Note: These mini-lessons are intended to be used in a writers workshop. I included either my own writing or current published literature as mentor texts for each of these three lessons. References to Atwell are from her 2015 book *In The Middle: A Lifetime of Learning About Writing, Reading, and Adolescents*. A text that focuses on creating and facilitating reading and writing workshops.

Mini Lesson 1: Introducing Odes:

* Bring students together.
* Put up Neruda’s “Ode To The Pomegranate” and give students a copy of the poem.
* Have students read once to themselves. Then read once aloud as a group before discussing.
* Discuss what resonated/stands out. Come together to parse out what the content of the text is.
* Give context on odes and Neruda (reference Atwell’s description, p. 391). ”Pablo Neruda, regarded as the greatest Latin American poet of them all…He developed a loose form called an irregular ode by retrofitting the intricate, choral odes of the ancient Greeks. Neruda abandoned weighty topics, threw out the rules about stanzas and meters, and went over-the-top singing the praises of common things-an apple, an onion, socks, salt.” (Atwell. 2015. p. 391)
* Reread after learning some background/context.
* Use Atwell’s “Tips for Neruda-Esque Odes” (p. 393)
* Present my “Ode to Toast” (give students a copy).
* Have student go and challenge them to write their own after generating a “Potential Subjects for an Ode”

**Ode To an Artichoke**

**by Pablo Neruda**

The artichoke  
of delicate heart  
erect  
in its battle-dress, builds  
its minimal cupola;  
keeps  
stark  
in its scallop of  
scales.  
Around it,  
demoniac vegetables  
bristle their thicknesses,  
devise  
tendrils and belfries,  
the bulb's agitations;  
while under the subsoil  
the carrot  
sleeps sound in its  
rusty mustaches.  
Runner and filaments  
bleach in the vineyards,  
whereon rise the vines.  
The sedulous cabbage  
arranges its petticoats;  
oregano  
sweetens a world;  
and the artichoke  
dulcetly there in a gardenplot,  
armed for a skirmish,  
goes proud  
in its pomegranate  
burnishes.  
Till, on a day,  
each by the other,  
the artichoke moves  
to its dream  
of a market place  
in the big willow  
hoppers:  
a battle formation.  
Most warlike  
of defilades-  
with men  
in the market stalls,  
white shirts  
in the soup-greens,  
artichoke field marshals,  
close-order conclaves,  
commands, detonations,  
and voices,  
a crashing of crate staves.  
  
And  
Maria  
come  
down  
with her hamper  
to  
make trial  
of an artichoke:  
she reflects, she examines,  
she candles them up to the light like an egg,  
never flinching;  
she bargains,  
she tumbles her prize  
in a market bag  
among shoes and a  
cabbage head,  
a bottle  
of vinegar; is back  
in her kitchen.  
The artichoke drowns in a pot.  
  
So you have it:  
a vegetable, armed,  
a profession  
(call it an artichoke)  
whose end  
is millennial.  
We taste of that  
sweetness,  
dismembering scale after scale.  
We eat of a halcyon paste:  
it is green at the artichoke heart.

**Tips for Neruda-Esque Odes (Atwell, p. 393)**

* **“Choose an ordinary subject from your every day life”**
* **“Begin by writing off the page”**
* **“Exaggerate its admirable qualities until it becomes central to human existence: hyberbole rules”**
* **“Tap all five sense”**
* **“Use metaphors and similes”**
* **“Directly address the subject of the ode”**
* **“Tell your feelings about the subject and give exalted descriptions of its qualities”**
* **“Keep the lines short”**
* **Push for sensory diction, plus language that’s packed with meaning and cut to the bone”**

**Ode to Toast –**

Your golden flesh

outshines

the rising sun.

As steam

curls up from

your delicate

crisp

surface,

I ponder a world

without your presence.

Alone,

or joined with

a companion

you create a beacon

by which

joy can be found.

Student Example:

Ode To Fidget Spinners

by Owen

Round

and round

you go.

You are

the earth

and sun.

You orbit

yourself.

An endless loop.

Faster and

faster.

Mesmerizing.