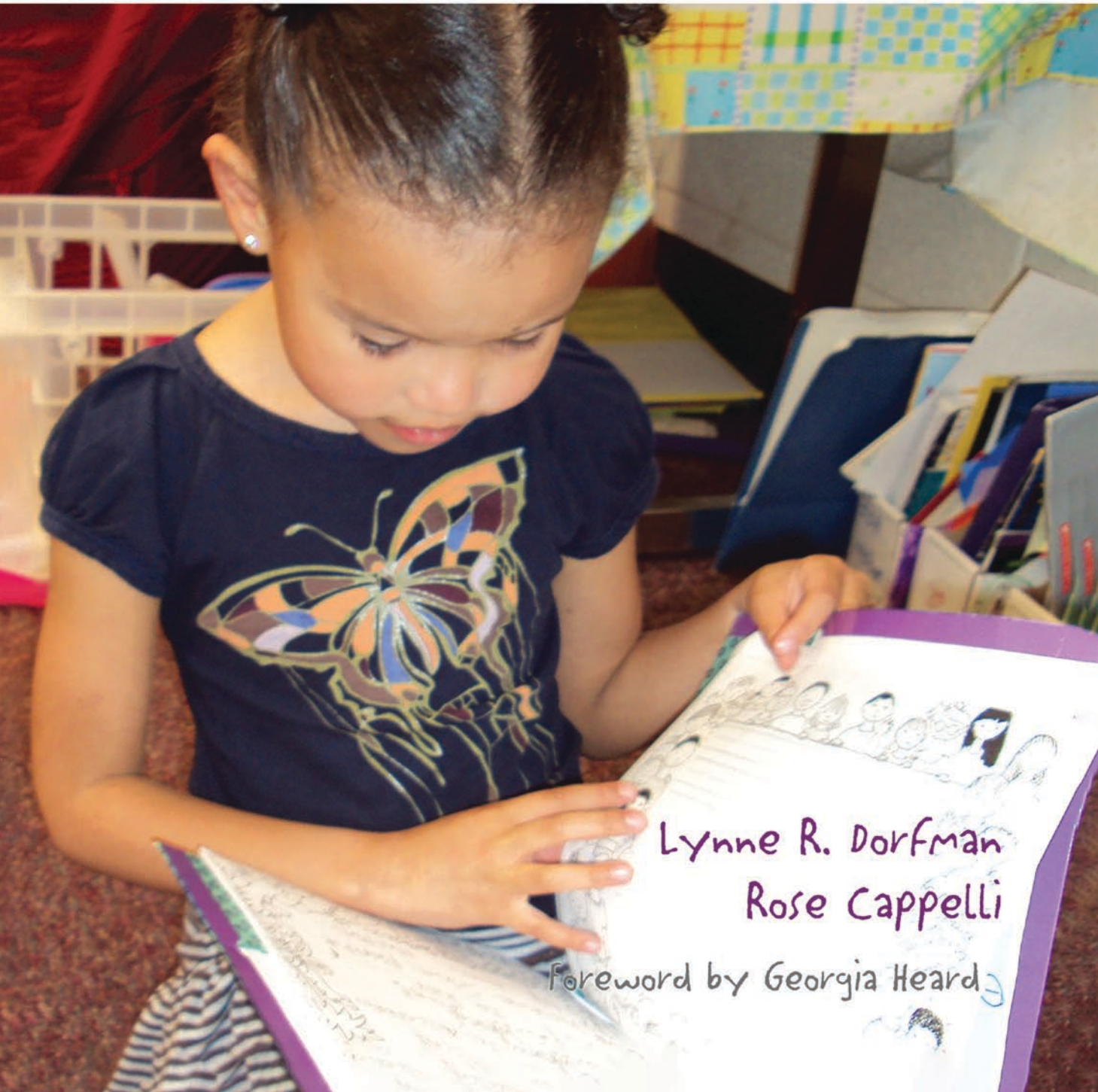


# POETRY MENTOR TEXTS

Making Reading and Writing Connections, K-8



Lynne R. Dorfman  
Rose Cappelli

Foreword by Georgia Heard

# POETRY MENTOR TEXTS



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# POETRY MENTOR TEXTS

Making Reading and Writing Connections, K-8



Lynne R. Dorfman  
Rose Cappelli

Foreword by Georgia Heard

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group

NEW YORK AND LONDON

A Stenhouse Book

First published 2012 by Stenhouse Publishers.

