

POETRY MEETS NONFICTION WORKSHOP

Allan Wolf

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Introduction to Poetry Meets Nonfiction

Play with Poetic Structure

Don't be afraid to let our words play on the page. Let them line up like soldiers on parade. Let them dash down stairs. Let them fall fast and crash on the grass. Or skip from rock to rock across a stream. To emphasize a word, make it live alone on its very own line. Add stanza breaks or dashes to make the reader stop. Play with punctuation. Ellipses make the words trail off. Parenthesis add afterthought to a sly aside. Indent a line to expand on the thought of the line that came before. Let your words build and explode. Let them linger in the air. Let them slink away slowly till they are barely even there.

from *Immersed In Verse* by Allan Wolf (Lark Books, 2006).

Note the author's use of poetic language (rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, personification, etc.) in the nonfiction prose above. Prose and poetry share much in common.

Don't Be Afraid

to	let	your	words
play	on	the	page.
Let	them	line	up
like	soldiers	on	parade.

Let
them
dash
down
stairs.

Let
them
fall
fast
and
CRASH on the grasssssss.

Or skip fromrock torock across a stream.

To emphasize a word, make it live
alone
on its very own line.

Add stanza breaks

or dashes to make the reader—stop.

Play with punctuation:

Ellipses make the words trail off . . .

Parentheses add afterthought (to a sly aside).

Indent a line

to expand on the thought

of the line that came before.

Let your words **build and explode!**

them in air.

Let linger the

Let them slink away

s l o w l y

till they're barely even there.

Note how this “poem” still relays the same information as the prose form. In fact, verse allows the text to actually demonstrate the concepts it is attempting to explain.

You Can't Write a Poem About THAT!

Finding Significance Within the Mundane

Mundane: from the Latin mundus (world) thus mundanus (of the world)

Well-known poems that celebrate the mundane:

Something Is Going to Happen (from *Delight*) by Robert Penn Warren

The Road Not Taken; Dust of Snow by Robert Frost

The Red Wheelbarrow; This Is Just to Say by William Carlos Williams

Fog by Carl Sandburg

Miracles by Walt Whitman

Phases of Mundane Observation

Confining your field of focus to only what exists within a ten-foot circle around you, choose a suitable mundane subject, such as a pencil, ceiling fan, book, (Note: If you really must look beyond a ten-foot circle, then confine your observation to the space of the room.) Writing continually, move through these phases of observation in order to generate descriptions and brainstorm ideas for further writing.

Describe

Describe, in detail, the subject's appearance, various parts, materials, size, weight, etc. Describe what it does. How does it move? What is its energy source? What does it sound like? Can you hold it? How does it feel? Evaluate What is its purpose? How does its existence make the world better? How does its existence make the world worse? Describe the subject's positive impact as well as its negative impact. Does it have a personality?

Radiate

Look around your ten-foot circle. Are there others? Now look as far as your eyes can see. Are there others there? Use your imagination. Are there others outside of your field of vision? Within the building where you are? Beyond the block? Across the city where you reside? The country? The world?

Connect

What other kinds exist? What other objects are related to it? What things have a similar look, function, movement? What other objects, mundane or otherwise, have a similar effect? Imagine if the subject of your study should disappear. What would happen? How would the world be changed? Why is the subject important to your own life? To the world?

Writing Prompts that Exercise Observation Powers

Snapshot Safari

In your notebook collect a variety of images from an “outing” around your house or school. Include sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. Be sure to keep each entry short (a single phrase will usually do), and don’t dwell on the significance of the image. Your object is simply to collect the images as a sensory record of your experience. Remember that poetry is not always confined by matters of narrative or logical continuity; seemingly disjointed images and sensations can sometimes provide a clarity and illumination which linear thoughts cannot.

Sound Safari

Like the Snapshot Safari but with sounds alone. Just walk, listen, and write. The most challenging part of this exercise is to figure out how to spell the sounds.

