

Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 29, 2022

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 virtually or in-person 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 virtual 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

- 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.
- 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/poem-a-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.

Online

- Post poems, links to poems, or photos of poems on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter using the hashtag #PocketPoem.
- Record a video of yourself reading a poem, then share it on your favorite social media platform.
- Schedule a video chat and read a poem to your loved ones.

Poems to Share by American Poets

O Small Sad Ecstasy of Love by Anne Carson

i love you to the moon & by Chen Chen

Purple by Kwame Dawes

How by Heid E. Erdrich

The Conversation by Forrest Gander

In the Company of Women by January Gill O'Neil

[The whale already] by Kimiko Hahn

This Morning I Pray for My Enemies by Joy Harjo

The Gate by Marie Howe

Instructions on Not Giving Up by Ada Limón

The Weight of Sweetness by Li-Young Lee

Before I Was a Gazan by Naomi Shihab Nye

In the High Country by David St. John

Blue Impala by Laura Tohe

This Body II by Renée Watson

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

O Small Sad Ecstasy of Love

Anne Carson

I like being with you all night with closed eyes.
What luck—here you are
coming
along the stars!
I did a road trip
all over my mind and heart
and
there you were
kneeling by the roadside
with your little toolkit
fixing something.

Give me a world, you have taken the world I was.

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i love you to the moon &

Chen Chen

not back, let's not come back, let's go by the speed of
queer zest & stay up
there & get ourselves a little
moon cottage (so pretty), then start a moon garden

with lots of moon veggies (so healthy), i mean
i was already moonlighting
as an online moonologist
most weekends, so this is the immensely

logical next step, are you
packing your bags yet, don't forget your
sailor moon jean jacket, let's wear
our sailor moon jean jackets while twirling in that lighter,

queerer moon gravity, let's love each other
(so good) on the moon, let's love
the moon
on the moon

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Purple

Kwame Dawes

for Akura

Walking, I drew my hand over the lumpy
bloom of a spray of purple; I stripped away
my fingers, stained purple; put it to my nose,

the minty honey, a perfume so aggressively
pleasant—I gave it to you to smell,
my daughter, and you pulled away as if

I was giving you a palm full of wasps,
deceptions: “Smell the way the air
changes because of purple and green.”

This is the promise I make to you:
I will never give you a fist full of wasps,
just the surprise of purple and the scent of rain.

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How

Heid E. Erdrich

Loves How I love you How you How we hang on words How eaten with need How we need to eat How weevils sift the wheat How cold it is How thick with hoarfrost ice slick sleet freeze How wintry the mix How full of angst How gut sick How blue lipped How we drink How we drink a health How we care How easy over as eggs How it all slides How absurd How yet tender we all How wrapped in a thick coat How battered How slender the flesh How we wrap ourselves How many selves we all How I miss you many How I see you How your eyes warm mine How tiny am I inside How enormous my need How you open an old-fashioned satchel How deep it yawns How bleak this need How like winter How it yet catches the light How brilliant the sundogs parhelion moon dogs paraselene phenomenon optic How fetching your spectacles How my thumbs might fit alongside the slope of your nose How my own glasses slide down my thin bridge How ridiculous the theory of the bridge How inane the babble babble How we grew to be friends How we grew thumbs How opposable we all How we grew sparks How we blew up a fire How angry How incensed How we resist How we bead up drops How water will not run How we distract How loud the dog snores How loudly How noisy the snow grows How many degrees below How we fret How again How we all came here How did we come How did we How loves How did we come to this

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The Conversation

Forrest Gander

All the while he talks to
the boy, their son, on the phone,
she is interrupting, telling him something
to say, not to say, indicating
that she needs to talk to the boy
herself. Rather than dampening
her enthusiasm or trying
to listen to both at once, finally
he hands her the phone. And rather
than resentment, what he feels
inside himself is the primordial
upwelling of tenderness.

