

POEM  
IN YOUR  
POCKET  
DAY

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APRIL 18 | NATIONAL POETRY MONTH 2019

Poets.ca THE LEAGUE OF  
CANADIAN POETS

# Poem in Your Pocket Day

In 2016, the League of Canadian Poets was thrilled to become a part of Poem in Your Pocket Day, a celebration held during National Poetry Month each year and organized by the Academy of American Poets. This booklet features the 15 Canadian poets selected to participate in this year's Poem in Your Pocket Day celebration! Bring this booklet to your office, your classroom, or your neighbourhood coffee shop to spread poetry on April 18, 2019!

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It's easy to carry a poem, share a poem, or start your own Poem in Your Pocket Day event. Here are some ideas of how you might get involved:

- Start a “poems for pockets” giveaway in your school or workplace
  - Urge local businesses to offer discounts for those carrying poems
  - Post pocket-sized verses in public places
  - Memorize a poem
  - Start a street team to pass out poems in your community
  - Distribute bookmarks with your favorite lines of poetry
  - Add a poem to your email footer
  - Post lines from your favorite poem on your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Tumblr
  - Send a poem to a friend
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Visit [poets.ca/pocketpoem](http://poets.ca/pocketpoem)  
for all Canadian Poem in Your Pocket poems and information!

For a longer booklet of 30+ contemporary and public domain poems, including this year's Canadian selections visit  
[poets.org/national-poetry-month/poem-your-pocket-day](http://poets.org/national-poetry-month/poem-your-pocket-day)

# Spotted Owl as Desire

Yvonne Blomer

After Robert Bateman's  
*Mossy Branches, Spotted Owl*

True owl. Old-growth owl. Nocturnal  
owl. The clock turns by you.  
Barking owl. Whistling.  
Hooted notes fall from mossed trees.  
Old-man moss. Knight's Plume moss. Creeping-  
feather moss.  
Nothing human here except me.  
Your eyes a lure. Shoulder-  
hunched owl. Padded in your brown  
mottled cloak, what are you  
tracking? Fogged-in owl, muffle-  
feathered owl, patience is  
your domain. Bone-lichen  
feathered. Lour-browed.  
Old strix. What are you  
making me into?

From *Ravine, Mouse, A Bird's Beak* (Nose in Book Publishing, 2018)

# Brother

Marilyn Bowering

While he studies the stars outdoors, model airplanes spin  
on fine webs in his room. Already he is lifting into the air,  
wings on his heels, a small Hermes signaling to the Great Bear.  
He reaches the outermost planets, he passes the edges of travel,  
and I can no longer steer him homeward.

Still, they say a womb is like a lochan on a hill,  
made of rills and rain and tears,  
and I can watch him from there when I am water  
as I was before

Forthcoming in *What is Long Past Occurs in Full Light* (MotherTongue Publishing, Summer 2019)

# Quick Question

Heather Cadsby

Speaking of good parenting  
I asked her how to be a natural mother. Or she asked me.  
It was blowing up a storm and we all knew a south wind brings rain.  
At least in that area. You couldn't drink the lake water.  
One father added chlorine to a pail of it. The speaker said  
boiling would have worked. But it was all after the fact.

No one succeeded at farming and every story was terrible.  
I wanted to make pine-needle pin cushions to sell. Child's play  
but I didn't know how or when to be the mother.  
The area was granite rock covered with roots. I was searching  
for earth though most girls wanted saddle shoes.

But, and here's where it gets confusing, someone yelled  
Listen to this:  
I am a rigid angry thing trying to be a mother.  
I am a wild shaking thing trying to be a mother.  
Don't you know a mother can be a thing of arrogance and narrow mind?

I was leaning on my elbows and staring off.

They said the mother went back into the house-on-fire.  
They said the father went too.  
They said the parents didn't know the baby was already out and safe.  
It grew up as best it could.

