



This writing prompt was developed in conjunction with Lightbox interviews with [Jamaal May](#) and [David Yezzi](#). For more information, please see www.lightboxpoetry.com.

Discussion Questions:

- Jamaal May’s poem, “On Metal,” is very concerned with sound as part of the poem’s content. In what ways does the poet manipulate sound, as well, in his own language? What relationships between the careful sonic work of the poem and the poem’s interest in sounds can you discover?
- How does “There Are Birds Here” use the technique of negation—that is, describing what is *not* the case—in order to make its argument?
- Read “Hum for the Bolt,” and jot down the words you don’t understand. What do these words evoke for you, in the context of the poem, even without knowing their precise definitions? What do you imagine them to mean? Research their definitions and reread the poem.
- What do you imagine is the “it” the speaker refers to in “Hum for the Bolt”? Using the title, what might you describe as the subject of this poem?
- Reread Jamaal May’s Lightbox interview, paying special attention to his musical analogies. What do you make of these? What role does music play in the selection of poems on the website?
- What are some different ways you might read “I Do Have a Seam”? What changes about the poem when you read it a specific way? Why do you think Jamaal May left these possibilities open for the reader?