

Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 27, 2017

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 across 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 or during the year!

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 choose 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 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 for your employees or coworkers to gather and share a meal, as well as their favorite poems by reading them 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 in this guide, 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 card 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

The Red Poppy by Louise Glück

Remember by Joy Harjo

Here and There by Juan Felipe Herrera

Cotton Candy by Edward Hirsch

The Weighing by Jane Hirshfield

The Moment by Marie Howe

Lyric by Khaled Mattawa

Variation on a Theme by W. S. Merwin

Burning the Old Year by Naomi Shihab Nye

The Dogs at Live Oak Beach, Santa Cruz by Alicia Ostriker

Springing by Marie Ponsot

When Giving Is All We Have by Alberto Ríos

The Owl by Arthur Sze

Eleventh Brother by Jean Valentine

Imaginary Morning Glory by C. D. Wright

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Red Poppy

Louise Glück

The great thing
is not having
a mind. Feelings:
oh, I have those; they
govern me. I have
a lord in heaven
called the sun, and open
for him, showing him
the fire of my own heart, fire
like his presence.
What could such glory be
if not a heart? Oh my brothers and sisters,
were you like me once, long ago,
before you were human? Did you
permit yourselves
to open once, who would never
open again? Because in truth
I am speaking now
the way you do. I speak
because I am shattered.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

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.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Here and There

Juan Felipe Herrera

I sit and meditate—my dog licks her paws
on the red-brown sofa
so many things somehow
it all is reduced to numbers letters figures
without faces or names only jagged lines
across the miles half-shadows
going into shadow-shadow then destruction the infinite light

here and there cannot be overcome
it is the first drop of ink

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Cotton Candy

Edward Hirsch

We walked on the bridge over the Chicago River
for what turned out to be the last time,
and I ate cotton candy, that sugary air,
that sweet blue light spun out of nothingness.
It was just a moment, really, nothing more,
but I remember marveling at the sturdy cables
of the bridge that held us up
and threading my fingers through the long
and slender fingers of my grandfather,
an old man from the Old World
who long ago disappeared into the nether regions.
And I remember that eight-year-old boy
who had tasted the sweetness of air,
which still clings to my mouth
and disappears when I breathe.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Weighing

Jane Hirshfield

The heart's reasons
seen clearly,
even the hardest
will carry
its whip-marks and sadness
and must be forgiven.

As the drought-starved
eland forgives
the drought-starved lion
who finally takes her,
enters willingly then
the life she cannot refuse,
and is lion, is fed,
and does not remember the other.

So few grains of happiness
measured against all the dark
and still the scales balance.

The world asks of us
only the strength we have and we give it.
Then it asks more, and we give it.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Moment

Marie Howe

Oh, the coming-out-of-nowhere moment

when, nothing

happens

no what-have-I-to-do-today list

maybe half a moment

the rush of traffic stops.

The whirl of I should be, I should be, I should be

slows to silence,

the white cotton curtains hanging still.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Lyric

Khaled Mattawa

Will answers be found
like seeds
planted among rows of song?

Will mouths recognize
the hunger
in their voices, all mouths in unison,

the ah in harmony, the way words
of hope are more
than truth when whispered?

Will we turn to each other and ask,
how long
has it been...how long since?

A world now, a world then
and each
is seeking a foothold, trying

to remember when we looked
at one another
and found—A world again—Surely

what we long for is at the wheel
contending.

Surely, we'll soon hear
its unearthly groan.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Variation on a Theme

W. S. Merwin

Thank you my life long afternoon
late in this spring that has no age
my window above the river
for the woman you led me to
when it was time at last the words
coming to me out of mid-air
that carried me through the clear day
and come even now to find me
for old friends and echoes of them
those mistakes only I could make
homesickness that guides the plovers
from somewhere they had loved before
they knew they loved it to somewhere
they had loved before they saw it
thank you good body hand and eye
and the places and moments known
only to me revisiting
once more complete just as they are
and the morning stars I have seen
and the dogs who are guiding me

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Burning the Old Year

Naomi Shihab Nye

Letters swallow themselves in seconds.
Notes friends tied to the doorknob,
transparent scarlet paper,
sizzle like moth wings,
marry the air.

So much of any year is flammable,
lists of vegetables, partial poems.
Orange swirling flame of days,
so little is a stone.

Where there was something and suddenly isn't,
an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space.
I begin again with the smallest numbers.

Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves,
only the things I didn't do
crackle after the blazing dies.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Dogs at Live Oak Beach, Santa Cruz

Alicia Ostriker

As if there could be a world
Of absolute innocence
In which we forget ourselves

The owners throw sticks
And half-bald tennis balls
Toward the surf
And the happy dogs leap after them
As if catapulted—

Black dogs, tan dogs,
Tubes of glorious muscle—

Pursuing pleasure
More than obedience
They race, skid to a halt in the wet sand,
Sometimes they'll plunge straight into
The foaming breakers

Like diving birds, letting the green turbulence
Toss them, until they snap and sink

Teeth into floating wood
Then bound back to their owners
Shining wet, with passionate speed
For nothing,
For absolutely nothing but joy.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Springing

Marie Ponsot

In a skiff on a sunrisen lake we are watchers.

Swimming aimlessly is luxury just as walking
loudly up a shallow stream is.

As we lean over the deep well, we whisper.

Friends at hearths are drawn to the one warm air;
strangers meet on beaches drawn to the one wet sea.

What wd it be to be water, one body of water
(what water is is another mystery) (We are
water divided.) It wd be a self without walls,
with surface tension, specific gravity a local
exchange between bedrock and cloud of falling and rising,
rising to fall, falling to rise.

(1962)

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

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.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Owl

Arthur Sze

The path was purple in the dusk.
I saw an owl, perched,
on a branch.

And when the owl stirred, a fine dust
fell from its wings. I was
silent then. And felt

the owl quaver. And at dawn, waking,
the path was green in the
May light.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Eleventh Brother

Jean Valentine

Rone arm still a swan's wing
The worst had happened before: love—before
I knew it was mine—
turned into a wild
swan and flew
across the rough water

Outsider seedword
until I die
I will be open to you as an egg
speechless red.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Imaginary Morning Glory

C. D. Wright

Whether or not the water was freezing. The body
would break its sheathe. Without layer on layer
of feather and air to insulate the loving belly.

A cloudy film surrounding the point of entry. If blue
were not blue how could love be love. But if the body
were made of rings. A loose halo would emerge
in the telluric light. If anyone were entrusted to verify
this rare occurrence. As the petal starts to
dwindle and curl unto itself. And only then. Love,
blue. Hallucinogenic blue, love.

Contributors' Notes

Louise Glück is the author of over a dozen books of poetry, including *Faithful and Virtuous Night* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), which won the 2014 National Book Award in Poetry. Her other honors include the Pulitzer Prize and the Lannan Literary Award for Poetry. In 1999, Glück was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and in the fall of 2003, she was appointed the twelfth U.S. Poet Laureate. She lives in Connecticut.

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. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Juan Felipe Herrera is the current U. S. Poet Laureate and also serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. 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.

Edward Hirsch is the author of several books of poetry, most recently *Gabriel: A Poem* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), which was nominated for the National Book Award, as well as the national bestseller *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry* (Harcourt, 1999). He was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2008, and he currently serves as the president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. He lives in New York City.

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 Hirshfield the Academy Fellowship for distinguished poetic achievement. Her other honors include the Poetry Center Book Award and numerous

fellowships. She currently serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and she lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Marie Howe's poetry collections include *The Kingdom of Ordinary Time* (W. W. Norton, 2008), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. 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 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.

Khaled Mattawa is the author of four poetry collections, including *Tocqueville* (New Issues, 2010), and he has also translated many volumes of contemporary Arabic poetry. He is the recipient of the 2010 Academy of American Poets Fellowship. Mattawa's other honors include the PEN American Center Poetry Translation Prize and numerous. He currently serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

W. S. Merwin is the author of many books of poetry, including *The Shadow of Sirius* (Copper Canyon Press, 2008), which won the Pulitzer Prize, and *Selected Translations* (Copper Canyon Press, 2013), which was awarded the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award from the Academy of American Poets. His other honors include the Lannan Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement and the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy of American Poets. He is a former Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and served as the U.S. Poet Laureate from 2010 to 2011. He lives in Hawaii.

Naomi Shihab Nye is the author of several poetry collections, including *Transfer* (BOA Editions, 2011), 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 *The Old Woman, the Tulip, and the Dog* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 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. She lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

Marie Ponsot is the author of several poetry collections, including *Easy* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2009) and *The Bird Catcher* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), which won the National Book Circle Award. Her honors include the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Prize and the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize. She was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2010, and she lives in New York City.

