



"Fed Up" by Isabel Bachmann

Prompts and Poetic Ideas In Celebration of

NATIONAL
POETRY
MONTH

ÉLAN

An International Student Literary Magazine

Alien Invasion

Editors-in-Chief, Olivia Meiller and Zoe Lathey

As everyone is trapped at home, it has become easy for our daily routines to feel monotonous. With this in mind, the Editors-in-Chief of Elan invite you to enjoy an exciting prompt that allows you to dream outside the confines of this current crisis.

Imagine an alien has invaded your home and taken a disguise. Describe the alien being an inanimate piece of furniture, a house plant, a pet, a sibling, etc. What signs or actions point to the alien's true identity? Do the owners of the home ever realize the alien's presence? What are the alien's intentions? You can answer these questions however you'd like. Keep in mind that you could focus on action and dialogue, or sensory details and images. An alien invasion is also something that can be seen as good or bad—is the alien here to help or hurt?

If you don't like the literal interpretation of an alien invasion, simply explore the idea of something being "not quite right" in your home. Does a person, or an object, feel unnatural, or stick out? Maybe use an alien as a metaphor to embody this "otherness."

Thank you for your time, and we hope you enjoy this prompt!

Embracing Environment

Poetry Editors, Conor Naccarato and Alexa Naparstek

Since we are in a time of social distancing/isolation and are within in our own homes, write a poem embracing the domestics of your environment. Ask yourself these questions:

- What do you see around you?
- Is environment important to your outlook on life?
- What emotions do you feel when you see the same items or photos on a daily basis?
- Are there photos that spark a different emotion now that you are faced with it constantly?
- Do you feel at a home?
- What about the environment makes you feel, or not feel, at home?

Writing poetry isn't a new art form, it comes from thousands of years of cultures telling their histories and stories to each generation. The ways in which we poets write poetry continues to evolve through new forms or restrictions. Contemporary poets often play with form in new and exciting ways to help bridge the gap between avid poetry readers and those who are unfamiliar with contemporary poetry. Poets have used a plethora of methods to convey their truths through technology, wordplay, and familiar visuals. Write a poem in which the odd, unconventional form helps convey the deeper meaning in your piece. Some examples are:

- "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch" by Sam Taylor; this piece uses the Wikipedia article on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch as the canvas for his erasure poetry to convey his emotions about ecological devastation alongside the information.
- "yasmeen" by Safia Elhillo; this piece uses the cleave form to demonstrate the divide the Elhillo has with her cultural identity and herself.

The Golden Shovel: A Contemporary Form

Managing Editors, Noland Blain and La'Mirakle Price

It's not every day that a new poetic form is invented. After all, the classic forms—the sonnet, the ballad, the haiku—are renowned for a reason. Everyone remembers writing a haiku for some middle school assignment, or dissecting Shakespeare's "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day." However, as Terrance Hayes, the inventor of the Golden Shovel, would tell you, the boundaries of poetry are never stagnant.

Terrance Hayes wrote the first Golden Shovel (titled "The Golden Shovel") in response to a Gwendolyn Brooks, the cherished "We Real Cool." On first read, the line breaks of Hayes's poem seem strange, perhaps even erratic—until you read the words at the end of each line, which, when read in order, recreate Brooks's iconic poem. The Golden Shovel is partly an erasure poem, using someone else's words to write your own truth. But the Golden Shovel is special, as it honors and celebrates the borrowed words. The rules are fairly simple:

1. Take one or more lines from a poem you admire.
2. Use each word on the line/lines as an ending word in your poem.
3. Keep the end words in order, so that when one reads the ending words from top to bottom, the inspiring line/lines are revealed.
4. Give credit to the poet who originally wrote the line/lines.

Apart from these boundaries, you have every freedom! Your poem does not need to have the same theme (or even topic) as the lines you borrowed. The golden shovel instead transforms the original meaning of the borrowed lines into something new. It's a technique that still challenges the writer, but allows for significantly more creative room than perhaps a classical form.

If there's ever a time for reflecting on poets past, it's National Poetry Month. What line changed your life? What line can't you get out of your head? The Golden Shovel is perfect for exploring those inexplicably haunting words.

Black Out Poetry

Website Editors, Catriona Keel and Evette Davis

Black out poetry is an activity that can be done to help when you feel stuck and unsure about what you want to write, or the specific way you want to write about a specific topic. This style of poetry can also be done for more entertainment and stress relieving purposes.

Black out poetry is when you take a piece of fiction, an article, or sometimes even another poem depending on its length. Take a marker or a pen and cross out words to make a poem. The poem doesn't have to relate to the original idea of the fiction piece or article you chose to make a poem out of. It can sometimes actually end up being the complete opposite from what you started with. A black out poem uses more creativity, though it also challenges you to find a way to say what you want to with the limited amount of words given.