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In the Company of Women

January Gill O'Neil

Make me laugh over coffee,
make it a double, make it frothy
so it seethes in our delight.
Make my cup overflow
with your small happiness.
I want to hoot and snort and cackle and chuckle.
Let your laughter fill me like a bell.
Let me listen to your ringing and singing
as Billie Holiday croons above our heads.
Sorry, the blues are nowhere to be found.
Not tonight. Not here.
No makeup. No tears.
Only contours. Only curves.
Each sip takes back a pound,
each dry-roasted swirl takes our soul.
Can I have a refill, just one more?
Let the bitterness sink to the bottom of our lives.
Let us take this joy to go.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

[*The whale already*]

Kimiko Hahn

a golden shovel

The whale already taken got away: the moon alone

—Yosa Buson, translated by Hiroaki Sato

What is endangered, the
rest of us ignore. The whale,
loved by children and cartoonists, already
dwindles. Bycatch has taken
them. The tiny creatures they consume haven't got
a chance to outlast the warming. A way
to safeguard whales is to deny ourselves the
discs and car exhaust. The moon
sees us at all cost alone.

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This Morning I Pray for My Enemies

Joy Harjo

And whom do I call my enemy?
An enemy must be worthy of engagement.
I turn in the direction of the sun and keep walking.
It's the heart that asks the question, not my furious mind.
The heart is the smaller cousin of the sun.
It sees and knows everything.
It hears the gnashing even as it hears the blessing.
The door to the mind should only open from the heart.
An enemy who gets in, risks the danger of becoming a friend.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Gate

Marie Howe

I had no idea that the gate I would step through
to finally enter this world

would be the space my brother's body made. He was
a little taller than me: a young man

but grown, himself by then,
done at twenty-eight, having folded every sheet,

rinsed every glass he would ever rinse under the cold
and running water.

This is what you have been waiting for, he used to say to me. And
I'd say, What?

And he'd say, This—holding up my cheese and mustard sandwich.
And I'd say, What?

And he'd say, This, sort of looking around.

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The Weight of Sweetness

Li-Young Lee

No easy thing to bear, the weight of sweetness.

Song, wisdom, sadness, joy: sweetness
equals three of any of these gravities.

See a peach bend
the branch and strain the stem until
it snaps.
Hold the peach, try the weight, sweetness
and death so round and snug
in your palm.
And, so, there is
the weight of memory:

Windblown, a rain-soaked
bough shakes, showering
the man and the boy.
They shiver in delight,
and the father lifts from his son's cheek
one green leaf
fallen like a kiss.

The good boy hugs a bag of peaches
his father has entrusted
to him.
Now he follows
his father, who carries a bagful in each arm.
See the look on the boy's face
as his father moves
faster and farther ahead, while his own steps
flag, and his arms grow weak, as he labors
under the weight
of peaches

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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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Before I Was a Gazan

Naomi Shihab Nye

I was a boy
and my homework was missing,
paper with numbers on it,
stacked and lined,
I was looking for my piece of paper,
proud of this plus that, then multiplied,
not remembering if I had left it
on the table after showing to my uncle
or the shelf after combing my hair
but it was still somewhere
and I was going to find it and turn it in,
make my teacher happy,
make her say my name to the whole class,
before everything got subtracted
in a minute
even my uncle
even my teacher
even the best math student and his baby sister
who couldn't talk yet.
And now I would do anything
for a problem I could solve.

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In the High Country

David St. John

Some days I am happy to be no one
The shifting grasses

In the May winds are miraculous enough
As they ripple through the meadow of lupine

The field as iridescent as a Renaissance heaven
& do you see that boy with his arms raised

Like one of Raphael's angels held within
This hush & this pause & the sky's lapis expanse?

That boy is my son & I am his only father
Even when I am no one

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Blue Impala

Laura Tohe

That time I stole a blue Impala in Flagstaff

the first year they made those automatic windows, you know?

I was sixteen and I was cruising down the highway

Hot on the trail to Albuquerque

I was hungry

and I was howling, man.

It was like stealing the best horse in the herd.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

This Body II

Renée Watson

My body is
perfect and
imperfect and
Black and
girl and
big and
thick hair and
short legs and
scraped knee and
healed scar and
heart beating and
hands that hold and
voice that bellows and
feet that dance and
arms that embrace and
my momma's eyes and
my daddy's smile and
my grandma's hope and

my body is masterpiece and
my body is mine.

