

Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2020

Every April, on Poem in Your Pocket Day, people celebrate by selecting a poem, carrying it with them, and sharing it with others throughout the day at schools, bookstores, libraries, parks, workplaces, and on social media using the hashtag #pocketpoem.

Join us in celebrating Poem in Your Pocket Day this year!

**academy of
american**

poets

Poets.ca
THE LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS

A Guide to Celebrating Poetry in Schools, Communities & Businesses

Poem in Your Pocket Day was initiated in April 2002 by the Office of the Mayor, in partnership with the New York City Departments of Cultural Affairs and Education, as part of the city's National Poetry Month celebration.

The Academy of American Poets, which launched National Poetry Month in 1996, took Poem in Your Pocket Day to all fifty United States in 2008, encouraging individuals across the country to join in and channel their inner bard.

The Academy of American Poets and the League of Canadian Poets, the latter of which has organized National Poetry Month in Canada since 1998, have teamed up to extend the reach of Poem in Your Pocket Day in North America.

Ideas for Celebrating Poem in Your Pocket Day

The beauty of Poem in Your Pocket Day is its simplicity. Individuals and institutions have generated many creative ways to share poems on this special day—from having children create handmade pockets to tuck their favorite poems into, to handing out poems to commuters at transportation hubs, to distributing poem scrolls in hospitals, nursing homes, and local businesses. The ideas are endless, but here are a few to get you started. And, of course, we invite you to share poems on any day during National Poetry Month and year-round!

In Your School

- If you're a school principal or administrator, organize a school-wide Poem in Your Pocket Day giveaway using the following curated collection of poems.
- Encourage students to choose a poem from our collection, print it out, and post it in a designated area, such as the school cafeteria, hallways, or the student lounge.
- Hold a student reading of the poems they've selected.

In Your Classroom

- Have your students choose a poem from our collection. Ask them to write a letter to a far-away friend or relative detailing what they like about the poem and why they think the recipient would enjoy it. Send the letters and poems so they arrive on Poem in Your Pocket Day.
- Ask your students to select their favorite poem from our collection, choose their favorite lines, and add those lines to a bookmark they can decorate with drawings. Collect the bookmarks and redistribute them, letting each student pick one that's not their own for ongoing use in class.
- Ask your students to memorize a poem and share it with the class.
- Have your students choose a poem to give away. Ask them to print out 20 copies of the poem and come up with a creative way to distribute it, such as in the form of a folded-paper animal or object (see the Appendix for instructions on how to create a folded swan), a decorated scroll, a poem tree, or a bookmark.
- Devote a class lesson to teaching your students about the haiku, a three-line poem with seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. (See the Appendix for more about the haiku.) Ask your students to write their own haikus and share them with the class by reading them aloud. Have your students decorate a copy of their haikus with drawings and stickers, then encourage them to give their poems to a family member or friend.
- Organize a class trip for students to visit a nursing home or community center and to read and share their favorite poems.

In Your Community

- Work with your local community officials to get permission to hand out poems in transportation hubs, shopping malls, pedestrian malls, or other areas where people in our community gather.
- Encourage local businesses to participate in Poem in Your Pocket Day by offering discounts to customers who bring in a poem, by posting poems in their establishments, or by distributing poems on bags, cups, or receipts.
- On April 1, write to your local newspaper asking them to publish a poem by a local poet on Poem in Your Pocket Day or to syndicate Poem-a-Day, a digital series available for free from the Academy of American Poets. (For more information, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem-day.)

In Your Workplace

- Stand outside the entrance of your place of work and distribute poems to employees and coworkers as they begin their day.
- Organize a lunch during which your employees or coworkers can take turns reading their favorite poems aloud.
- Ask your employer to encourage employees to choose their favorite poems and post them around the office.
- Place printouts of poems on people's desk chairs before they arrive to work.
- Add a poem or link to a poem to your email signature. In addition to the poems here, you'll find thousands more at Poets.org.
- Email a poem to employees and coworkers, encouraging them to read and share their own favorites throughout the day.
- Jot a favorite line of poetry on the back of your business cards before distributing them.
- Tape a poem to the watercooler.

On Social Media

- Post poems, links to poems, or photos of poems on Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, or Twitter using the hashtag #pocketpoem.

Poems to Share by Contemporary American Poets

Null Point by Gabrielle Calvocoressi

Remember by Joy Harjo

Jackrabbits, Green Onions & Witches Stew by Juan Felipe Herrera

Mosquito by Jane Hirshfield

The Map by Marie Howe

Instructions on Not Giving Up by Ada Limón

The Laughing Child by W. S. Merwin

Making History by Marilyn Nelson

The Rider by Naomi Shihab Nye

Utopian by Alicia Ostriker

When Giving Is All We Have by Alberto Ríos

In Brazil by Tracy K. Smith

Unpacking a Globe by Arthur Sze

Kissing in Vietnamese by Ocean Vuong

The Silver Thread by Afaa Michael Weaver

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Null Point

Gabrielle Calvocoressi

The first thing I learned was to look wide
at the darkness

and not want anything. He'd say, *Just look
at the darkness*

and tell me what you see. I'd say, *I see stars* or
Just the stars, Dad.

And he'd say, *Don't call them that yet. What do you see?*
Just the stars, Dad.

But then I'd be quiet and let my eyes go and look wide
at the darkness.

It was like a dome. I think it frightened me to stare
at the darkness.

I see light. I see a million little lights. And he'd say
They aren't all stars.

Some were planets and some were planes and I'd say, *Yeah,*
they aren't all stars.

But not really believe it. But say it so not to feel stupid out there
in the darkness.

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Remember

Joy Harjo

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.

Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.

