

**POEM  
IN YOUR  
POCKET  
DAY**

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APRIL 30 | NATIONAL POETRY MONTH 2020

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 30, 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](https://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](https://poets.org/national-poetry-month/poem-your-pocket-day)

# Swimming in Church Lake

John Wall Barger

That thundercloud, north, is a bathtub  
overflowing silver.

The man with the beard  
is my father. What current  
urges me to the road,  
him to the forest?

My mother hugs her knees  
on the big granite rock.

I am the son with tinnitus  
from rock concerts.

Quiet as a dentist drill  
just over my head  
shifting one ear to the other.

Below us, lake bottom,  
darkness blossoms.

The feather of dusk is upon us.  
Light, a dragonfly, scatters.  
Waterskaters.

The man with the beard  
swims out further.

We are a triangle of waves.  
I am the rattlebrained  
son. That sound is the  
mind treading water.

I am the bearded man.  
I keep the colorblind distances.

I am the woman.  
The trembling celestial  
ladder my body.

I am love,  
keeping the triangle large.

I am thunder  
my ear sings.

*Arc Poetry magazine, Spring 2019*

# Cosmic Egg Hypothesis

Laura Cok

That the universe's egg came first,  
that God is a chicken. That each star  
lay coiled in place, thin membrane  
keeping order. Here is a tiny rhododendron  
ready to hatch. The ocean in a teacup  
with its cube of salt. Whiskey barrels. Golden  
retrievers. Scaled down so only God,  
the chicken, can peer into the egg  
with her reading lamp and microscope, looking for—  
ah, here we are, kicking towards the light.

# Le Mot Juste

M.E. Csamer

Membrane is a sheath, keeps us in; sometimes clarity skins it,  
like when you said thin, the thin places;  
you, telling your son *it was in this parking lot when I knew I loved your father,*  
*here where I fell, stopped, time ran into my back, stopped as well;*  
*that I fell, that it was thin, I froze and touched it and life touched back,*  
though that's not how you said it  
or how I can say it here because it was the one word thin  
that slowed the air in the room, our breathing,  
like Flaubert said, *le mot juste*.

I want to see your child's eyes as you tell him:  
is he stopped as well, unable to be his ten years,  
to think *my mother is embarrassing me;*  
your story, the recognizing of love, your words  
labeling the picture he has in his mind,  
walking into a room where you and his father are standing together  
and it's, oh, love,  
so he touches the thin place too,  
and where you are mesmerized, remembering,  
he is comforted, like when you tuck him in and your hair falls against his face,  
the last thought before sleep the smell of you, his mother.

There are three of us in this room,  
beautiful, artistic women,  
each battered in her own way and giving it out through words  
or paint or in this silence  
where the membrane wraps around us  
and we are inside the living heart of the world  
and it should be remarkable but it is only this,  
women talking in the small spaces of time we have,  
free of the chores, the nurturing,  
hands resting before they move to raise the world again,  
hold it to our breasts and warm it.

# Christmas Work Detail, Samos

Steven Heighton

*Eid milad majid\**

In the olive grove on the high ground, facing west  
into rain, we dig graves for three men drowned  
in the straits—Syrians, maybe, dispossessed  
of everything by the sea, so there's no knowing

for sure. This much you can say for any grave,  
it's landlocked. And these men will lie a decent  
distance uphill, out of sight of the beach  
where on Sunday their bodies washed ashore

in plausible orange life-vests (ten euros each)  
packed with sawdust, bubble wrap, rags. These rains  
haven't softened the soil, yet digging up here  
feels only right; the waves that buried them

terrified them first, and we guess, again,  
that they—like the ones the crossing didn't kill—  
were from desert towns, this sea inconceivable  
as the Arctic. And each cardboard casket,

awaiting its patient passenger, looks  
almost seaworthy after the cut-rate raft  
they fled in, and which, deflated, washed in  
later, silent, as if shyly contrite.

It seems we've failed them, despite the safe graves.  
In a grove this untended the ground is brined  
bitter with black fruit rotting, and on islands  
nowhere is far enough from the waves.

\*—Arabic for *Happy birth feast*, or *Merry Christmas*

*The Moth*, 2019

# Why Scrabble

Louisa Howerow

Because Scrabble's square board says  
it is a plane figure, a stable figure

Because in the board's 15 X 15 grid  
no square can be truer than another

Because 15 is my mother's lucky number,  
and she loved numbers long before she loved letters

Because she says her tongue can't twist itself  
to those strange English sounds  
and she's deaf to them when she needs to be

Because Q and Z are worth ten points  
and if AA ZA QI exist then she can invent others

Because to play Scrabble is to slap down tiles  
left-right, top down, and laugh our fool heads off

Because once she made bingo on her first turn,  
and we took photos to pin on her bragging wall  
right there with her row of winning scores

Because Scrabble proved to be  
the canary in the coal mine.