Treasure Box of Priceless Things

The teacher places a variety of “everyday objects” in a box (eraser, paper clip, wash cloth, shoe lace, chicken bone, button, house key, etc.) As the box is passed around, students are asked to reach into the box and feel around until they feel an object they want to write about.

Walk a Mile in Something Else’s Shoes

Imagine what it would be like to be some mundane object, like a shoe or a coffee cup.

Thirteen Ways of Looking at Your Elbow

Come up with thirteen different ways of looking at a mundane subject. You may slow down by way # seven, but don’t give up (See *Thirteen Ways of Looking at Your Knees and Elbows* by Allan Wolf).

Treasure Hunts and Riddles

The teacher hides an object somewhere in the room and then describes its location in the form of a riddle. Students can also simply play a form of I-Spy by creating riddle poems about the everyday objects in the room. The emphasis should be more on choice of details rather than literary quality.

Everyday Object As Self Portrait

Generate a list of characteristics of yourself. Include internal and external characteristics. (Be honest, this list is just for brainstorming, and you won’t be required to share it unless you want to.) After your list is complete, choose an everyday object that you feel shares a common characteristic(s) with you. Make a list of other characteristics of the object. Now write a poem that illustrates your comparison. You may start by simply saying, “I am like . . .”

Inquisition

Write down a list of questions to ask of some mundane subject. You can speak directly to the subject or else ask the questions generally. This list of questions might prove to be a poem in itself, or it may trigger a poem that provides an answer to one or more of the questions.

Multi-Voice Dialogue Poem

Similar to Inquisition, except this time your object actually answers back! Write a dialogue poem in which you conduct an interview or carry on a conversation with a mundane object. Your two (or more) voices can speak simultaneously or alternate, passing the lines back and forth.

Helpful “Mundane” Forms

Acrostic An acrostic (pronounced uh-CRAW-stick) poem is an easy way for students to summarize what they know about a topic by gathering together thoughts, facts, ideas, and details into a poem in which the first letters of each line spell out the topic at hand. Add an extra degree of difficulty to this form by also arranging the last letters of each line so that they spell out a word or phrase that is appropriate to the topic.

Cinquain

A cinquain (pronounced SING-cane) is a five-line unrhymed poem. It is easy to write and can be used in a variety of subject areas. Cinquains can be useful in helping students to gain new insights into a topic being studied. There are many variations. Here’s one that’s pretty popular: Line One: One noun that introduces the poem’s subject. Line Two: Two adjectives that describe the subject. Line Three: Three verbs (or verbals) related to the subject. Line Four: Four-word phrase telling feelings of the writer or describing the subject. Line Five: One noun (different from line one) that sums up the previous four lines.

Diamante

The diamante (pronounced DIE-uh-MON-tay) is a perfect poem form to illustrate the contrast between two different subjects. The seven lines of this poem are in the shape of a diamond, with the different subjects acting as the top and bottom points of the diamond. Line One: Noun “A.” Line Two: Two adjectives describing the noun “A.” Line Three: Three “ing” or “ed” words describing noun “A.” Line Four: Four nouns. Two describing the noun “A”. Two describing noun “B.” Line Five: Three “ing” or “ed” words describing noun “B.” Line Six: Two adjectives describing the noun “B.” Line Seven: Noun “B” Note that immediately after writing Noun “A” in line one, the writer may want to go to line seven and enter the contrasting noun “B” there. Then the writer can go back and fill in the rest of the poem.

Limerick

A limerick is a five-line poem, usually humorous in nature, arranged in a A-A-B-B-A rhyme pattern. Lines one and two consist of eight or nine syllables. Lines three and four consist of five or six syllables. The last line (which rhymes with the first two) consists of from eight to ten syllables. Limericks can be used to tell brief stories or to describe the characteristics of something being studied in class.

Inquisition

Write down a list of questions to ask of someone (or something) you encounter on your outing. You can speak directly to the subject or else ask the questions generally. This list of questions might prove to be a poem in itself, or it may trigger a poem which provides an answer to one or more of the questions.

