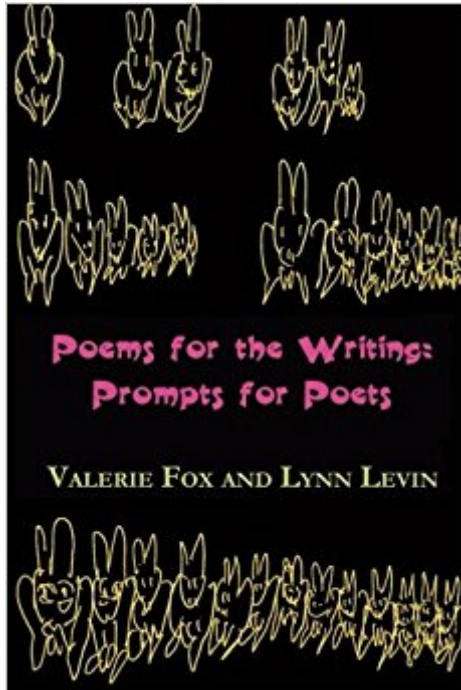


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Poems For The Writing: Prompts For Poets



Synopsis

Poems for the Writing: Prompts for Poets was a finalist in the 2014 Next Generation Indie Book Awards in the Education/Academic category. Valerie Fox and Lynn Levin's Poems for the Writing: Prompts for Poets offers fourteen classroom- and workshop-tested writing prompts that will appeal to both beginning and experienced poets. Among the book's inspiring and unusual ideas are the Fibonacci poem, advice-column poem, and spirit-of-names poem. The book lends itself to academic courses as well as poetry workshops in less formal settings, such as adult-ed, community-based, and "coffee-shop" classes. Individuals will find the book to be a helpful companion to their independent practice of poetry. In addition to the prompts, scores of sample poems by a variety of poets are included. Contributors include Rina Terry, Arlene Ang, Jim Ellis, Kevin Hughes, Laurel Hostak, Daniela Elza, John Vick, Harriet Levin, Anna Strong, Marie Kane, Chris Cunningham, Luray Gross, Susan Smith Nash, Christine Hamm, Miriam N. Kotzin, Eric Muth, Mirna Norales, Joe Nguyen, Kelly McQuain, Amy LaBrie, Alina Macneal, Lauren Hall, Lewis Warsh, Erin McCourt, Christopher Bursk, Don Riggs, Marshall Warfield, Kevin Hughes, Robert Fabianski, Peter Wood, Leonard Gontarek, Corie Feiner, John Timpane, Dawn Manning, Hayden Saunier, Joanna Fuhrman, and Katherine A. Hogan. The book also includes witty illustrations by Don Riggs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although this book is ideal for teaching poetry, I'd like to add that it's also a great read for someone who reads and writes poetry on his or her own. The amateur and professional alike would benefit

from studying the writing exercises and resulting poems. A template I found fun was the "Fibonacci Poem," where the syllables in each line of a poem are based on a mathematical sequence found in nature. "The Advice-Column Poem," and "Write What You (Don't) Know" may seem simple - and the authors do a good job explaining them - but the works based on these are anything but simple-minded. Throughout the book, poets such as Marshall Warfield, Arlene Ang, and Kelly McQuain add their individual stamp on the collection, and Don Riggs often steps out of the role of illustrating the book to pen a few poems himself. The authors, Valerie Fox and Lynn Levin, also write, based on their own models, some original pieces to show just how effective their own advice can be. Lynn Levin offers five poems based on "Cameo Cinquain," the most fun and pithy of which is "Howard." And my personal favorite of Valerie Fox's writing is "Essay on How to Make Art out of Unanswerable Letters," an example from the "Unanswerable Letters" section. *Poems for the Writing* shows how adventurous writing can be for the poet and how informative it can be for the reader. Well done and highly recommended!

This is the best book concerning the writing of poetry, and writing in general, that I have to come across. Smart, honest, accessible, and in a few places dazzling. The best advice for poets is to not give them advice, but to inspire them by being human, imaginative, and downright funny. I thoroughly enjoyed this read and learned from it.

Fox and Levin's *Poems for Writing* is a delightful combination of poetry prompts, poems and line drawings (by poet-artist Don Riggs) that will prove valuable for those who teach--and write--poetry. One of my favorite chapters is called "Paraclausithyron." The chapter begins, "At one time or another, you may have had the unpleasant situation of being shut out of something: a business meeting, a party, a conversation, or your sweetheart's apartment or bedroom." Tapping into this universal experience, the chapter offers us an insight and resolution: "There's a poem for that: the paraclausithyron." After explaining the classical convention of poetry written at/to a beloved's closed door, the authors invite writers to "Write your own lament before a shut door." What fun; what a great way to invite writers to use their words to open closed doors--or at least, to redesign the door that blocks them. This book offers prompts that work and poems that sing. Caution: Reading this book may cause an uncontrollable desire to versify. Please read responsibly.

Poems for the Writing is a refreshing spin on the standard writing textbook. Fox and Levin deviate from the basic, entry-level instructions (i.e. "write a blue poem," "write a body poem") by offering a

taste of old world poetic romanticism ("write a paraclausithyron") and an explanation as to how attempting each prompt will help you to grow as a poet. What's lovely about the prompts is that they can ease a writer into formalism while encouraging her to play and experiment with form. Many of the prompts can be adapted, or used as-is, to function in the standard Composition 101 classroom as a creative exercise in clarity and conciseness. For example, have students use the Cameo Cinquain to summarize a text. I am excited to try the prompts with my students (and by myself). It's also fun to just get lost in the sample poems, particularly Levin's pitch-perfect "Janice," the aching sweetness of Riggs' "The last time we danced to the Beatles," LaBrie's honest and reflective "The Daily Muse Columnist," Feiner's multi-layered "Fear of Driving," and Fox's whimsically poignant "Essay on Making Art out of Unanswerable Letters." This book combines the necessary instruction of a textbook with the joy of a new book of poems, and yields both tools and impetus for the creation of art.

I bought this book because I am a huge fan of Lynn Levin's poetry. I'm happy to say that the book is a gem and well worth the investment. I'd been going through a dry phase, and the prompts have inspired half a dozen new poems already. I'm so glad I bought it!

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