*From *Could Be* (Brick Books, 2009)*

# Crushed

Lorne Daniel

The bad news this week relentless, rolling  
past my glazed face. Addictions,  
elections, deaths of the wrong  
people, hypnotic grief. Dazed  
at the roadside today I breathe hot exhaust. Blurred  
tires hiss, rut and groove the grey  
just a step away. Over, over.  
On the shoulder, waiting for a break,  
me and this sleek crow, its cape  
tucked and trim. Light disappears  
or plays, iridescent, depending  
on the moment, the angles between us.  
What impresses me as a semi blows by,  
buffeting, is — yes — that unruffled coat  
but too the shining  
absence of concern. Unblinking.  
Legs spring-loaded, ready  
to jump to some small grain,  
fresh-crushed and nourishing.

Previously published in *Red Wheelbarrow Literary Magazine*, National Edition (2017, Vol. 18 Iss. 22)

# O Sea of Troubles We Did Not Take Arms Against

Adebe DeRango-Adem

for many moons we were complete                      like a single river  
how beautiful we drifted    & how delirious  
were the times we pretended not to bear                      the thirst  
of a hollow earth    as such perhaps we were  
not a river but a collection      of    rapids & yet those pangs  
a clever mix of love    & fear of the real  
a longing    soon to transform  
into a longing to disappear somehow into the familiar  
softening, from the dusts of the    world  
skylines—do you remember    how we slept  
in mangled ways    looking out to the Atlantic  
being in our element    but no I will not spend my life  
wading waiting    wading  
the answer is that    I have arrived with scars  
to haunt or to be haunted  
    is the question

From *The Unmooring* (Mansfield Press, 2018)

# Ode to Chopsticks

Fiona Tinwei Lam

Grandfather sets the bowl full of marbles before me.  
I pick up the chopsticks and hover,  
then picture my hand as a heron  
with a long, long beak plunging down  
to pluck each orb, lift it  
through air and held breath  
in a tremulous trip toward the saucer.

Five thousand years of evolution in hand:  
branches honed to stir ancient cauldrons  
become sleek batons of ivory, gold or jade  
adorning an aristocrat's table.  
With their deft dance and dip,  
more adroit than a fork.  
Twin acrobats poised  
to hoist choice morsels—  
crisp shard of duck skin,  
noodle strands, fish cheeks,  
single green pea.

Let your elders lead, he tells me,  
Never point your chopsticks at a guest.  
Never spear your food like a fisherman.  
Don't tap the side of your bowl like a beggar.  
Keep them by the plate when you rest  
or across the bowl at meal's end. But never  
upright like incense burning  
in an urn for the dead.

While he watches, stiff bamboo  
grows nimble. One by one  
each small glassy planet arcs up  
then lands with a clink!  
The bowl gleams, empty.  
He nods.

Previously published in *The New Quarterly* (Fall 2017), winner of the Nick Blatchford Occasional Verse Contest 2017, and forthcoming in *Odes & Laments* (Caitlin Press, Fall 2019)

# Beekeeping

Allison LaSorda

We don white hats and veils to check on your hive—  
push toward each other's newness, curtailed by safety devices.  
A sting's purple welt glares on your left calf. From the box,  
you pull bee-crowded sleeves: workers' movement steady

but erratic, sun strobes their effort. Pointing to hexagons,  
you explain some house larvae, others reflect light  
in honey, still others plastered over with wax. I pretend  
to notice the distinctions, drifting into a future self

who readies ice and tends to your stung skin. A tin smoker  
calms, masks alarm pheromones, & simulates forest fire,  
during which bees will gorge on honey to save their bounty  
and escape. It's not panic, exactly, it's instinct. Still, I relate

to the threat of an ending—the impulse to make meaning by holding  
everything inside yourself at once, as much as you can carry.

# Water

**Kathryn Mockler**

If you are feeling hopeless,  
then give up hope. I won't  
tell anyone. I won't tell you  
to put on a brave face or feel  
better about yourself. I won't  
tell you to wash your hair or  
pick up the dirty clothes. You  
don't know where to begin. I  
don't know where to end. We  
are water. We slosh this way  
and that. Sometimes we splash  
up against a boat, a dock, the  
shore. Fish swim through us.  
Rocks sink. There are pebbles  
and little pieces of glass and  
there are sticks and there are  
shells and there are fragments  
of bone. The garbage floats—  
a plastic cup, a beer can. Sometimes  
the sand beneath us gets  
stirred up. Sometimes it sits  
perfectly still.

