

The poem, "Poem for Don Cherry", uses a very open and unsystematic form because the poem does not follow any traditional format for composition or structure. On the page the poem is set up in such a way that it appears visually cluttered and even disorganized. However, I never got the impression that the words were thrown onto the paper with no regard for how they might land; instead, they seem to be placed on the page in a deliberate manner. No action is completely without motive because every action has something that is driving it and Mackey used an open form to invoke the image of jazz. If the poem was written in a more traditional style the entire poem would take on a different mood and would not be able to reflect music in the same way. The open form of the poem is a comment on music, but jazz specifically, because the form reflects the dynamic and experimental nature of music, which allows for great freedom of self-expression and self-discovery.

The form of the poem mimics the liberty that music, and jazz in particular, provides the artist. The very nature of music is that it demands a certain level of experimentation and creativity. Jazz is a type of music where the underlying foundation is one of explicit experimentation through improvisation; there are no rigid guidelines. Similarly, "Poem for Don Cherry" has no formal or traditional boundaries; it is an unrestrained depiction of images and ideas. The poem reads, "The mouth she wore/who although she wore jeans I/could see she grew hair/on her legs, /her bald feet." This passage is not framed in any traditional sense because the words seem to crawl over the page. This can be seen as a comment on the experimentation that is an integral part of jazz composition. The actual words are hard to put together but they seem to convey a sense of admiration. He says, "The mouth she wore," and

this seems dramatic and the woman takes on a goddess-like aspect. The lines about her wearing jeans and having un-shaven legs ground this woman in a more contemporary setting and help to change the perception of a goddess. The unconventional and free-form that the poem has reflects the creativity that is necessary for all musical endeavors. The form is like a visual representation of music and is a comment on the very essence of jazz, which is unpredictability, experimentation, and creativity.

The informal structure of the poem allows the author freedom for explicit self-expression and allows the reader the possibility of self-discovery. The only limitations that Mackey faces are those that are presented by his ingenuity and imagination. The poem is only given structure because of Mackey's impulses and in a poem with an open form the author's intentions are often confusing, which allows for an unlimited number of ways to view the work. Therefore, the reader is forced to forge their own opinions and give their own interpretation of the poem and this can lead to a sense of self-discovery.

The poem reads, "insistent Mu, /became the/root of whatever/song." The form in this passage is very un-orthodox and allows for a lot of interpretations. It can be seen as the birth of music. Jazz is the most established and highly regarded form of music that has been developed solely in America and it could be seen as being the "root" for every other American song. This passage can be seen as a declaration for the importance of jazz in American musical history. As the reader puts further thought into their interpretation of a poem they can learn more about themselves and this is a type of self-discovery. The open form of a poem allows the author full freedom to express their ideas while also allowing the reader full freedom to explore and interpret these ideas.