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Contributors' Notes

Anne Carson is the author of many books of poetry and translation, including *The Beauty of the Husband: A Fictional Essay in 29 Tangos* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), winner of the T.S. Eliot Prize for Poetry; *Autobiography of Red* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); and *Short Talks* (Brick Books, 1992). Her awards and honors include the Lannan Literary Award, the Pushcart Prize, the Griffin Poetry Prize, a Guggenheim fellowship, and the MacArthur Fellowship. She currently teaches in New York University's creative writing program.

Chen Chen received a PhD from Texas Tech University. He is the author of *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities* (BOA Editions, 2017), which won the A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize and was long-listed for the National Book Award. The recipient of a 2022 United States Artists fellowship and 2019 Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, he is the Jacob Ziskind Visiting Poet-in-Residence at Brandeis University and lives in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Kwame Dawes is the author of *Progeny of Air* (Peepal Tree Press), which received the Forward Poetry Prize for Best First Collection. He is also the author of *Nebraska* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019), *City of Bones: A Testament* (Northwestern University Press, 2017), and *Duppy Conqueror: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 2013), among many others, as well as several works of fiction and non-fiction. Dawes was born in Ghana and raised in Kingston, Jamaica. He is the founding director of the African Poetry Book Fund and co-founder and programming director of the Calabash International Literary Festival. He is currently the Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner* at the University of Nebraska, where he is Chancellor's Professor of English.

Heid E. Erdrich is the author of numerous collections, including *Little Big Bully* (PenguinEditions, 2020), *Verb Animate* (Tinderbox Editions, 2020), and more. She is also the editor of *New Poets of Native Nations* (Graywolf Press, 2018) and coeditor of *Sister Nations: Native American Women Writers on Community* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002). She grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is Ojibwe enrolled at Turtle Mountain. Erdrich directs Wiigwaas Press, an Ojibwe language publisher. She teaches in the low-residency MFA Creative Writing Program of Augsburg University and is the 2019 Distinguished Visiting Professor in Liberal Arts at University of Minnesota Morris.

Forrest Gander is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Twice Alive* (New Directions, 2021) and *Be With* (New Directions, 2018), winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. The collection was also long-listed for the 2018 National Book Award in Poetry. He is the editor of *Mouth to Mouth: 12 Contemporary Mexican Women Poets* (Milkweed Editions, 1993), a bilingual anthology of contemporary Mexican poets, and the translator of *Then Come Back: The Lost Neruda Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 2016) among others. He holds degrees in both geology and literature. Gander is professor of English and comparative literature at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and lives in Rhode Island.

January Gill O'Neil is the author of *Rewilding* (CavanKerry Press, 2018), recognized by Mass Center for the Book as a notable poetry collection for 2018; *Misery Islands* (CavanKerry Press, 2014), winner of a 2015 Paterson Award for Literary Excellence; and *Underlife* (CavanKerry Press, 2009). The recipient of fellowships from Cave Canem and the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, O'Neil was awarded a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant. She is an associate professor of English at Salem State University and lives in Beverly, Massachusetts.

Kimiko Hahn is the author of numerous collections of poetry, including *Foreign Bodies* (W. W. Norton, 2020) and *The Unbearable Heart* (1995), which received an American Book Award. She frequently draws on, and even reinvents, classic forms and techniques used by women writers in Japan and China, including the *zuihitsu*, or pillow book, and *nu shu*, a nearly extinct script Chinese women used to correspond with one another. Hahn is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, among others. She is a Distinguished Professor in the English department at Queens College/CUNY and lives in New York.

Joy Harjo is the current poet laureate of the United States. Her 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.

Marie Howe is the author of *Magdalene* (W. W. Norton, 2017), which was long-listed for the National Book Award; *The Kingdom of Ordinary Time* (W. W. Norton, 2009), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; *What the Living Do* (W. W. Norton, 1998); and *The Good Thief* (Persea Books, 1988). *What the Living Do* is an elegy for her brother, John, who died of AIDS in 1989. In 1995, she co edited the anthology *In the Company of My Solitude: American Writing from the AIDS Pandemic* (Persea, 1995). Currently she teaches at New York University and Sarah Lawrence College. She lives in New York City with her daughter.