Published 2024 by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Copyright © 2012 by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dorfman, Lynne R., 1952-

Poetry mentor texts : making reading and writing connections, K-8 / Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli. -- 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-57110-949-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Poetry--Study and teaching (Elementary) 2. Poetry--Authorship--Study and teaching (Elementary) 3. Poetry--Study and teaching (Middle School) 4. Poetry--Authorship--Study and teaching (Middle school) I. Cappelli, Rose, 1950- II. Title.

LB1575.D67 2012

372.64'044--dc23

2012022960

Chapter opener photos by Rose Cappelli and Jon DeMinico

Cover photo by Rose Cappelli

Cover design, interior design, and typesetting by designboy Creative Group

ISBN 13: 978-1-57110-949-1 (pbk)

ISBN 13: 978-1-03-268208-2 (hbk)

## CREDITS

### Chapter 1

“Editing the Chrysalis” from *Fly with Poetry* by Avis Harley. Copyright © 2000 by Avis Harley. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

“Will We Ever See?” from *Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky* by Georgia Heard. Copyright © 1992 by Georgia Heard. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

### Chapter 2

“The Squirrel” by William Varner first appeared in *Folio*. Copyright William Varner. Published by American University. Reprinted by permission.

“My Writer’s Notebook” by Brod Bagert. © Brod Bagert 2012.

“Writer’s Notebook” from *A Writing Kind of Day* by Ralph Fletcher. Copyright © 2005 by Ralph Fletcher. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

“Pigeons” from *Snippets* by Charlotte Zolotow, © 1993 Charlotte Zolotow. By permission of Edite Kroll Literary Agency Inc.

“Dream Dust” from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* by Langston Hughes, edited by Arnold Rampersad with David Roessel, Associate Editor, copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

“Every Time I Climb a Tree” from *Every Time I Climb a Tree* by David McCord. Text Copyright © 1925, 1929, 1949, 1950, 1952, © 1961, 1962, 1965, 1966, 1967 by David McCord; Copyright renewal 1980 by David McCord. By permission of Little, Brown and Company. All rights reserved.

“Summer Squash” from *Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash* by Donald Graves. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

“That Reminds Me” by Will Mowery. Reprinted with permission of Will Mowery.

“Remembering,” copyright © 2008 by Patricia McKissack, from *Stitchin’ and Pullin’: A Gee’s Bend Quilt* by Patricia McKissack, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera. Used by permission of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

### Chapter 3

“Walking Home from School I See” Copyright © 2009 by Rebecca Kai Dotlich. Currently appears in *Falling Down the Page*, published by Roaring Brook Press. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

“Signs” by John Frank: Reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division from *A Chill in the Air* by John Frank. Text copyright © 2003 John Frank.

“Zeke, an Old Farm Dog” from *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George. Text copyright © 1997 by Kristine O’Connell George. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

“Orders” from *A. M. Klein: Complete Poems: Part One*, © University of Toronto Press, 1990. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

“Swift Things Are Beautiful” by Elizabeth Coatsworth: From *Away Goes Sally*, © 2003 Bethlehem Books. Reprinted with permission from Bethlehem Books.

“Helping Hands” by Allan Wolf: Reprinted with permission of Allan Wolf. “Helping Hands” originally appeared in *Falling Down the Page*, compiled by Georgia Heard, Roaring Book Press, 2009.

“I’m Talking Big!” © 1993 by Colin McNaughton. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd, London SE11 5HJ, [www.walker.co.uk](http://www.walker.co.uk).

### Chapter 4

“Acrostic” by Will Mowery. Reprinted with permission of Will Mowery.

“Recess” by Will Mowery. Reprinted with permission of Will Mowery.