Previously published in *The Puritan* (Issue 41, Spring 2018)

# Jazz (A Variation)

Lorie Miseck

A minor key swings open the blue door  
of the heart. Brassed and unhinged  
sound unwinds. Sunset slides  
down the day's spine. Slides down to  
the hour of smoke and wine,  
to artless sway of belonging.  
To the one, to the lonely, to the only  
to each of us held in  
evening's aching arms. Listen  
to the division of chord and time.  
And time again. Listen. Listen,  
we take our night with one part wisdom  
and five parts song.

And the darkness goes on for miles.

# A Haiku

kjmunro

low winter sun  
the mist  
from a mandarin

Winner of the 2019 Very Small Verse contest from the League of Canadian Poets

# Eggshells

Jim Nason

When Rooster flew the Co-op  
to explore the world on stilts, no one talked  
about the state of the nest he abandoned, the deathly  
smell of broken, featherless hens, the eggshells  
of prisoner grief that littered the floor-sod, rat pee  
and half eaten worms, the cold wind blowing  
through chicken wire. The morning he left there was  
a prophetic quiet among the usually chatty stars  
as they faded, distress and silence co-pillowed the hens.  
The stilts he made of broken shells, straw and hay,  
molded together with dust and the yolk of conquered hens  
allowed him to navigate the snow that had fallen all night.  
The crisp air was an affirmation. The yard was still  
except for a restrained wind that filled the puncture marks  
of his crossing. What if there is no better life?  
Staring down the length of his new legs, Rooster  
had never been naïve and could already feel the biting  
cold of his freedom, his feet freezing like mice  
nibbling the claw tips of his toes. Emptiness  
was the steeped house he carried on his wings,  
the enormous waking in his chest, sun rising  
in silence, his bent over shadow tilted  
against the glittery field.

From *Rooster, Dog, Crow* (Frontenac House, 2018)

# Glom Glom Sunraises

Charlie Petch

Dawn was especially noisy today,  
as the three suns sprouted from horizon,  
as the lamprey loons sung whale songs,  
as your tentacle slipped from my gilled side.

I opened one eyeball,  
to see the shine of us.  
Watched feathered spider flies  
steal the dust of our skin.

Having no other eyeball to open,  
I slip from our volcano dome,  
to scavenge hopplepops for our breakfast,  
follow their giggles to find them.

Your 7 limbs seem heavy for you today.  
So we turn off the magnets  
and float instead,  
tango in mid air.

You push branches from my cheek,  
ask if I want to go see our egg sack.  
I spin around your head three times,  
because this is how we spell love.

# Still be still be still be

Harry Posner

Still be still be still be  
Calm or calm or calm or  
Pla cid oh pla cid oh pla cid oh  
Re lax re lax re lax re  
Ding for pleasure  
Ding for dinner  
Ring for treasure  
The pleasure of your  
Company your tympani  
Your thrum drum not  
Hum drum you're some fun  
You are we are when we are  
To gather our each our sweet  
Peach the reach of fresh flesh  
Enmeshed arms legs held  
Melded melted to gather  
in the cool pool so still  
be still be still be still  
my beat ing heart

# “it didn’t happen here”

Eleonore Schönmaier

i’m in the bus which is really just an old car  
and it’s night and pouring rain and i’m  
thirteen and the car is jammed with  
bodies and we’re about to head  
down the long dirt road out to  
my settlement and the driver  
shouts, don’t let the drunk  
indian in, shouts to close  
the door and i slam the  
door shut and blood  
runs down the  
window and a man is out there alone in the  
night with a smashed hand but we all  
drive off into the dark and i slammed  
the door shut on a man’s hand and  
we drove off into the night  
and you tell me how you  
held a little girl’s hand  
and you tell me how she was your first  
indigenous friend and i’m not saying  
it’s not true but if this was the only  
truth we would not have the  
stories we have  
where the drunk man-next-door has a  
smashed hand (and i too would have  
a bottle in my pocket if i lived in  
steady fear) blood running  
down the window and there  
is a man alone in the night  
left to walk to the places  
he needs to go when  
walking is too far  
for any man to  
have to go  
in all that  
cold

Winner of the League of Canadian  
Poets’ 2019 National Broadsheet Contest

# Visit

Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang

I saw my father yesterday,  
sitting on the wall of his mausoleum.  
He held my hand and told me he forgave me  
and I asked, for what?