Li-Young Lee is the author of *The Undressing* (W. W. Norton, 2018); *Behind My Eyes* (W. W. Norton, 2008); *Book of My Nights* (BOA Editions, 2001), which won the 2002 William Carlos Williams Award; *The City in Which I Love You* (BOA Editions, 1990), which was the 1990 Lamont Poetry Selection; and *Rose* (BOA Editions, 1986), which won the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Poetry Award. His awards include a Lannan Literary Award, a Whiting Writer's Award, the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Award, the I. B. Lavan Award, three Pushcart Prizes, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship. He lives in Chicago, Illinois.

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.

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.

David St. John's many books of poetry include *Study for the World's Body: New and Selected Poems* (1994), which was nominated for the National Book Award. St. John is the recipient of many honors and awards, including National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 2016 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and currently teaches in the PhD Program in Creative Writing and Literature and is the Chair of English at the University of Southern California. He lives in Venice Beach, California.

Laura Tohe is the author of *Tseyí / Deep in the Rock* (University of Arizona Press, 2005), which received the Arizona Book Association's Glyph Award for Best Poetry and Best Book; *No Parole Today* (West End Press, 1999), which was named Poetry Book of the Year by the Wordcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers; and *Making Friends with Water* (Nosila Press, 1986); among others. Tohe is Sleepy-Rock People clan and born for the Bitter Water People clan. A Poets Laureate fellow of the Academy of American Poets, she is the current poet laureate of the Navajo Nation.

Renée Watson is the author of *Piecing Me Together* (Bloomsbury, 2017), which received a Coretta Scott King Award and Newbery Honor, and *Harlem's Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills* (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2012), which received an NAACP Image Award nomination in children's literature. Watson founded I, Too Arts Collective, a nonprofit that was housed in the home of Langston Hughes. She lives in New York.

Poems to Share by Canadian Poets

2020 by Ashley-Elizabeth Best

Strange Scattered Year by Frances Boyle

Sometimes by Rae Crossman

At Dusk as Desire by Dagne Forrest

Vanishing Point by Marlene Grand Ma tre

The Why of It by Louisa Howerow

For your head by Maureen Hynes

Famine's Feast by Keith Inman

Spider by Laboni Islam

Seaweed Soup and a Happy Birthday by Mark Kim

Pavane for a Dead Letter by Marion Lougheed

Small Warblers by Annick MacAskill

Untitled by Harry Posner

Skin by Eleonore Sch nmaier

Hafez by B noo an

Ashley-Elizabeth Best

We started the new year by keeping our eyes open.
I tape poems to entry ways, the space above my bed,
around the couch and dinner table
talismans against the kind of people we were afraid

to become. The year miscarried its first few months
and then, throb of spring, butterflies land in the snouts
of flowers.

We hike Frontenac Provincial Park so long and hard,
my toenail peels off at the end. Bugs huff at our
necks, a frenzy of garter snakes mating in cool spaces
between granite outcroppings.

A group of Tiger Lilies at the trail head; we prayed
for stars to fall and they've taken up in ditches.
From the point of empty
and we begin to fill.

Strange Scattered Year

Frances Boyle

I cobble together some shape like stars,
gas cloud of spangles, sensory noise
a beautiful typeface of serifed
angels and italicized galaxies. That year

declines to cohere. I'm out of practice
even at reaching for the right shelf
to take down fragments rattling
in their sealer jar. Bright ring

and clamouring disk with its ovoid dance
on tabletop or dark drift of space.
Dust of that year toxic to breathe, I need
particulate mask to filter it from my mouth

and nose. That year, melded by star-shine,
stuck to those before and aft, adhesion
of moist exhales. Trial and tributary, ribbon
of spilled milk, and I gather it in handfuls,

sop it up, recap the edgewise static,
staccato tumbling voices, and eerie dance
of half-memory. Monitor dial inching along
through situations half-heard, a moving line,

a pointing finger. Evidence in star systems
we pretend are fixed—his belt, her chair.
Try to slake my thirst with what, I believe,
is a firm grip on the ladle's hilt.

