

# *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**

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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](http://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

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## *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**

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## *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**

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## *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

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## *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

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## *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**

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## *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

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## *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)



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## *When Giving Is All We Have*

Alberto Ríos

*One river gives  
Its journey to the next.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Something greater from the difference.

# national poetry month

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## *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.

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## *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

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## *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](http://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'rst 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.*

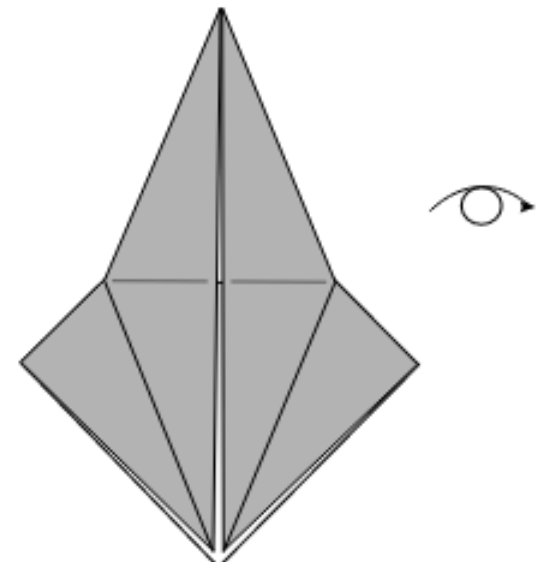
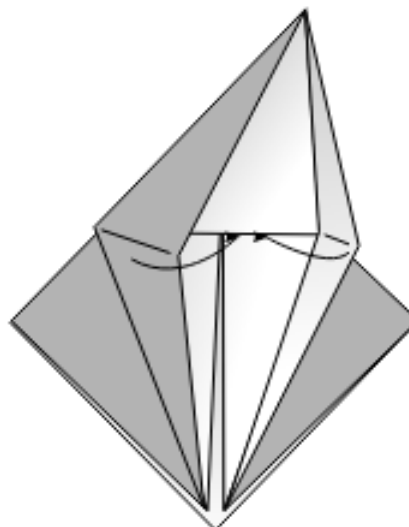
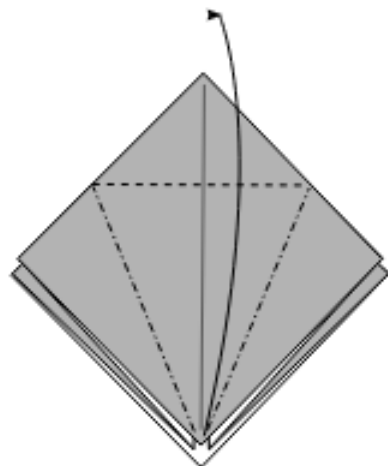
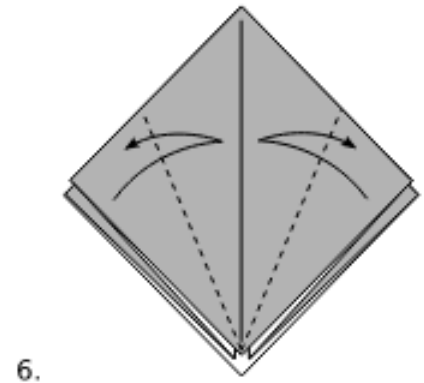
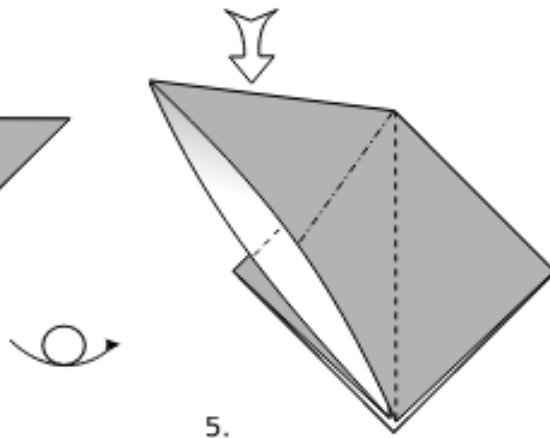
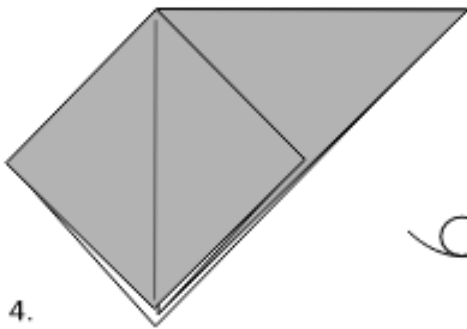
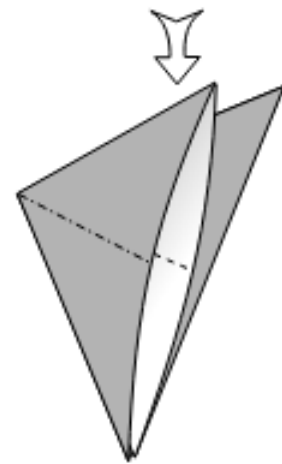
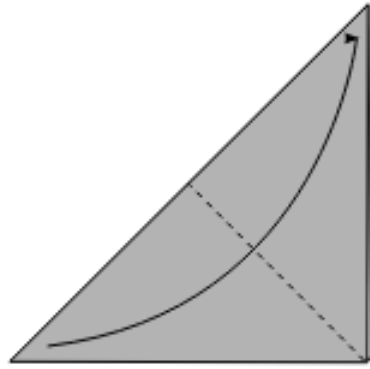
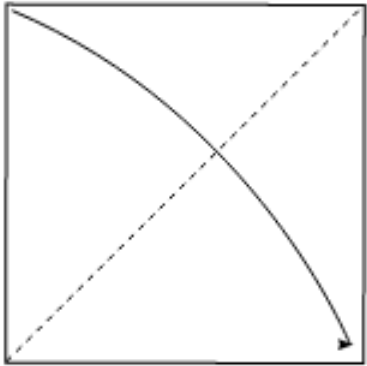
Haiku was traditionally written in the present tense and focused on associations between images. There was a pause at the end of the first or second line, and a “season word,” or kigo, specified the time of year.

