



## Cultural Tapestry Arts Lesson: Naomi Shihab Nye

### *Red Brocade*

The Arabs used to say,  
When a stranger appears at your door,  
feed him for three days  
before asking who he is,  
where he's come from,  
where he's headed.  
That way, he'll have strength  
enough to answer.  
Or, by then you'll be  
such good friends  
you don't care.

Let's go back to that.  
Rice? Pine nuts?  
Here, take the red brocade pillow.  
My child will serve water  
to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!  
I was not preparing to be busy.  
That's the armor everyone put on  
to pretend they had a purpose  
in the world.

I refuse to be claimed.  
Your plate is waiting.  
We will snip fresh mint  
into your tea.

**Poet: Naomi Shihab Nye** –gives voice to her experience as an Arab-American through poems about heritage and peace that overflow with a humanitarian spirit.

**NOTES:**

# Let's Explore

Spend several minutes to read the poem a few times...

- *What do you notice?*

- *Who or what is the subject(s) and why was the poet inspired to write about them?*
- *What do you learn about the subject - where might this be taking place, and when?*
- *What makes this subject different or special?*

- *What do you wonder?*

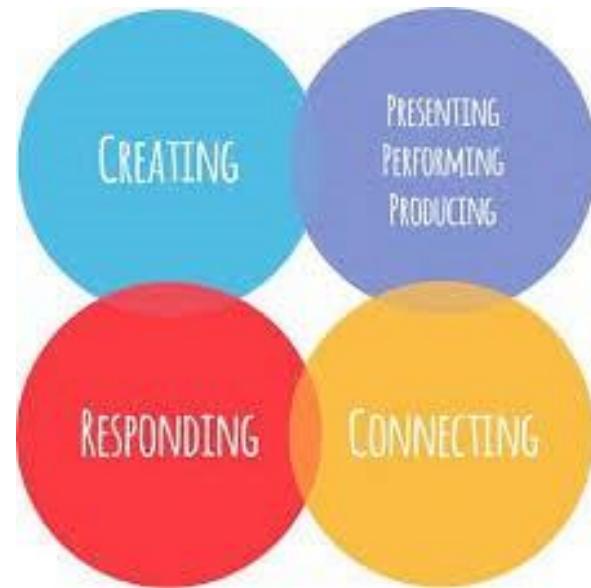
- *What is going on? What surrounds the subject of the poem?*
- *What happened before the time of the poem, and what might come next?*
- *Are there different ways to see the situation, or is it clear what is happening?*
- *Have you ever seen someone or something like the subject? If you have, where did you see them or it?*

- *How does it make you feel?*

- *If the poem describes an action, would you ever like to do something similar?*
- *Do you see yourself in the poem? In what way?*
- *Do things or feelings in the poem remind you of anything?*
- *Does the title of the poem affect how you feel about it?*

Write down your thoughts and share with family and friends...

# The Four Artistic Processes



## RESPOND: Explore and Understand

- What words have impact? Why do you think the author chose them?
- What do you notice about tone, rhythm, pattern and mood of the poem?

## CONNECT: Relate to the artwork

- How does the poem make you feel? Why?
- If you could interview the author or the subject, what questions would you ask?
- What do you think the subject (person) in the poem is doing? If there isn't a person shown, do you feel an emotion in what is written, such as affection, tension, or creativity?

## CREATE: Make your own art

- Write a poem or short essay reflecting on the way the poem makes you feel, or a subject similar to that of the poem.
- Draw or paint an artwork or take a photograph that has a subject similar to that in the poem.
- Imagine you are the artist who created the poem. Write what they might say to describe their reason for writing the poem, from their point of view.

## PRESENT: Share your artwork

- Share your creation with family or friends.
- Take a moment to share what you have discovered.