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# An Intro to Poetry

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# What are we going to cover...

We'll cover a lot (but not enough):

1. What is poetry?
2. A little history
3. Types of poems
4. How to...
5. Publishing/Submitting
6. Criticism/Rejection ☹
7. Poets I admire



01

# What is poetry

Almost anything you want it to be  
(but not really)

# Poetry

**An unhelpful definition from Oxford:** a collection of poems; poems in general synonym verse, epic/lyric/pastoral, etc. poetry  
Maya Angelou's poetry; a poetry reading



# Poem

**A more helpful definition from Oxford:** a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their sound and the images they suggest, not just for their obvious meanings. The words are arranged in separate lines, usually with a repeated rhythm, and often the lines rhyme at the end.

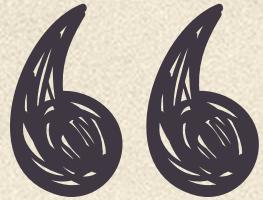




Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.

- William Wordsworth





If I feel physically as if the top of  
my head were taken off, I know  
that is poetry.

– Emily Dickinson





Poetry is a way of taking life by  
the throat.



**- Robert Frost**





The poet is a liar who always  
speaks the truth.



- Jean Cocteau





The genesis of a poem for me is usually a cluster of words. The only good metaphor I can think of is a scientific one: dipping a thread into a supersaturated solution to induce crystal formation. I don't think I solve problems in my poetry; I think I uncover the problems.

**- Margaret Atwood**





Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden  
beauty of the world, and makes  
familiar objects be as if they were  
not familiar.



– Percy Bysshe Shelley





I would define ... the poetry of  
words as the rhythmical  
creation of beauty.



- Edgar Allen Poe





**It is a test that genuine poetry can  
communicate before it is  
understood.**



**- Dante Alighieri**





Writing free verse is like playing  
tennis with the net down.



- Robert Frost

**OUCH!**





Poetry is what happens when  
nothing else can.



- Charles Bukowski



NO  
PRESSURE



A good poem is a contribution to reality. The world is never the same once a good poem has been added to it. A good poem helps to change the shape of the universe, helps to extend everyone's knowledge of himself and the world around him.

- Dylan Thomas





**...that's the role of poetry,  
to say what others cannot.**



**- The Poet Dandelion (Andrzej Sapkowski)**

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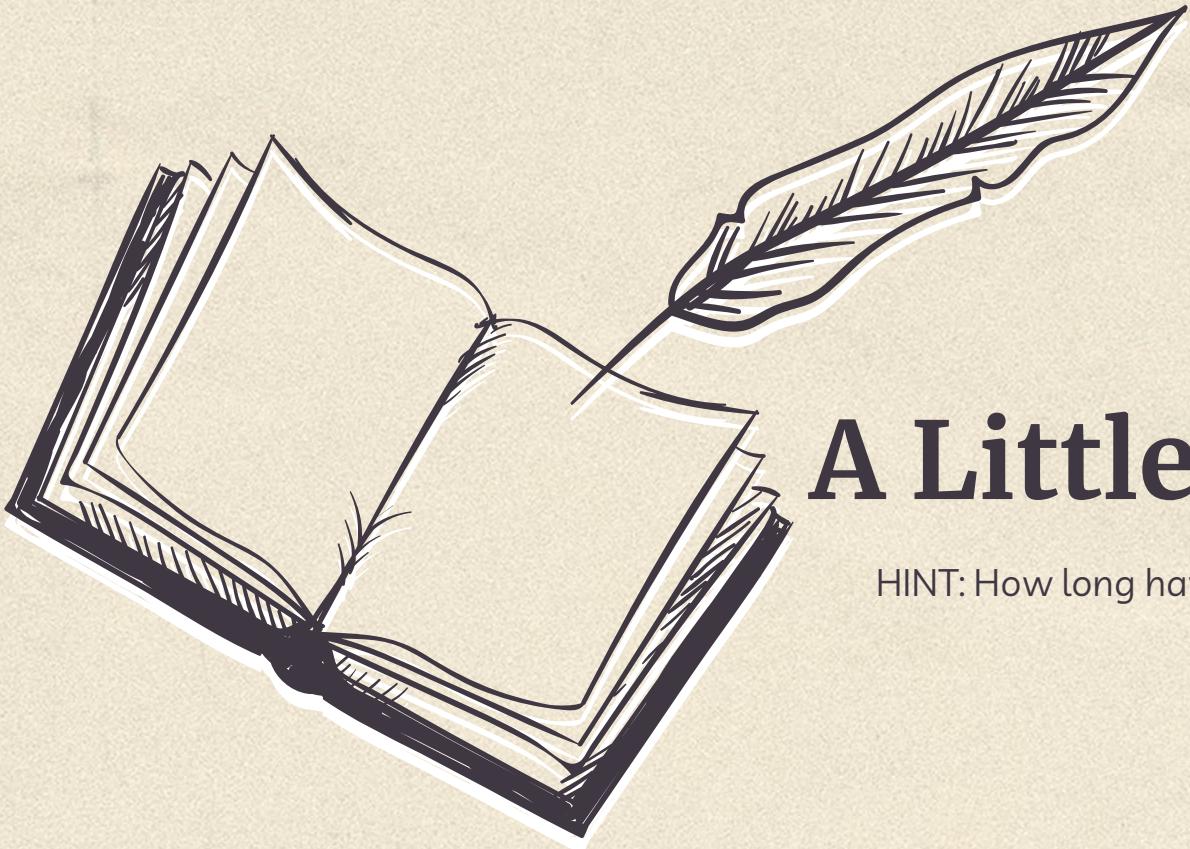