Arthur Sze is the author of nine books of poetry, most recently *Compass Rose* (Copper Canyon Press, 2014). 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 currently serves as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and he was the first poet laureate of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he lives.

Jean Valentine is the author of several poetry collections, including *Shirt in Heaven* (Copper Canyon Press, 2015). She is the recipient of the 2009 Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets. Her other honors include the National Book Award and the Shelley Memorial Prize from the Poetry Society of America. She lives in New York City.

C. D. Wright was the author of several poetry collections, including *ShallCross* (Copper Canyon Press, 2016) and *One With Others* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010), which received the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy of American Poets. Among her numerous honors are a Lannan Literary Award and a Whiting Award. Wright served as state poet of Rhode Island from 1994 to 1999, and in 2013, she was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She passed away in January, 2016.

Poems to Share by Contemporary Canadian Poets

To Pablo by George Elliott Clarke

If a Poem Could Walk by Lorna Crozier

Another Poem About My Father by Kayla Czaga

rich in horses by Marilyn Dumont

Five by Sue Goyette

The Road Ghazal by Sheniz Janmohamed

Mentor Moon by M. Travis Lane

There Goes the Neighbourhood by Alice Major

The Thousand-Year Egg by Bruce Meyer

Owed by George Murray

North of Cochin by Antony di Nardo

Paddling the Bus by Armand Garnet Ruffo

Before Is Also a Place: To the Eve River by Renée Sarojini Saklikar

*i would call this a love letter but i'm not wordsworth and there aren't enough flowers by
Zainab Syed*

Ode to a Barn by Daniel Scott Tysdal

Poem in Your Pocket Day

To Pablo

George Elliott Clarke

In school, I hated poetry—those skinny,
Malnourished poems that professors love;
The bad grammar and dirty words that catch
In the mouth like fishhooks, tear holes in speech.
Pablo, your words are rain I run through,
Grass I sleep in.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

If a Poem Could Walk

Lorna Crozier

It would have paws, not feet,
four of them to sink into the moss
when humans blunder up the path.

Or hooves, small ones,
leaving half-moons in the sand.
Something to make you stop
and wonder
what kind of animal this is,
where it came from, where it's going.

It draws nearest when you are most alone.
You lay red plums on your blanket,
a glass of cool cider, two sugar cubes,

knowing it is tame and wild—
the perfect animal—
knowing it will stop for nothing
as it walks
with its four new legs
right off the page.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Another Poem About My Father

Kayla Czaga

I don't *get* poetry either. Mostly I get cavities, ad mail. Once, I got eleven hundred dollars in small change from my father for Christmas. He said, *you've got to work for your money*—meaning you've got to haul it through six feet of snow to the bank, good luck, here's a bag. My father is more like a poem than most poems are. He once tucked a living loon into his coat and brought it home to amuse my mother who loves birds, especially surprised-sounding birds, especially owls. My nostalgia receptors zigzag wildly through me when I think of my father pushing his metal detector across all the parks, school yards, and riverbanks of this great nation, waving it back and forth—*like some sort of yaywho*, my mother would say—until it beeps solemnly above a nickel. With a butterknife he cuts such slender metaphors from the earth.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

rich in horses

Marilyn Dumont

we had snow horses and we had saw horses—both melted
we had stuffed horses and we had stick horses—they decayed
we had skid horses and we had mules—both became obsolete
we rode saddle horses and some of us rode broncs
there were horses in our eyes but more in our heads
we had stories and bet on horses, and sometimes they became one
we had many horses but never owned one
we had bold horses and we had silent ones
we had hunters, saddle and pack horses
we rode small, swift buffalo runners
and drove lumbering Belgian skid horses
we had many horses but never owned one
we rode horses and they raised us

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Five

Sue Goyette

The incline to our streets was first invented
as an easy way to feed the ocean tethered

to the end of them. We'd roll down bottles
of caught breath of our gifted sermons.

We'd drag skeins of dreams talk. Little hoofed
arguments. The ocean was a beast left in our care

and it was in our best interest to keep it fed.
This is how we thought back then. For awhile

it was renamed Dragon and men would spear its sides
and endure its wrath to get to the swimming jewels

beneath it. We often ate those jewels,
cooking their slender bodies over our fires.

Back then, we didn't know a great deal
about dragons and how, when provoked,

they'd stand and flap their gigantic wings.
This is how we first learned of storms. The fish

in our cooking pots would swim hard then,
the lash of their home coming down for them

through our roofs.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Road Ghazal

Sheniz Janmohamed

Pack light, walk tall. You'll need courage to take this road.
The maple bows to you, scattering her leaves upon this road.