He smelled of apples, an autumn of leaves  
for skin. I remember you like this, I said,  
a harvest — an orchard of a man.

He opened his shirt, plucked a plum  
from his lungs and held it out to me.  
Everything, he said, is a way of remembering.

Previously published in *Arc Poetry Magazine* (2012), Best Canadian Poetry 2013,  
Best of the Best Canadian Poetry, and *Sweet Delivery* (Oolichan Books, 2011).

# About the Authors

**Yvonne Blomer** served as the City of Victoria's Poet Laureate from 2015-2018. Her most recent books include *Sugar Ride: Cycling from Hanoi to Kuala Lumpur*, Palimpsest Press, 2017 and *Refugium: Poems for the Pacific*, Caitlin Press, 2017, which she edited. Yvonne's chapbook "Elegies for Earth" won Leaf Press's Overleaf Chapbook Contest in 2017. Yvonne lives in Victoria, BC and tries to place the environment first in every decision she makes.

**Marilyn Bowering** is a poet and novelist who lives on Vancouver Island.

**Heather Cadsby** is the author of five books of poetry. Her most recent book is *Standing in the Flock of Connections* (Brick Books, 2018).

**Lorne Daniel** recently returned to poetry after many years away. He has published three books of poetry and his work has been included in anthologies and periodicals across Canada, the U.S. and the U.K.. He lives in Victoria, BC. Find Lorne on Instagram at [lorne daniel](#).

**Adebe DeRango-Adem** is a writer and former attendee of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (Naropa University), where she mentored with poets Anne Waldman and Amiri Baraka. She is the author of three full-length poetry collections: *Ex Nihilo* (Frontenac House, 2010), which became a finalist for the Dylan Thomas Prize, *Terra Incognita* (Inanna Publications, 2015), which was nominated for the Pat Lowther Memorial Award, and *The Unmooring*, published in 2018 by Mansfield Press.

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, **kjmunro** moved to the Yukon Territory in 1991. She founded & facilitates 'solstice haiku', a monthly haiku discussion group in Whitehorse. She has two leaflets with Leaf Press, & co-edited the anthology of crime-themed haiku *Body of Evidence: a collection of killer 'ku*. Her first poetry collection is forthcoming with Red Moon Press in 2019.

# About the Authors

**Fiona Tinwei Lam** has authored two poetry books and a children's book. She edited *The Bright Well: Canadian Poems on Facing Cancer*, and co-edited *Love Me True: Writers on the Ins, Outs, Ups & Downs of Marriage*. She has won *The New Quarterly's* Nick Blatchford prize and was a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award. Her work appears in over thirty anthologies, including *The Best of the Best Canadian Poetry: 10th Anniversary Edition* and *Forcefield: 77 Women Poets of BC*. Her poetry videos have screened at festivals locally and internationally. Her new collection of poems is forthcoming with Caitlin Press in 2019. [fonalam.net](http://fonalam.net)

**Allison LaSorda's** work has appeared in *The Fiddlehead*, *North American Review*, *Shenandoah*, and *Hazlitt*. She was nominated for the 2018 National Magazine Award for Personal Journalism.

**Lorie Miseck** is a poet and photographer. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta.

**Kathryn Mockler** is the author of four books of poetry and six short films. She is the Canada Editor of *Joyland: a hub for short fiction*, the Publisher of *The Rusty Toque*, and she teaches creative writing at Western University.

**Jim Nason's** sixth poetry collection, *Rooster, Dog, Crow* was recently released with Frontenac House. He has also published a short story collection *The Girl on the Escalator* and his third novel, *Spirit of a Hundred Thousand Dead Animals*, was recently published by Signature Editions. Jim is a Finalist for the 2018 ReLit Poetry Award.

**Charlie Petch** is an award winning spoken word artist, playwright, haiku deathmaster and musical saw player. They have been published in *Matrix*, *Descant*, *Toronto Quarterly* and other journals. They are a member of the League of Canadian Poets and are the creative director and founder of "Hot Damn It's A Queer Slam". Find out more about them at [charliecetch.com](http://charliecetch.com)

# About the Authors

**Harry Posner** is the author of six books, including poetry, novels and short stories, and he has produced several spoken word CDs. He is a member of Words Aloud poetry collective, the Headwaters Writers Guild, Writers Ink Alton, and an Associate Member of the League of Canadian Poets. Posner is currently Dufferin County's first Poet Laureate.