Note: The title is a phrase from David O'Meara's poem "I Used to Live Around Here" in Noble Glass, Penny Black, and the typographical notions in the poem, particularly of a galaxy being italicized, come from P.K. Page's poem "Stargazer" in The Essential P.K. Page.

Sometimes

Rae Crossman

Rushing into our early morning bedroom
with her
under-the-pillow discovery.

My daughter's
toothless grin.

Sometimes poetry is like that:
all tooth fairy
no incisors.

Sometimes
it's wolf canines
and snap of bone.

At Dusk

Dagne Forrest

At dusk the woods shift closer,
shadows melt across
my shoulders.

Here, the nose puckering scent
of rotten apples
sharp, ascends.

Unseen roosting birds decry
my presence. Flustered,
tensing sky-

ward—dark wings undone,
one by one.

Vanishing Point

Marlene Grand Maître

She finds the last chinook, washed up
on Sombrio Beach, carries it home

to ink its body, cover with rice paper.
Blue gyotaku: her hands

stroke the scales and ridges,
lift the prints. By nightfall,

a ghost school of chinook shimmers
on every wall.

In home's uncharted depths,
she wakes underwater, pierced

by an orca call, a pulsebeat
of mourning, as the last

cow and calf glide
through the bedroom, drawn by hunger

to the phantom salmon.
She will wake

five thousand years ago,
on a Norwegian shoreline,

mesolithic woman, the first carver
of whales on rock.

The Why of It

Louisa Howerow

You know before you start you won't succeed
in creating the ideal pain français, not the crackly kind
you'd buy from a village boulangerie, not even if

you follow Julia Child's instructions and advice,
accompanied by drawings. Twenty pages worth.
You don't have the right flour with its precise

gluten strength. You don't have a baker's oven
with a fire-brick floor. You still haven't mastered
how to form the dough into the shape you want,

but you will go at it again and again, because
you want your muscles doing, keeping busy,
taking you away for seven hours, plus

three for cooling down. You like the elastic feel
of the dough, its smoothness. The kneading,
the scraping, the lifting and the slapping down.

Repeat, repeat. Yes! Moving fast, creating
a rhythm. No matter how the table shakes,
you work that dough, until you're spent. If

there was a river, you could beat your wash
on rocks, or a carpet to bang out on a fence,
but you don't have river or a carpet or fence.

All you have are muscles making good,
doing something they're learning to do,
believing they can keep death at bay.

For your head

Maureen Hynes

make a halo, a wreath, a circlet
of bright green aspen leaves. Crown your dismal
thoughts & unruly feelings with a tiara of thyme.
Find small red things, a cranberry or rosehip or yew berry
to trim your sorrow-filled week, to be the eyes
that your eyes can't see out of. With grass dew,
paste a rose petal on your forehead, and smear
a lick of honey on each earlobe to sweeten
whatever you hear. Breathe in jasmine scent
to intensify your memories. Pick four small leaves—
one for Fear, one for Trust, one for Rage,
the last for Desire. Lay each briefly on your tongue,
to taste but not swallow. Open your mouth
and let their power beam outward.

Famine's Feast

Keith Inman

A sparrow hawk swoops —
glides up to the high wire
clutching his harvest mouse

as spare row crops stoop
outside under the skies fire
crutching this hard-set house

Spider

Laboni Islam

Praise your fluency
in silk — spinning

what is hidden within

the way you float a line out on the wind
& let it latch.

Praise your small & diligent body

the way it pulls & fastens
till a single spoke
sings
of a whole geometry.

Praise your eight-legged patience.

Can you teach me to be still?

To welcome what disturbs the web
& what to do with it?

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Seaweed Soup and a Happy Birthday

Mark Kim

A tradition for life,
for death, and everything in between.

Narrowed into a warm bowl, with an emerald
glow,
and dark leaves.

My vision is adjusted to the shades, the
intricacy of the recipe,
and history.

A year of life passes, another bowl filled,
and the aroma of vitality pollutes the day.

The broth of sea, greens of the water,
and a reminder of my past, present, future.

The surface is broken, ripples undulate,
and I'm back.

Mom asks how it tastes, it's good. A little
salty. It doesn't matter.

Good morning,
good night, and everything in between.

