

# 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

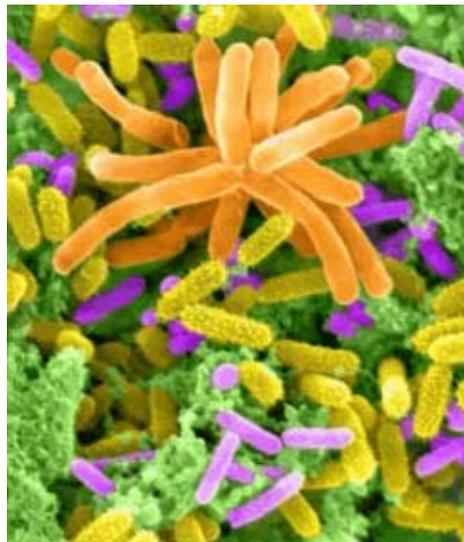
- 1) Pick a poem that you like that is likely to be out of copyright (published before 1923) or in the public domain.
- 2) Find a image that illustrates it or some aspect of it.
- 3) Put them together on a sheet of paper or in your journal.

*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](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](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>. 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!*