

# poetry cheat sheet

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## FREE VERSE:

A poem that doesn't have a regular rhythm or rhyme scheme. This poem may be about any topic.

### HOW TO:

Choose an idea, feeling, thought or observation from your "HEART MAP" or your "QUESTIONS FOR MEMOIRISTS."

We Are a Thunderstorm  
by Amity Gage

Individually

we are single drops of rain  
falling silently into the dust  
offering little promise  
of moisture to the thirsty land.

But, together  
we can nourish the earth  
and revive its hopes and dreams.

Together  
we are a thunderstorm.

## 2 SPECIAL PLACE POEM:

A poem that richly describes your favorite place! Get really specific here rather than general (think about nooks in your house, or a particular spot on the beach, or up on the roof of your building rather than Thailand or grandma's whole house)

### EXAMPLE:

Waves subtract the shoreline—  
wipe away  
footprints

leave behind a  
blank slate  
to start again

Down the coast  
a child chases  
his father

runs  
on wobbly legs  
laughing

big hopes already in order  
for him

Waves conceal  
my own failures  
and shortcomings

push forward  
my own hopes and dreams

a soft breeze  
dances on bare toes  
sweeps through hair pulled back  
in a ponytail

an orange sun shifts  
on the horizon

Like the child,  
I wonder about  
my own future

Who will I become?

I watch  
As sand sifts between  
each passing tide,  
and the only part that  
comes into focus  
herein  
this place

is the present.

## 3 LETTER POEM:

A poem, in the form of a letter, that expresses strong feelings, images, thoughts, or opinions that you hold.

### HOW TO:

Think of a person, thing, or force that intrigues you—one that you have feelings, thoughts questions, or opinions about.

- \* A person could be a friend or family member, a coach, a famous person, or athlete, etc.
- \* A 'thing' or 'force' might be something like the creek in your backyard, a shadow on your wall at night, the wind, a dolphin, etc.

To start—if it's easier for you—write your ideas in LETTER FORMAT:

- \* Express feelings—affection, fear, curiosity, hope, outrage, gratitude, pride or shame.
- \* Share thoughts, ideas and opinions. Talk about IMAGINED things as much as real things.
- \* Write in line breaks, and re-format into a poem.

Sign it with a clever name, like... "Your Worried Friend," or "A Curious Guy."

Victim by Rachel S.

Dear Insomnia,  
Your power rules my sleep  
preventing the occurrence of  
dreams.

Lying in bed  
staring at the ceiling  
I wait.

Glancing at the digital clock  
menacing red letters  
are a magnet to my eyes.

10:47 p.m.

12:36 a.m.

2:51 a.m.

Still awake.

I close my eyes praying to drift  
away.

The alarm clock buzzes and my  
stomach falls.

Summer light shimmers through  
the glass

as I force my eyes open  
and drag myself off my soft pillow.

Only

one

hour

of sleep.

You do not fade away.

With no rest

the prolonged night before

it is impossible to focus.

When the sun goes down again  
your cycle begins  
once more.

Yawningly yours,  
A Victim of Sleeplessness

## ④ CONFESSION POEM:

A THREE STANZA poem that exposes your own character flaws, or confesses 'little' secrets about yourself that no one knows. These must be TRUE. (Make sure to think about what can go 'public' and what should stay private.)

### HOW TO:

The poem can be three stanzas about one event, OR three stanzas about three separate events.

Browse the list below for starter ideas:

- *taking more than your share*
- *pretending to be sick*
- *breaking a promise*
- *saying something mean*
- *lying*
- *taking something that didn't belong to you*
- *tricking someone*
- *blaming someone else for something you did*

Start your stanzas with language like "I also..." or "Although I didn't mean to..."

- *Include descriptive details!*
- *Include CONSEQUENCES!*

### Confessions of a Murderer

by Charlie E.

I broke the handle off a cup  
didn't want Mom to yell  
so I placed the handle inside it  
and hid the whole thing  
behind the potato chips

I picked all the four-leaf clovers from  
the box of Lucky Charms  
and ate them  
before my mother  
ever got them off the shelf  
to feed to my brothers and sister.

Sitting beside a pool one day  
I noticed a fly in the water  
so I helped him out  
then pulled off his wings  
and threw him back to see him struggle.

## ⑤ INSIDE-OUT POEM:

This two stanza poem is one where you get the chance to write about how others see you on the outside and then WHO you really are on the inside.

### EXAMPLE:

Who am I really  
way down deep?  
What is it like in those  
secret chambers  
of my heart?

Am I the girl  
they say is so  
smiley and happy  
all the time?  
Do I really have  
everything under control  
Calm, cool and collected  
is what I hear.  
Patient.  
A people person.  
No worries.  
No stress.  
Is that me?

Gazing farther  
Past my appearance  
You'd see challenges,  
frustrations,  
and yes...  
anger.

Pressure to be the best  
Pressure be first over the finish line  
Pressure to stay at the top  
Pressure to meet  
everyone else's  
needs and expectations.

I'm not saying  
what the world perceives  
is completely wrong.  
Just not the whole truth.

If you were to look at my heart  
As a collage of colors  
Bright, sunny tones would consume  
most of the space.

Yet you wouldn't be able to conceal  
the fact that  
shades of gray  
loom off to the sides  
sometimes casting a shadow over all the rest.

When you search deeper  
what you will find is someone  
who struggles.  
Just like you.