A flap of cardinal feathers, the night-dipped wing of a raven!
Turn your head, there's more to see than the end of this road.

Have you dropped enough crumbs to trace your heart back home?
Home is in every step you take, home is every rock on this road.

When you arrive, reach into your pocket and pull out that rock.
Leave it behind— someone else will find home on this road.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Mentor Moon

M. Travis Lane

The moon has gone over the hill and now
still lustres faintly in the trees
before she sinks in cloud banks, marsh,
the flattened sea, the pale shine of the beach
which, with no moon at all, is white.

It seems
a chalkboard in a school
on which the flung-up drift-weed
scrawls letters not one of us could read,
twined, twinned with logs and dory rope.

The soft foam nuzzles at my feet.
The night air's cold. No birds
wheel out about there in the sky.
Now all of us (our mentor, moon)
withdraw, go under covers, go to bed.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

There Goes the Neighborhood

Alice Major

Magpie as neighbour. You've moved in,
hold your raucous parties, shout at the kids,
fix up your house—a slipshod, DIY
endeavour that always seems half-done. Twigs
strewn all around the yard.

We complain that you've forced out
the elegant kingbird couple
and that lovely warbler family who used
to ornament the neighbourhood,

forgetting it wasn't you
who moved in first, altered the architecture
of poplar, hazelnut and reed-rimmed slough,
wild rose, stonecrop, berry bush.

We ignore the fact
that you're the only ones prepared to cope with us—
to live off garbage bins out back,
plant your nests where predatory cars
go prowling by, and square up to the cat.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Thousand-Year Egg

Bruce Meyer

What is buried may eventually rise:
the delicious life, lost treasures with black shells,
amber whites and pungent cheese-like yolks,

living proof that a sleeping beauty
lives after having slept so long.
The emperors of ancient China

believed in everlasting life,
that if buried with their household cast
would rise and restart their reigns on cue.

In a dream of a winter morning a thousand years away,
my daughter wakes with half the day
consumed by teenage sleep.

She has probably grown in the night—
taller and more beautiful than yesterday,
and with her disshevelled hair,

red and radiant in the midday sun,
she passes before our kitchen window
translucent as amber when light shines through.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Owed

George Murray

My debts are my blessings, so I stay home
to count what I haven't, and add no more.

The pots above the stove hang and ring
their slight touches as I enter the room.

Here are the facts of you alone, they sing.

The kitchen table is an accountant's desk.
Sit down without a plate, it says, among

the strewn toys and echoed noise of small wrecks.
Calculate not what's owed and owned,

but what's outstanding, and who that's for.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

North of Cochin

Antony di Nardo

Ferry the locals from Kottayam to the church on Sunday.
Fetch the elephants.
Take the bus ride to Kumali,
come to the southwest corner
and the tea plantations, seven degrees south, overlooking
the ocean's scrim.

Mussels on request, unlimited rations of supplicants and sand.
\$45 a day for two.
Albino dolphins and leopard-skin patches pad the beach.
All hats are cool.

Now you can forget how you got here.

Negotiate the sunset.

Nets in waiting above the sea.

Go to Giddyfly.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Paddling the Bus

Armand Garnet Ruffo

Voyageurs all of us. Riding the day
long shimmer of waves
reflecting window storefronts.
Circuitous routes
catching us in their current.
Shooting the Rideau Street rapids.
Funneled along MacKenzie King.
Dashing to a swift stop at Lincoln Fields,
Pinecrest or Bayshore eddy.
Voyageurs all of us, pulling together,
soon to lay our paddles down,
weary and destined
for dinner.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Before Is Also a Place: To the Eve River

Renée Sarojini Saklikar

That summer we hiked past the rip-rapped roads
 stayed high up on trails,
 logged to the water line,
 covered in young hemlock,
 red alder.