Because when she begged off the second game,  
couldn't finish the first,  
we knew

*Fresh Voices, 2019*

# Letters Home

Kevin Irie

Your letters back home  
were maps of your progress,  
charting a course where children existed  
to pass their exams, then marry and multiply.

You spoke of new cars like having more offspring,  
as if success were the infant conceived with immigration,  
a photo sent along with your words to drive your achievements  
all the way home.

You failed to describe  
the way your goals were routed like traffic  
in other directions, those detours  
common as dead-end streets:

long hours, harsh weather,  
small bills turning to larger debts,  
the children rebellious.

Bad news never existed in print.  
Your letters were brochures sent to family  
who could only visit with you by mail,  
guests of your word on paper alone.

There, a pen could hold your children to curfew,  
paper could keep your husband happy.

Fluent at last in New World content,  
you hid dismay like a second language  
you spoke only in private, at home.

Silence: the one who would always listen  
and never talk back

in English.

*Dinner at Madonna's, Frontenac House, 2003*

# Believe...

**Penn Kemp**

In the space of a year, she has learned to sit,  
to stand, to walk, to totter forward in a run.

She has seen one full round of the seasons.  
She wraps her family round her little finger.

Now just before dusk we stroll hand in hand  
to witness the evening ritual of geese return.

Gliding along the river in formation, they  
skim overhead, flapping slow time in sych.

She studies their procedure, dropping my hand  
to edge forward, neck outstretched, arms aero-

dynamically angled. She flaps and flaps along  
the bank, following their flight, ready for that

sudden lift. Again, again, till the last goose has  
flown. Dragging her heels home, disconcerted,

she braces her body against the rising breeze,  
bewildered that she too can't take off to sky

but game to try again tomorrow, convinced  
the birds' secret will soon belong to her.

*River Revery*, 2019 | <https://riverrevery.ca/animation/>

# Concealing

Shannon Kernaghan

I study her practised strokes  
mirror-side, my legs dangling  
from the bathroom cabinet.  
She applies a solid foundation  
then caulks empty space with  
concealer, a false front to hide  
true age, real provenance,  
“Better tips,” she says with a heavily  
mascaraed wink.

When I examine my favourite photo of her  
as a teen before she came to Canada,  
her olive skin shining  
through the years and Kodachrome,  
I long to run fingers through the snarl  
of ropey curls she now relaxes  
chemically, straightening and shellacking  
with products that conceal her  
Mediterranean past,  
a name shortened from Simonides to  
Simon,  
one I will legally change back  
proud of my heritage,  
unafraid to show a few curls  
a few cracks.

*More Life Coming Up, After the Break(down), 2017*

# Missed Call

Annick MacAskill

The house sparrow carries sunlight in her beak.  
Consider the mystery—the slight frame

burgeoning with hymns against the backdrop  
of still melting snow, blue and white pooling

in the long given-out grass. Under cedars I walk  
and whisper, attempt forgetting, but her notes

are pressed upon my mind. Her flush moves over me,  
probes my body—I don't expand like she does,

but I no longer split from wanting.  
Her call rushes my insides, sears my chest—

tests my resilience. I try her song, but my throat fails,  
feeble. And would you hear me anyway?

I imagine your arms in another version of winter,  
deep in snowdrifts, limbs and torso smudged

in effort and evening—you catch everything, as I see it—  
while I'm still here, rasping.

[\* ...but her notes envelop / my mind's soft ear. Her flush...]

[\* ...but her notes still surface / in my mind. Her flush...]

[\* ...but her notes are stamped / upon my mind. Her flush...]

[\* ...but her notes / sink into my mind. Her flush...]

[\* ...but her notes become infixed / in my mind. Her flush...]

*Canadian Notes & Queries, Summer 2018 | Murmurations, Gaspereau Press, 2020*

# The Last Time I Saw You

Carol L. MacKay

You were gassing up  
and half-smiling over the pump.  
I pulled my body back in the seat, returned the credit card  
to my wallet, zipped up  
behind the armour of the 4-Runner.  
I couldn't help leaning forward  
to watch the smile uncurl to a straight line  
and that's when I noticed  
I couldn't help but notice  
the knotty unpruned branches of your twisty  
hands very different from the ones  
I want to remember on my swing seat  
higher, higher, higher.  
And I wanted to take the pitted nozzle from them  
squeeze the heaviness in your place, ask  
Where are your people? And I wanted  
to know if they kicked you to the curb  
to open your own pickle jars or  
drag the biting handles of groceries home yourself. And  
after,

I tore the Kodachrome from the album.  
I flamingo-legged across the sand  
in my one piece, one-tracked mind  
I want, I want, I want.  
You were pulled along in clamdiggers & flip-flops  
fingers long-leashed, warm-wrapping my tugging hand.