Examples

White Goat

White Goat, is your name Billie?
What are you thinking as you
Twist your head around the feeding bin?
Do you miss your kids?
Are they crying for you?
Will you be with them ever again?

Cheryl Bromley Jones, teacher

Skyscrapers

Do skyscrapers ever grow tired
of holding themselves up high?
Do they ever shiver on frosty nights
with their tops against the sky?
Do they get lonely sometimes
because they have grown so tall?
Do they ever wish they could lie right down
and never get up at all?

Rose Fyleman

Letter Poem

Write a letter as a poem, addressing someone or something you encounter on your outing.

Malcolm, My Man

Malcolm (my man!)
You don't know me.
But I know you.
I dream of you.
In your blackness I see myself.
I long to be the man you once were.
What you are.
Who you are.
That is all that matters to you.
You're like no one I've ever known.

I see all in your eyes.
Malcolm (my man!)
Man with no fear,
No boundaries.
show me the way.
Damn!
Malcolm, you had so far to go.
Death, so bloody.
Still it was a gift.
The end was inevitable and so was your memory.
True men live forever.
That is the way it will always be. Forever.
Never forgotten.
That is what I want to be.

Duane Shorter, student.

Foster Student-Centered Assessment Skills

Students compare texts to evaluate proficiency. Give students sample texts along a four point performance continuum and have them rank order them from most to least effective. Working in groups have them develop their own descriptions of each of the four score points and relate these descriptions to proficiency levels designated as *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Failing*.

Rank the following versions of the same poem from 1 to 4 with 1 being the least effective and 4 being the most effective. Explain your answers as best you can.

The Boy

The boy put his best toy over his head and
threw it down on the floor
and broke it.
That made him sad so
he started crying.

Mad

He lifts the toy
his favorite one
above his head
He throws it—mad—
He kicks it—mad—
He stomps it—mad—
in to pie ces
His eyes grow wide
He cries
and cries

The Mad Boy

He lifts the toy
his best one
he holds it over his head
and
throws it
kicks it
stomps it
His eyes get wide
and he cries.

The Boy

The boy
broke his toy.

Share Example Poems in a Multi-Modal Way

Be sure to present examples in a “multi-modal” way, appealing to a variety of the senses. For example, you might allow students to see the poem on an overhead screen, blackboard, or chart paper. Allow students to hear poems by asking them to close their eyes as you recite or read. Students can even touch the poem if it is written on some appropriate object (a poem about a pumpkin might be written on a pumpkin). Poems about food can be accompanied by an appropriate snack to appeal to the sense of taste. Strike a match to call upon the sense of *smell* as you read a poem about fire.

Students like to listen to poems read aloud, but they also like to do poetry as active participants. You might invite students to join you at the front of the class to help act out a poem as you recite it. Encourage students to repeat certain lines or sound out a call-and-response of some sort. If you are illustrating a certain poetic device, you might ask your students to clap when they hear an example as you read aloud. Use your imagination and watch your students begin to use theirs.

Introducing Writing Activities

- Introduce the writing activity, technique, topic, or theme. A verbal introduction can involve group brainstorming or some other prewriting activity.
- Present an example poem(s) by an established adult writer(s). This could be in the form of a reading, recitation, or performance. Example poems should illustrate the technique, topic, or theme. Remember to think “multi-modal.”
- Model writing on an overhead, blackboard, or chart paper. Write a group example poem. Allow students to suggest opening lines. Suggest a structure if students get stuck. Keep it flowing. You can create a complete poem or just the beginning of one.
- Present an example poem(s) by a student writer(s) who has participated in the activity in the past. This is a great time to share a poem that you have written yourself.
- Allow students to write on their own. As much as possible, the teacher should write along with the students. This further establishes your class as a “community of writers” and lets your students see that writing is a lifetime pursuit. I like to alternate between “writing and roaming.”
- Allow students to share. Share as a large group (always in a circle) or in small teams. “Pair share” if sharing time is very limited.

