

**Ecphrastic poetry & the  
development of professional  
literacy in biology**

# What is ecphrastic poetry?

- Ecphrastic poetry is the conversation between two pieces of art. The writer interprets a work of visual art and then creates a narrative in verse form that represents his or her reaction to that painting, photograph, sculpture or other artistic creation.

<http://www.firkinfiction.com/11.html>

# Ecphrastic poetry and biology

- How do you write a biology-related poem in an ecphrastic manner?
- Complete the following steps:
  1. View a stimulus image and identify a biology-related concept it evokes.
  2. If required, write down the concept, definition, law, formula etc.
  3. Identify a suitable poetry type and write the poem.

**What concept does this image evoke?**



# Chloroplasts

# Example Haiku poem

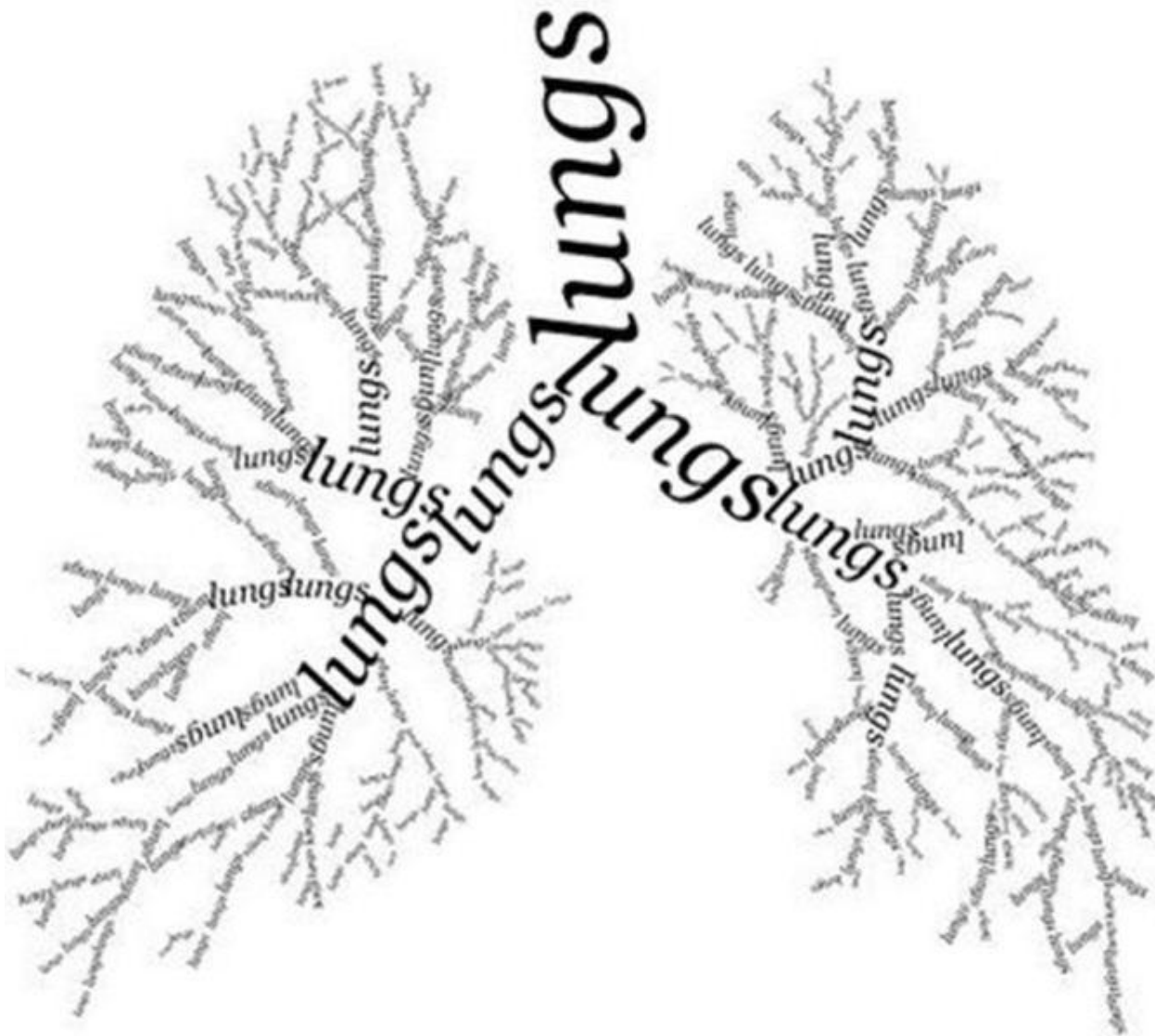
*Small green chloroplasts  
capture energy from light  
and thus make glucose.*

