**T**hink about this statement for a moment: *Poetry does not have to be factual to be true.* What do you think this means? Free-write about it for a few minutes. Then compare your response with a partner's.

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One way to think about the statement is to consider to what degree memory and imagination are based on truth. Much depends on the perspective from which events or feelings are shared. For example, a poem may convey the emotions a person felt or the internal struggle he or she experienced at a particular moment. The connection that a writer has to an event will determine the writer's perspective. That perspective often guides the writer in selecting what gets told. **Exploring multiple perspectives** helps you take a close look at the different **points of view** and lenses that create the writer's experience.

When you read the following poem, imagine that the narrator is a driver facing a situation similar to Koester's. As you read, you will see that the story takes a different turn. Record your reactions and thoughts in your **Response Notes.**

## Traveling Through the Dark by William Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River Road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail light I stumbled back of the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold.
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
Alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

### Response Notes

*I wonder what killed this deer.*

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—
then pushed her over the edge into the river. ✤

✳ In a few sentences describe your reactions to and questions about the poem.

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✳ Explain why you think the two drivers made different choices. Discuss your reasons with a partner. Record your best ideas here.

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✳ Write a parallel poem by telling a story of your own where you had to make choices. Tell the story as if you were describing what happened to a friend. Present the situation and the choices. To help you create your poem, follow the steps outlined on pages 16–18.

**1** Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision.

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**2** Recall what you saw, heard, smelled, and felt. Fill in the Sensory Chart below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **What could you SEE?** | |
| **What could you HEAR?** | |
| **What could you SMELL?** | |
| **What could you physically FEEL?** | |
| **What emotions could you FEEL?** | |

**3** List two possible choices you had, and note the possible outcome for each of the choices.

| Choice One | Possible Outcome |
|---|---|
| Choice Two | Possible Outcome |

**4** Write the storyline of your poem in a few brief sentences.

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**5** Decide which choice you will explore in your poem. It could be a choice you really made, or it could be an alternative. Think about what happened or would happen as a result of your choice. (This will become the reflective part of your poem.) Describe it here.

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**6** Explain your choice. Does your perspective, or point of view, influence your choice? How?

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✳ Use your notes to draft your poem.

Title _____

✳ Share your poem with a partner. Read it aloud. Then have your partner read it aloud to you. After sharing, point out elements in your poem that are your memories of what really happened and identify other elements that reveal your true feelings and values.

How does seeing multiple perspectives enrich your understanding of an experience?