

The Poets' Almanac

2019

Local Gems Press

The Poets' Almanac

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*Dedicated to every poet who needs prompts and
journals to write in!*

Foreword

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Poets' Almanac. When we started this in 2016 we knew there was a demand for notebooks and poetry prompts (bonus points for both of these in the same package!)

However, we didn't realize just how big the demand was. Now we know! Each year we get more emails telling us how helpful this little pocket-sized tome has been, and we've seen entire books of poetry written and published just from the prompts in this book. Hopefully this year's version continues that tradition!

Enjoy the 2019 Poets' Almanac. Looking forward to another great year of great writing.

~ James P. Wagner (Ishwa)

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Day 1

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: I am

Write a poem about something that describes you.
What are you, who are you?

Prompt B: I am not

Write a poem about something that does not describe
you. What are you not, who are you not?

Notes:

not a story of me

in the dark words slip around the corners
down anonymous streets in a dangerous neighborhood
where i used to live but don't visit anymore
not ready to read my life
shabbier shrunken for being past
as though i prefer to step from behind clouds
live in perpetual sunlight
pretend shadows speak from a distance
i want to perceive as describing scenes
imagined perfect history
sunlight or labyrinthine streets
one of these must be a dream
but i don't know if escape lies
in waking or sleeping

~ Lesley Tyson

Day 2

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Old Belief

Write a poem about a belief you used to have, but no longer do.

Prompt B: New Belief

Write a poem about something new you have come to believe that you didn't use to.

Notes:

Give

Gazing up a star-filled sky
i hold good intentions,
my heart of gratitude for all I have, my
voice of one carries promise in
words across pages.
every life is like a star
in this world capable of
halting darkness
me, with open arms
reach out
even if to touch just one.
That's why giving is precedence.
In a cold gloomy season heading
towards winter,
the smallest of gestures
food is a candle
for someone else's
shaded chamber of struggle.

Margarette Wahl

Day 3

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: A Secret

Write a poem about a secret. It can be a secret you have kept, a secret someone else kept, a made up secret, or any kind of secret.

Prompt B: A Confession

Write a poem about a confession. It can take the form of a confession itself, or be about a confession you gave or that was given to you, or a made up confession.

Notes:

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What I Did Was

What I did was quietly lift
the china top from the sugar bowl.
I placed it on a dish towel
to keep it quiet.
With a soup spoon, removed
several spoons, maybe all, of the sugar.
Then I replaced it with salt.
After quietly returning the china top
to the sugar bowl, replacing the dish
towel on the rack,
I waited. When the coffee was soured,
I blamed you.
My red face told a different story.

~ Linda Trott Dickman

Day 4

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Re-write a poem

Pick a poem by a poet you like (or dislike) and re-write the poem using a different voice, focus, or just different words.

Prompt B: Write a response poem

Pick a poem by a poet you like or dislike and write a poem in response to the poem you picked. It can be a continuation, or a counter.

Notes:

Sea Glass

Sea glass—broken, beautiful—
translucent redemption:

laced with drifting clouds,
splintered and polished
in the deep blue, thrown
through the thrashing froth
helpless upon the shifting sands,

waiting—each once of a whole, now
alone—for their celestial gleam
to catch the wonder of your eye—

~Alex Edwards-Bourdrez;

Day 5

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Write a poem that starts with the following quote:

"No good deed goes unpunished..."

Prompt B: Write a poem using a minimum of 5 words from the following word bank:

| | | |
|-----------|--------|----------|
| Moustache | Guilt | Erase |
| Entice | Overt | Entrench |
| Assume | Ignite | Inundate |

Notes:

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*to err, kill or forgive
is human
but,
to be divine
you must create
...write.*

~ Gene McParland

Day 6

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Two Close Words

Write a poem about the difference between two closely related words such as love and enchanted, pain and misery, ghost and apparition, etc.

Prompt B: Personified Animal

Write a poem from the point of view of a personified animal.

Notes:

Day 7

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: First Impression

First impressions are powerful. Write a poem about a first impression you had of someone, or made on someone else.

Prompt B: Sales Pitch

We are bombarded with advertising on a daily basis. Write a poem that is also a sales pitch of some kind.

Notes:

Your Spear of Truth

You are pure air and deep water.
You are diamond shining stars.
You are dense fog and gleaming sheets of rain.
In fact, you are the whole damn sky.
You are the beauty of bare feet.
You are dry, chapped hands and a bone-tired body,
but you are more than you think you are.
You are the hot air balloon rising.
You are the first bulb pushing through the soil.
This is your strength—
your spear of truth.
Now use it.