—That's how you find the river

—Line by line, the alder or follow the trail
 To young Douglas Firs, tree farmed,
close to power lines, radio towers visible,
western Hemlocks, also planted.

coastal streams built over, where coho once, pink once, chinook,
chum, salmon, steelhead—

Once upon a time, we were together.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

*i would call this a love
letter but i'm not
wordsworth and there
aren't enough flowers*

Zainab Syed

dearest,
every time I say "hello"
my words claw at my lips
biting into the sides of my cheeks
because what I wanted to say was
there are cobwebs in my wrists
my mouth tastes like stale rose petals
I have been trying to bloom in winter sunlight
but instead I prise my teeth apart once more
to ask how you've been
and make crescent moons in my palms
swallow the love letters in my throat
somebody told me that a part of me was once a supernova exploding
and I wonder if my skin reaching for yours is just a star
piecing itself together.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Ode to a Barn

Daniel Scott Tysdal

The first memory I recall
is watching this barn rise
into a sky where nothing stood,
the nothing there said, "Bye."

What if endless fires raged
and swept the barns away?
Where would we keep our tools and toil?
Where would the critters stray?

The first memory I recall
is of our dog chasing a fox.
My father raised his rifle, aimed.
Guess which one he shot.

Contributors' Notes

Africadian (African-Nova Scotian) poet George Elliott Clarke is the Poet Laureate of Canada (2016–2017) and was the Poet Laureate of Toronto (2012–2015). The author of 14 poetry “projects,” Clarke is also revered as an opera librettist, novelist, and playwright. His latest verse work is *Extra Illicit Sonnets* (Exile Editions, 2015), a set of amatory lyrics.

Lorna Crozier’s latest books, both published in 2015, are *The Wrong Cat* (McClelland & Stewart) and *The Wild in You* (Greystone Books), a collaboration with photographer Ian McAllister. She’s an Officer of the Order of Canada and the recipient of the Governor General’s Award and five honorary doctorates for her contributions to Canadian literature.

Kayla Czaga grew up in Kitimat and now lives in Vancouver, BC, where she recently earned her MFA in Creative Writing at UBC. Her poetry, nonfiction and fiction has been published in *The Walrus*, *Best Canadian Poetry 2013*, *Room Magazine*, *Event* and *The Antigonish Review*, among others. *For Your Safety Please Hold On* (Nightwood, 2015) is her first book.

Marilyn Dumont’s poetry has won provincial and national awards. She has been the Writer-in-Residence at five Canadian universities and the Edmonton Public Library as well as faculty in Literary Arts and advisor in the Aboriginal Emerging Writers Program at the Banff Centre in Alberta. She freelances for a living.

Sue Goyette lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and has published five books of poems and a novel. Her collection *Ocean* (Gaspereau Press, 2013) was short-listed for the 2014 Griffin Poetry Prize and won the 2016 Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts Award. Her latest collection is *The Brief Reincarnation of a Girl* (Gaspereau Press, 2015).

Sheniz Janmohamed is an author, artist educator, and spoken-word artist. She is the author of two collections of poetry: *Bleeding Light* (Mawenzi House, 2010) and *Firesmoke* (Mawenzi House, 2014). Sheniz facilitates creative writing workshops for writers of all ages and is a Mentor-Artist at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto.

M. Travis Lane has published sixteen collections of poetry. The 2015 collection *Crossover* (Cormorant Books, 2015) was short listed for the Governor General's Award. A book about her poetry, "*How Thought Feels*": *The Poetry of M. Travis Lane* (Frog Hollow Press) came out in 2015, and two more collections will be published in 2016 or 2017: *The Complete Long Poems of M. Travis Lane* and *Heart on Fist, Selected Prose of M. Travis Lane*.

Alice Major has published 10 books of poetry. She lives in the western Canadian city of Edmonton, where she served as the city's first poet laureate. She is very interested in science as well as poetry, and often combines the two in her writing.

Bruce Meyer is author of 47 books of poetry, short fiction, and nonfiction. His most recent books are *The Madness of Planets* (Black Moss Press, 2016), *The Arrow of Time* (Ronsdale Press, 2015), and *The Seasons* (Porcupine's Quill, 2014). He lives in Barrie, Ontario.

George Murray is the author of six books of poetry, one bestselling book of aphorisms, and a book for children. His work appears widely in journals and magazines in Canada, the United States, the UK, and Australia. He lives in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Antony Di Nardo is the author of three collections of poetry, most recently *Roaming Charges* (Brick Books, 2015). His work appears in journals across Canada and internationally. After teaching in Beirut for several years, he has returned to his home in Sutton, Quebec.