Pavane for a Dead Letter

Marion Lougheed

every thought is a wartime letter
struck through with black
words and news that can't be shared

in the depths a torpedo
hits its mark

a cargo of letters
waltzes
slowly
to the ocean floor

Small Warblers

Annick MacAskill

(after Doireann Ní Ghríofa)

I did not know that's why they were there,
suddenly, and everywhere, in the trees and on
the sidewalks, inconsequential and familiar,
yet sparkling, like perfect round jewels
with the most remarkable prismatic calls. Like a brook, winding
through winter and spring, spilling
across cities and mountains and along the Atlantic
and before every window I would find. I started noticing,
as if blinking through a mist, searching,
thinking of God or romantic love, their sounds
like noise or music, and sometimes
these things were indistinguishable, as in a baby's cry.
Their ordinariness does not diminish them.
Now I tilt my head, and listen.

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Untitled

Harry Posner

On this Buddha quiet
Autumn morning
A bird lands
In the dead Austrian pine.

How useful will I be
After the curtain falls?

Skin

Eleonore Schönmaier

a man's frosted exhalation
in the pitch interior

of a car's trunk
is white against black

like chalk on the board
easily erased, but

not easily forgotten
the sound of tires on snow

heard from inside
the trunk of a cop car

*Hafez*¹

Bānoo Zan

I stood at the gates—
The Roknabad Stream murmured through
Mosalla Gardens²
Roses scattered the morning breeze
The sea kissed the boat
and waved at the palace
The king smiled at sycophant ghazals

I was the bard—
the blood of the city—
the breath of God—

Centuries later they would say
that I loved Shiraz³
But I feared tempests
and remained true to the past

Open my book
and read your future

¹ The fourteenth-century Iranian poet (ghazal writer). Iranians call him “The Mouthpiece of the Divine” and perform divinations with his Divan (collected poems). On important occasions, they form an intention or question in their mind, open the book, and interpret the ghazals on the page metaphorically according to their personal circumstances. The questions are usually about matters of significance, fate, love, etc.

² The Roknabad Stream and Mosalla Gardens were popular outings during Hafez’s times

³ It is said that Hafez’s fame traveled beyond the boundaries of his hometown, Shiraz. A king sent him an invitation to board a ship and join his court. Hafez started preparations but in the last minute changed his mind. He is said to have never set foot outside Shiraz

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*

Sea Charm *by Langston Hughes*

The New Colossus *by Emma Lazarus*

The Tropics of New York *by Claude McKay*

Wild Swans *by Edna St. Vincent Millay*

One Perfect Rose *by Dorothy Parker*

Assured *by Alexander Posey*

Fog *by Carl Sandburg*

Faults *by Sara Teasdale*

The Eagle *by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

Storm Ending *by Jean Toomer*

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

Sea Charm

Langston Hughes

Sea charm
The sea's own children
Do not understand.
They know
But that the sea is strong
Like God's hand.
They know
But that sea wind is sweet
Like God's breath,
And that the sea holds
A wide, deep death

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

One Perfect Rose

Dorothy Parker

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
All tenderly his messenger he chose;
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet—
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;
“My fragile leaves,” it said, “his heart enclose.”
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose.

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.

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.*

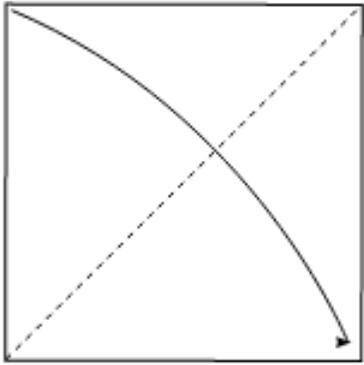
Haiku was traditionally written in the present tense and focused on associations between images. There was a pause at the end of the first or second line, and a “season word,” or kigo, specified the time of year.

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.

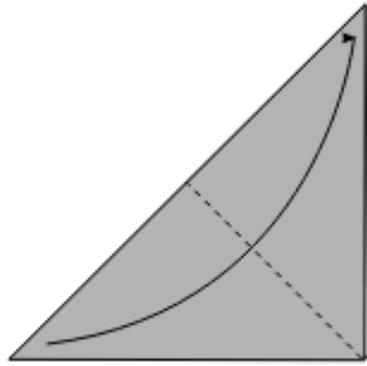
To read more examples of poems written in the haiku form, visit www.poets.org/haiku.