~ Cristina M. R. Norcross

(First published in *Beauty in the Broken Places*, Kelsay Books, 2019)

Day 8

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Stanza Breaks

Write a poem that has the following stanza pattern of lines:

2, 4, 2, 4

Prompt B: One Sentence Poem

Write a poem that is only one sentence long.

Notes:

I Don't Want To Be September

I am July – just a circular looping away
from my name – July – not September
still-summer yet waning, first day of school
those damned yellow buses muffing up traffic
yellow/orange/red leaves lining sidewalks
the last blast of roses, of heat, of quicker swims
of splendiferous sunsets
and yet I am July.

(Dribble) ~ J R Turek

Day 9

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Write a poem that starts with the following quote:

A penny saved is a penny earned

Prompt B: Write a poem using a minimum of 5 words from the following word bank:

letter revenge cobbler
autumn technology infuse
leverage intricate biological

Notes:

Unknown Bridges

Deftly maneuvering beyond crowded bridges
That define who I am and how I became me
Dividing the shallow water beneath
Between loneliness, heartbreak, pain and finally
freedom
I move to be isolated between them
A spirit clogging the holes in the slats
A way to be welcomed back
By each spirited reader crossing my past
Unbeknownst to them
Intent upon reaching my future
As I slide away
Slide between each barking dog and screaming child
A poet seemingly unknown
Yet unheard no more

~ Jessica Brooke

Day 10

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Unpopular Opinion

Write a poem about an unpopular opinion either you or someone you know has. Why is it unpopular? Why does the opinion holder go against the grain?

Prompt B: Write a poem that starts with the following line:

Even a Cup of Coffee Has Feelings

Notes:

Daisy Aroma

A tinted blue round bottle
Dressed in white flower trim
Ribbon around its small neck
A silver knob sits on top
A little spray here and a dab there
Breathe deep and inhale sweetly
A fragrance of early spring daisies
Pleasantly invading the ones nearby
Sending senses into overdrive

~ Carissa Kopf

Day 11

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Echoes

Write a poem about an echo, it can be one you made, one you heard, or one you imagined.

Prompt B: Ghosts

Write a poem about ghosts. It can be a real ghost, an imagined ghost, a ghost of the past, or whatever other type of ghost you can imagine.

Notes:

Music in The Fire Pit

Walking the grounds of the spiritual center
the fire pit at the lake
still, silent, abandoned
filled with ashes
cool, grey, weightless
evidence of prayer, purification, and release
a new white supplication
folded over, resting on top
scrawled with song and poetry
waiting for the next holy bonfire
the witnesses dancing salamanders
Its fierce message demanding
“Do it now!”

What would you burn?

~ Patricia Martin

Day 12

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Love Poem to a Non-Lover

Write a love poem, to someone you are not in love with. Write a love poem to a friend, or a family member.

Prompt B: Constant

Life is full of change, but some things are constant. Write about one of these constants.

Notes:

Sunflower

Lovely lavender sunflower
Bathe in sunshine by day
Pearls of moonlight by night
Unlike many mundane in the garden
You thrive and dazzle
Sweet, spectral delight
You quiet the restlessness spirit
Within me

~ Rita B. Rose

Day 13

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Fake Compound Word

Sometimes we accidentally invent compound words when we talk. Write a poem about a compound word that doesn't exist that either you or someone you know invented.

Prompt B: Myth Poem

Write a poem about a myth. It could be a well-known myth, a local myth, or a made-up myth.

Notes:

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5 AM

I am awake
in your dream...
kind of insomnia
after long cold, rainy spring...

fresh flowing clouds
wash my eyelashes- wild and acid

each unspeakable word
creates gates to be opened-
code: name;
(I repeat my name, I repeat, your name)

bridges images,
walked on tiptoe of time
over burned grapes and thousands of colors orchids.

I am that woman?
who you are?

~ Daniela Voicu

Day 14

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Last Line First

Write the last line of a poem first, then write the rest of the poem.

Prompt B: Waking Up

Write a poem about waking up in the morning (or evening.)

