

E. Rose McClellan

Word Vomit on the Road to Boise

I am waiting for an epiphany.  
I type random words  
And then delete them.  
I can't settle on anything.  
I'm not passionate about anything.  
I don't want to write about anything in particular  
I just want to write.  
Is this some heavy-handed metaphor for life?  
I feel I should juxtapose this apathy  
With some obscure facet of happiness or patience,  
Or maybe the road of life we walk  
(Or drive, as the case may be,  
In a yellow mini-van occupied by two saxophones,  
A clarinet  
Four musicians  
And Jacques Ibert's *Concertino Da Camera* on the radio)  
But nothing brilliant comes to mind.  
I'm rolling through nothing to get ~~to~~ nowhere.  
The scenery sliding smoothly past my window  
Has been the same for three hours  
And will be for the next few hours  
of forever.  
Stubble sagebrush  
Barbed wire sagging on tipsy fence posts  
Cows.  
So I word-vomit on this page,  
Hoping for divine inspiration  
Or at least some sign that civilization still exists somewhere.  
Holsteins and Herefords don't count.  
Ibert is giving me a headache.  
I am staring at little black letters  
Periods  
Commas  
White spaces  
Knowing they don't mean a thing.

**Comment [BI1]:** Love the title, though it is a bit off putting and doesn't really match what your poem is really saying. If that is your intention, though, then it works.

**Comment [BI2]:** Not sure about the repetition of anything. It is not a very lyrical word. You might consider substituting it for something that is more poetic and rhythmic.

**Comment [BI3]:** This chunk of lines is really choppy. Try to incorporate some fluidity in here by combining sentences, changing words, etc.

**Comment [BI4]:** I like this image- it's very specific and vivid

**Comment [BI5]:** This line here sounds more poetic. It makes the reader stop to think about it before moving on.

**Comment [BI6]:** These lines seem out of place and irrelevant. I would suggest removing them.

**Comment [BI7]:** Still not sure about this. "Vomit" is such a harsh, irreverent word with an unpleasant connotation. It is a bit jarring after your philosophical comments about life.

**Comment [BI8]:** These lines also seem irrelevant and aren't adding to your poem.

**Comment [BI9]:** I love this idea, and I really think this is what you are trying to talk about throughout your poem. I suggest focusing more on this idea, tying it into life, etc., and removing all the less relevant day-to-day thoughts.

## Jessica DeLand's Response

### **What Works:**

I really like the big picture you are going for. It is an interesting idea to compare words and writing and struggling to write with how we live life and travel and do not seem to get anywhere. It is a bit depressing, but it is definitely a thought that we can all relate to. I also like the very pointed language you use in the lines that reference this big picture. They are well-written and make the reader stop to consider the ideas you bring up.

### **What Doesn't Work:**

About half of your poem (I tried to point these places out specifically) is not really relevant to your overall point. It seems a bit like you were writing this poem down while on a specific trip, but the thoughts and details from that specific trip are not really very important to what you are really trying to say and the reader will not be very interested in them unless you imbue them with symbolic value. Because of this, some of the language you use is very common and not especially poetic, which jars against the lines that do use very expressive, emotional, poetic language. My main suggestions are to, first, cut out every detail that is not moving your piece forward, basically anything that is not conveying anything of significance. Second, go through and spruce up the language. Replace common words with lyrical ones with multiple meanings to add depth to your poem. And third, you might consider breaking your poem into sections. It is a bit off-putting to be faced with a page-long block of text, so you might consider dividing it into stanzas to create more white space and to organize the thoughts a little more clearly.