getting a little disorienting.

... Yesterday's high temperature topped off at 62 degrees — normal for Oct. 26, not Nov. 26. And if the forecast for highs in the high 50's and low 60's holds for the rest of the week, this will become the second warmest November on record, said Chris Johannesson, a meteorologist at Pennsylvania State University.

But you don't need a weatherman to know that something strange is going on. Sal Napolitano, a carousel operator in Central Park for 31 years, gauges the pace of the seasons by how much the trees — leafy or bare — block his view of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

"This year, we couldn't see anything," Mr. Napolitano said. "Not one float."

Across the East River in Brooklyn, the big fountain in front of Borough Hall has been shut off since last week, but a few sparrows were gamely attempting to bathe in it yesterday, flitting around in the dregs of Sunday night's rain showers.

On the lip of the fountain sat Danny Moran, an electrician on lunch break from wiring the

new federal courthouse going up at the far end of the plaza. For those who work outdoors, said Mr. Moran, 39, the fair weather has been a blessing — particularly the cleanup crew at the World Trade Center site.

For some people, however, the fact that the weather remains as crystalline as it was on Sept. 11 is itself a troubling reminder of a day that will live in infamy.

”I hate to say this,” said Sandra Kaplan as she walked her two yellow Labrador retrievers in Central Park, ”but every time I see a gorgeous blue sky, I think of Sept. 11.”

Nicole Santomasso, who was 794 pages into ”Anna Karenina” on a bench in Vesuvio Playground in SoHo as the sun began to slide behind a building at 3 p.m., said she treasured every hour of sunlight. But Ms. Santomasso, 26, who was 12 pages away from the end of her book, said she was ready to move on.

”Maybe when the winter comes it will help people transition,” she said. ”Because then they’ll feel like it’s a new season.”

After reading the poem and article, tell us what you think — or suggest other Times content that could be matched with the poem instead.

[See more about the collaboration and find ideas for using any week’s pairing for teaching and learning](#)
[»](#)

Kenneth Goldsmith’s “Two Poems from ‘The Day’” is from Poetry (July/August 2009).

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14 Comments

1. September 1, 2011 8:40 pm [Link](#)

A day can seem like nothing special. Yet, so many possibilities may arise to make it noteworthy. We never really realize how awe-inspiring our lives really are until something as horrific as 9/11 happens. We never really appreciate what we have – until it is gone.

That said, I believe Goldsmith's poem is a twist on the reality which happened "daytime readings will peak" and the usual day to day happenings such as the temperature.

9/11 brought the United States together, I believe. It showed the world that even when bruised and sore we did not give. We never were beat.

I think 9/11 should always and forever be ingrained into the memory of United States history. Students should learn about the horrific events, the sadness, and the heroism on that day. No American will ever be able to think of 9/11 as just another day in September.

We thank all of those men and wome who put themselves at risk to save those that they could. We honor those lost with memory and respect. And we stand together on 9/11's anniversaries, and every day for that matter, as one, especially to support those who lost so much with those two planes.

– Rachel

2. September 2, 2011 4:20 am [Link](#)

This is a really heartfelt poem. The message is very powerful. And thank you for putting me as comment of the moment for my 9/11 piece of... "I am a student, and to be honest I really thought history was boring because all of the dates you had to remember for tests. But now by reading this learning network article I started to think about how you really need to deeply understand the history of something. And by understanding it you will realize that it is essential to human life. I think 9/11 should be taught in schools across the world, and we shouldn't neglect it, we should understand and remember the event."

– Rachel K

3. September 3, 2011 11:57 am [Link](#)

Something that happens habitually has nothing special to it. We get used to it like a routine. It's not until something out of the ordinary happens that we start to value these things. For example a day, here is nothing special about it unless it is like a birthday or unless something that we are not used to happens. And usually, those unusual things are what make us value how special something so simple as a day can be.