Armand Garnet Ruffo draws on his Ojibway heritage for his work. His writing includes *Introduction to Indigenous Literary Criticism in Canada* (Broadview Press, 2015), *The Thunderbird Poems* (Harbour, 2015), and *Norval Morrisseau: Man Changing Into Thunderbird* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2014), nominated for the Governor General's Literary Award. He teaches at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Renée Sarojini Saklikar writes *thecanadaproject*, widely published in journals, anthologies and chapbooks. The first completed book from *thecanadaproject* is *children of air india, un/authorized exhibits and interjections* (Nightwood Editions, 2013), winner of the 2014 Canadian Authors Association Award for poetry. Renée is currently a mentor and instructor for Simon Fraser University and cofounder of the poetry reading series Lunch Poems at SFU. With Wayde Compton, Renée coedited *The Revolving City: 51 Poems and the Stories Behind Them* (Anvil

Press, 2015). Renée was recently appointed poet laureate for the City of Surrey. She collects poems about bees.

Zainab Syed is a queer feminist who spends most of her time reading E. E. Cummings and the Communist Manifesto and, trying (unsuccessfully) to befriend her cat. She lives in Toronto and can be found in parks taking pictures of squirrels.

Daniel Scott Tysdal is the ReLit Award winning author of three books of poetry, most recently *Fauxccasional Poems* (icehouse poetry, 2015), and the poetry textbook *The Writing Moment: A Practical Guide to Creating Poems* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Poems to Share from the Public Domain

Spellbound *by Emily Brontë*

Oread *by H. D.*

Wild Nights—Wild Nights! *by Emily Dickinson*

Holy Sonnet 14 *by John Donne*

Summer in the South *by Paul Laurence Dunbar*

Design *by Robert Frost*

Bright Star *by John Keats*

The Tropics of New York *by Claude McKay*

Afternoon on a Hill *by Edna St. Vincent Millay*

Anthem for Doomed Youth *by Wilfred Owen*

Sonnet 18 *by William Shakespeare*

Storm Ending *by Jean Toomer*

Song of Myself, I *by Walt Whitman*

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal *by William Wordsworth*

The Lake Isle of Innisfree *by W. B. Yeats*

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

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Spellbound

Emily Brontë

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Oread

H. D.

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

national
poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!

Emily Dickinson

Wild Nights — Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile — the winds —
To a heart in port —
Done with the compass —
Done with the chart!

Rowing in Eden —
Ah, the sea!
Might I moor — Tonight —
In thee!

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Holy Sonnet 14

John Donne

Batter my heart, three-personed God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end.
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Summer in the South

Paul Laurence Dunbar

The oriole sings in the greening grove
As if he were half-way waiting,
The rosebuds peep from their hoods of green,
Timid and hesitating.

The rain comes down in a torrent sweep
And the nights smell warm and piney,
The garden thrives, but the tender shoots
Are yellow-green and tiny.

Then a flash of sun on a waiting hill,
Streams laugh that erst were quiet,
The sky smiles down with a dazzling blue
And the woods run mad with riot.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Design

Robert Frost

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth—
Assorted characters of death and blight
Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
Like the ingredients of a witches' broth—
A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,
The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
What brought the kindred spider to that height,
Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
What but design of darkness to appall?—
If design govern in a thing so small.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Bright Star

John Keats

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

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

Afternoon on a Hill

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.
What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

national **poetry month**

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Sonnet 18

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

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 Myself, I

Walt Whitman

I Celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil,
 this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and
 their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never
 forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

national
poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

*A Slumber Did My
Spirit Seal*

William Wordsworth

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

national poetry month

Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

W. B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

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.*

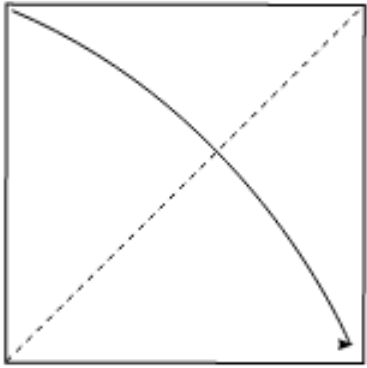
Haiku was traditionally written in the present tense and focused on associations between images. There was a pause at the end of the first or second line, and a “season word,” or kigo, specified the time of year.

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.

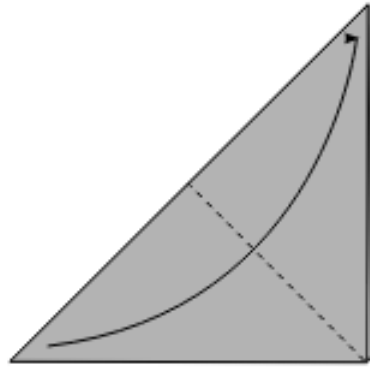
To read more examples of poems written in the haiku form, visit www.poets.org/haiku.