“Butterfly” from *Silver Seeds* by Paul Paolilli and Dan Brewer, © 2001 by Paul Paolilli and Dan Brewer, text. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

“Jewel” from *Winter: An Alphabet Acrostic* by Steven Schnur. Text copyright © 2002 by Steven Schnur. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company. All rights reserved.

“Worldly Wise” from *The Monarch’s Progress: Poems with Wings* by Avis Harley. Copyright © 2008 by Avis Harley. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

“Drawing” by Judy Young: From Judy Young, *R is for Rhyme*. © Sleeping Bear Press, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc, Reproduced by permission. [www.cengage.com/permissions](http://www.cengage.com/permissions).

“Sipping the Sunset” by Avis Harley: *African Acrostics*. Text copyright © 2009 by Avis Harley. Photographs copyright © 2009 by Deborah Noyes. Reproduced by permission of the Publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

## Chapter 5

“A Slave to Grubby Hands” by Will Mowery. Reprinted with permission of Will Mowery.

“Empire State Building” from *Monumental Verses* by J. Patrick Lewis. Published by National Geographic, 2005.

“railroad tracks” by Ralph Fletcher: From *Ordinary Things: Poems from a Walk in Early Spring* by Ralph Fletcher. Copyright © 1997 Ralph Fletcher. Used by permission of Marian Reiner.

“Garden Hose” by Beatrice Janosco.

“Monkey Wrench” from *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

“Winter Eyes” by Douglas Florian: Copyright © 1999 by Douglas Florian. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

“Letter to the Sun” from *Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow* by Joyce Sidman. Text copyright © 2006 by Joyce Sidman. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 6

“the drip” by Will Mowery. Reprinted with permission of Will Mowery.

“Honeybees” by Paul Fleischman: Text copyright © 1988 by Paul Fleischman. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

“Last Licks” from *Weird? (Me Too!) Let’s Be Friends* by Sara Holbrook. Copyright © 2011 by Sara Holbrook. Published by Wordsong, an imprint of Boyds Mill Press. Reprinted by permission.

“Sparrows” by Paul Fleischman: Text copyright © 1988 by Paul Fleischman. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

“Backboard Rap” by Betsy Franco: *Messing Around on the Monkey Bars*. Text copyright © 2009 by Betsy Franco. Illustrations Copyright © 2009 by Jessie Hartland. Reproduced by permission of the Publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

“Triangle” by Theoni Pappas: Reproduced from *Math Talk* by Theoni Pappas. © 1991 by Theoni Pappas. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Wide World Publishing, San Carlos, CA. <http://www.wideworldpublishing.com>.

For our editor and friend, Bill Varner:

**E**ffective communicator,  
**D**elivering efficient messages to  
**I**nspire confidence and empower  
**T**he diverse team  
**O**f teacher-writers with the  
**R**ight words at the right time.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Contents

---

	Foreword by Georgia Heard	xii
	Acknowledgments	xiii
	Introduction	1
<b>1</b>	CHAPTER Getting Started	7
<b>2</b>	CHAPTER Poetry to Inspire Response	15
<b>3</b>	CHAPTER List Poems Are for Everyone	43
<b>4</b>	CHAPTER Acrostic Poetry: Accessible and Challenging	65
<b>5</b>	CHAPTER The Persona Poem: Writing in the Voice of Another	91
<b>6</b>	CHAPTER Poetry for Two Voices	117
<b>7</b>	CHAPTER A Treasure Chest of Books	147
	Afterword	165
	References	169
	Index	173

# foreword

---

➤ by Georgia Heard

Lynne Dorfman and Rose Cappelli have done it again! They've given us a treasure chest of mentor texts—this time for poetry.

I've always believed, just as Lynne and Rose do, that there is more than one writing teacher in every classroom to guide student writers. In fact, a crowd of invisible teachers quietly whispers words of wisdom to students as they write. Mentor texts—the books and poems we love that can stretch writers to do their best—help students stay true to their vision of what they really want to say.

One of the challenges that teachers of reading and writing face is how to get these high-quality exemplar texts into the classroom to use in literature circles, small- and whole-group instruction, and mini-lessons, and to inspire our students to write their best. The poetry choices are abundant and sometimes overwhelming—not to mention that school budgets are tight. *Poetry Mentor Texts* is the perfect guide to help us on our journey of locating the just-right poem to inspire and guide our students in writing and reading poetry.