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Jackrabbits, Green Onions & Witches Stew

Juan Felipe Herrera

Jackrabbits, green onions & witches stew

Three dollars & upside down lemons & you

Dinky planet on a skateboard of dynamite

Oh, what to do, chile peppers, Mrs. Oops

Dr. What, Mr. Space Station unscrewed

The *Redbook of Ants* says you better run

No sireee, LOL, blowin' my bubble gum sun

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Mosquito

Jane Hirshfield

I say I
&
a small mosquito drinks from my tongue

but many say we and hear I
say you or he and
hear I

what can we do with this problem

a bowl held in both hands
cannot be filled by its holder

x , says the blue whale
 x , say the krill
solve for y , says the ocean, then multiply by existence

the feet of an ant make their own sound on the earth

ice is astonished by water

a person misreads
delirium as delphinium
and falls into
a blueness sleepy as beauty when sneezing

the pronoun dozes

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The Map

Marie Howe

The failure of love might account for most of the suffering in the world.

The girl was going over her global studies homework

in the air where she drew the map with her finger

touching the Gobi desert,

the Plateau of Tiber in front of her,

and looking through her transparent map backwards

I did suddenly see,

how her left is my right, and for a moment I understood.

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Instructions on Not Giving Up

Ada Limón

More than the fuchsia funnels breaking out
of the crabapple tree, more than the neighbor's
almost obscene display of cherry limbs shoving
their cotton candy-colored blossoms to the slate
sky of Spring rains, it's the greening of the trees
that really gets to me. When all the shock of white
and taffy, the world's baubles and trinkets, leave
the pavement strewn with the confetti of aftermath,
the leaves come. Patient, plodding, a green skin
growing over whatever winter did to us, a return
to the strange idea of continuous living despite
the mess of us, the hurt, the empty. Fine then,
I'll take it, the tree seems to say, a new slick leaf
unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all.

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The Laughing Child

W. S. Merwin

When she looked down from the kitchen window
into the back yard and the brown wicker
baby carriage in which she had tucked me
three months old to lie out in the fresh air
of my first January the carriage
was shaking she said and went on shaking
and she saw I was lying there laughing
she told me about it later it was
something that reassured her in a life
in which she had lost everyone she loved
before I was born and she had just begun
to believe that she might be able to
keep me as I lay there in the winter
laughing it was what she was thinking of
later when she told me that I had been
a happy child and she must have kept that
through the gray cloud of all her days and now
out of the horn of dreams of my own life
I wake again into the laughing child

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Making History

Marilyn Nelson

Blue and White Orlon Snowflake Sweater, Blue Snowpants, Red Galoshes
—Smoky Hill AFB, Kansas, 1955

Somebody took a picture of a class
standing in line to get polio shots,
and published it in the *Weekly Reader*.
We stood like that today. And it did hurt.
Mrs. Liebel said we were Making History,
but all I did was sqwunch up my eyes and wince.
Making History takes more than standing in line
believing little white lies about pain.
Mama says First Negroes are History:
First Negro Telephone Operator,
First Negro Opera Singer At The Met,
First Negro Pilots, First Supreme Court Judge.
That lady in Montgomery just became a First
by sqwunching up her eyes and sitting there.

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The Rider

Naomi Shihab Nye

A boy told me
if he roller-skated fast enough
his loneliness couldn't catch up to him,
the best reason I ever heard
for trying to be a champion.
What I wonder tonight
pedaling hard down King William Street
is if it translates to bicycles.
A victory! To leave your loneliness
panting behind you on some street corner
while you float free into a cloud of sudden azaleas,
pink petals that have never felt loneliness,
no matter how slowly they fell.

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Utopian

Alicia Ostriker

My neighbor's daughter has created a city
you cannot see
on an island to which you cannot swim
ruled by a noble princess and her athletic consort
all the buildings are glass so that lies are impossible
beneath the city they have buried certain words
which can never be spoken again
chiefly the word divorce which is eaten by maggots
when it rains you hear chimes
rabbits race through its suburbs
the name of the city is one you can almost pronounce

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When Giving Is All We Have

Alberto Ríos

*One river gives
Its journey to the next.*

We give because someone gave to us.
We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.
We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,
We have been wounded by it—

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you
What I had to give—together, we made

Something greater from the difference.

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In Brazil

Tracy K. Smith

for Adélia Prado

Poets swagger up and down the shore, I'll bet,
Wagging their hips in time to the raucous tide.
They tip back their heads and life sears a path
Down the throat. At night they dance, don't they,
Across tiles that might as well be glass, or ice.
And if they don't want to spend the evening alone,
They don't. And if they want to wear snow-angels
Into the sheets of some big empty bed, that's
What they do, until a dark form takes shape
On the ceiling overhead. Then they put on a robe
And kick around looking for some slippers.
When the poem finally arrives, it grins
And watches back with wide credulous eyes.

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Unpacking a Globe

Arthur Sze

I gaze at the Pacific and don't expect
to ever see the heads on Easter Island,

though I guess at sunlight rippling
the yellow grasses sloping to shore;

yesterday a doe ate grass in the orchard:
it lifted its ears and stopped eating

when it sensed us watching from
a glass hallway—in his sleep, a veteran

sweats, defusing a land mine.
On the globe, I mark the Battle of

the Coral Sea—no one frets at that now.
A poem can never be too dark,

I nod and, staring at the Kenai, hear
ice breaking up along an inlet;

yesterday a coyote trotted across
my headlights and turned his head

but didn't break stride; that's how
I want to live on this planet:

alive to a rabbit at a glass door—
and flower where there is no flower.

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Kissing in Vietnamese

Ocean Vuong

My grandmother kisses
as if bombs are bursting in the backyard,
where mint and jasmine lace their perfumes
through the kitchen window,
as if somewhere, a body is falling apart
and flames are making their way back
through the intricacies of a young boy's thigh,
as if to walk out the door, your torso
would dance from exit wounds.