**Eleonore Schönmaier's** most recent poetry book is *Dust Blown Side of the Journey* from McGill-Queen's University Press. Her other collections are the critically acclaimed *Wavelengths of Your Song* (2013) and *Treading Fast Rivers* (1999). Her poetry has won the Alfred G. Bailey Prize, the Earle Birney Prize, and is widely anthologized including publication in *Best Canadian Poetry*.

**Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang** is the author of 10 books, including picture books, poetry, and fiction. Her award winning work has been internationally sold and translated. She is currently an adjunct professor of Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia.

# 12 Canadian Nature Poetry Books

Recommended by Terrence Abrahams from the League of Canadian Poets National Poetry Month Blog

Canada's relationship with nature poetry has, historically, been an uncomfortable one. Early settler poets took their settler-colonial romanticism to the extreme, writing of this land as if it were wild and unknown, rather than familiar and home to long-standing indigenous communities. Though the damage done by these early poets cannot be undone, nature poetry in Canada has thankfully started to shift.

Poetry featuring images of the Canadian wilderness are now rooted less in European romanticism. Instead, they take a more personal turn by focusing on field studies, environmentalism, anti-colonial efforts in activism, and, of course, genuine love and appreciation people have for natural world. There are, perhaps, more love poems here in the following books than in any anthology of romantic poetry out there.

❶ [\*Plainwater\*](#) by Anne Carson | Vintage Canada, 2000

Though familiar natural imagery is scattered throughout this collection, the latter half of Carson's *Plainwater* reads as a fictional travelogue. Geography colludes and collides with the intensely human to create a sometimes uncomfortable catalogue of the ways people relate to surroundings and, by extension, each other.

❷ [\*Small Arguments\*](#) by Souvankham Thammavongsa | Pedlar Press, 2003

This small book featuring smaller poems touches on the familiar aspects of nature: insects and fruits we see in our homes, crawling or ripening on our kitchen counters, awakening a new (or perhaps old but overlooked) appreciation for such little lives.

❸ [\*As Long as Trees Last\*](#) by Hoa Nguyen | Wave Books, 2012

Nguyen's writing, as always, is full of movement, despite the stillness and presumed peacefulness of many of her subjects – trees and suburban streets wake up and become less a part of an urban environment and more of a reminder that even cities are full of stirring, shifting green things.

4 *Light Light* by Julie Joosten | Book\*hug, 2013

Joosten's book artfully looks at the way light affects us all, and what we would (and wouldn't be) without it. Observation and emotion fuse with scientific fact to delight and delightfully unsettle.

5 *Field Notes for the Alpine Tundra* by Elena Johnson | Gaspereau Press, 2015

Johnson lived as the writer-in-residence at a remote ecology research station in the Yukon's Ruby Range in 2008. These poems, exploring both the scientific and emotional side of northern field studies, are both moving and satisfying. You might learn a new fact or two.

6 *Cephalopography* by Rasiqra Revulva | words (on) pages, 2016

Lyrical, emotional, visceral – like the tentacled things she features in her poetic work, Revulva's poetic efforts are as graceful and strange as they are fascinating.

7 *Certain Details* by Nelson Ball | Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017

Ball's short, observational poems are the cumulative effort of over sixty some-odd years spent walking, watching, waiting. Nothing about nature seems to be missed by Ball's careful eye.

8 *Faunics* by Jack Davis | Pedlar Press, 2017

Davis' work asks us to reconsider how we understand animals in relation to ourselves, to redefine animalism, and to ultimately look for a harmony within the human animal.

9 *Weed Apologue* by Sarah-Jean Krahn | words (on) pages, 2017

Drawing on a critical response to Robert Kroestch's Seed Catalogue, Krahn's poetry condemns Canadian colonialism and its impact on indigenous women and the environment while weaving language in a way that cannot be anything but like a so-called weed: insistent, seemingly effortless, hardy, and, ultimately, beautiful.

