**Reading 7.13 Notes and Revisions**

**Thursday, April 4th**

**Student Materials:**

* A fresh copy of the poem, on one single page, spaced out with footnotes at the bottom defining the words (gossamer, ductile, promontory, and filament) ***only***
* The bottom line/focus question on a completely separate page (so students can refer back to their notes to accurately answer their bottom line

**Framing:** Today we are going to analyze a pretty complex poem looking both at the structure of the poem and its deeper meaning.

**Do Now:** Should only include one question, question #3 What do you think the author’s message is. Teacher should do a gallery walk to get a feel for where kids are at with their initial understanding of the poem, but do not go over it. Have students revise their responses at the end of discussion.

**Prompt Break Down:**

*Direction: As you are talking through each stanza, students should be annotating their own poem.*

**Step 1:** Have students take two minutes to silently read stanza #1 independently. Then, come back whole class and read it together. Ask students – What is literally happening? (Students should say it’s about a spider finding a perfect spot to weave its cobweb)

* Then ask, what strikes you as interesting in the stanza? Students should be pushed to think about words/lines that the poet particular used in this stanza to describe this process the spider is going through.
* Picking out words like patient🡪 why describe the spider this way? Never known an insect to have such human characteristic
* “it stood isolated” 🡪 emphasizing the spider is alone, with no else around.
* Again, the alliteration around the words “vacant vast” surrounding? – what is the poet trying to say
* The repetition of the filament (three times) 🡪 indicating the spider isn’t given up, ongoing and determined to make a mark 🡪 the poet specifically didn’t choose to describe the spider as desperate at this point, talk through this. How is a patient spider is different from a desperate?
* This particular spider in this stanza is determined without frustration, to make a connection with the land.

Talk through the last line of stanza one 🡪 Ever unreeling (undoing) them, ever tirelessly speeding them 🡪 again to emphasize that this spider is putting in work, not giving up or getting tired. It is patient. It recognizes that it will take time to find the right spot to make its mark, create its cobweb.

**Step 2:** Have students take two minutes to silently read stanza #1 independently. Then, come back whole class and read it together. Ask students to do a turn and talk and come back whole class – What is literally happening? Students should say the second stanza is about a soul trying to do the same thing as a spider- make connections with the world/people.

Students may already recognize the some of the structural elements of the poem, based on their homework from last night. Have 2-3 students shout out what they notice about the structure.

* Should say, two stanzas – each stanza has exactly five lines

Push students further - ask them to pick out words, phrases, or lines that are similar in each stanza, or try to convey the same meaning.

* For example, line 3 in stanza one “Mark’d how to explore the vacant vast surrounding” is similar to what is being said in stanza two line 2 “Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space” – students should see the connections between the similar word choices being used in each of these line.
* Vacant and detached vs Vast and “measureless oceans of space” – both spider and soul are alone and in an opened/empty space
* Line 5 in stanza one and line 3 in stanza two are similar as well 🡪 the clauses “ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding” mimic the phrase “Ceaselessly musing, venturing , throwing, seeking the spheres to connect..” – just the like the spider is working tirelessly to weaves its cobweb, the soul is doing the same work with the same effort to make its’ connection
* Then, talk through the last line of stanza 2, “till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul” 🡪 the poet purposefully ends that stanza with the spider analogy, creating a mood of hope- the idea that there is no certainty the soul will make connections, or the spider will find the perfect spot to create a cobweb, but both alike will continue to try until they do.

**Step 3:** Think the focus question🡪 Students should recognize that the technique the other is using to convey his message is through the imagery of spider.

But they should be pushed to think through the why 🡪 Why would Walt Whitman choose the imagery of a spider to send the message about souls connecting?

* This is a difficult question, work through this as a class

*Ideal response: It hard to visualize a soul, it’s even harder to visualize a soul connecting. The poet wanted to use something concrete, something familiar to send his message*

**Exit ticket:** students go back to their Do Now and fixing up their original responses based on our reading discussion.