This book's predictable structure is very user friendly and encompasses both reading and writing connections. Each chapter is devoted to a particular student-friendly poetic form, such as the list poem, acrostic poem, and poem for two voices. Five excellent mentor poems have been carefully selected for each chapter to move student writers forward by highlighting several essential writing traits, such as word choice, point of view, and figurative language.

As I read *Poetry Mentor Texts*, I found poems by some of my favorite children's poets, including J. Patrick Lewis and Kristine O'Connell George, and also discovered new poets, such as Stenhouse's very own William Varner. In addition to these grown-up mentor poems, Lynne and Rose sprinkle each chapter with excellent student samples that will be sure to spark your own students' creative powers.

Every writer of poetry is first a reader of poetry. *Poetry Mentor Texts* will open a treasure chest of poems to inspire your students to raise the level of expectation for their own poems and write from their hearts.

# Acknowledgments

---

You will find poetry nowhere unless you bring some of it with you.

➤ *Joseph Joubert*

**M**entors have always played an important role in our personal and professional lives. We continue to learn from the work of all the authors of children's literature. For this book particularly, we relied on the work of Joyce Sidman, Georgia Heard, Ralph Fletcher, J. Patrick Lewis, Sara Holbrook, and Kristine O'Connell George. Many teacher-writers have also influenced our thinking as we continue to grow as teachers of readers and writers—Katie Wood Ray, Regie Routman, Mark Overmeyer, Kelly Gallagher, Debbie Miller, and Jeff Anderson.

We are so grateful for our friendships with poet-teachers Bruce Bloome and Will Mowery. Thank you for providing us with wonderfully wonderful poems for this book. A special thank-you goes to Bill Varner, our poet-editor, for sharing his poetry with us. It inspired us to return to our notebooks and write.

The support of our friends and colleagues of the Keystone State Reading Association and our own Chester County Reading Association is never-ending. Thank you for always cheering us on! As ever, we appreciate the encouragement and advice from Patti and Phil Sollenberger and Denise Glick at Reading Matters, the Stenhouse distributor for our area.

Our work with the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project continues to be an important part of our professional growth. Thank you, Dr. Mary Buckelew, for the many opportunities you have afforded us. We are proud to be members of such a strong writing community. We learn from all the teachers we meet through our graduate courses, presentations, and conferences. The Project has provided us with much food for thought.

Our work in our districts, Upper Moreland Township School District and the West Chester Area School District, has been rewarding and empowering. We extend our thanks to our superintendents, Dr. Robert Milrod and Dr. Jim Scanlon, and our principals, Dr. Joseph M. Waters and Mrs. Rebecca Eberly. Of course, our work would not be possible without the help of the extraordinary teachers and students who provide inspiration and insight on a daily basis. We especially thank Teresa Lombardi, Mickey Moore, Joanne Costello, Jon DeMinico, Danielle Norton, Karen Drew, Bruce Bloome, and Sue Powdizki from Upper Moreland Intermediate School, and Linda Trembath, Connie Harker, Nicole Lockhart, Christine Miller, and Shawn Dzielawa from Fern Hill Elementary School.

Our friend, author Frank Murphy, has been a most enthusiastic supporter of our work. Thank you, Frank, for the incredible samples of persona poetry from your fifth graders at Holland Elementary School in the Council Rock School District. We would also like to thank Mr. Mark J. Klein, Esq., the superintendent of Council Rock School District, and Mr. Andrew Sanko, the principal of Holland Elementary School.

The Stenhouse crew continues to be our extended family. You warm our hearts and give us the stamina to continue to write books and share our work with teachers across the country. A big thank-you goes to Chandra Lowe, Jill Cooley, Rebecca Eaton, Chuck Lerch, Nate Butler, Chris Downey, Zsofia McMullin, Lise Wood, and Jay Kilburn. Of course, we would like to express our gratitude to Philippa Stratton and Dan Tobin for their tireless work to maintain Stenhouse Publishers as a cutting-edge educational publishing firm. And most especially, thank you, Bill Varner, our editor and friend. We could not have written any of our books without you. We have so much respect for you and your advice. You are most remarkable!