⑩ *Better Nature* by Fenn Stewart | Book\*hug, 2017

Though she works directly from a diary Walt Whitman kept while travelling through Canada, Stewart never gets sentimental. Her poetry focuses on how people interact with the world, from settler appropriation of the land, environmental activism, individual efforts to “go green,” and a tongue-in-cheek touch upon how we can better our natures to better nature itself.

⑪ *Spellbook for an Attic Gardener* by Laura K. Watson | self-published, 2017

Complete with stunning illustrations, Watson’s *Spellbook* is a comforting (though sometimes emotionally charged) look at how easy it is to bring the outside in.

⑫ *Blackbird Song* by Randy Lundy | University of Regina Press, 2018

This book, though not yet released [at the time this article was written], closes this list due to the anticipatory excitement I feel for it. Lundy’s previous work has been nothing but beautiful, his attention to detail making it easy to get lost in the portions of the natural world he recreates on a page.

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**Terrence Abrahams** lives and writes quietly in Toronto. His first chapbook, *a wish*, was published with Penrose Press in 2018. He is [@trabrahams](#) on Twitter.

# Poetry activities for educators and young readers

## Poetry-palooza

Organize a poetry-palooza for a group of young readers to engage them with the many sides to poetry. Participants can read a poem aloud — original or not — to the others, or they could distribute their favourite written poem—again, original or not. But there’s more to poetry than the poems! Encourage young readers to write fanmail to their favourite poets, or take the fun even farther away from poetry and hide poems around the room, or have other poetry game stations for participants to engage with.

## Poetry Play Stations

Poetry play stations use different techniques to encourage young readers to craft poems. Here are some great stations to include:

### Erasure poetry

Using a page of existing text, use a black marker to completely cross out sections of the text — the words or phrases that remain can be strung together to form an original poem! Part of the beauty of erasure poem is how the entire page looks when completed, blacked-out sections and all.

### Found poetry

Found poetry is very similar to erasure poetry — well, erasure poetry is a kind of found poetry — but with a little more freedom. Again using an existing text, participants select words or phrases from the text that they think will make a great poem: using the found words and phrases, they can play with line breaks, stanzas, and other ways of construction an original poem from the found text!

### Book spine poetry

This is a great poetic experiment that takes over Twitter every April — using as few as three or as many as...well, as many as you can stack, create a poem using the titles of books as they appear on the spines. These make excellent photos and are great for sharing on social media!

## Poetry Play Stations Continued

### Magnet poetry

A classic! Choosing words from a pile of individual words to string together an original poem. This could be from a magnetic poetry set, but you could also simply prepare an assortment of words for participants to choose from.

### Dear Poet

Dear Poet is a multimedia education project from the Academy of American Poets that invites young people in grades five through twelve to write letters in response to poems written and read by some of the award-winning poets who serve on the Academy of American Poets Board of Chancellors. They prepared a specialized lesson plan to help teachers implement this program into their curriculum—which is free to use—but the program can also be adopted to include Canadian poets. If you would like to write to Canadian poets, we recommend any of the poets featured in the 2016 or 2017 Poem in Your Pocket Day booklets! Letters can be sent to the League office or emailed to [info@poets.ca](mailto:info@poets.ca).

### Poetry as response

One of the most exciting things about poetry is how it can engage with other art forms: other texts, yes, but also art in completely a completely different medium. For students who are already interested in writing, encourage them to write a response poem to a scene from a movie or play, or to a painting or photograph; students for whom writing doesn't come naturally may be interested in doing the opposite, crafting a response in another medium to a pre-selected poem.

### Recitation

Reading poetry aloud can be a groundbreaking moment for engaging with a poem; similarly, hearing a poem out loud can also shine a different light on the words. It can be terrifying to read original poetry in front of others, but there are other ways to share! Students can read classic poems, or their favourite contemporary poems, or even try reading song lyrics out loud with no musical backup. Poetry in Voice is a charitable organization that encourages Canadian students to fall in love with poetry through reading, writing, and recitation, with an online anthology of

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classic and contemporary poems and [comprehensive teaching materials](#) on their website, all free of cost. They also run a nation-wide [student recitation competition](#), which awards over \$75,000 in travel and prizes annually.