Find an excerpt from your favorite fiction work, or an old book/newspaper article and a pen/marker, then begin your own blackout poetry. Your blackout poem doesn't have to be the best poem, just acts as a creative outlet for you to write and inspire yourself. It's helpful in assisting you to discover ways to write without giving too much second thought to the words you have on the page. You can turn these poems into second drafts and third drafts later on if you feel deeply connected with the poem you create.

Remember to just have fun with creating these new poems and find new ways to write!

Ekphrastic Poetry Prompt: Writing Poems from Art

Art Editors, Reece Braswell and Blake Molenaar

In honor of National Poetry Month, Elan's art editors challenge you to write a poem in response to a work of visual art, otherwise known as an ekphrastic poem. We ask you to write an ekphrastic poem inspired by one of the works in the following images linked below: Claude Monet's "Saint Lazare Station," Salman Toor's "Bar Boy," or Ava Burr's "Five, Six, Seven, Eight," featured in Elan's most recent issue.

One of the unique qualities of ekphrastic poetry is that there are so many ways to approach it. You can:

- Write your take on the work, its narrative and its emotions, as Joseph Stanton does in "Edward Hopper's 'New York Movie.'"
- Write about your experience viewing the piece, about the emotions it draws out.
- Relate the work to an experience of your own, just as Larry Levis does in "Ocean Park #17, 1968: Homage to Diebenkorn."
- Take on the voice of a person or object in the piece, or even the voice of the artist!

P.S.: here are the images

- Bar Boy: https://whitneymedia.org/assets/image/824511/large_Bar_Boy_copy.jpg
- Saint Lazare Station: <https://cdn.kastatic.org/ka-perseus-images/dbbb7009f6c7a84b1e2a4d5903fd48b054585ca5.jpg>
- Five, Six, Seven, Eight: <https://download-accl.zoho.com/v1/docs/prv/gv6dr18647002b6464e84967f050fd141abcb?t=1587243430456>

Poetic Form: Sonnets

Marketing Editors, Grace Brodeen and Ashley Chatmon

In honor of National Poetry month, the Elan marketing editors invite you to explore the timeless form of Shakespearean sonnets. This poetic structure is composed of three quatrains and an ending couplet written in iambic pentameter with the rhyme pattern abab cdcd efef gg. The Shakespearean sonnet incorporates many elements that require the upmost attention in its execution. Explore the capacity of language and the extent at which you can express yourself through this structured format!

Be sure to:

- Write in iambic pentameter (five metrical feet per line, each consisting of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable)
- Include three quatrains and an ending couplet (14 lines total) Incorporate the abab cdcd efef gg rhyme scheme
- A turning point nearing the end of the poem (volta)
- Have fun exploring the ways this form can express your intent!

For reference, here are some great examples of sonnets by both contemporary and traditional poets.

- "Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud" by John Donne, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44107/holy-sonnets-death-be-not-proud>
- "Sonnet 14" by William Shakespeare, <https://poets.org/poem/not-stars-do-i-my-judgment-pluck-sonnet-14>
- "Hades' Pitch" by Rita Dove, <https://poets.org/poem/hades-pitch>
- "Anne Hathaway" by Carol Ann Duffy, <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/anne-hathaway/>

Are you just looking for a way to generate ideas? Try these approaches!

Journaling

Fiction and CNF Editors, Anna Howse and Sheldon White

The Elan Fiction/CNF editors welcome you to join us in an activity for National Poetry Month. During these times especially, writing can help us deal with our feelings and cope with stress. For our prompt we want you to write a journal entry. It can be about anything, from a simple recap of what you've spent the day doing to expressing all your feelings onto the page.

From there, highlight the 5, 17, 28, 55, and 63 words from the entry and use that to generate a poem! The exercise can be repeated as many times as you would like. We hope that this will be a simple and fun way for you to generate work!

Music Shuffle

Layout and Design editors, Luz Manunga and Jasper Darnell

It has been a stressful time for all of us, and we hope that poetry can uplift you during these hard times. We as a team have decided to create a prompt to get your creative minds working:

- Go to any music app that you use, shuffle your music, and write a poem based off the feeling the song is giving you!

We hope that you are being safe and stay healthy, keep writing and creating!

About Élan

Élan is an international student literary magazine and a publication of the Creative Writing department at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. Created in 1986, Élan is fueled by a passion for the written word and artistic expression.

Created in 1986, Élan's first issue was self-produced and published by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts to showcase the creative writing skills of its students.

MISSION AND HISTORY

Our mission as a publication is to compile original writing and visual artwork submitted by young writers and artists from across the globe. Élan publishes a fall and spring online editions each year, as well as a print compilation

Since Élan's beginnings, the publication has maintained a meaningful presence in the Jacksonville community through writing workshops in middle schools and various community events and venues.

For more information, visit us at
www.ElanLitMag.org

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