**What concept does this image evoke?**

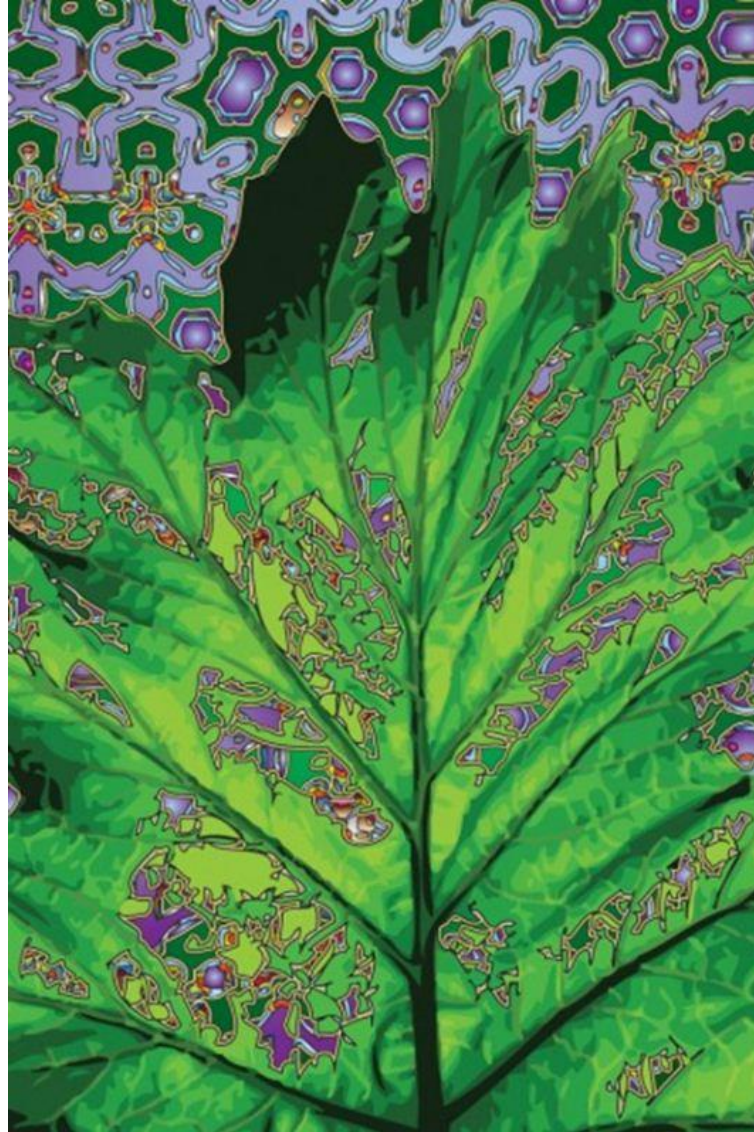


# **The respiratory system**

# Example Concrete poem



# What concept does this image evoke?



# Photosynthesis

# Example Acrostic poem

**P**lants

**H**eterotrough

**O**xxygen

**T**emperature

**O**utdoors

**S**unlight

**Y**our source of oxygen

**N**ourishment (makes own food)

**T**rees

**H**2O (water)

**E**nergy

**S**oil

**I**n order to survive all organisms must release energy in sugars

**S**ugars

**What concept does this image evoke?**



**DNA**

# Example Limerick poem

I'm the whole of my parts, so they say!  
And unique are my parts, DNA.  
They're tiny in size,  
But they sure humanize  
My nature and features, óle!

# What concept does this image evoke?



**Germs**

# Example Free Verse poem

A mighty creature is the germ,  
Though smaller than the pachyderm.  
His customary dwelling place  
Is deep within the human race.  
His childish pride he often pleases  
By giving people strange diseases.  
Do you, my poppet, feel infirm?  
You probably contain a germ.