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

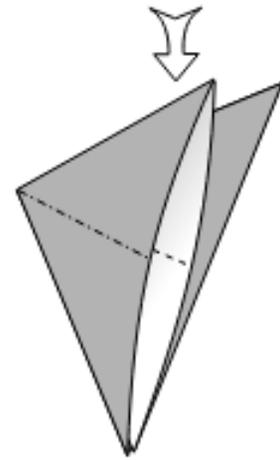
How to Create a Folded Swan



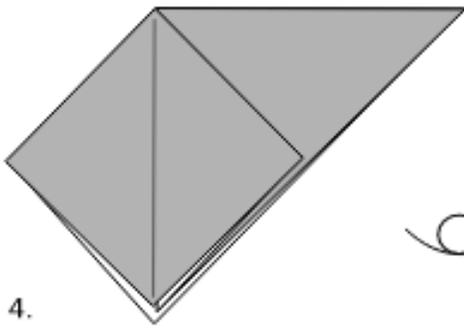
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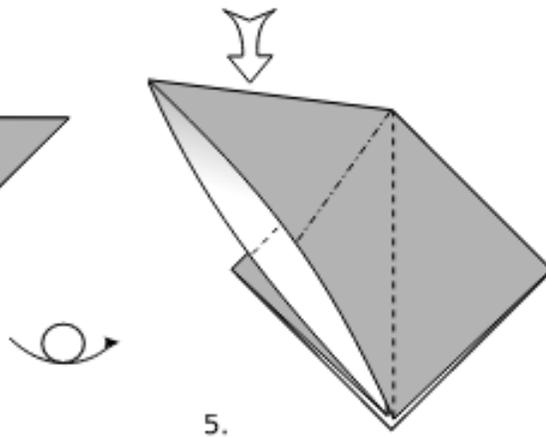
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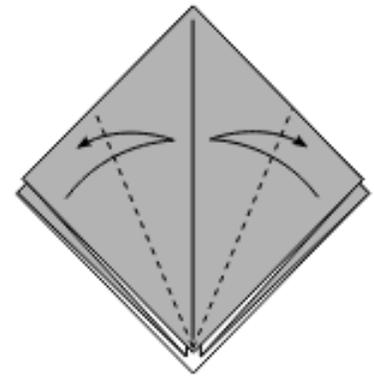
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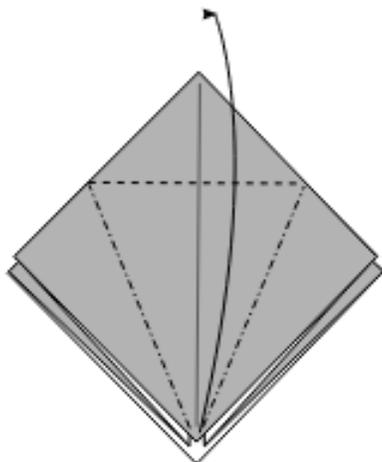
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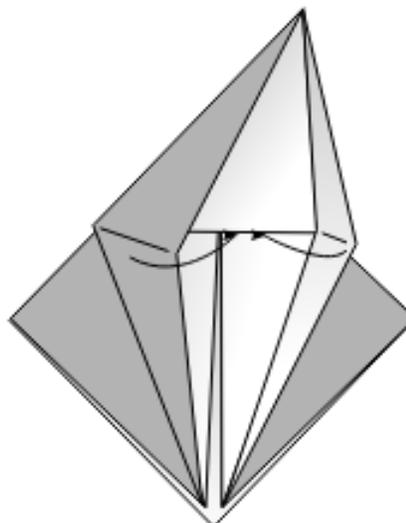
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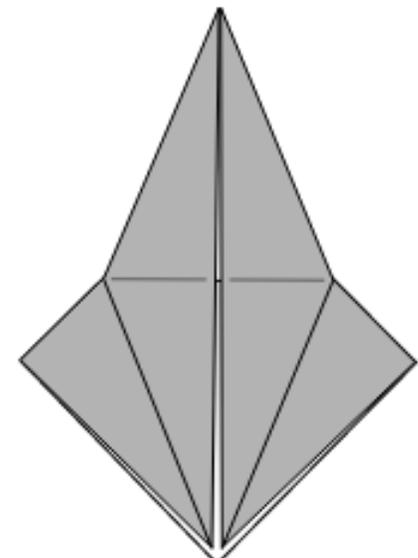