Notes:

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Times Out

These are the times
that I wish were not now
 we have come across
the holy crucifixion
only to be denied salvation
 we have sought god
when god was us
 we tremble at the footsteps to Eden
 only to worry ourselves sick with fear

What is to come of the infatuated
 who wonder at their very footsteps
 and seek help at every corner
 despite help deceiving them at every turn

We procrastinate our existence
 and prolong ecstasy without taking pills
 instead we turn to demagogues
 to turn our pages

Now
 it is up to the unruly mob
 to pursue a leader
 even if it is only pretense

~ Larry Jaffe

Day 15

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Legendary Place

A legendary place is only a legend until someone proves it exists. Write about a legendary place.

Prompt B: Family Portrait

What would your family portrait look like? How would you want it to look? Write a poem about it.

Notes:

Day 16

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Vision

Write a poem about a vision. It could be a premonition, a dream, a wish or any kind of vision you can think of.

Prompt B: Mirage

Sometimes a vision, isn't a vision, but a mirage. Write about a mirage.

Notes:

Day 17

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Curtal Sonnet

Curtal sonnet, is a curtailed or contracted sonnet. Specifically it is a sonnet of 11 lines rhyming *abcabc dcbdc* or *abcabc dbcdc* with the last line a tail, or half a line. The term was used by Gerard Manley Hopkins to describe the form that he used in poems like “Pied Beauty” and “Peace.”

Prompt B: Tailed Sonnet

The Caudate Sonnet, also called a **Tailed Sonnet**, is an extended sonnet with a coda or tail added at the end. It was first attributed to the Italian poet Francesco Berni (1497-1536). This sonnet verse form is often used for satire. The form follows the traditional 14 line structure, with an additional 2 line rhyming couplet and a final half-line of only 6 syllables.

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Day 18

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Write a poem that starts with the following quote:

Be grateful for your enemies

Prompt B: Write a poem using a minimum of 5 words from the following word bank:

indentured allowing empower
trust latitude cautious
alarm structure difference

Notes:

Day 19

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Label

A label can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on the circumstances. Write a poem about a label.

Prompt B: Fake Biography

Write a biography about yourself, or someone else. It should be 100 words or less, and completely fake.

Notes:

Day 20

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Routine

We all have some kind of routine. Write a poem about a routine you have, or a routine you wish you had.

Prompt B: Unmet Expectations

Sometimes things just don't go as planned. Write a poem about a time this happened to you.

Notes:

Day 21

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Word Reduction Poem

Write a poem that has reduces the word count in each line.

10 words line 1

9 words line 2

8 words line 3

and so on.

Prompt B: Skinny Poem

Write a poem that has only one word in each line.

Notes:

10 words

Why
did
you
leave
me
here
in
deep
waters
drowning?

~ Alexis Kennedy

Day 22

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: A Tree With Three Nests

You look up and see a tree. In this tree there are three nests. Write a poem about this. Who do the nests belong to? Are they empty or full?

Prompt B: Abandoned

Write a poem about something that was abandoned. It could be a building, a toy, a relationship or anything you can think of.

Notes:

Year end to begin anew!

The end of the year,
Marks the beginning of a time,
This time is not one that ticks,
But instead reflects,
It reflects our thoughts,
And allows us to begin anew,
And we enter a new year,
Having reflected upon our lives,
We start upon a new beginning,
And our reflection watches us,
As we grow.

~ Joseph Munisteri

Day 23

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Senryu A

Write a senryu about someone you know.

Prompt B: Senryu B

Write a senryu about someone made up.

Senryu: a form of poetry with the syllable count of

5

7

5

typically a humorous poem.

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High-heeled sling-backs
make a comeback
My ankles swell

Tight dress
loose skin
bad fashion choice

~ Sharon Anderson

Day 24

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Good advice.

Write a poem about some good advice you gave or received.

Prompt B: Bad Advice.

Write a poem about some bad advice you gave or received.

Notes:

Day 25

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Unreliable Narrator

Sometimes we are just not trustworthy. Write a poem from the point of view of an unreliable narrator.

Prompt B: Collaborative Poem

Write a poem with a friend. One of you write the first verse, then the other write the second, and continue rotating until you think the poem is complete.

Notes:

Day 26

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Special Place

We all like to escape to a special place sometimes. Write a poem about one such special place.

Prompt B: Overheard Conversation

Sometimes when in public we can't help but overhear something interesting. Write a poem about a conversation you overheard.

Notes:

Day 27

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Optimist

Write a poem from the point of view of an optimist.

Prompt B: Pessimist

Write a poem from the point of view of a pessimist.

Notes:

Day 28

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Season

Many famous poets have written about the seasons. Join them, and write a poem about one of them.

Prompt B: Holiday

Write a poem about a holiday you celebrate or a holiday you find particularly interesting.