When my grandmother kisses, there would be
no flashy smooching, no western music
of pursed lips, she kisses as if to breathe
you inside her, nose pressed to cheek
so that your scent is relearned
and your sweat pearls into drops of gold
inside her lungs, as if while she holds you
death also, is clutching your wrist.

My grandmother kisses as if history
never ended, as if somewhere
a body is still
falling apart.

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The Silver Thread

Afaa Michael Weaver

The fern gathers where the water seldom goes
unless the storms swell this world of wise choices,
the loud trickle of clear tongues of the stream
licking the edges of rock, while up ahead a curve
hides tomorrow from our crystal ball, the thing
we are afraid to admit we have, the guarantee
we hide from faith. In the woods our dog is lost
from time to time, until suddenly we hear her paws
inside winter's death becoming the yearly promise
of new undergrowth, her careless paws that beg
each day for the next bowl of treats, true faith
in what love yields. The rain stops not long after
it threatens to soak us with cold and chills, the trees
open to the gradual break of blue inside the gray,
turning the clouds naked and white under the sun,
the stream disappears under a bridge made by men
so trucks can crawl back and forth over this road
of dirt with its one row of grass, where our tongues
make a silver thread finding its way past the fear.

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Contributors' Notes

Gabrielle Calvocoressi is the author of *Rocket Fantastic* (Persea Books, 2017), *Apocalyptic Swing* (Persea Books, 2009), and *The Last Time I Saw Amelia Earhart* (Persea Books, 2005). She is the recipient of a Stegner Fellowship and a Rona Jaffe Women Writers' Award, among other honors and awards. She lives in Carrboro, North Carolina.

Joy Harjo's poetry collections include *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings* (W. W. Norton, 2015) and *How We Became Human: New and Selected Poems* (W. W. Norton, 2002). In 2015, she received the Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her other honors include the PEN Open Book Award and the American Indian Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award. A Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, she lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Juan Felipe Herrera was the U. S. Poet Laureate and served as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2011 to 2016. He is the author of many collections of poetry, including *Notes on the Assemblage* (City Lights, 2015) and *Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems* (University of Arizona Press, 2008), a recipient of the PEN/Beyond Margins Award. He lives in Fresno, California.

Jane Hirshfield's poetry collections include *The Beauty: Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), which was nominated for the National Book Award, and *Come, Thief* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2011). In 2004, the Academy of American Poets awarded her the Academy Fellowship for distinguished poetic achievement. Her other honors include the Poetry Center Book Award and numerous fellowships. She served as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2012 to 2017, and she lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Marie Howe's poetry collections include *Magdalene* (W. W. Norton, 2017), which was long-listed for the National Book Award. Howe is the recipient of the 2015 Academy of American Poets Fellowship and has also received grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Bunting Institution, and the National Endowment for the Arts. She currently serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She lives in New York City.

Ada Limón is the author of five poetry collections, including *The Carrying* (Milkweed Editions, 2018), which received the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *Bright Dead Things* (Milkweed Editions, 2015), which was a finalist for the National Book Award. The recipient of numerous honors and awards, including a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Limón lives in Lexington, Kentucky, and Sonoma, California.

W. S. Merwin was born in New York City on September 30, 1927. He was the author of numerous poetry collections, including *Garden Time* (Copper Canyon Press, 2016) and *The Shadow of Sirius* (Copper Canyon Press, 2008), which won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. A former chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and poet laureate of the United States, he died on March 15, 2019.

Marilyn Nelson is the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Faster Than Light: New and Selected Poems, 1996–2011* (Louisiana State University Press, 2012). She has also published several collections of verse for children and young adults, including *How I Discovered Poetry* (Dial Press, 2014). Nelson is the recipient of honors and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Poetry Society of America, among others. A former poet laureate of Connecticut and Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, she lives in Connecticut.

Naomi Shihab Nye is the author of several poetry collections, including *The Tiny Journalist* (BOA Editions, 2019), as well as several children's books. In 1988, she received the Academy of American Poets' Lavan Award, and in 2009, she was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She has also received awards and fellowships from the International Poetry Forum and the Guggenheim Foundation, among others. She lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Alicia Ostriker is the author of over ten books of poetry, including *Waiting for the Light* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), as well as several books of criticism. Her honors include the Paterson Poetry Award and the William Carlos Williams Award of the Poetry Society of America. She currently serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and in 2018 she was named New York Poet 2018–2020. She lives in New York City.

Alberto Ríos is the author of several poetry collections, most recently *A Small Story About the Sky* (Copper Canyon Press, 2015). His honors include the 1981 Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets and the Arizona Governor's Arts Award. Ríos currently serves as the inaugural state poet laureate of Arizona, as well as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. He lives in Tempe, Arizona.

Tracy K. Smith is the current poet laureate of the United States. She is the author of four poetry collections, including *Wade in the Water* (Graywolf Press, 2018) and *Life on Mars* (Graywolf Press, 2011), which received the 2012 Pulitzer Prize. The recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the 2014 Academy of American Poets Fellowship, Smith lives in New Jersey.

Arthur Sze is the author of nine books of poetry, most recently *Sight Lines* (Copper Canyon Press, 2019). His honors include an American Book Award, the Jackson Poetry Prize from *Poets & Writers* magazine, a Lannan Literary Award for Poetry, and a Western States Book Award for Translation. Sze served as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2012 to 2017, and he was the first poet laureate of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he lives.

Ocean Vuong is the author of *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (Copper Canyon Press, 2016), which received the T. S. Eliot Prize. Vuong, who was born in Saigon, Vietnam, is the recipient of a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a Ruth Lully and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship, and a Whiting Award, among other honors. He teaches at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and lives in Massachusetts.