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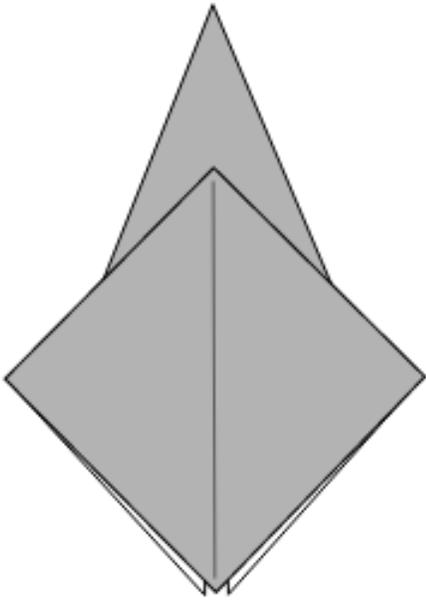
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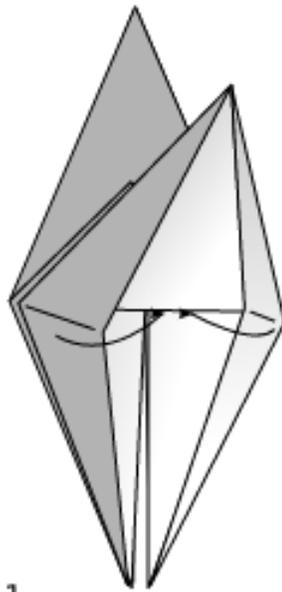
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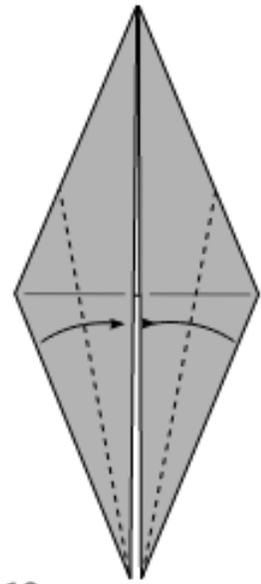
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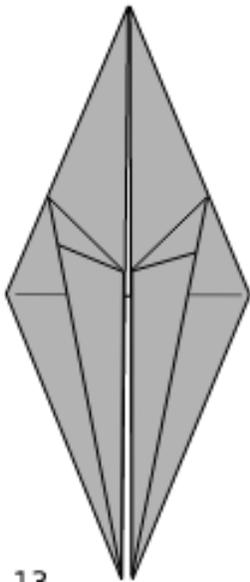
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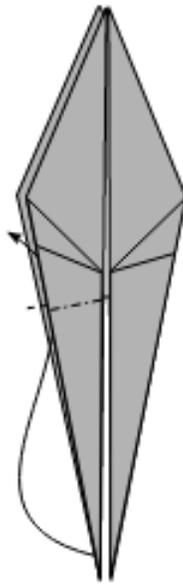
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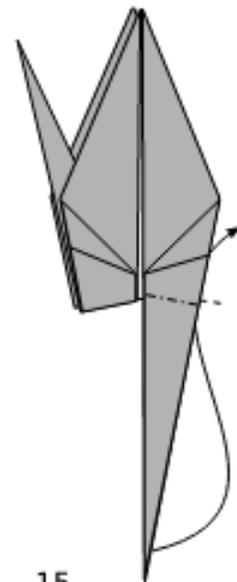
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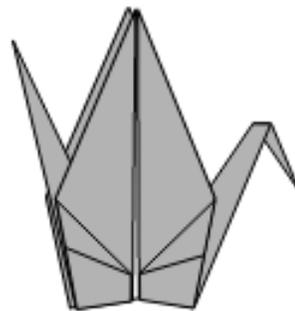
14.



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.