9/11 is the best example for this. No one ever imagined that on a very normal day something as atrocious could happen. And still, ten years later people remember it as it were that day. Every year September 11 comes around people get the shivers, feel emotions and memories of that horrible day fill their head. We never know what we have until its gone, and people learned that with 9/11. That day will never be just another day in September. Year after year people will remember le million of lives that were lost and the fear we all felt.

Referring back to what's stated in the first paragraph, I believe Kenneth Goldsmith's poem represent 9/11 perfectly. It has a twist on what really happened. He describes the weather on a very simple day, just the weather nothing else but when people know that the forecast is fro, September 11 the poem suddenly changes, they read it with a different perspective and actually feel something when they read it, they know it is not just another boring day.

This day marked people lives and know they constantly get reminded of it. As the article says "it is hard to move" because there are many things that bring the memories back. All American people should know about this day, it is lesson that you can never take something for granted, not even something that happened everyday like a day does.

As I read the article and poem, I thought of a painting by Salvador Dali. The painting presents a simple setting with varied things, just like a day. But the clocks are everywhere reminding us of something. Days will pass and ten years have already passed but there will still be things everywhere that remind us of 9/11 and it is impossible to avoid them, just like its impossible to forget the weather because its always there.

— *Isabella*

4. 4. September 8, 2011 9:41 pm [Link](#)

Kenneth Goldstein takes something as mundane as the weather forecast on 9/11 and turns it into a poem. I believe this poem symbolizes the fact that we can't know what is going to happen in the future. We may be able to predict the weather, but not other people's actions. Life is something that is unpredictable and mostly ordinary but 9/11 proves that every now and then something out of the ordinary will occur that opens everyone's eyes to reality. We begin to value the things we normally take for granted.

Although I was very young on the day of 9/11, my mother always describes it as if it were yesterday. Waking up on September 11, 2001 she thought another ordinary day was on the way until she heard the shocking news on the radio that a plain had crashed into the twin towers. She immediately got up and turned on the television watching the second crash live. A sudden feeling of fear and shock overwhelmed her completely.

The warm weather in the end of november shows that the terrifying attacks still haunt the

people that lived through this tragic event. The author's words show that something as simple and beautiful as a clear blue sky can remind someone of something as awful as 9/11

– *Nickie*

5. 5. September 9, 2011 12:00 am [Link](#)

In this “poem”, Goldsmith uses his own words as well as our own knowledge of the context in order to create the desired effect. Goldsmith chose a mundane detail about the day 9/11 to lead us to contrast the apparently pleasant weather with the tragic events that occurred. By allowing us to make this contrast, the author brings the insignificance of human problems in the grand scheme of things to the forefront. This poem makes us take a step back to look at how minute our petty problems are in relation to our universe and at how little they are reflected by nature. The knowledge of our unimportance has its own effect on our perception of nature and almost makes pleasant weather and clear blue skies seem like a mockery, reminding us every day of what could happen.

– *Gunter*

6. 6. September 9, 2011 1:01 am [Link](#)

Kenneth Goldsmith takes a seemingly unremarkable weather report and carefully builds tension by describing an idyllic late summer day. By not mentioning the Twin Towers, he draws attention to the fact that you can never predict what will happen when you wake up or what you'll find just around the corner. And yet underlying tension appears in this poem with the mention on clear skies and high pressure.

What I didn't know when I was seven, was that the impact of 9/11 would live on in the mind of Americans. I didn't know what a terrorist attack was, and I didn't know of the prejudice that would follow. I didn't understand the disbelief in my father's face and I didn't see the scar that 9/11 left on this country.

Goldsmith's poem reminds me of in just- by e.e cummings because when read the first time, it seems to be about spring and “eddieandbill” and “bettyandisbel” playing and running, but upon closer inspection, something darker looms over the poem. The unsettling image of the “queer old balloonman” heightens the contrast between the innocence of the children and the unnerving description of the balloonMan. In a similar way, Goldsmith creates tension by describing an unguarded beautiful summer day on which shattering events occurred leaving almost 3,000 dead and an entire country mourning.