# Lovers

Diana Manole

We walk at a distance—  
actors not knowing what to do with our hands.  
The silence of dioecious plants.  
“You’re a suspect,” he warns me.  
And so I am: a woman.

“See me, please!”



# Crepuscule

Colin Morton

Pacemaker, beta blocker, titanium knee.  
We're kept in comfort at great expense.  
Remember yesterday when we were free?

Now appointments fill our week.  
Always looking for glasses or pens.  
Pacemaker, beta blocker, titanium knee.

You say I can't hear, well, you can't see.  
Dear, let's not even mention Depends.  
Remember yesterday when we were free?

I look after you, you take care of me.  
We've been lovers, we're still friends.  
Pacemaker, beta blocker, titanium knee.

Remember how we'd run uphill to see  
sunset? We didn't want the day to end.  
Pacemaker, beta blocker, titanium knee.  
Did we even know when we were free?

Ascent, readthebestwriting.com, 2018

# Georgian Bay Meditation

Nan Williamson

Rosy granite, dark-veined  
feldspar flecked black,  
gleaming splash of milky quartz,  
angular stones drawn by glaciers,  
fractured and scraped,  
rounded by sand and waves,  
rocky abstractions milled from the Shield.

I choose your birthday token  
from this gritty northern shore,  
place in your veined hand  
a ruddy gold-streaked story-  
older than language, than love.  
Dark green bands of igneous rock,  
orange lichen dropped like paint.  
Jack pines clutch at crevices,  
jagged branches lean one way.

In the bay, shifting hues: cobalt,  
steel grey, and thin, bitter spume  
snap at the scudding sky;  
Waves slap against the stones,  
retreat, return; the rhythm lasts  
all afternoon - or our whole lives.  
What's left is little time  
to understand it all, beginning  
with these ancient traces on the shore.

*Room Magazine*, March/April 2014

# The Moon Over Istanbul

Bänoo Zan

is my mother's  
profile

She will not remember  
my departure

The moon over Istanbul  
is a bonfire of stories  
displaced and homegrown—

This is the waning moon  
like the thin dome of  
Hagia Sophia<sup>1</sup>  
emptied of prayer—  
a bright cup  
filled with night—

I drink from her dreams—  
a whirling dervish mirror skirt  
spread over the void—

stars falling  
my eyes  
drop by drop—

Christos and Allah  
inhabit the same temple  
but we are driven apart—

The moon over Istanbul  
is a song of farewell  
no bird can sing—

She is the same goddess  
worshiped everywhere—

but now  
she is here—  
with me—

<sup>1</sup>Former Greek Orthodox Christian cathedral,  
later an Ottoman imperial mosque, and now  
a museum, located in Istanbul, Turkey  
Juniper Poetry Magazine, Fall 2019

# About the Authors

**John Wall Barger's** poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Rattle*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, and *Best of the Best Canadian Poetry*. His poem, "Smog Mother," was co-winner of *The Malahat Review's* 2017 Long Poem Prize. His fourth book, *The Mean Game* (Palimpsest Press, 2019), is currently in its second printing.

Originally from northern California, **Laura Cok** spent time in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Waterloo, Ontario before settling in Toronto, where she has lived for 15 years. Cok has an MA in English Literature from the University of Toronto, where she won the E.J. Pratt Poetry Medal and the *University of Toronto Magazine* alumni poetry contest. Her first book, *Doubter's Hymnal*, was published by Mansfield Press in 2019 and was longlisted for the Gerald Lampert award, and her poem "Cosmic Egg Hypothesis" won the 2020 Broadsheet Contest.

**M. E. Csamer** is widely published in Canadian literary magazines. Her books include *Paper Moon* (1998), *Light is What We Live In* (2005), and *A Month Without Snow* (2007). She served for several years as president for The League of Canadian Poets. Her last published collection of poetry is *Another Way of Falling* (2012).

**Steven Heighton's** most recent books are *The Nightingale Won't Let You Sleep*, a novel, and *The Waking Comes Late*, which received the 2016 Governor General's Award for Poetry. His short fiction and poetry have received four gold National Magazine Awards and have appeared in *London Review of Books*, *Granta*, *Poetry*, *Best American Poetry*, *Tin House*, *TLR*, *Agni*, *Best American Mystery Stories*, *Zoetrope*, and several editions of *Best Canadian Poetry*.

