



Statue Stories Chicago: The Public Writing Competition Give the Bronze Cow a voice!

How now bronze cow? How go things with you? Tell us something of yourself. Something besides Moo. If the Bronze Cow could talk what would she say for herself?

Write a Monologue!

Monologos means "speaking alone" in Greek, but we all know that people who speak without thinking about their listener can be very dull indeed. Your challenge is to find a 'voice' for your statue and to write an engaging monologue in 350 words.

Get under your statue's skin!

- Look closely and develop a sense of empathy with the sculpture and imagine how it would feel. Does the cow enjoy living in the city? What does it see every day?
- Invite your listener to feel with you: create shifts in tempo and emotion, use different tenses, figures of speech and anecdotes, sensory details and even sound effects- maybe the odd moo!

Finding your sculpture's voice?

Write in the first person and adopt the persona of your character:

- What kind of vocabulary will you use - your own or that of another era/dialect?
- Your words will be spoken so read them aloud: use their rhythm and your sentence structure to convey emotion and urgency.
- Read great monologues for inspiration, for example Hamlet's *Alas Poor Yorick*, or watch film monologues, like Morgan Freeman's in *The Shawshank Redemption*.

How are you going to keep people listening? Structure your monologue!

- How will you introduce yourself? With a greeting, a warning, a question, an order, a riddle? Grab and hold your listener's attention from your very first line.
- Think of your monologue as a story, with you as both narrator and lead: how will you build a sense of development, suspense and atmosphere?
- Your final line is the most important of all: how will you say goodbye and make your exit?

Do some background research before you begin - Find out about your statue

Google around and become an expert on your statue. You are sure to discover interesting facts, anecdotes, jokes or quotes to weave into your monologue.

The Subject: *Bronze Cow*

In 1999, Chicago was taken over by a herd of fiberglass cows. Peter Hanig carried this idea back with him from Switzerland. Why cows? They were chosen for their universal significance. Sacred, nurturing and affectionate, what better guardians for a city? In celebration of this event, a cow was cast in bronze and set to look over Chicago permanently.

What's in a name? How now bronze cow?

Bronze usually means 3rd place, but at 57 inches high and 92 inches long, this cow is no runner up! Can you think of a better name?

What do I look like? Where am I?

She stands at the entrance to the Chicago Cultural Center. Many people climb upon her to take pictures. How does she feel about being the object of amusement? Two famous Chicago landmarks, the 'Chicago Picasso' sculpture and the Historic Water Tower are etched into her eyes. Is this where she heads when the city is sleeping?

My story!

What does she think of the theatregoers and art lovers passing by? Perhaps she wishes that CowParade happened all year round, with her colourful family milling through the streets. Or maybe she likes being Chicago's one prize cow.

Some points to keep in mind:

- **The audience is not used to speaking to statues!** It's an unexpected experience and so, the piece needs to be engaging from the start.
- **Every word counts!** It's a short word limit, so avoid 'filler'!
- **The project sets out to reach new audiences:** people who like looking at public art and statues as well as people who didn't know they did! We hope for wide public appeal.
- **Use the physicality of the statue.** If a statue has a broken nose, you might want to refer to it!
- **Refer to the location and surroundings** of the statue. What's it doing in that place specifically? Does it explore the areas at night when nobody is around?

Have you found your story and your voice? Then get writing!

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