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

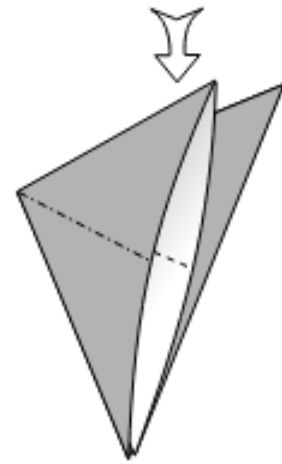
How to Create a Folded Swan



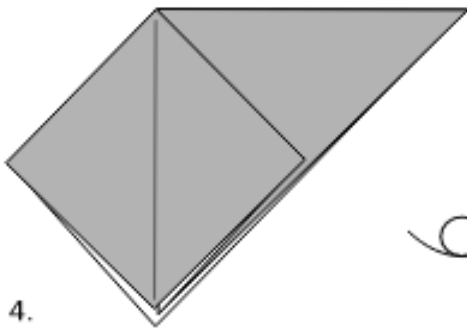
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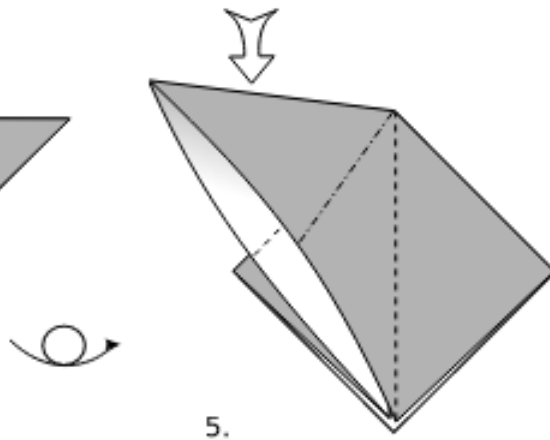
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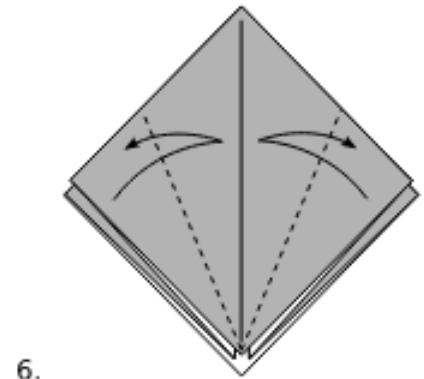
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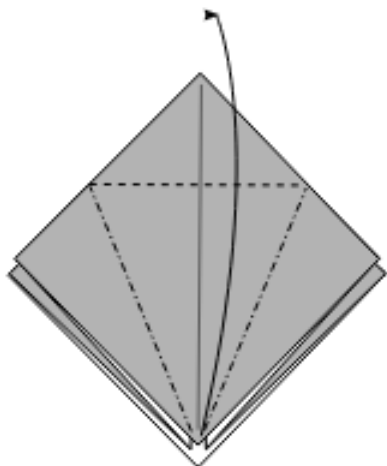
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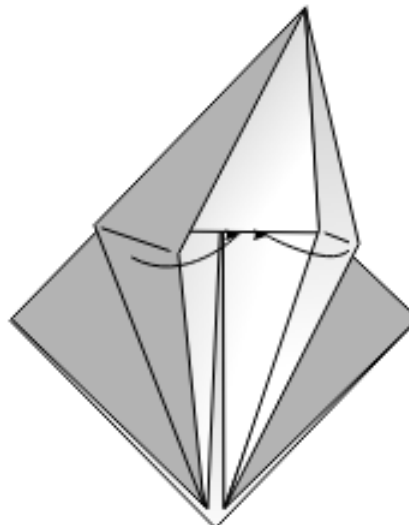
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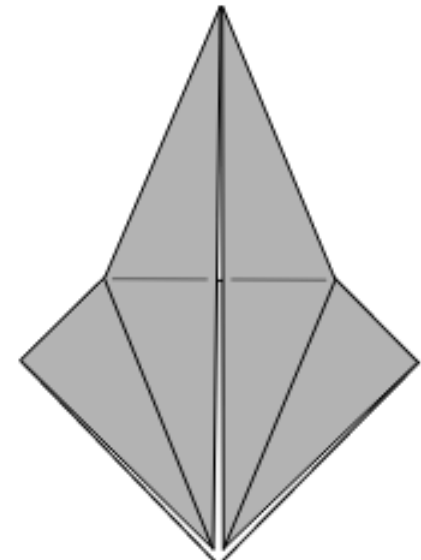
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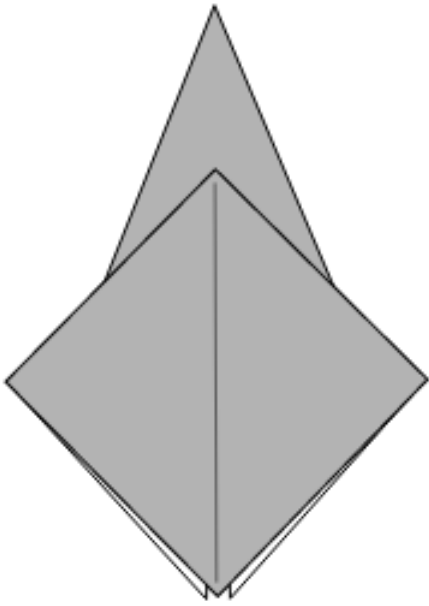
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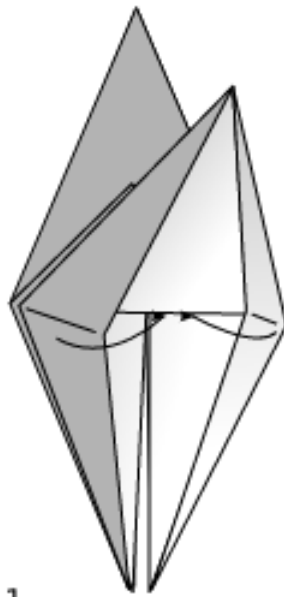
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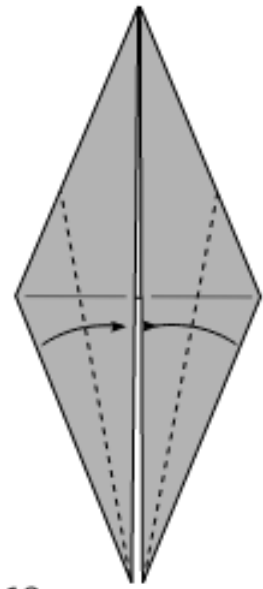