Thank you, Ralph and Allan, for always being there. Allan, we're still waiting for your chapter . . . .

# Introduction

---

Teaching kids of all ages to write poetry, and to love to write and read poetry, is probably my favorite teaching. It's sheer fun. It's exhilarating.

Every child is successful. Each year, I am amazed at what kids can do, how insightful and clever they are, and what powerful poems they write.

➤ *Regie Routman, Conversations*

Should everyone read and write poetry? You may think, “It’s not for me. I don’t get it, I don’t like it, and my students don’t like it either.” But kids *do* love poetry! They like the rhythm of the words, the rhyme, and the playful, often humorous tones. Kids love to sing and listen to music. Poetry is like music: it has lyrics, melody, and harmony. It’s why we like to read poems aloud—a symphony of sounds emerges and engages our senses in a whirlwind of images, emotions, and wonderings about the world and how things work.

Poetry is the great equalizer for both reading and writing workshop. Using a poem as a mentor text for reading and writing is doable. A poem’s length invites revisiting for different purposes. Its vivid language pulls the reader in and provides opportunities for word investigations. Poems make great reading selections for literature circles and small-group instruction, either read individually or compared as a set. They are effective for small- and whole-group instruction because they are short and can be reread many times to deepen comprehension, cite evidence, offer opinions, draw conclusions, and talk about main ideas and themes. In *Pass the Poetry, Please!* Lee Bennett Hopkins discusses how poems are effective reads for struggling readers in the upper grades:

Poems, being short, are not demanding or frustrating to these readers. They can start them, finish them, and gain from them, without experiencing any discomfort whatsoever. (1987, 6)

Poetry shouldn’t be just a part of the language arts curriculum. It offers another way to communicate and demonstrate our understanding of a concept in content areas. It is a method for deepening comprehension and developing a level of empathy and knowledge that can be applied to real-world situations. Poetry can serve to informally assess science and math. It can help students link content areas. As poet Sara Holbrook says:

We write poetry to make our individual ideas heard, and these ideas must not be limited to language arts class . . . When we succeed, when we create a poem that serves as a bridge toward understanding, that is communication—an indispensable standard of learning. (2005, xvi)

## THE TOP TEN REASONS TO USE POETRY AS MENTOR TEXTS

We have many ideas about why poetry should be regularly used in reading/writing classrooms, but we tried to consolidate our thinking into a simple list. Here are our top ten reasons to use poetry as mentor texts:

1. Children love the sound of language and the chance to read, recite, and perform poetry.
2. Poetry can help us see differently, understand ourselves and others, and validate our passions and our human experience.
3. Poetry easily finds a home in all areas of the curriculum and can bridge the reading/writing workshop.
4. Poetry is the great equalizer—a genre especially suited to the struggling or unmotivated reader/writer.
5. Poetry enhances thinking skills and promotes personal connections.
6. Reading poems aloud captures the ear, imagination, and soul of the listener.
7. The playfulness of language and the ability of words to hold us captive with their intensity, beauty, and genius are particularly apparent in poetry.
8. A poet helps us see things in new ways and helps us talk and write about ordinary things in extraordinary ways. That’s the essence of good writing.
9. Poetry helps broaden children’s experiences and what they are able to write about.
10. Poetry can be the voice that names the events we live through by helping us make sense of them and write about them.

## HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS BOOK

Our introduction provides you with a rationale for poetry use in reading and writing workshop. In Chapter 1 we define mentor texts and discuss the natural connections between reading and writing. This chapter also provides an explanation of possible ways to integrate poetry into a school day and a look at the power of companion pieces (books, other poems, songs). The rest of this book is organized into six chapters that deal with, respectively, poetry to inspire response, list poems, acrostic poetry, persona poetry, and poetry for two voices. The final chapter contains an annotated list of resources for the poems and companion pieces we discuss in each chapter as well as additional resources too good to miss. We hope to provide you with more than enough choices to last an entire year.

