

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Every April, on Poem in Your Pocket Day, people throughout the United States celebrate by selecting a poem, carrying it with them, and sharing it with others throughout the day.

Join the celebration by printing one of the following poems.

You can also share your poem selection on Twitter by using the hashtag #pocketpoem.

poets.org

**academy of
american**

poets

Table of Contents

Emily Dickinson, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?"	4
Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Afternoon on a Hill"	5
H. D., "Oread"	6
Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme"	7
Amy Lowell, "The Taxi"	8
Robert Frost, "Design"	9
William Wordsworth, "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal"	10
Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself, I"	11
Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth"	12
William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 18"	13
Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Summer in the South"	14
Jean Toomer, "Storm Ending"	15
Wallace Stevens, "The Snow Man"	16
Claude McKay, "The Tropics of New York"	17
William Carlos Williams, "Spring Storm"	18
John Keats, "Bright Star"	19
Edwin Arlington Robinson, "Dear Friends"	20
Carl Sandburg, "At a Window"	21
A. E. Housman, "Would Not Stay"	22
T. S. Eliot, "Morning at the Window"	23
Emily Brontë, "Spellbound"	24
John Donne, "Holy Sonnet 14"	25

Emma Lazarus, “Long Island Sound”	26
Emily Dickinson, “Wild Nights – Wild Nights!”	27
W. B. Yeats, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”	28

Poems for Kids

Eliza Lee Follen, “The Good Moolly Cow [excerpt]”	29
Walt Whitman, “A Noiseless Patient Spider”	30
Marsden Hartley, “Fishmonger”	31
Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”	32
Rudyard Kipling, “Untitled”	33
Christina Rossetti, “Clouds”	34

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Emily Dickinson

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you — Nobody — too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise — you know!

How dreary — to be — Somebody!
How public — like a Frog —
To tell one's name — the livelong June —
To an admiring Bog!

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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!

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme

Gerard Manley Hopkins

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

Í say móre: the just man justices;
Kéeps gráce: thát keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
Christ—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

The Taxi

Amy Lowell

When I go away from you
The world beats dead
Like a slackened drum.
I call out for you against the jugged stars
And shout into the ridges of the wind.
Streets coming fast,
One after the other,
Wedge you away from me,
And the lamps of the city prick my eyes
So that I can no longer see your face.
Why should I leave you,
To wound myself upon the sharp edges of the night?

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

The Snow Man

Wallace Stevens

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

Spring Storm

William Carlos Williams

The sky has given over
its bitterness.
Out of the dark change
all day long
rain falls and falls
as if it would never end.
Still the snow keeps
its hold on the ground.
But water, water
from a thousand runnels!
It collects swiftly,
dappled with black
cuts a way for itself
through green ice in the gutters.
Drop after drop it falls
from the withered grass-stems
of the overhanging embankment.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

Dear Friends

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Dear friends, reproach me not for what I do,
Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say
That I am wearing half my life away
For bubble-work that only fools pursue.
And if my bubbles be too small for you,
Blow bigger than your own: the games we play
To fill the frittered minutes of a day,
Good glasses are to read the spirit through.

And whoso reads may get him some shrewd skill;
And some unprofitable scorn resign,
To praise the very thing that he deplores;
So, friends (dear friends), remember, if you will,
The shame I win for singing is all mine,
The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

At a Window

Carl Sandburg

Give me hunger,
O you gods that sit and give
The world its orders.
Give me hunger, pain and want,
Shut me out with shame and failure
From your doors of gold and fame,
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger!

But leave me a little love,
A voice to speak to me in the day end,
A hand to touch me in the dark room
Breaking the long loneliness.
In the dusk of day-shapes
Blurring the sunset,
One little wandering, western star
Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow.
Let me go to the window,
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk
And wait and know the coming
Of a little love.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

*He would not stay for me,
and who can wonder*

A. E. Housman

He would not stay for me, and who can wonder?
He would not stay for me to stand and gaze.
I shook his hand, and tore my heart in sunder,
And went with half my life about my ways.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

Morning at the Window

T. S. Eliot

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

Long Island Sound

Emma Lazarus

I see it as it looked one afternoon
In August,—by a fresh soft breeze o'erblown.
The swiftness of the tide, the light thereon,
A far-off sail, white as a crescent moon.
The shining waters with pale currents strewn,
The quiet fishing-smacks, the Eastern cove,
The semi-circle of its dark, green grove.
The luminous grasses, and the merry sun
In the grave sky; the sparkle far and wide,
Laughter of unseen children, cheerful chirp
Of crickets, and low lisp of rippling tide,
Light summer clouds fantastical as sleep
Changing unnoted while I gazed thereon.
All these fair sounds and sights I made my own.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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!

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

The Good Moolly Cow [excerpt]

Eliza Lee Follen

Come! supper is ready;
Come! boys and girls, now,
For here is fresh milk
From the good moolly cow.

Have done with your fife,
And your row de dow dow,
And taste this sweet milk
From the good moolly cow.

When children are hungry,
O, who can tell how
They love the fresh milk
From the good moolly cow!

So, when you meet moolly,
Just say, with a bow,
“Thank you for your milk,
Mrs. Good Moolly Cow.”

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Poem in Your Pocket Day

April 30, 2015

A Noiseless Patient Spider

Walt Whitman

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to
connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

Fishmonger

Marsden Hartley

I have taken scales from off
The cheeks of the moon.
I have made fins from bluejays' wings,
I have made eyes from damsons in the shadow.
I have taken flushes from the peachlips in the sun.
From all these I have made a fish of heaven for you,
Set it swimming on a young October sky.
I sit on the bank of the stream and watch
The grasses in amazement
As they turn to ashy gold.
Are the fishes from the rainbow
Still beautiful to you,
For whom they are made,
For whom I have set them,
Swimming?

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

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.

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

Untitled

Rudyard Kipling

You mustn't swim till you're six weeks old,
Or your head will be sunk by your heels;
And summer gales and Killer Whales
Are bad for baby seals.
Are bad for baby seals, dear rat,
As bad as bad can be.
But splash and grow strong,
And you can't be wrong,
Child of the Open Sea!

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Poem in Your Pocket Day
April 30, 2015

Clouds

Christina Rossetti

White sheep, white sheep,
On a blue hill,
When the wind stops,
You all stand still.
When the wind blows,
You walk away slow.
White sheep, white sheep,
Where do you go?