Notes:

Day 29

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Write a poem that starts or ends with the following quote:

All is well that ends well

Prompt B: Write a poem using a minimum of 5 words from the following word bank:

smooth soothe work
dark insist inundate
appease sloth fracture

Notes:

Sidewalks In Life

Walking hand in hand
retracing the past or...
creating the future
depending on the day at hand
Or simply by the hand
we are holding.....
Heading nowhere in particular
each step leading to places
where memories are made
some least forgotten....
others forever engraved
on the heart

~ Marcia Conover

Day 30

Poetry Prompts

Prompt A: Ode to the Mundane

Write a poem about something rather ordinary as if it were something extraordinary. Base it on the style of an ode to something you are in love with.

Prompt B: Trivial Poem

Write a poem about something very trivial. A daily action normally taken for granted, or a fact that doesn't matter.

Notes:

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MOON

Odin's lost glass eye

Dot on the i of a gang sign sprayed by a cosmic tagger

Croquet ball fit for use in St. Louis

A very painful kidney stone

Sphincter of a dog that swallowed the sun

Headlight of the largest SUV ever built, the Ford
Metatron

~ Jon Wesick

The Benefits of Local Poetry Publications

Quite a few people enjoy community theater shows. It might not be Broadway, but it can certainly be entertaining. Others, enjoy local sports leagues---not the major leagues (and luckily a fraction of the price) but in many cases, just as much fun. In recent years, more and more, we see poetry joining the ranks of community activity. Local readings and open-mic nights are nothing new, but they are becoming more organized, with local organizations forming and breathing poetic life into specific regions---and along with this trend of community poetry, comes community poetry publications.

That is to say, publications that are specific to particular groups of poets or more commonly---specific regions.

These local and community publications have been an interesting topic of conversation in recent times. While many people are very excited about them, they have garnered a little bit of criticism as well.

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“A Poetry Anthology from Astoria, Oregon, whose going to read that?” one might ask.

It might be true that of the many poetry anthologies out there of various topical and interesting themes such as autism, breast cancer, politics, romance, comedy and many others, a publication based on region is not going to have much appeal—at least outside of the...well, region. (Although, there are some exceptions here.)

But what someone who might ask this question doesn't understand is just what a powerful effect this publication might have on that region and the poets within it. Each anthology, review, magazine that comprises poets on a local level is a shared experience, a community effort that enriches all of those involved in it. There are countless readings and workshops and contests. Poets love all of these, they love to read their work in front of an audience, many of them love to get critiques of their works in progress and helpful ideas on where they might go with their pieces. And for some poets, this is good enough. But many of them want to be doing it for SOMETHING. Some kind of tangible goal that they can reach to let them know they have achieved something for their efforts.

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One of the interesting things about the creative arts or sports is how many people stop being heavily involved with them once they are out of high school or college. For many of them, it's not because they lack a continued interest in the activity at hand—and in some cases it's not even lack of time, but lack of a next step. The gap between school sports and the professional leagues for example is quite large, luckily in some places they have community leagues and teams so that those with a real interest can keep playing.

Quite a few young poets would start out with hope and promise as they got their poetry accepted in their school publications in high school and then maybe college---but like high school and college athletes normally find out when trying to reach the major leagues, poets would find that after those high school and college lit journals, there were usually no more publications out there within reach for them---the fancy elite journals having such a high rejection rate that unless you knew someone who worked there it almost didn't even pay to bother trying.

The sad side effect of this wide gap between the elite journals and the art and lit magazines of the local colleges and high schools was that many of those poets

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without a next step to strive for, would simply stop writing---put their poetry in a cabinet somewhere and move in to something else with more apparent and obvious outlets for growth.

“How will this local publication advance my poetry career?” some poets might ask of a local publication—and those people are missing the point of them entirely.

Local poetry publications, like local sports leagues, fill the gap of the post-school activity.

They are not designed to make the poets inside them famous on a national or international level, but instead are intended to inspire and invigorate the craft in a specific region—stand as proof of the work a poet has already accomplished, and provide avenues for them to encounter and interact with the work of others that they might not have seen otherwise.

Local Publications Provide:

1: A goal to write for.

Everyone needs a goal to shoot for and writers are no different. People can set goals for themselves, but having something external set the goals for us makes it

far easier. (Think of working out at home versus a trainer!)

2: A sense of accomplishment.