Mystery Poem

Write a “Who Am I?” or a “What Am I?” poem in which the speaker only gives descriptive clues to the reader who must guess who, or what, the speaker is. This answer can be given as part of the poem’s ending or not at all. The poem can take whatever form you choose.

Examples

The Mountain Chicken

I’m called the Mountain Chicken
but I never, ever cluck.
You’ll find me in Dominica
if you have any luck.
I do not peck. I do not scratch.
My name must be a joke.
I do not strut. Instead I hop.
I do not cluck. I croak.
Don’t look inside the chicken coop.
I’m underneath this log.
I’m really not a chicken, see
I really am a . . .

Allan Wolf

Who Am I?

I played a sport, Round Ball the game.
I flew through the air, and all knew my name.
To the greatest heights, I did reach,
When playing with the dream,
this—no one could teach.
The size of the ball did change but once,
And to the larger did I return.
From fame and glory did I retire,
Wearing red and black attire.
Who am I?

P.J. Purdy and Tammy Roberts

Metaphors

I’m a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils,
O red fruit, ivory, vine timbers!
This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising.
Money’s new-minted in this fat purse.
I’m a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
I’ve eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there’s no getting off.

Sylvia Plath

Riddle

We are little airy creatures,
All of different voice and features:
One of us in glass is set,
One of us is found in jet,
One of us is set in tin,
One a lump of gold within;
If the last you should pursue,
It can never fly from you.

Author unknown

Limerick

A limerick is a five-line poem, usually humorous in nature, arranged in a A-A-B-B-A rhyme pattern. Lines one and two consist of eight or nine syllables. Lines three and four consist of five or six syllables. The last line (which rhymes with the first two) consists of from eight to ten syllables. Limericks can be used to tell brief stories or to describe the characteristics of something being studied in class.

Examples

Biology

A chameleon when he's feeling blue,
Can alter his glum point of view.
By changing his hue
To a color that's new:
I'd like to do that, wouldn't you?

Eve Merriam

Sammy

There was a young hopeful named Sam
Who loved diving into the jam.
When his mother said, "Sammy!
Don't make yourself jammy."
He said, "You're too late ma, I am."

Elizabeth Ripley

Ecology/Social Issues

Said an envious, erudite ermine:
"There's one thing I cannot determine:
When a man wears my coat,
He's a person of note.
While I'm but a species of vermin!"

Oliver Hereford

Physics

There was a young lady named Bright,
Whose speed was much faster than light.
She went out one day
In a relative way
And returned on the previous night.

A.H. Reginald Butler

Diamante

The diamante (pronounced DIE-uh-MON-tay) is a perfect poem form to illustrate the contrast between two different subjects. The seven lines of this poem are in the shape of a diamond, with the different subjects acting as the top and bottom points of the diamond.

- Line One: Noun “A.”
- Line Two: Two adjectives describing the noun “A.”
- Line Three: Three “ing” or “ed” words describing noun “A.”
- Line Four: Four nouns. Two describing the noun “A”. Two describing noun “B.”
- Line Five: Three “ing” or “ed” words describing noun “B.”
- Line Six: Two adjectives describing the noun “B.”
- Line Seven: Noun “B”

Note that immediately after writing Noun “A” in line one, the writer may want to go to line seven and enter the contrasting noun “B” there. Then the writer can go back and fill in the rest of the poem.

Examples

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Younger, easier
Old friends, one teacher, one class
Bonner, Holly Hill Elementary / Holly Hill Junior High, Campbell
Changing classes, changing teachers, finding new friends
Older, harder
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Note: I picked up these diamante examples from an unknown presenter to whom I owe thanks.

