Tickle Your Mind

Below are five ideas to help you get started exploring poetry and to Tickle Your Mind in the process.

Illustrate a Poem

1) Pick a poem that you like that is likely to be out of copyright (published before 1923) or in the public domain.

2) Find a image that illustrates it or some aspect of it.

3) Put them together on a sheet of paper or in your journal.

For example, here is a poem from nearly 100 years ago:

The Microbe
By Hilaire Belloc

The Microbe is so very small
You cannot make him out at all,
But many sanguine people hope
To see him through a microscope. 
His jointed tongue that lies beneath
A hundred curious rows of teeth;
His seven tufted tails with lots
Of lovely pink and purple spots, 
On each of which a pattern stands,
Composed of forty separate bands;
His eyebrows of a tender green; 
All these have never yet been seen--
But Scientists, who ought to know,
Assure us that they must be so. . . .
Oh! let us never, never doubt
What nobody is sure about!

from More Beasts (for Worse Children), Duckworth, 1912
See the book: http://openlibrary.org/b/OL7115711M/More_beasts_%28for_worse_children%29

Photo from the Department of Energy Joint Genome Institute http://www.jgi.doe.gov/News/news_8_18_08.html
Methylamine-enriched community of Lake Washington sediment featuring Methylotenera cells.
Photo: D. Kunkel, color, E. Latypova
Write a poem about your name

*Hint:* Think of the sound of your name, or a color, or an animal, or a piece of clothing, or a song you associate with it, and the rest of the poem will follow.

*For example, a person named “Patricia” might start this way:*

> With a name like a sneeze, ‘Pah-TRISH-ah....
> I have allergies and wheezes galore....

Imagine That You Are An Animal

Imagine that you are an animal and write a poem using all your five senses. What do you see, smell, hear, feel, and taste?

Imagining Names

1) Please read this poem by Nan Fry:

*Names for Bear*

Apple of the Forest
Big hairy one
Blue tooth
Broadfoot
Caleb
Cousin
Dog of God
Golden friend
Goliath
Grandfather of the hill
Grandmother
Great food
Holy animal
Honey paw
King of the woods
Little mother of honey
Lord of the mountains
Old man with the fur coat
One who prowls at night
Old shaggy bottom
Owner of the earth
Step widener
Wise man
Wise woman
Sacred one

*This poem first appeared in “Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wristlet” and is used here with permission of the author.*
2) Using “Names for Bear” as a model, write a list of at least 10 names for yourself. The names need not be in alphabetical order. If you run out of ideas, ask a friend to suggest some descriptive names for you.

3) Using the list of names for you, choose one for each of the blanks below:

I am ________________________________
______________________________________

Be careful when you speak to me,
for I am ________________________________
______________________________________

Come be the friend of ____________________ [Your real, first name]
for I am ________________________________
______________________________________

-Created by Patricia Gray and used with permission.

Now you have a poem about yourself!

**A Poem About A Picture**

Find a picture and write a poem about it. To get you started, several images are listed below. This time, do not show the picture with your poem, for your poem *is* the work of art on its own. A poem about a work of art is called an *Ekphrastic* poem. It is a verbal description of a visual work of art.

*Hint*: Try the following images from the Library's Prints and Photographs catalog at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/pphome.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/pphome.html). Type in each designation separately until you find one you like—or just choose a painting or photo you already know.

“still life with violin”
“mother west wind”
“suruga satta no kaijō”
“fox woman/ Bertha Lum”
“gentry bros. circus”
“mary jane as a Sunday school scholar”
“creek in woods”
“two’s company”
“sea tortoises come ashore by night”

*Or select another image of your choice.*
Thank you for exploring these “Poetry for the Mind’s Joy” activities. If you enjoyed one or more of them, look for poetry readings, poetry classes, or poetry groups in your area or search online – or do as Poet Laureate Kay Ryan has done and simply write poems on your own!