

DEAR POET PROJECT 2021



- In class, we will get to know some of the poems listed below.**
 - Read the title and tag of all the poems and the prompts associated with them.
 - Choose the five (5) that catch your attention.
 - Watch the poet read their poem.
 - Complete the writing prompt.
 - Read the text of the poem.
 - Watch the “video lesson link” and hear an English teacher share their experience of the poem.
- Then, everyone will choose one (1) poem to read closely.** Re-read and -watch it several times. Make new discoveries and connections. Think critically and feel deeply.
- Finally, we will all write our poets a letter in response to their poem.**
 - Ask the poet questions. What do you want to know more about? What confused you?
 - Comment on their voice as a writer. What did you like?
 - Make text-to-self, -world, or -text connection. Tell a story about what the poem made you think of.
 - Make sure to include the following: your name, the name of the poet to whom you’ve written, your grade level, and your school and teacher’s name.
 - You can read letters from previous students [here](#) if you’re looking for inspiration.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find all the poems as videos recorded by the poets. Next to each video, you can also click on links to read the text of the poem, read other poems by the poet, and read more about the poet’s biography.

Poem (Link to text of poem)	Poet (Link to Poet)	Teacher	Personal Writing Prompt	Video Lesson Link
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	Reading)			
<p><u>"Wasteland: On the California Wildfires"</u></p> <p>tags: nature, climate change, rebirth</p>	<p><u>Forrest Gander</u></p>	<p>Stephanie Walquist (Oak Park, IL)</p>	<p>Humans have used nature for as long as we have been on the planet. We have used its forces and have learned how to enhance the power of nature--sometimes to a degree where we now make nature more powerful than ever. Have you experienced the power of nature? Was it a positive experience or was it an overwhelming, perhaps terrifying, experience? How did it make you think about your relationship to the natural world?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>OR</u></p> <p>This poem also has images that ask you to think about how everything is interconnected--large things are connected to small things and vice versa. What do you think about that idea? How do you see small things--events, actions--on an individual or local scale--as connected to bigger things on a national or global scale?</p>	<p><u>Video Slides</u></p>
<p><u>"Ship of Theseus"</u></p> <p>tags: change, loss, philosophy</p>	<p><u>Rodney Gomez</u></p>	<p>Lianna Bessette (Arlington, MA)</p>	<p>Rodney Gomez writes about the Ship of Theseus paradox, which explores how our identities shift over time, particularly after major life changes like parenthood and loss. How have you changed since childhood (or perhaps since the pandemic began), and how do you define yourself? How have you been "repurposed" over time?</p>	<p><u>Video Slides</u></p>
<p><u>"Poem Not to be Read at Your Wedding"</u></p> <p>tags: weddings, expectation vs reality, love, friendship</p>	<p><u>Beth Ann Fennelly</u></p>	<p>Jolene Heinemann (Chicago, IL)</p>	<p>Fennelly writes an occasion poem that she insists should not actually be read at the occasion (a loved one's wedding). She seems to suggest that reality can never live up to expectations (the perfect wedding, a bride at the top of a cake, the virgin Mary) and life is messy, AND THAT'S OKAY. Think of a special occasion (a wedding, a funeral, a birthday, a family dinner graduation, etc). Write a poem or letter or journal entry about that event that says something that probably should NOT actually be expressed at the event.</p>	<p><u>Video Slides</u></p>
<p><u>"What Schools Don't Teach Black Boys in America Today"</u></p> <p>tags:</p>	<p><u>John Warner Smith</u></p>	<p>Liz Farrow (Chicago, IL)</p>	<p>Whose voices are an inspiration to you? Who are some important voices (poets, artists, authors) that you think should be represented in schools today? What voices do you think are missing in your school curriculum?</p>	<p><u>Slides Video</u></p>
<p><u>"Wonder Woman"</u></p>	<p><u>Angelo Geter</u></p>	<p>Michelle Fountain</p>	<p>What makes a woman strong and how does she show that strength?</p>	<p><u>Slides</u></p>

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<p>tags: woman, mother, strength, BLM</p>		(Woodstock, VT)	Consider a strong woman in your life, it could be your mother or someone else. Write about what she does and how she inspires you.	Video
<p><u>"Year of the Murder Hornet"</u> tags: coronavirus, nature, daily life</p>	Tina Cane	Veronica Foster (Biddeford, ME)	Think about your experience of 2020, including the way that your life changed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Write about your experience, repeating "year of _____" at the beginning of each line, memory, or observation.	Video Slides
<p><u>"14 Love Songs"</u> tags: nature, love, appreciation</p>	Elizabeth Jacobson	Kurt Ostrow (Fall River, MA)	Have you ever been afraid of love? Think about relationships you've witnessed or relationships you've been in yourself. What parts of love — and how love makes us feel — can be scary?	Video Slides
<p><u>"It Doesn't Take Much"</u> tags: life, death, nature, hope, reflection</p>	Margaret Gibson	Molly Castner (Wexford, PA)	Gibson's poetry reveals how events that we see in nature reflect our own human experiences. These opportunities require us to reflect and consider difficult universal truths. Write about an experience you have had with nature that forced you to consider the connection between events in the natural world and the universal human experience.	Video Slides
<p><u>"If You Tell It Backward"</u> Tags: history, racism, segregation</p>	Porsha Olayiwola	Emma Pampanin (Boston, MA)	In this poem, Porsha Olayiwola describes U.S. racism through the history of a swimming pool. The poet looks at this space and sees the painful and racist history it contains, even in its modern form. How can space represent history? What spaces hold history - individual or global- for you?	Video Slides