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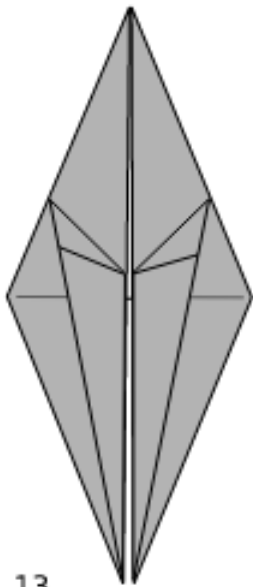
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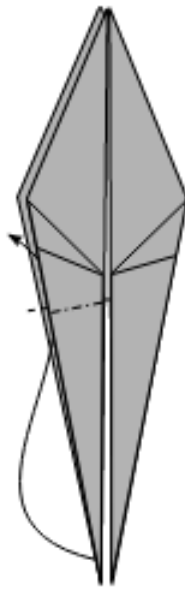
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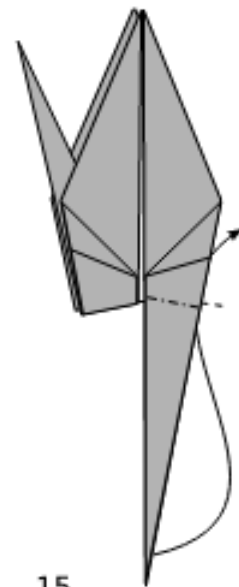
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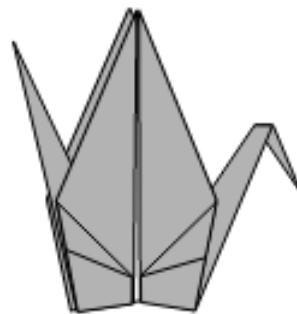
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Other Resources

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. Launched in 2006, Poem-a-Day is now distributed via email, web, and social media to 350,000+ readers free of charge and is available for syndication. For more information, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem-day.

Teach This Poem

Inspired by the success of our popular syndicated series Poem-a-Day, we're pleased to announce the launch of 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.

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National Association for Poetry Therapy