People need to feel accomplished—and they need to have a metric to judge themselves as to where they currently are to where they used to be—this is why they have belts in karate, this is why we have different levels of education. Publication in local books, reviews, magazines, provides a notch on the belt of a poet—a sense that all their hard work paid off, and can serve as a stepping stone towards their eventual book of poems!

3: Amazing networking events.

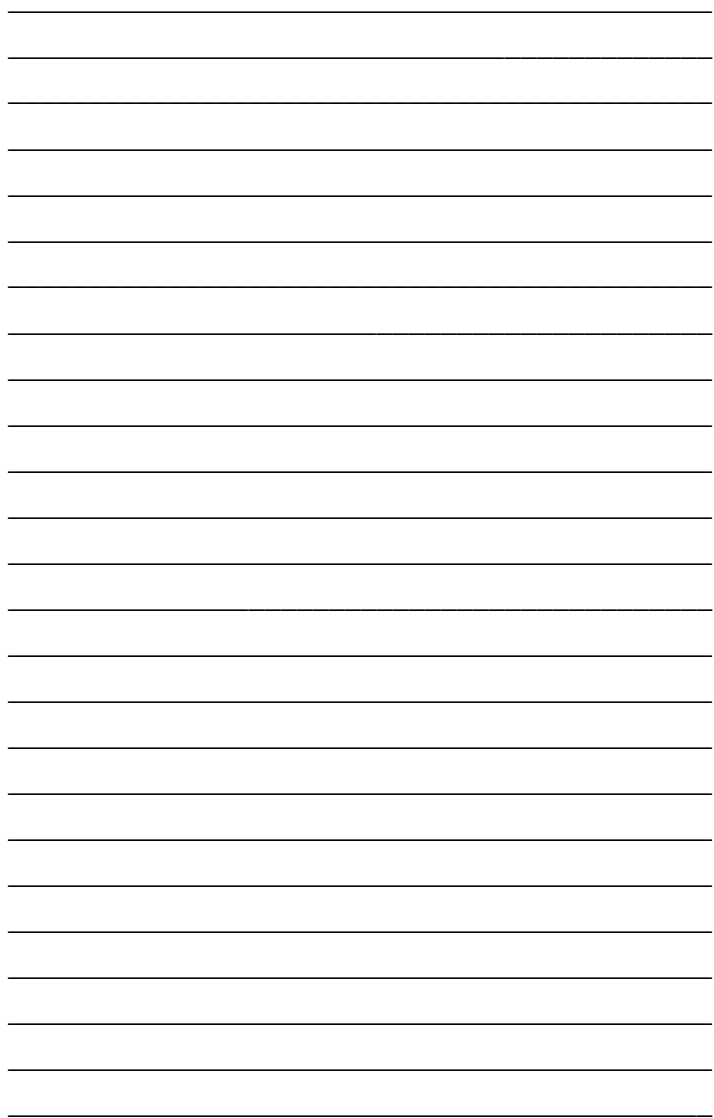
Most local publications have events to launch themselves. The organizations or groups that sponsored the publications typically sponsor these events and invite the poets within them to come and read. There is nothing quite like a book launch event---the number of people, the family and friends who come to show their support, and the networking between poets—meeting the movers and shaker and

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writers in your local area all serve to provide some of the best events a poet could possibly attend.

But most importantly, these publications nurture and benefit the institution and tradition of poetry that has existed for thousands of years. Without poetry alive and fresh at the local level, we wouldn't have any at the national level---and this generation's future famous poets might be left in the dust along with the many athletes whose careers were cut short by lack of opportunity.

So love poetry at the local level, give out copies of the books as gifts to your family and friends, and enjoy being a part of the ever-growing history of poetry!



Japanese Poetry Forms

A Poet's Guide



When people think of Japanese poetry, the Haiku is the first thing that comes to mind. But the Haiku did not become the Haiku we know until a thousand years after the first manuscripts of classical Japanese poetry were written..

Learn about the Renga, the Tanka, the Sedoka, the Choka, the Haikai, the Dodoitsu and others. Learn about the Japanese death poem tradition and read some poems by Zen Monks that are up to 700 years old.

Learn the history behind the vibrant culture that gave rise to so many wonderful forms of poetry, and how to write them.

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Available on Amazon!



Local Gems Poetry Press is a small Long Island based poetry press dedicated to spreading poetry through performance and the written word. Local Gems believes that poetry is the voice of the people, and as the sister organization of the Bards Initiative, believes that poetry can be used to make a difference.

www.localgemspetrypress.com