**Louisa Howerow's** poems can be found in a number of Canadian anthologies, among them: *An Unfinished War: war of 1812 poetry & prose* (Black Moss Press), *I Found It at the Movies: An Anthology of Film Poems* (Guernica Editions), *Imaginarium 3 & 4: The Best of Canadian Speculative Writing* (ChiZine Press), *Gush: Menstrual Manifestos for Our Times* (Frontenac House) and *Another Dysfunctional Cancer Poem Anthology* (Mansfield Press).

# About the Authors

**Kevin Irie** has published poetry in Canada, the States, Australia, and England. His poems have been broadcast on CBC Radio and have been translated into Spanish, French, and Japanese. He has been long-listed for the CBC Poetry Prize, nominated for the ReLit Award, and shortlisted for Arc's Poem of the Year contest. His book, *Viewing Tom Thomson: A Minority Report* (Frontenac House) was a finalist for the Acorn-Plantos People's Poetry Award as well as the Toronto Book Award. He lives in Toronto.

Poet, performer and playwright **Penn Kemp** has been celebrated as a trailblazer from her first poetry publication by Coach House (1972) to her latest: *River Revery*, *Local Heroes* (Insomniac Press) and *Fox Haunts* (Aeolus House). See [pennkemp.weebly.com](http://pennkemp.weebly.com) and [pennkemp.wordpress.com](http://pennkemp.wordpress.com).

**Shannon Kernaghan** is a published author and columnist. Her work appears in books, magazines and journals. For years she wrote a weekly newspaper column and continues to tell her stories at [ShannonKernaghan.com](http://ShannonKernaghan.com).

**Annick MacAskill's** debut collection, *No Meeting Without Body* (Gaspereau Press, 2018), was selected as a finalist for the J.M. Abraham Award and the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. Her second collection, *Murmurations*, appears with Gaspereau Press this spring. She lives and writes in Halifax.

**Carol L. MacKay's** poems have been published in literary journals in Canada, the US and Ireland, including in *The New Quarterly*, *Crannóg*, *Prairie Journal* and *The Fiddlehead*. She writes poetry for young people as well and is a frequent contributor to children's magazines. Carol lives on Vancouver Island.

**Diana Manole** is a Romanian-Canadian scholar, literary translator, and award-winning author of nine books of poetry and drama in her native Romania. Her poetry in English has been published in magazines and anthologies in Europe, the UK, the US, Mexico, South Africa, and Canada, and in the English-Romanian book *B&W* (Tracus Arte 2015). Her second bilingual collection of poems, *Praying to a Landed-Immigrant God*, will be published in Canada by Grey Borders Books in September 2020. Holding a doctorate from the University of Toronto, Diana teaches academic and practical courses in theatre and performance, literature, and creative writing at universities in Southern Ontario.

# About the Authors

**Christine McNair** has published two books of poetry, *Conflict* (Book\*hug, 2012) and *Charm* (Book\*hug, 2017). *Charm* won the Archibald Lampman prize in 2018. She works as a book doctor in Ottawa.

**Colin Morton** has published a dozen books, ranging from visual and sound poetry (*Printed Matter*) to historical narratives (*The Merzbook: Kurt Schwitters Poems*; *The Hundred Cuts: Sitting Bull and the Major*). He has also published a novel, short stories, many reviews and essays, and coproduced (with Ed Ackerman) the award-winning animated sound-poetry film *Primiti Too Taa*. [colinmorton.net](http://colinmorton.net).

**Nan Williamson** is a graduate of the Humber School for Writers, Toronto, 2013. Her chapbook, *leave the door open for the moon*, was published by Jackson Creek Press in 2015. Her poems and illustrations have been published in many juried literary journals and anthologies in Canada, the US and the UK. Currently, Nan leads the newly-revived Poetry Circle, Canadian Authors Association, Peterborough Branch.

**Bānoo Zan** is a poet, librettist, translator, teacher, editor and poetry curator, with more than 200 published poems and poetry-related pieces as well as three books. *Song of Phoenix: Life and Works of Sylvia Plath*, was reprinted in Iran in 2010. *Songs of Exile*, her first poetry collection, was released in 2016 in Canada by Guernica Editions. It was shortlisted for Gerald Lampert Memorial Award by the League of Canadian Poets in 2017. *Letters to My Father*, her second poetry book, was published in 2017 by Piquant Press in Canada. She is the founder of Shab-e She'r (Poetry Night), Toronto's most diverse poetry reading and open mic series (inception: 2012). It is a brave space that bridges the gap between communities of poets from different ethnicities, nationalities, religions (or lack thereof), ages, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, poetic styles, voices and visions.

LinkedIn [/in/banoozan/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/banoozan/) | Facebook [/banoo.zan](https://www.facebook.com/banoo.zan)

Twitter [/BanooZan](https://twitter.com/BanooZan) | Instagram [/banoo.zan](https://www.instagram.com/banoo.zan)

# 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 previously published 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](#)

[Poetry class 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.