Afaa Michael Weaver is the author of several books of poetry, including *Spirit Boxing* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017) and *The Government of Nature* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), for which he received the Kingsley Tufts Award. He has received fellowships from the Pennsylvania State Arts Council and the Pew Charitable Trusts, among others. He lives in West Cornwall, Connecticut.

Poems to Share by Contemporary Canadian Poets

Spotted Owl as Desire *by Yvonne Blomer*

Brother *by Marilyn Bowering*

Today I Will Different *by Karin Cope*

Dawn *by Stephanie Cui*

Crushed *by Lorne Daniel*

O Sea of Troubles We Did Not Take Arms Against *by Adebe DeRango-Adem*

Ode to Chopsticks *by Fiona Lam*

Beekeeping *by Allison LaSorda*

Constellations Retreat before This Truck Stop Night *by D. A. Lockhart*

Jazz (A Variation) *by Lorie Miseck*

[Untitled] *by kjmunro*

Glom Glom Sunraises *by Charlie Petch*

Still be still be still be *by Harry Posner*

I Have a Problem *by Greg Santos*

Visit *by Sarah Tsiang*

Spotted Owl as Desire

Yvonne Blomer

After Robert Bateman's *Mossy Branches*, *Spotted Owl*

True owl. Old-growth owl. Nocturnal
owl. The clock turns by you.
Barking owl. Whistling.
Hooted notes fall from mossed trees.
Old-man moss. Knight's Plume moss. Creeping-
feather moss. Nothing human here except me.
Your eyes a lure. Shoulder-
hunched owl. Padded in your brown
mottled cloak, what are you
tracking? Fogged-in owl, muffle-
feathered owl, patience is
your domain. Bone-lichen
feathered. Lour-browed.
Old strix. What are you
making me into?

Brother

Marilyn Bowering

While he studies the stars outdoors, model airplanes spin
on fine webs in his room. Already he is lifting into the air,
wings on his heels, a small Hermes signaling to the Great Bear.
He reaches the outermost planets, he passes the edges of travel,
and I can no longer steer him homeward.

Still, they say a womb is like a lochan on a hill,
made of rills and rain and tears,
and I can watch him from there when I am water
as I was before

Today I Will Different

Karin Cope

You wake, you say
today will be different, today
I will do what I do what I must what I will
today I will efficient today
tasks completed today organized today
my desk in order.
Today I will different.
Do today as if some other un-waylaid by wind
or whim or want. Someone of will, not wanton
wondering. What song will you sing then when
salsa flings you circumsolar when
lightslant leaps across your foot when
urgency, like sucking sand, slips seaward and
beckons you to swim?

Dawn

Stephanie Cui

Out in the moonlight
The trees are glowing white.
They are fully dressed and await the wind's call.

But the wind is a shy girl at four in the morning,
And she does not come out to play.
Dawn slowly tip-toes, blueing the sky.
I am lost on a path so familiar.

Does darkness lock up my eyelids
With a key that only belongs to dawn?
I sneak by buildings,
They seem unrealistic against the early light.
Windows lit here and there, like the fading stars.

My footsteps are shaky,
My voice—the only echo remaining in the world.
The sun rows the moon across the sky, claiming its throne.
And I step into the day drunk with awe.

Crushed

Lorne Daniel

The bad news this week relentless, rolling
past my glazed face. Addictions,
elections, deaths of the wrong
people, hypnotic grief. Dazed
at the roadside today I breathe hot exhaust. Blurred
tires hiss, rut and groove the grey
just a step away. Over, over.
On the shoulder, waiting for a break,
me and this sleek crow, its cape
tucked and trim. Light disappears
or plays, iridescent, depending
on the moment, the angles between us.
What impresses me as a semi blows by,
buffeting, is — yes— that unruffled coat
but too the shining
absence of concern. Unblinking.
Legs spring-loaded, ready
to jump to some small grain,
fresh-crushed and nourishing.

Ode to Chopsticks

Fiona Lam

Grandfather sets the bowl full of marbles before me.
I pick up the chopsticks and hover,
then picture my hand as a heron
with a long, long beak plunging down
to pluck each orb, lift it
through air and held breath
in a tremulous trip toward the saucer.

Five thousand years of evolution in hand:
branches honed to stir ancient cauldrons
become sleek batons of ivory, gold or jade
adorning an aristocrat's table.
With their deft dance and dip,
more adroit than a fork.
Twin acrobats poised
to hoist choice morsels—
crisp shard of duck skin,
noodle strands, fish cheeks,
single green pea.

*Let your elders lead, he tells me,
Never point your chopsticks at a guest.
Never spear your food like a fisherman.
Don't tap the side of your bowl like a beggar.
Keep them by the plate when you rest
or across the bowl at meal's end. But never
upright like incense burning
in an urn for the dead.*

While he watches, stiff bamboo
grows nimble. One by one
each small glassy planet arcs up
then lands with a *clink!*
The bowl gleams, empty.
He nods.

Beekeeping

Allison LaSorda

We don white hats and veils to check on your hive—
push toward each other's newness, curtailed by safety devices.
A sting's purple welt glares on your left calf. From the box,
you pull bee-crowded sleeves: workers' movement steady

but erratic, sun strobes their effort. Pointing to hexagons,
you explain some house larvae, others reflect light
in honey, still others plastered over with wax. I pretend
to notice the distinctions, drifting into a future self

who readies ice and tends to your stung skin. A tin smoker
calms, masks alarm pheromones, & simulates forest fire,
during which bees will gorge on honey to save their bounty
and escape. It's not panic, exactly, it's instinct. Still, I relate

to the threat of an ending—the impulse to make meaning by holding
everything inside yourself at once, as much as you can carry.