# What concept does this image evoke?



# **Scientific taxonomy**

# Example Cinquain poem

*Kangaroo*

*Furry marsupial*

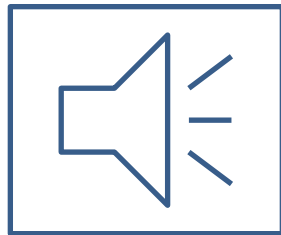
*Hopping, jumping, bounding*

*Proud emblem of Australia*

*Macropod*

# What concept does this musical composition evoke?

*Battle Hymn of the Republic.*



# Respiration

# Example re-worked song lyric

My eyes have seen the glory of respiratory chain  
In every mitochondrion intrinsic to membranes  
Functionally organised in complex sub-domaines  
Where electrons flow along

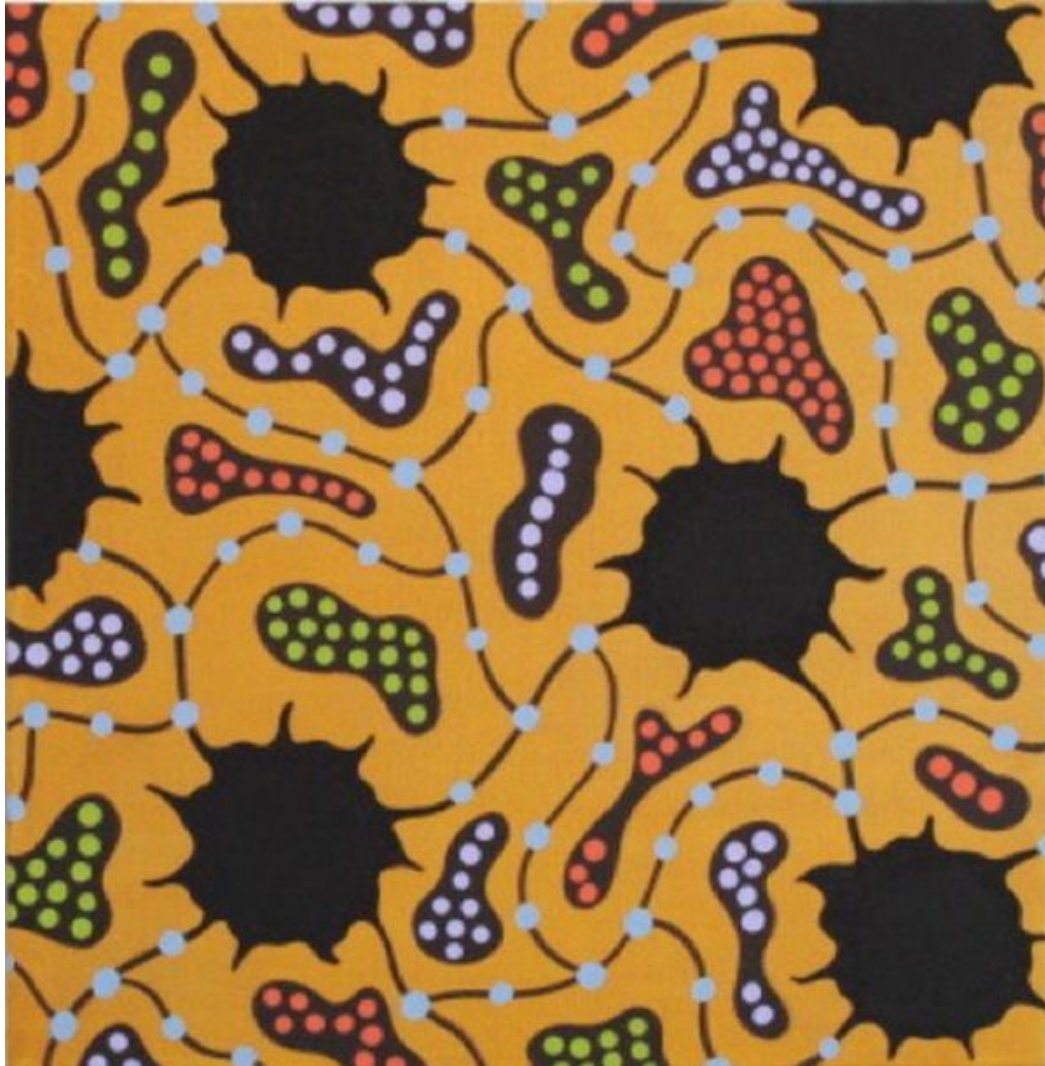
Glory, glory respiration (3x)  
Where electrons flow along

# Activity

Using the given stimulus material, create the following types of poetry:

- Free verse
- Acrostic
- Cinquain
- Haiku
- Limerick

# STIMULUS IMAGE 1



# STIMULUS IMAGE 2



# STIMULUS IMAGE 3



# STIMULUS IMAGE 4



# STIMULUS IMAGE 5

