

5 Ways How to Write a Poem

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Okay, so there are probably about a million ways how to write a poem, but the five methods below help me when I've been stuck in a rut. If you have other ways to get those poems started, then feel encouraged to share in the comments below.

Here are 5 ways how to write poetry:

1. **Capture a moment.** One trap I can sometimes fall into is that I try to write the big poem or the poem filled with ideas (like love, hate, etc.). What always works better, for me anyway, is to focus on one moment that expresses an emotion or works as a metaphor for a bigger idea.
2. **Steal a conversation.** My first chapbook includes a poem titled "[Eavesdropping](#)," which is basically several conversations I overheard while in airport terminals. I took notes in the terminals and worked on the poem while doing my laundry at a laundromat. Listening to others can kickstart poems, because you'll hear things you would never say or think yourself.
3. **Describe something or someone.** Specificity strengthens a poem, and it's hard to get more specific than throwing all your attention toward one thing or person. The only trap with these poems is that they can sometimes read like lists.
4. **Respond to something.** Response poems have been around forever. In fact, an argument could be made that all poems are response poems. To what could your poem respond? For starters, you could respond to another poem, a piece of art, something someone said to you, a cool-looking car, etc. Nothing is off limits.
5. **Use someone else's line.** This is kind of like eavesdropping, I suppose, but there are poems that will take a line from another person's poem and make that the first line. In this tradition, it is also good form to mention the poem is "after (poet's name here)." How this can help is that you've already got a great line out of the way—and just need to write the rest of the poem.

How do you write poems?

As I said above, there are other ways how to write poems (and I encourage you to share those below), but these are some of my favorite techniques. If the five tips on how to make a poem mentioned above don't work for you, that's fine. One of the many [rules of poetry](#) is that there are no rules of poetry—more like guidelines.

Follow me on Twitter @[robertleebrewer](#) or check out [My Name Is Not Bob](#).

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If your problem isn't starting poems (or even finishing poems), but instead, it's finding an audience for your poems, then I recommend the [2016 Poet's Market](#), edited by me. This reference houses hundreds of publishing opportunities, including book publishers and (online and print) publications, in addition to several articles on finding an audience through getting published, speaking tips, and more!

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