Poetry is fear overcome.



- Peter Cantelon





02

## A Little History

HINT: How long have humans been sentient?

# A Poetic Timeline



## Pyramid of Unis

Invocation to New Life inscribed on the burial chamber in the pyramid of Unis. Egypt circa 4,300 (unattributed)



## Enheduanna: Mother of poets

The earliest recorded poetry written by Sumerian high priestess of the goddess Inanna and the god Nanna in Ur about 4,200 years ago



## Ramayana and Mahabharata

Indian Sanskrit epics written between 7<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE which include the text of the Bhagavad Gita

Others: Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailer (Egypt 2,500 BCE); Gilgamesh (Mesopotamia 1,800 BCE); Epic of Sundiata from West Africa (Date unknown)

# A Poetic Timeline

04

## Dante & John Donne The Divine Comedy & Paradise Lost

Italian epic poem completed in 1320. 14,233 lines; British epic poem completed in 1667. 10,000+ lines.

05

## Modern Poetry

William Blake, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Amanda Gorman, Kenji Miyazawa, Eminem, Shel Silverstein, Theodore Geisel, Robert Service, Shane Koyczan, Ted Hughes, Rupi Kaur & so many more

Circa 600 BCE, Greek poet composed more than 10,000 lines famously known as the 10<sup>th</sup> muse.