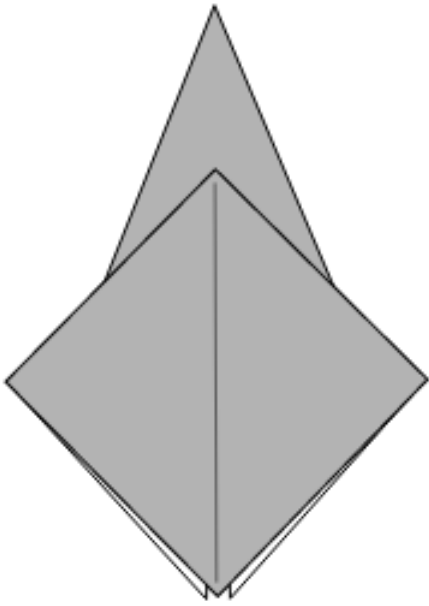
As the form has evolved, many of these rules—including the 5/7/5 practice—have been routinely broken. However, the philosophy of haiku has been preserved: the focus on a brief moment in time; a use of provocative, colorful images; an ability to be read in one breath; and a sense of sudden enlightenment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

To read more examples of poems written in the haiku form, visit [www.poets.org/haiku](http://www.poets.org/haiku).

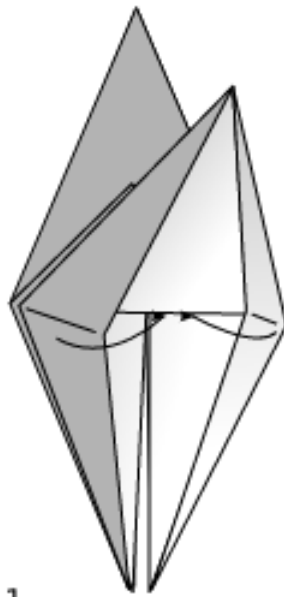
To read about other poetic forms, such as the acrostic, the cinquain, and the sonnet, visit [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org).

# How to Create a Folded Swan

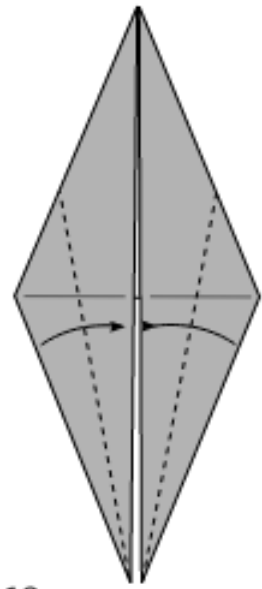




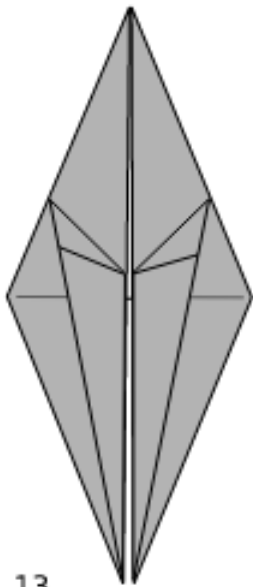
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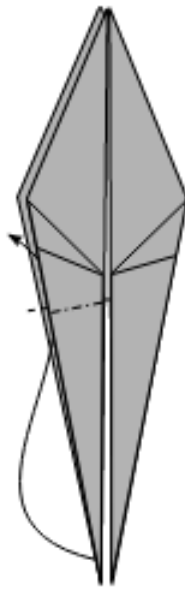
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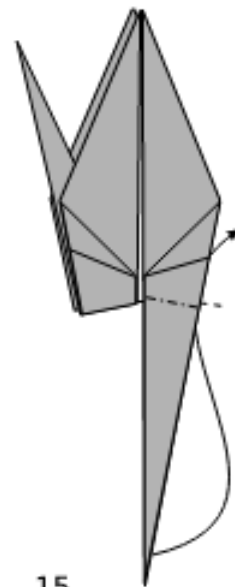
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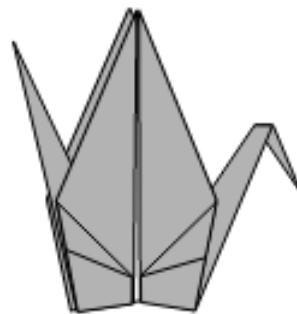
14.



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. 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

# *From Our Sponsors*

National Association for Poetry Therapy

