

**Handout for *From Park to Playa* writing class NellCrossBeckerman.com**

Tips:

- Go for a walk when having a brain freeze.
- When stuck on starting, use a mentor text and replace their words with yours (just for one-two lines, don't plagiarize entire texts, obviously.)
- If you get the opportunity to call/Zoom pitch your editor, do so! Be open to their input.
- Keep a file of illustrators you admire and would like to work with.
- Have a great title.
- How can you anchor your story around big emotional moments that lend themselves to epic illustrations?
- Feeling lost? Go back to your critique group/partner.
- Consider prepping an Author's Note explaining your personal connection to the story/how you were inspired.
- Return for primary research—go to the place, see the thing in person. Can't? Watch a documentary, something that can give you more of a sensory feeling than books/websites. Note sounds, textures, temperatures, scents.
- Be involved in discussing illustration for text placement/page turns.

**Possible structures to consider:**

- **Chronological** (day-to-night)
- **Geographical** (east to west, down to up, etc)
- **Cumulative**
- **Call-to-action** (ie Go explore!)
- **Circular** (opening and closing stanzas mirror each other)
- **Poetic refrain** (start or end stanza with same phrase)
- **Ask a question** in each stanza to increase interactivity during read aloud.

**Books Mentioned:**

- *Over and Under the Snow* by Kate Messner
- *Cloth Lullaby* by Amy Novesky
- *Girl on a Motorcycle* by Amy Novesky
- *If You Want to Ride a Horse* by Amy Novesky
- *Reimagining Your Nonfiction Picture Book* by Kirsten W. Larson
- Follow Melissa Stewart [www.melissa-stewart.com](http://www.melissa-stewart.com)