Constellations Retreat before This Truck Stop Night

D. A. Lockhart

After sunset these prairies
hide their absence of rise
in the evenness of darkness.
Backlit Flying J road sign
declaring this strip of Wyoming
belongs to the constellation
drawn from diesel vapour
of long-haul truckers coast
bound. Private showers, ample
parking, and 24 hour steak dinners
just rewards for crossing the space
between. In this September hour
you know you make your own
gospel and the only surety
of the upcoming season
is the gristle of your 2 am sirloin
Here, under this portioned out
license plate of a settler highline
across Lakota land, that surety
carries the weight it must
before you sleep through till
dawn in a Ford Ranger cab
at great remove from the sign
that bleaches out the horizon
and expanse of stars beyond.

Jazz (A Variation)

Lorie Miseck

A minor key swings open the blue door
of the heart. Brass and unhinged
sound unwinds. Sunset slides
down the day's spine. Slides down to
the hour of smoke and wine,
to artless sway of belonging.
To the one, to the lonely, to the only
to each of us held in
evening's aching arms. Listen
to the division of chord and time.
And time again. Listen. Listen,
we take our night with one part wisdom
and five parts song.

And the darkness goes on for miles.

[untitled]

kjmunro

low winter sun

the mist

from a mandarin

Glom Glom Sunraises

Charlie Petch

Dawn was especially noisy today,
as the three suns sprouted from horizon,
as the lamprey loons sung whale songs,
as your tentacle slipped from my gilled side.

I opened one eyeball,
to see the shine of us.
Watched feathered spider flies
steal the dust of our skin.

Having no other eyeball to open,
I slip from our volcano dome,
to scavenge hopplepops for our breakfast,
follow their giggles to find them.

Your 7 limbs seem heavy for you today.
So we turn off the magnets
and float instead,
tango in mid air.

You push branches from my cheek,
ask if I want to go see our egg sack.
I spin around your head three times,
because this is how we spell love.

Still be still be still be

Harry Posner

Still be still be still be
Calm or calm or calm or
Pla cid oh pla cid oh pla cid oh
Re lax re lax re lax re
Ding for pleasure
Ding for dinner
Ring for treasure
The pleasure of your
Company your tympani
Your thrum drum not
Hum drum you're some fun
You are we are when we are
To gather our each our sweet
Peach the reach of fresh flesh
Enmeshed arms legs held
Melded melted to gather
in the cool pool so still
be still be still be still
my beat ing heart

I Have a Problem

Greg Santos

All I care about is everything.
I like to lie down and look up at the stars,
even when there are none.
I am almost nothing but thoughts and water.

I find mirrors unbearably off-putting.
My children find them droll.
Do you feel that too?
My left hand feels like a cataclysmic storm.

I will never tire of looking at my wife.
Her smile is like a constant sonar beep
in the depths of my chest.
I hear rain even when it's sunny out.

Have you ever squinted at the ocean
so the sky and the water blend until
you don't know where one ends and the other begins?
I'm doing that right now with you.

Visit

Sarah Tsiang

I saw my father yesterday,
sitting on the wall of his mausoleum.
He held my hand and told me he forgave me
and I asked, for what?

He smelled of apples, an autumn of leaves
for skin. I remember you like this, I said,
a harvest—an orchard of a man.

He opened his shirt, plucked a plum
from his lungs and held it out to me.
Everything, he said, is a way of remembering.

Contributors' Notes

Yvonne Blomer served as the City of Victoria's poet laureate from 2015 to 2018. She is the author of *Sugar Ride: Cycling from Hanoi to Kuala Lumpur* (Palimpsest Press, 2017) and she edited *Refugium: Poems for the Pacific* (Caitlin Press, 2017). Her chapbook *Elegies for Earth* won Leaf Press's Overleaf Chapbook Contest in 2017. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

Marilyn Bowering is a poet and novelist. She lives on Vancouver Island.

Karin Cope is the author of scholarly works, popular histories, short stories, policy papers, blogs and poetry; her artworks include photographs, installations, performances, videos, guerrilla theatre and mixed media and online works. She teaches at NSCAD University in the Division of Art History and Contemporary Culture.

Stephanie Cui received the League of Canadian Poets' 2018 Jessamy Stursberg Poetry Prize for young poets.

Lorne Daniel has published three books of poetry, and his work has been included in anthologies and periodicals across Canada, the U.S. and the U.K.. He lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

Adebe DeRango-Adem is the author of three full-length poetry collections: *The Unmooring* (Mansfield Press, 2018); *Terra Incognita* (Inanna Publications, 2015), which was nominated for the Pat Lowther Memorial Award; and *Ex Nihilo* (Frontenac House, 2010), which was a finalist for the Dylan Thomas Prize.

Fiona Tinwei Lam has authored two poetry books, including *Enter the Chrysanthemum* (Caitlin Press, 2009). She also edited *The Bright Well: Canadian Poems on Facing Cancer* (Leaf Press, 2011). She has received The New Quarterly's Nick Blatchford Prize and was a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award. Her work appears in over thirty anthologies, including *The Best of the Best Canadian Poetry: 10th Anniversary Edition* (Tightrope Books, 2017).

Allison LaSorda's work has appeared in *The Fiddlehead*, *North American Review*, *Shenandoah*, and *Hazlitt*, and she was nominated for a 2018 National Magazine Award for Personal Journalism.

D. A. Lockhart is the author of *The Gravel Lot that was Montana* (Mansfield Press, 2018), *This City at the Crossroads* (Black Moss Press, 2017), and *Big Medicine Comes to Erie* (Black Moss Press, 2016). He holds an MFA from Indiana University–Bloomington, where he held a Neal Marshall Fellowship in Creative Writing. He has received grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. He is a pukuwankoamimens of the Lenape nation and a member of the Moravian of the Thames First Nation, and he lives in Waawiyaaatanong on the south shore of the Detroit River.

Lorie Miseck is a poet and photographer. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta.