*Group Poem, 6th graders
Bonner Elementary School*

DEMOCRACY
Many, representative
Self-governed, elected, tolerating
Legislature, constitution / despotism, absolutism
Inherited, exploiting, oppressing
Machiavellian, single
AUTOCRACY

*Group Poem, 11th graders
Spruce Creek Senior High*

You can adapt the diamante to reinforce vocabulary or concepts that you have been studying in any content area.

Adapted for Earth Science

- Line one: Write the word “SWAMP.”
- Line two: Write the names of two famous swamps.
- Line three: Three words that describe swamp geography or climate.

Line four: Name a swamp plant, a swamp animal, a desert plant, a desert animal.

Line five: Three words that describe desert geography or climate

Line six: Write the names of two famous deserts.

Line seven: Write the word "DESERT."

Example

SWAMP

Okefenokee, Everglades
wet, spongy, low-lying
fern, egret / cactus, lizard
hot, dry, sandy
Sahara, Mojave
DESERT

Adapted for Environmental Science

Line one: Write the word "POLLUTION."

Line two: Write two adjectives which describe pollution.

Line three: Three verbs which tell how humankind pollutes the earth.

Line four: Two specific examples of pollution / Two specific examples of conservation.

Line five: Three verbs which tell how humankind conserves the earth.

Line six: Write two adjectives which describe conservation.

Line seven: Write the word "CONSERVATION."

Example

POLLUTION

foul, noisy
stripping, exhausting, contaminating
clear cutting, dumping poisonous chemicals / treating wastes, banning dioxin
recycling, replenishing, preserving
clear, unspoiled
CONSERVATION

Cinquain

A cinquain (pronounced SEEN-cane) is a five-line unrhymed poem. It is easy to write and can be used in a variety of subject areas. Cinquains can be useful in helping students to gain new insights into a topic being studied. Although there are variations, the cinquain generally takes the following form:

Line One: One noun that introduces the poem's subject.

Line Two: Two adjectives that describe the subject.

Line Three: Three verbs (or verbals) related to the subject.

Line Four: Four-word phrase telling feelings of the writer or describing the subject.

Line Five: One noun (different from line one) that sums up the previous four lines.

Examples

Spiders
Tiny, busy
Spinning, moving, floating
Building fragile wispy nests
Artists

Tree frogs
Brown, glistening
Prowling, leaping, hanging
Stretching throats to sing
Woodsprites

Jennings and Telfer

Grackles
Iridescent, black
Splashing, hopping, dunking
Fluttering feathered creek communion
Bath time

Allan Wolf

Orangutan
Playful, busy
Climbing, swinging, chewing
Getting into everything, everywhere
Toddler

Karen Rose

Heron
White, long-necked
Watching, wading, eating
Segregated from the others
Fisherman

Joy Ray

Acrostic Poem

An acrostic (pronounced uh-CRAW-stick) poem is an easy way for students to summarize what they know about a topic by gathering together thoughts, facts, ideas, and details into a poem in which the first letters of each line spell out the topic at hand. Add an extra degree of difficulty to this form, by also arranging the last letters of each line so that they spell out a word or phrase that is appropriate to the topic.

Examples

Wishing for freedom
Haughty look in your eyes
Isolated in your too-small space
Tundra dweller
Ermine-colored
Furry and fuzzy
Out of place in a St. Louis summer
Xtremely quiet *Joy Ray*

Editing the Chrysalis

“At last,” cried
Butterfly,
Poised
Over its
Empty chrysalis,
“My final draft!”

Avis Harley

Unknown,
Vanished
World,
X-tinct:
Yesterday’s
Zoo.

Abecedarian
by Avis Harley

Forgotten Giants

Ancient
Bogs
Contain
Dinosaur
Eggs,
Forgotten
Giants
Hidden
Inside
Jurassic
Kingdoms.
Like
Memories
Never
Opened,
Prehistoric
Quagmires
Retain
Secrets.

from Avis
Harley’s excellent
book titled Fly With
Poetry: An ABC of
Poetry (Wordsong/B
oyds Mills Press).