Additionally, each chapter includes classroom connections for both reading and writing. The poems we have highlighted focus on the five critical reading areas whenever possible: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. We believe that the use of poetry in all grades directly links to the charge of text complexity presented in today’s Common Core State Standards. Poetry addresses the standards’ emphasis on sophisticated text and the skills with which students read. It helps students deepen their comprehension by requiring them to respond to reading—orally and/or written—to draw inferences, and to determine the impact that point of view has on the text.

Each mentor poem also serves to move our student writers forward by presenting them with an opportunity for discussion of the traits of writing, such as the development

of ideas (content), organization, voice, and conventions. You can choose which area(s) you wish to expand in a shared or guided experience, depending on what your student writers need. We don't discuss every pillar of reading and every trait of writing—instead, we focus on the ones that seem to naturally fit with the poem presented or the developmental level of the target audience.

Each chapter includes classroom snapshots from reading and writing workshop and presents five poems for your use. Student samples help you see what you might expect your own students to compose. Finally, Your Turn Lessons appear at the end of each chapter for you to try out for yourself and with your students. These lessons may be taught over two or three days. They are longer than the traditional mini-lesson because they focus on a strategy or skill that you want all your students to be able to try out and eventually use independently as readers and writers. The Your Turn Lesson scaffolds the gradual release of responsibility model and provides a place for reflection so that students' understanding of the target skill or strategy is deepened.

### **Your Turn Lesson Format**

Hook:	Use literature to invite participation.
Purpose:	Tell what you will do.
Brainstorm:	Invite writers to sketch, list, talk, create word storms, etc., to generate ideas.
Model:	Demonstrate what you will do with a mentor text, your own writing, or sometimes a student sample.
Shared/Guided Writing:	Writers actively participate in the modeled technique or strategy, either individually, in partnerships, or as part of a whole-class shared writing experience. Use partner or group sharing and roving conferences to guide writers.
Independent Writing:	Writers compose a new piece or return to a published piece or notebook entry to try out the strategy.
Reflection:	Writers consciously reflect on how the writing worked. Reflection is an important step that helps students view themselves as writers and become aware of the strategies that work for them and that move them forward. Self-reflection can be guided through the use of key questions. All writers should first reflect on the strategy that was demonstrated and tried out.

- How did today's strategy work?

Additional questions can be varied according to the level of the writer and the purpose of the lesson.

- What do I do well as a writer? What are the unique characteristics that set my writing apart from others (my fingerprints)?
- If I were to revise, what is one thing I would absolutely change, omit, or add?
- Would this piece of writing work better in a different format? A different tense?

### *Optional Steps*

**Write and Reflect Again:** Writers rewrite their entry or piece using the revision strategy from the reflection. Writers ask themselves if this is a piece they wish to continue to work on for publication.

**Goal Setting:** Writers use input from the selection to set personal goals.

The Your Turn Lesson provides a chance for you to write along with your students. As a teacher of writers, it is important to be a teacher who writes. In *A Garden of Poets: Poetry Writing in the Elementary Classroom*, Mary Kenner Glover talks about the importance of teacher as writer:

The teacher must be a writer, too. I have been most successful as a poetry teacher when I've let my students know from the beginning that I am a writer also. When they write, I write alongside them. They see me filling the pages of my writer's notebook as they are beginning to fill theirs. I become their equal in this way, and although I maintain my role as their teacher and guide, I am just one writer among many. (1999, 21)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The simple truth is that poetry—like art, music, and other forms of creativity—can develop a sense of compassion and empathy that children need to better understand themselves and their world. Beauty and humanity are inextricably woven together into poetic expression. As Donald Graves reminds us:

We are surrounded by poetry in the ordinary moments of our days. We can take the ordinary and, through poetry, turn the smallest, least significant moment into something important. In this respect, poetry is for everyone. (1994, 340)

The use of poetry as mentor texts in reading and writing will give students a chance to grow as readers, writers, imagineers, and human beings. That is where the power lies. Join us as we float on a sea of words to catch some views of reading and writing workshop where poems are used as mentor texts.

Happy reading!