– *Erin*

7. 7. September 9, 2011 1:13 am [Link](#)

Kenneth Goldsmith takes an unusual approach on a very serious topic. He is able to relate to the catastrophic accidents in his own way. Everyone deals with the consequences of a disaster differently. For example, at the time of 9/11, I was 7 years old, but I still to this day remember it very vividly. I woke up with my older brother sharing the news to the rest of the family and although everyone was horrified, our reactions were completely different than my neighbors, who were New Yorkers. I remember going over to their house, where their mom was sobbing. At the time I didn't understand why she was so sad but as I grew up I began to get a better

understanding.

Even though I live in Los Angeles, I still feel like I am also able to make a connection between the weather and the actual events that happened. It was a gloomy day, many clouds in the sky therefore implying that what happened in New York was also dark, somber.

— *Beau Barnett*

8. 8. September 9, 2011 1:30 am [Link](#)

Weather shapes our days. If it's nice out we plan on going out and doing things in the sun and enjoying the good weather.

Having been to New York, I know that a nice day with low humidity is to be cherished. Kenneth Goldsmith's poem describes a day that you remember for the fun times and the adventures. On September 11th, 2001 I woke up to both my parents crying in front of the television. Both my parents are from New York, my mother grew up in the city. I was born there and we had only moved to LA a few years before. I learned to walk in the lobby between the two towers and had stood on the top of them only two weeks before. Being 7, though I knew it was important, the weather was probably more concerning for me than this thing I didn't really understand.

The article paired with the poem creates a sort of irony. The weather described is characteristic not of fall or even of summer but of spring. Spring is a time of life and birth, but the weather and the season were tainted with the memories of a catastrophe comparable to the coldest winter day.

— *Liana*

9. 9. September 9, 2011 1:32 am [Link](#)

Goldsmith retakes and rescrambles an ordinary and even banal weather report to form a meaningful poem. However, it is a past weather report. One of a date that will stay in American history forever.

"D8 l the new york times tuesday, september 11, 2001" These simple words had a different meaning then than they do now. Back then, it was the date of a seemingly normal good day. Today, it is the time of death of a thousand victims of 9/11. Now the weather report takes a different meaning; it too imprints in history. Even though the weather was not really "special" in itself.

The contrast between the banality of the weather report and the historical event that occurred that day is noteworthy and powerful.

It was a very standard weather report. It gave no clue that it would be the weather of this horrific day. No warning. Nothing. Nature too did not know. Nature was doing his daily thing just like the victims of 9/11.

— *Shirley*

10. 10. September 9, 2011 3:14 am [Link](#)

I like the pattern in which Kenneth Goldsmith wrote his poem. Well of course he didn't write it but he chose the way he put the pieces of the news reports. He starts with the day, with very high temperatures, and then he shifts to the night when the temperatures are very low. And then

he mentions “tomorrow Mainly sunny”. At the same time that this is really sad 😞, it’s also very ironic because it just proves that we can’t always predict the future. Sure, everyone expected it to be another jolly, gleeful day in New York City, but no, a terrible event occurred and nobody knew it would happen. Maybe Goldsmith is suggesting we stop trying to pretend we know everything when we really do not.

Just as Andy Newman proved to us, these people were not “expecting” a disaster to take place, but they did and they are traumatized by it. His little anecdotes at the beginning of his piece are very innocent, although not regarding an “innocent” event at all. Personally, i like the correlation between this piece and the poem. I think they go well together and they both have the same intentions : emphasizing a very disastrous event by evoking the innocence of it all. 😊

– *Shaheen* ;)

11. 11. September 9, 2011 4:01 am [Link](#)

On September 11, 2001, the words that make up “Metropolitan Forecast” were read by thousands of New Yorkers. They were read, as most weather forecasts should be during the warm periods of the year, quickly and casually.

Today these words are filled with meanings that could never have been expected on the morning of September 11, 2001. Goldsmith forces us to travel back in time to the day when two sister buildings fell, taking down with them thousands of lives and a false sense national security.