Tanka Talk

Students create a classroom dialectic in verse by writing tankas (5 lines of 5,7,5, 7, and 7 syllables respectively) about a variety of topics (shopping, sorrow, hair, victory, cars, friendship, peer pressure, anger, math, a historical figure, a scientific fact, etc)

Depression is not
a sour look on my face.
Looks are a symptom
that my heart is deflated,
trust and hope have gone missing.
S.H.

Depression is not
my voice becoming silent.
My silence is a symptom
of the look on your face,
Trust? Hope? Missing all along.
A.W.

Fun is a giggle,
pink lipstick, blue nail polish,
whispering girlfriends,
a good cry at a movie
then laughing all the way home.
S.H.

Fun is a joy ride,
a spitting competition
telling raunchy jokes
laughing till our stomachs ache
knowing that we all belong.
A.W.

Underwear in brief:
Mostly equipped with front flaps;
Underoos; jock straps;
Low-rise; boxer; bikini;
Jumbo or teeny-weeny.
A.W.

Persona Poems, Monologue Poems

- offer a student-centered approach to learning.
- lend themselves to performance and presentation.
- are handy content memorization tools.
- reinforce audience awareness.
- place young perf-poets in the role of teacher by intrinsically asking, “What do I want my audience to learn?”
- help students to organize, prioritize, and categorize content.
- require close reading of any primary texts.
- encourage the use of specialized vocabulary in context.
- encourage text-to-self connections.
- promote independent, supplementary research.
- are useful across the curriculum.
- provide a fun, engaging, and authentic way to assess learning.

Private Patrick Gass, the Carpenter, Makes His Case to Lewis and Clark

Welcome to Fort Kaskaskia, Sirs.
I know that you’ve had a rough journey thus far,
and I know that you have plenty soldiers to see
so I thank you for taking the time to see me.
Now Captain Bissell claims he can’t spare me
but with all due respect I’d like to plead my case.

Do I have any special skills?

Well, I’m a right handy carpenter.
With the proper tools and a few hands
I can clear you a field of trees in a week
and build you a cabin to boot.
Give me a broadax and a hewing dog
and I’ll square the logs if you choose.
Give me a froe
and I’ll build you a clapboard roof.
Give me a wedge and a maul
and I’ll split a hundred rails in a day.
I can saddle notch a log
or make a saddle for your horse.
Or a bed for to lay on or a bench for to sit on.
I know the ins and outs of raising a fort
which I know you’ll be needin’ up north
and with your permission, sirs, I’ve an idea or two
to expand the capabilities of your keelboat.
I can row and push a setting pole.
I can shoot a gun and throw a hawk.

I can swim like a fish. I can run like the devil.
I'm strong and I'm fit.
I'm a soldier's soldier, Sirs.
I never shirk and I do my work.
And I do the other feller's too.

What's that? *Why* do I want to join?

I mainly . . . Mainly, I want to see the trees.

from *New Found Land: Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery* by Allan Wolf.
Candlewick Press (Cambridge, 2004), pp 77-78.

Multi-Voice Poem

Write a two-voice poem, a la Paul Fleischman's *Joyful Noise*. Perhaps a conversation between two (or more) speakers. Your two voices can speak simultaneously or alternate, passing the lines back and forth. Example (from *Math Talk: Mathematical Ideas in Poems for Two Voices* by Theoni Pappas, see bibliography.)

One

One.
The numbers that is.
I was the
Counting
started with me.

One
Every number
I can multiply any number

One
I can divide any number
and leave it
And when you think you've
just add me to the last
I'm number one,
the first.

I was the first of them.
The numbers that is.
initiator.and computation
One
has me as a factor.
and amazingly leave it unchanged.
that's me.
you name it
the same.
reached the end of the numbers,
and the list goes on.
the first.