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, kmunro moved to the Yukon Territory in 1991. Her first poetry collection is forthcoming with Red Moon Press in 2019. She also co-edited the anthology of crime-themed haiku *Body of Evidence: a collection of killer 'ku* (Catkin Press, 2017).

Charlie Petch's work has been published in *Matrix*, *Descant*, *Toronto Quarterly*, and other journals. They are the creative director and founder of "Hot Damn It's A Queer Slam."

Harry Posner is the author of six books of poetry and fiction, and he has produced several spoken word CDs. He currently serves as Dufferin County's first poet laureate.

Greg Santos is the author of *Blackbirds* (Eyewear Publishing, 2018), *Rabbit Punch!* (DC Books, 2014), and *The Emperor's Sofa* (DC Books, 2010). He holds an MFA in creative writing from The New School in New York City. His writing has appeared in *The Walrus*, *Geist*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, and The Best American Poetry Blog. He regularly works with at-risk communities and teaches writing and literature at the Thomas More Institute. He is the poetry editor of *carte blanche* and lives in Montreal.

Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang is the author of ten books, including picture books, poetry, and fiction. She is currently an adjunct professor of creative writing at the University of British Columbia.

Poems to Share from the Public Domain

Moonrise *by H.D.*

To Make a Prairie *by Emily Dickinson*

Life *by Paul Laurence Dunbar*

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening *by Robert Frost*

Tanka (I) *by Sadakichi Hartmann*

When I Rise Up *by Georgia Douglas Johnson*

The New Colossus *by Emma Lazarus*

The Tropics of New York *by Claude McKay*

Wild Swans *by Edna St. Vincent Millay*

Assured *by Alexander Posey*

Fog *by Carl Sandburg*

Faults *by Sara Teasdale*

The Eagle *by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

Storm Ending *by Jean Toomer*

Song of the Open Road, 1 *by Walt Whitman*

For biographies of these poets, visit www.poets.org.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Moonrise

H.D.

Will you glimmer on the sea?
Will you fling your spear-head
On the shore?
What note shall we pitch?

We have a song,
On the bank we share our arrows—
The loosed string tells our note:

*O flight,
Bring her swiftly to our song.
She is great,
We measure her by the pine-trees.*

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

To Make a Prairie

Emily Dickinson

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee, —
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Life

Paul Laurence Dunbar

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double;
 And that is life!

A crust and a corner that love makes precious,
With a smile to warm and the tears to refresh us;
And joy seems sweeter when cares come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils for laughter;
 And that is life!

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Tanka (I)

Sadakichi Hartmann

Winter? Spring? Who knows?
White buds from the plumbtrees wing
And mingle with the snows.
No blue skies these flowers bring,
Yet their fragrance augurs Spring.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

When I Rise Up

Georgia Douglas Johnson

When I rise up above the earth,
And look down on the things that fetter me,
I beat my wings upon the air,
Or tranquil lie,
Surge after surge of potent strength
Like incense comes to me
When I rise up above the earth
And look down upon the things that fetter me.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The New Colossus

Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

national
poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Tropics of New York

Claude McKay

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger root
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,

Sat in the window, bringing memories
of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
And dewy dawns, and mystical skies
In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eyes grow dim, and I could no more gaze;
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Wild Swans

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over.
And what did I see I had not seen before?
Only a question less or a question more;
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying,
House without air, I leave you and lock your door.
Wild swans, come over the town, come over
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Assured

Alexander Posey

Be it dark; be it bright;
Be it pain; be it rest;
Be it wrong; be it right—
It must be for the best.

Some good must somewhere wait,
And sometime joy and pain
Must cease to alternate,
Or else we live in vain.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Fog

Carl Sandburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Faults

Sara Teasdale

They came to tell your faults to me,
They named them over one by one;
I laughed aloud when they were done,
I knew them all so well before,—
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see
Your faults had made me love you more.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Eagle

Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Storm Ending

Jean Toomer

Thunder blossoms gorgeously above our heads,
Great, hollow, bell-like flowers,
Rumbling in the wind,
Stretching clappers to strike our ears . . .
Full-lipped flowers
Bitten by the sun
Bleeding rain
Dripping rain like golden honey—
And the sweet earth flying from the thunder.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Song of the Open Road, 1

Walt Whitman

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

Appendix

Haiku

A traditional Japanese haiku is a three-line poem with seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Often focusing on images from nature, haiku emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression.

Haiku began in thirteenth-century Japan as the opening phrase of renga, an oral poem, generally 100 stanzas long, which was also composed syllabically. The much shorter haiku broke away from renga in the sixteenth-century, and was mastered a century later by Matsuo Basho, who wrote this classic haiku:

*An old pond!
A frog jumps in—
the sound of water.*

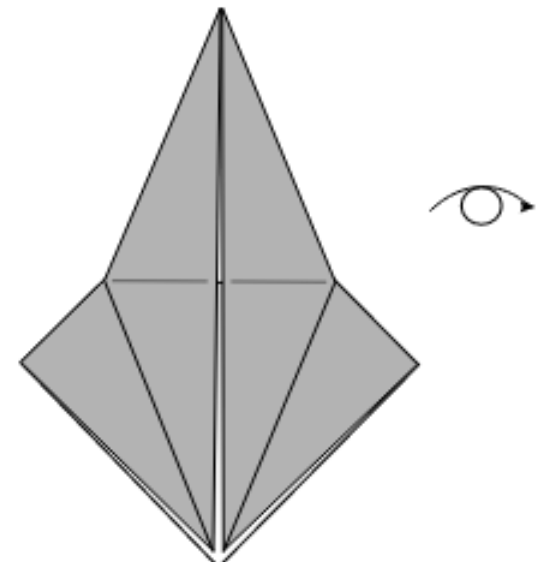
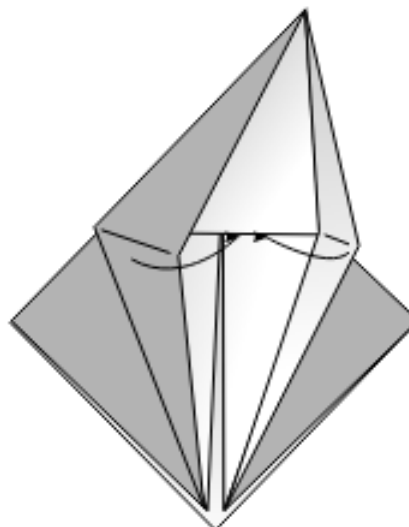
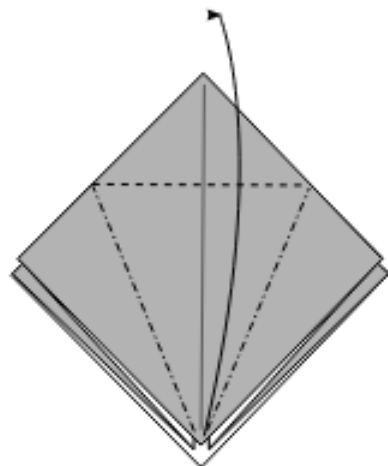
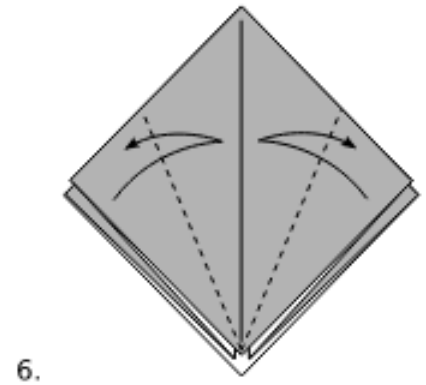
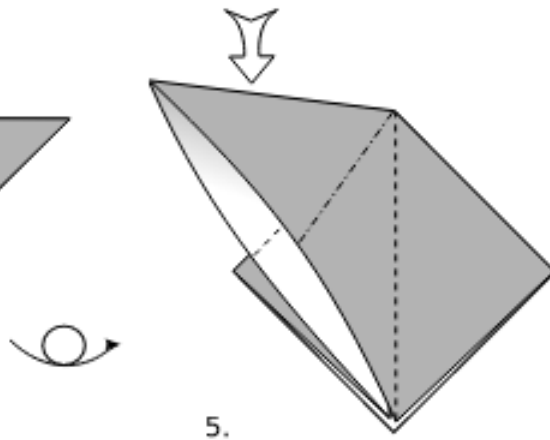
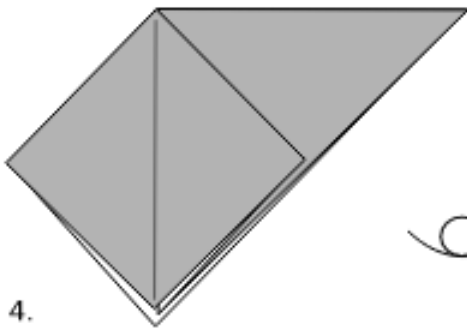
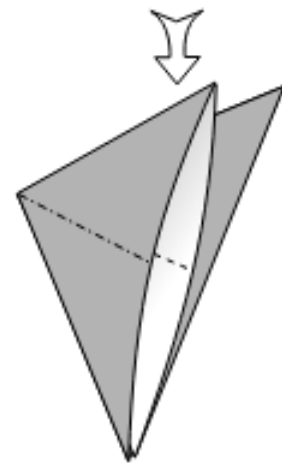
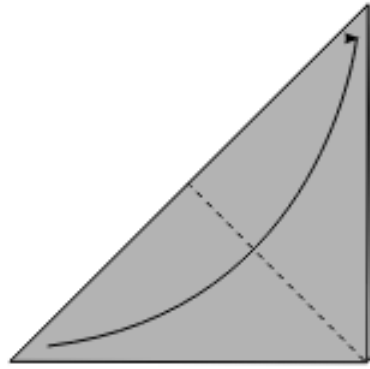
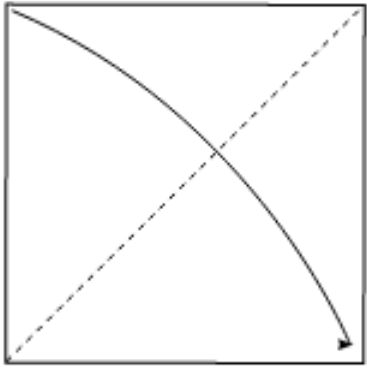
Haiku was traditionally written in the present tense and focused on associations between images. There was a pause at the end of the first or second line, and a “season word,” or kigo, specified the time of year.

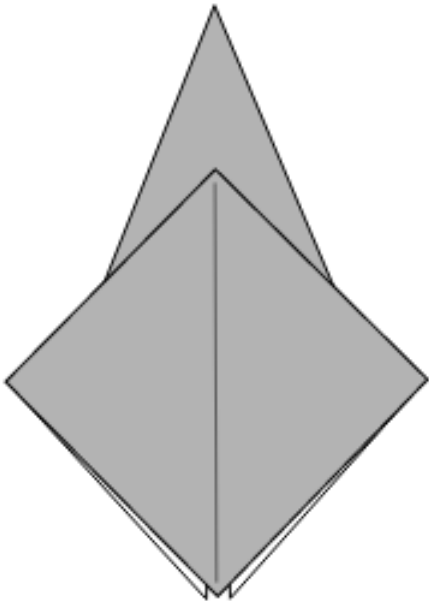
As the form has evolved, many of these rules—including the 5/7/5 practice—have been routinely broken. However, the philosophy of haiku has been preserved: the focus on a brief moment in time; a use of provocative, colorful images; an ability to be read in one breath; and a sense of sudden enlightenment and illumination.