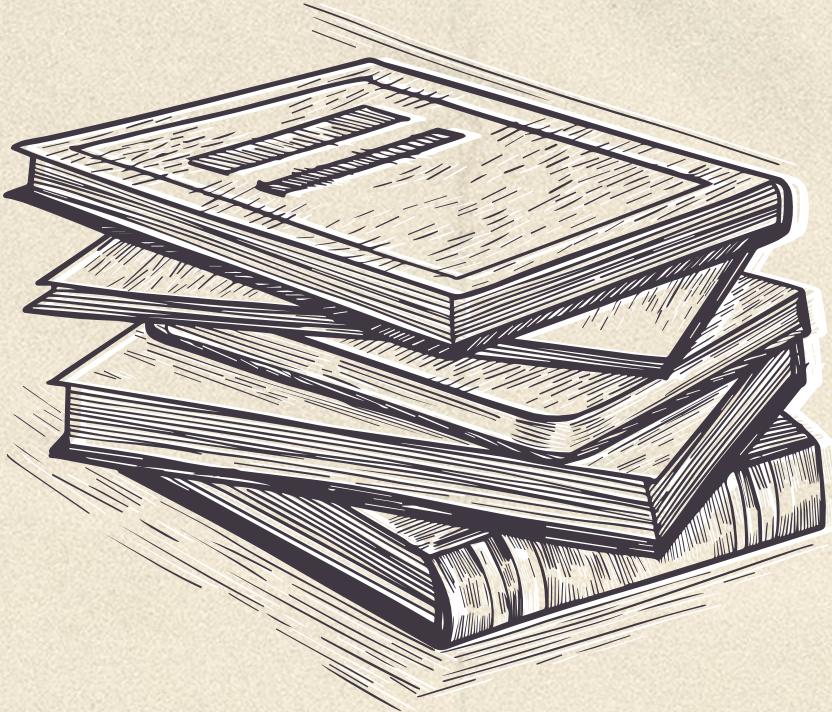


## & SHAKESPEARE!

The Bard. 154 sonnets, plays and other poems; writing between 1585-1613 CE

# 03

## Types of Poems



# Poetic Types

Ekphrastic

Acrostic

Free Verse

Ode

Villanelle

Elegy

Sonnet

Rhymed

Blank Verse

Lyric

Ballad

Epic

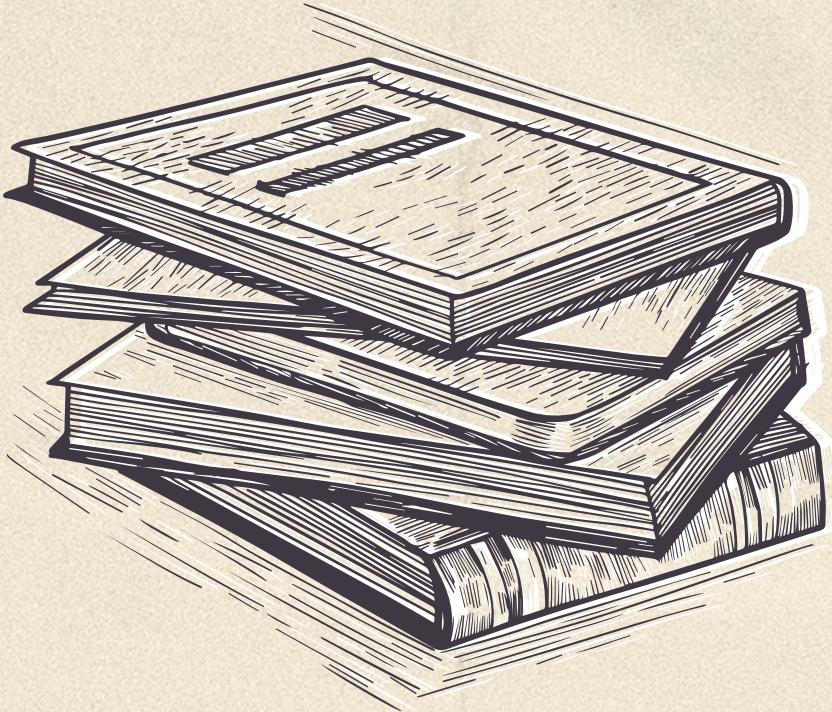
Limerick

Haiku



# 04

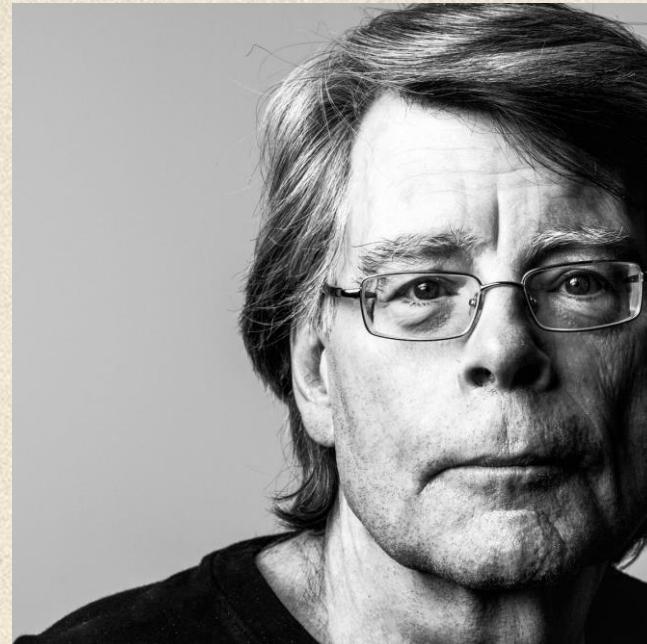
## How to...





# Advice from the most prolific and successful writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Write for yourself, then the audience
- The magic is in you. *“I’m convinced that fear is at the root of most bad writing.”*
- Read, read, read.
- You have three months (deadlines)
- Writer’s write
- Find your inspiration (music, nature...)
- STOP. Make it easy: pen, paper, phone, laptop, PC, Start a blog etc.