The meaning we put behind the words though is not what makes the poem. If anything, it can only serve as a support for the content of the writing. Goldsmith brilliantly puts together a simple array of words to form a poem that speaks for itself. Capitalization, punctuation and structure work together to develop a tension that works throughout the poem. This “forecast” seems to hint at the impending tragedy that would influence the lives of people everywhere for the next decade.

– *Sarah*

12. 12. September 9, 2011 4:27 am [Link](#)

In this poem, Kenneth Goldsmith refers to an element of everyday life such as a weather forecast. Firstly, it proves how sudden and unexpected the event of 9/11 was for everyone that day. By focusing on this detail rather than on the event itself, Goldsmith portrays the insignificance of people’s activities that day all the while thousands of people were going to be killed a couple of hours later. The morality of this poem does not only apply for 9/11 but for everyday life. Thus meaning that people should always remember and be aware of the grievances occurring everyday in the world around them rather than focus on small details such as this Metropolitan Weather Forecast.

– *Léa*

13. 13. September 9, 2011 11:45 am [Link](#)

Kenneth Goldsmith’s poem is a perfect example of a seemingly meaningless poem that would later carry all the meaning in the world. While taking a totally mundane weather report and turning into a poem may seem fun or eclectic, Goldsmith manages to turn everyday words into

a portrait of the disaster that is 9/11.

On this day, my father was supposed to be in the tower and most likely would have perished. I thank god every day for the delayed flight that prevented him from being there, and this poem only reminds me further of the horrific event that occurred.

The author does a wonderful job of creating a subtly poignant poem which artfully and quietly drives the point home.

— *Anna*

14. 14. September 9, 2011 3:02 pm [Link](#)

I find the choice to pair this poem with an article about the way people in New York reacted to the clear weather after the 9/11 attacks to be a pertinent one. Both pieces remind us of the fact that despite the tragedies and horrors that we may be faced with in our lives, nature marches on relentlessly, unaffected by human death and suffering. The article in particular gives great perspective on this, and how that fact can affect our state of mind and force us to make connections that we might not otherwise make.

— *Michael*

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Comments of the Moment

[“ Truly, what i am afraid of is the future. ”](#)

— [Isaiah A.](#)

[What Are You Afraid Of?](#)

[“ @AbdulazizS, I agree with you that sometimes students cheat because they are too lazy to study, but I also think that they do it because of the lack of confidence on themselves, or just to finish fast and leave the stress away. Yes, I have cheated before, and I must say that I feel guilt for doing it; I believe that I did it because I didn't feel confident with my level of understanding in the class subject, therefore I cheated. The main reason wasn't exactly that I wasn't good at that class, but because my parents expect me to get good grades; failing a test would affect my grade very badly. ”](#)

— [Melissa, Yes Prep SE](#)

[Do You Know People Who Cheat on High-Stakes Tests?](#)

[“ People who are reading this comment, pick up your jaws from your keyboards because I'm about to drop some knowledge. In my opinion the SAT cheating scandal is taken too seriously. A test should say what you're capable of doing in your time in school, but people do cheat because it is considered as a fall back, that way they won't fail. They get away with it by doing it in a subtle way; anyone can cheat, if you're super smart or super dumb; you can or cannot cheat. It can happen here, anywhere, it's not the school's fault, it all depends on the students. If they want to do it or don't.”](#)

– Jahaziel YES Prep SE

Do You Know People Who Cheat on High-Stakes Tests?

