

Poem I:
This River Here

Ex. I.2:

A simple but powerful exercise is simply to find a place you really love, as Carmen sings of this river that means so much to her. “This river here,” she says more than once, and “Right here” begins most of the stanzas. The reader feels like he or she is standing beside the poet, being shown something very special. Think of a phrase you like that refers to that place, or invokes it. Repeat and chant your phrase throughout the poem as a thread; include history or personal memory, or imagined memory, or descriptive elements of the place, and see what happens! As you write the poem, listen to see how the repeated phrase comes alive and takes on different meanings.

— Exercise provided by Naomi Shihab Nye, poet, novelist, anthologist