

“Ode to my Violin” brings the speaker’s violin to life in a delightful way. During the poem, the violin mimics the emotions of the violinist before, during, and after a concert. This use of personification, which gives inanimate objects human qualities, is purposeful and well done.

First, the title of this poem declares that it is an “Ode,” whose origin is from the Greek word *aeidein*, which means to ‘chant’ or ‘sing.’ An ode usually praises people, natural scenes, and abstract idea; it is often a shorter, lyric poem that thoughtfully looks at the subject.

“Ode to My Violin” praises the violin in its performance at a concert. At the opening, the violin “sound[s] perfect and great.” Before playing the concert, the violin eagerly anticipates practice. Its “favorite food is sap / Which makes its notes stronger.” The speaker warns that “if the it catches a cold / Its voice will sound bad.”

The speaker moves on to the concert itself in the next three couplets:

At the concert
Where it sang so beautifully well,
It got a little nervous for a moment,
So it played a little fast.

But at last it calmed down.
We finished elegantly with a bow.

The speaker personifies the violin saying the violin “sang,” it became “nervous,” and it “finished with a bow.”

At the end of the concert, the violin “smiled broadly” as the audience applauded. On the way home, the violin slept “on my [the speaker’s] lap” as “my dad drives us back home.”

This poem’s use of personification makes “Ode to My Violin” an engaging poem to read. Also, perhaps, by centering the poem on the page and having line length vary, the writer is approximating the long and short strokes of the bow when the violin is played. Congratulations to this artistic writer!

Thank you for the pleasure of reading your work!

Marie Kane, Final Judge
Sarah Mook Poetry Contest, 2018