“ Ever since I was little I have feared Oompa Loompas, the seemingly friendly Willy Wonka helpers with orange skin and green hair. I recognize this fear as irrational, but they frighten me nonetheless. I also fear garden gnomes and Munchkins--the Wizard of Oz characters, not the delectable donuts.-”

– Kourtney

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ I am mostly afraid of growing up. Since I finished my freshman year of high school, the fear of getting older and taking on more responsibility is overwhelming to me. When I turned 16 in September I felt as though I was slapped in the face with responsibility. Now I can drive if I want to and my family expects me to get a job. ”

– Meghan

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ As far as phobias go, I don't have many. But leave me in Central Park for a few hours alone and I might go insane. Why? It pains me to admit that I have pathological fear of dare I say it - pigeons. ”

– Shaleen

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ I am scared of not being know as Michaela, people all throughout my life have labeled me as something I am not; Tristan's sister, Jeremiah and Caleb's sister, Angel's sister, Beth's daughter, one of the B. kids. ”

– Michaela B.

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ ...just one spider in particular, the Brown Recluse. I am afraid that i will get bit by a Brown Recluse, which can kill you in up to seven minutes. I think that's pretty self explanatory...I like the excitement of horror movies and the moments when you just want to laugh at the main character for being so stupid. For example, "why is she going down into the basement when you know that someone is in there? Seriously, get a knife or a gun and call 911." Yeah, some horror movies are stupid like that but they are still fun to watch.”

– Tristan M

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ My personal phobia is probably be a dull, lifeless world. color makes the world go round in a lot of ways for me and i try to spruce up a room enough to make the fact that the walls are white disappear. not for others but for me because i cant stand anything

without color.”

– MarleyC

What Are You Afraid Of?

“ A journey that I would love to take is becoming a creative baker. I am always watching shows like The Cake Boss and I always think that I would love to do that. Putting all your creativity into something delicious for the sake of other people would make me so happy.”

– Morgan W

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ I am a college student myself, and i have noticed many things that Facebook has done to students in a collegiate setting. First, when i walk down the hallway of my dormitory, almost every laptop screen has that particular students Facebook page open. I feel as if Facebook is making people communicate less face to face, and more over the internet which results in bad communication skills. When a person would attend a job interview, they would be so used to communicating over the internet that they would have difficulty talking face to face with an employer.”

– Matthew

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“ I want to make something of myself, a role model to young children everywhere who need a responsible adult to guide them in this day and age. I hope that when I get a job, I will become the very best at it so that I can push myself as an individual and as a valuable member of society so that I can give my small part to history. I want to be able to accomplish helping out humanity at this stage in any way I can. My biggest wish after getting out of high school is to help out my fellow peers to also become something for themselves, and overall contributing to the huge swimming pool full of hungry fish called humanity.”

– Alexis, Ms. Valdes P.6

What Do You Hope to Get Out of High School?

“ I believe that in taking such undertakings, it's what happens along the way that really matters rather than crossing the real, metaphorical crossing line because sure, The sights are pretty, but The lesson you learn, or the information you gathered is much more important than the scenery.”

– Jordan M.

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ The journey I want to take is a journey to success. I want to be a better parent than my parents ever were, and become successful. Starting with trying my best in highschool. Also with going to a college in florida. Then, getting a job, saving animals such as seals.”

– Savannah C

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ A dream-journey I have is traveling around the world like my grandmother. Every year she travels to some foreign place, Turkey, Egypt, and so on. I would love to learn about the different cultures, taste their foods, learn about their ancient history, etc.”

– Tyanne

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ My journeys were my surgery. First, I got my tonsil taken out, then I swallowed a quarter down my throat, and now I have to get my scoliosis surgery, this year. Also, of all my life, I have ADD and it's pretty hard to go through, in life. Because it interferes with my learning.”

– Cristina P.

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ I've been in love with basketball since I was about 4 years old. Basketball was the first sport i ever took in with a very strong interest. Basketball has taught me my strengths, my weaknesses, how to deal with my pain and problems, basketball taught me what love really is.”

– Macie

What Journey Do You Most Want to Make?

“ In my opinion boys have more intense relationships than girls. Girls have less intense relationships because they talk about everything to other people and we have girl fights and gossip about others and think it's okay. Were sometimes there for each other but I think that guys always have each other's backs and help each other.”

– Jennifer Ms.Valdes,P.2

Do Boys Have Less Intense Friendships Than Girls?

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