Bio-Poem Examples

Seventh Grade Student

Molly

Who is energetic, creative, athletic and short.
Daughter of Sandra and John.
Lover of fun, marine life, and John.
Who feels pessimistic, left out, and sometimes happy.
Who needs love, time, and hugs.
Who fears sharks, death, and homework.
Who gives friendship, advice, and love.
Who would like to see a cure for cancer, Alaska, and my parents back together.
Resident of Mount Air.

McDonald

Character from Literature

Queeny

Angry, defiant, bright, frightened
Daughter of a prison inmate
Cares deeply about her mom and dad
Who feels alone
Who needs someone to see through her defenses
Who gives friendship to those who believe in her
Who fears going to jail
Who would like to see her father
Resident of Cotton Junction, Georgia

Peavy

Historical Figure

Abe

Strong, brooding, witty, compassionate
Husband of Mary Todd Lincoln
Cares deeply about saving the Union
Who feels committed to ending slavery
Who needs the nation's understanding
Who gives freely of himself
Who fears war
Who would like to see North and South as one again
Resident of the ages

Lincoln

“Bio Poem” Example

Sammy

Two poems based on *Sammy* by Elizabeth Ripley

Both of these poems—one a “Bio Poem,” the other an “I Am Poem”—show how poem forms can be used to assess how well students understand literary characters or historical figures. The “bio poem” and “I am poem” also make excellent pre-performance character studies for students who may be acting out a character from literature or poetry.

Naughty, happy, hungry, and sly
Son of Mommy
Lover of fun, jam, and mom
Who feels motivated, happy, and guilt-free
Who needs jam, bread, and a chair to stand on
Who gives headaches, grief, and hugs
Who would like to see his mommy happy
and a swimming pool filled with jam.
Resident of The Kitchen
Jaminsky

“I Am Poem” Example

Mommy of Sammy by Elizabeth Ripley
I am a harried mom in a heckuva hurry.
I wonder why my son can't stay out of trouble.
I hear huge lips smacking in the kitchen.
I see mounds of jam everywhere.
I want a vacation!
I am a harried mom in a heckuva hurry.
I pretend not to find my child annoying.
I touch my child's sticky sweet face.
I worry that he will wipe his face on my new curtains.
I cry to think he won't be a child forever.
I am a harried mom in a heckuva hurry.
I understand that children will make messes.
I say, Sammy! Don't make yourself jammy.
(I say, I'm thankful that we've food to eat at all.)
I dream of the day that Sammy becomes self-cleaning.
I try to remember that this is just a phase.
I hope when I am old, my son will clean up after me.
I am a harried mom in a heckuva hurry.

Resources

Titles of Some of the Poems I Shared

Something Is Going to Happen (from *Delight*) by Robert Penn Warren

The Road Not Taken; Dust of Snow by Robert Frost

The Red Wheelbarrow; This Is Just to Say by William Carlos Williams

Fog by Carl Sandburg

Miracles by Walt Whitman

From *Immersed In Verse: An Informative, Slightly Irreverent & Totally Tremendous Guide to Living the Poet's Life* by Allan Wolf

- *The Red Wheelbarrow* by William Carlos Williams
- *Write About A Radish* by Karla Kuskin
- *Don't Be Afraid* by Allan Wolf
- *Hamburger Haiku* by Allan Wolf
- *A Simile is Like a Song* Author Unknown
- *Where I'm From* by George Ella Lyon

From *The Blood-Hungry Spleen and Other Poems About Our Parts* by Allan Wolf

- Bone Chart
- You Can't Beat Your Heart
- Thirteen Ways of Looking at Your Knees and Elbows
- etc.

From *New Found Land* by Allan Wolf

- *Sgt. Patrick Gass, The Carpenter*

Other poems I might have shared:

- *Arithmetic* by Carl Sandburg
- *Math Lesson* by Bobbi Katz

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A (Very) Limited Bibliography of “NonFiction” Poetry

Note: These titles are just to get you going. There are plenty more, but a handout can only be so long before it turns into a book!

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