To read more examples of poems written in the haiku form, visit www.poets.org/haiku.

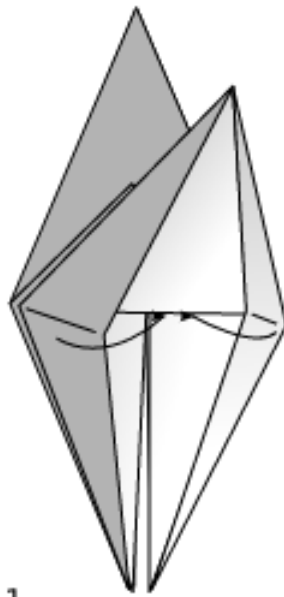
To read about other poetic forms, such as the acrostic, the cinquain, and the sonnet, visit www.poets.org.

How to Create a Folded Swan

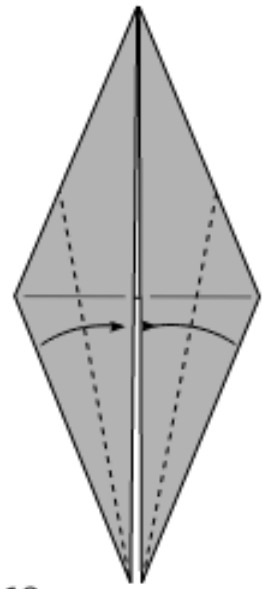




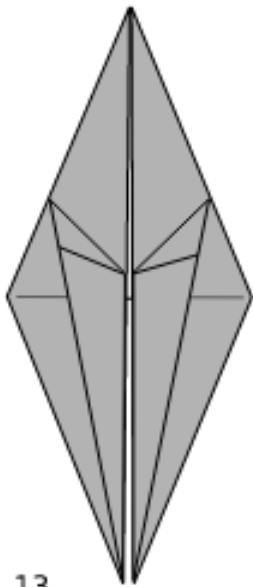
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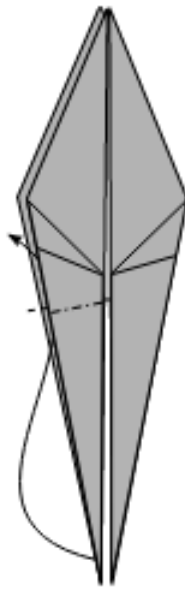
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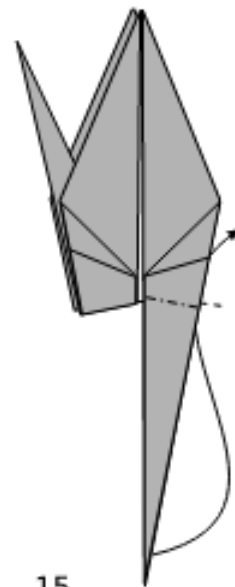
12.



13.



14.



15.



16.



17.



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Other Resources

Poem-a-Day

Poem-a-Day is the original and only daily digital poetry series featuring over 200 new, previously unpublished poems by today's talented poets each year. On weekdays, poems are accompanied by exclusive commentary by the poets. The series highlights classic poems on weekends. For more information, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem-day.

Teach This Poem

Produced for K-12 educators, Teach This Poem features one poem a week from our online poetry collection, accompanied by interdisciplinary resources and activities designed to help teachers quickly and easily bring poetry into the classroom. The series is curated by our Educator in Residence, Dr. Madeleine Fuchs Holzer, and is available for free via email. For more information, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/teach-poem.

Poetry Lesson Plans

The Academy of American Poets presents lesson plans, most of which align with Common Core State Standards, and all of which have been reviewed by our Educator in Residence with an eye toward developing skills of perception and imagination. We hope they will inspire the educators in our community to bring even more poems into your classrooms! For more information, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/lesson-plans.

National Poetry Month

National Poetry Month is the largest literary celebration in the world, with tens of millions of readers, students, K-12 teachers, librarians, booksellers, literary events curators, publishers, bloggers, and, of course, poets marking poetry's important place in our culture and our lives.

While we celebrate poets and poetry year-round, the Academy of American Poets was inspired by the successful celebrations of Black History Month (February) and Women's History Month (March), and founded National Poetry Month in April 1996 with an aim to:

- highlight the extraordinary legacy and ongoing achievement of American poets,
- encourage the reading of poems,
- assist teachers in bringing poetry into their classrooms,
- increase the attention paid to poetry by national and local media,
- encourage increased publication and distribution of poetry books, and
- encourage support for poets and poetry.

For more information, visit www.poets.org/npm.

The Academy of American Poets

The Academy of American Poets is the largest membership-based nonprofit organization fostering an appreciation for contemporary poetry and supporting American poets. For over three generations, the organization has connected millions of people to great poetry through programs such as National Poetry Month, the largest literary celebration in the world; Poets.org, one of the leading poetry sites online; American Poets, a biannual magazine; an annual series of poetry readings and special events; and its education programs.

The League of Canadian Poets

The League of Canadian Poets is the professional organization for established and emerging Canadian poets. Founded in 1966 to nurture the advancement of poetry in Canada, and the promotion of the interests of poets, it now comprises over 700 members. The League serves the poetry community and promotes a high level of professional achievement through events, networking, projects, publications, mentoring and awards. It administers programs and funds for governments and private donors and encourages an appreciative readership and audience for poetry through educational partnerships and presentations to diverse groups. As the recognized voice of Canadian poets, it represents their concerns to governments, publishers, and society at large, and maintains connections with similar organizations at home and abroad. The League strives to promote equal opportunities for poets from every literary tradition and cultural and demographic background.