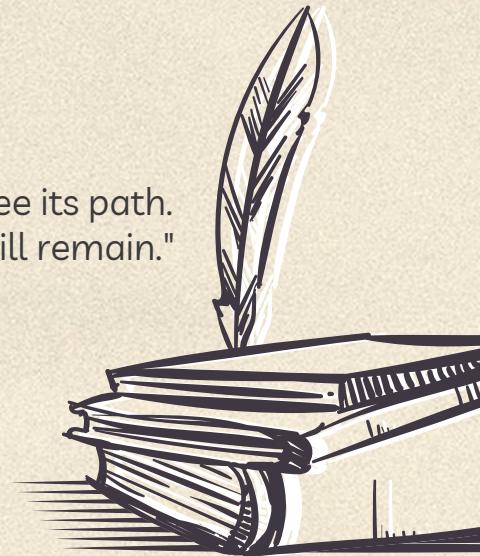


# Litany Against Fear

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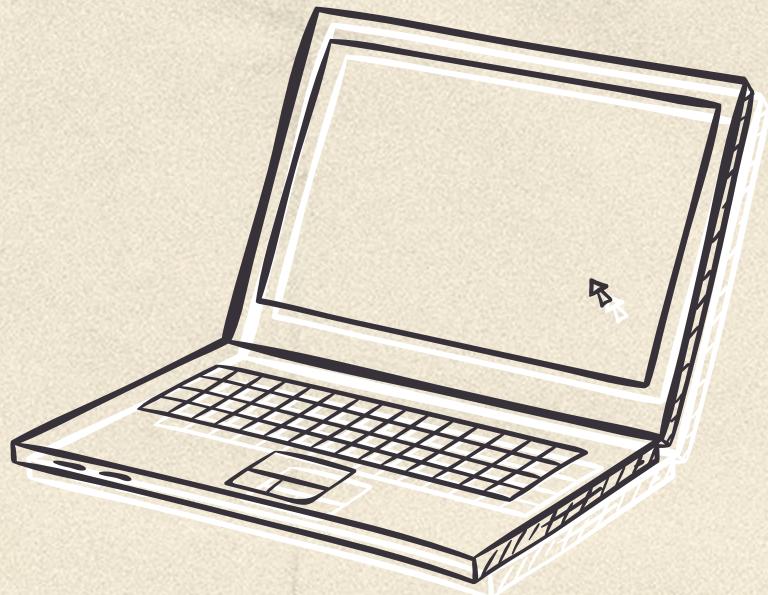
"I must not fear.  
Fear is the mind-killer.  
Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.  
I will face my fear.  
I will permit it to pass over me and through me.  
And when it has gone past, I will turn the inner eye to see its path.  
Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain."

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# 05

## Publishing/ Submitting





## Statistics & the Odds

Appreciation of poetry (like most creative work) is subjective. Play the odds – the more you submit, the greater your chances.

## Reach out...

Editors and publishers are happy to answer your questions. Just email.

## Right Place/Right Time

The most well known poets reflect their times.  
See Bob Dylan.

## Marketing

Know your market and let your market know you. Horror magazines won't publish your limerick.

## Make Your Own Luck

Network and connect. Follow the Facebook groups and social media sites.

# Resources for Publishing

## Facebook

[www.facebook.com/groups/poeticallyinclined/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/poeticallyinclined/)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/thatpoetryplace/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/thatpoetryplace/)  
[www.facebook.com/p0etic1](http://www.facebook.com/p0etic1)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/860877037424122 \(No Fee Call\)](http://www.facebook.com/groups/860877037424122)

## Internet

[www.newpages.com/classifieds/calls-for-submissions](http://www.newpages.com/classifieds/calls-for-submissions)  
[trishhopkinson.com/2021/05/07/30-international-lit-mags-seeking-english-no-fee-submissions-of-poetry-prose-and-art/](http://trishhopkinson.com/2021/05/07/30-international-lit-mags-seeking-english-no-fee-submissions-of-poetry-prose-and-art/)

!!! Try International !!!

# 06

## Criticism & Rejection

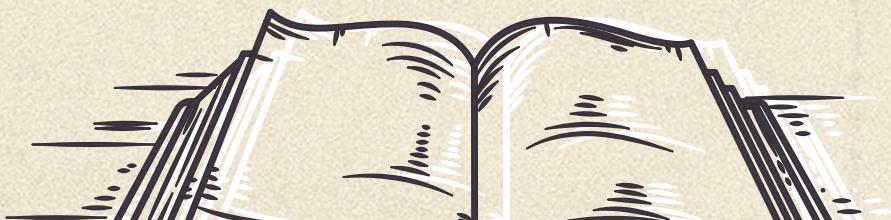


“Your baby is  
ugly and your  
ugly too!”



# Poets I Admire

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, John Donne, Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, Leonard Cohen, Kenji Miyazawa, Forough Farrokhzad, Sappho, Irving Layton, Emily Dickenson, Morrissey, Margaret Atwood, William Blake, John Keats, Emily Browning, Robert Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ezra Pound, Charles Bukowski, Dante, Dylan Thomas, Lord Byron, Shel Silverstein, Amanda Gorman



# An Encouragement

“It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.”

- Gandalf to Frodo, The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien



# Thanks

Do you have any questions?

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Download the presentation at:

[www.Cantelon.org](http://www.Cantelon.org)