## Finding the right poems

Of course, the hardest part is not usually finding fun ways to teach young readers — all you teachers and librarians are already experts in that field. The question is, what poems do you choose? The annual [Poem in Your Pocket Day booklet](#) is a great place to start, with age appropriate poems from a variety of poets across Canada and the US. Some of our favourite poetry meant for young readers include [Alligator Pie](#) by Dennis Lee (yes, that Dennis Lee!), Dr. Seuss, Louis Carroll's [Jabberwocky](#) (or, for that matter, [any of the songs and poems from the Alice books](#)), and Shel Silverstein's [Where the Sidewalk Ends](#). For 2017, the Academy of American Poets prepared a great [online anthology](#) of poems suitable for young readers as well — delightfully, it includes more than one poem about cake.

## More resources

[Classroom tips from the Academy of American Poets](#)

[Poetryclass learning resources from the Poetry Society \(UK\)](#)

[League of Canadian Poets Teachers' Lounge](#)

# 10 Ways to support your favourite poets

## ❶ Buy their books!

This is number one on the list because it's also the most obvious, straightforward way to support your favourite poet. BUT, did you consider that where you buy books from makes an impact? By buying directly from the publisher – especially if the publisher is a small or independent press – you also help support future publishing opportunities for poets. All Lit Up is an amazing retailer of independently published poetry, and a great resource for readers living in remote areas that may not have a wide selection of booksellers. As an added bonus, shopping through All Lit Up supports the Literary Press Group of Canada, which in turn supports and advocates for independent Canadian literary publishers!

## ❷ Borrow poetry from your local library!

High circulation numbers help alert librarians to what's popular in their community. If your library doesn't carry your favourite poet's work, recommend it! Let the library staff know what you'd like to see on the shelves, and prove it by borrowing the book if they follow your recommendation.

## ❸ Find and follow your favourite poets on their public social media accounts.

Some poets have Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram, some don't. But if they do, follow them and share their content that excites you. Whether they have social media or not, you can always post about their poetry on your platform of choice. Make public recommendations, write about 2019 PIYP day booklet – supplementary material how you've connected to their work and what it means to you, post about their readings (even the ones you'll sadly have to miss because they're taking place out of town).

#### 4 Talk about their books.

We may be in the age of social media, but word of mouth is still an extremely powerful tool! Tell friends and family about their books, recommend them to your co-workers, read your favourite poet's books in public places (we all know bookworms love to see what other bookworms are reading).

#### 5 Review their books.

When your favourite poet releases a new book, write a review. There are so many avenues through which to do this and each avenue offers a different approach or expectation for the reviewer. A review on Amazon, Indigo, or GoodReads could simply be a rating out of five stars or a few sentences on what you enjoyed about the book. Some literary websites have open calls for longer, more formal reviews.

#### 6 Tell your MPs and MPPs how important the arts are!

Funding bodies like Canada Council for the Arts/Ontario Arts Council/Toronto Arts Council are government agencies. Many poets rely on grants and funding as part of their livelihood. A large portion of the League's funding comes from these bodies, too. Social media makes it easier than ever to contact your local politicians. They likely have a Twitter account, or at least have an email address through which you can contact them. Here's an example of a quick message of support you could send:

*Happy National Poetry Month! I am writing to let you know that poetry is important to me – as are all the arts! Poetry connects us and provides a vital outlet for self-expression. I urge you to continue to support initiatives like (insert provincial funding program) so that the arts can continue to flourish in our community.*

#### 7 Promote your favourite poet!

Feature your favourite poet on your blog, podcast, zine, or other publication! Reach out for an interview – it never hurts to ask!

### **8 Suggest them for your book club!**

Maybe your book club doesn't usually read poetry, but it's good to change things up once in a while! If your book club needs some convincing, suggest a collection that is also autobiographical, political, or deals with pop culture. Spin it to get it on your list!

### **9 If you're a poet yourself, check out their editing services.**

Lots of poets and writers also work as freelance editors and will read your manuscript and provide super valuable feedback. Support them through paying their fees and they'll support you with help tidying up your manuscript! A real win-win.

### **10 Go to a reading!**

If you know of a local spot that hosts poetry readings, suggest your favourite poet. Bring a book of theirs and show off your favourite poem.