

Requirements

- Poetry must not exceed 40 lines or 500 words.
- Poetry must be family friendly, meaning it must not include sex, violence, or profanity.
- Poetry should be the poet's original work that has not been published yet.
- Poetry must follow this year's theme to be included in the book.

Some prompts to get you started:

1. Write a poem about one or all of the four seasons in Chicago. (Some ideas for brainstorming: What does the season look, feel, smell like? What memories do you associate with that season?).
2. Write a poem about something that happened to someone you know. Write about it as if it had happened to you.
3. Write a poem about your shadow moving through the city. (Some ideas for brainstorming: How does it change when you move? What does it look like in different kinds of light, in different situations? What would happen if you lost it? Does it have a secret life?)
4. Write a poem using three different neighborhoods.
5. Write a poem from the perspective of someone you know who lives in Chicago.
6. Write a poem about a place that frightens you or a place where you feel happy. Try to recreate the feeling of the place.
7. Write a poem about something or someone you lost.
8. Write a poem in the form of a lullaby.
9. Write a poem about a time you felt powerless in Chicago.
10. Write a poem that begins with you waking up.
11. Write the final line of your poem first, then figure out a way to get there.
12. Write a poem in the form of a letter (epistle).
13. Write a poem that begins with a line of advice or instruction, such as don't give up or take a left at the willow tree.
14. Write a poem in which a similar or identical phrase is repeated three or more times throughout the poem.

15. Write a poem that gets shorter with each line.
16. Write a poem about the end of something.
17. Write a poem about something you believe.
18. Write a poem about an event in your life that you have strong feelings about (it doesn't have to be painful) without stating how you feel about the event. If you want an extra challenge, end every third line with the letter "R".
19. Write about something in your life that you do every day. If you want an added challenge, make the first and the last lines the same or similar.
20. Write a poem as if it were an entry in someone's journal or diary or even their Twitter account. If you want an added challenge, limit your stanzas to 145 characters so they mirror the limitations of texting.
21. Write about something you can see from the window of your home.
22. Start your poem with a piece of advice.
23. Write about an event in your life in the city that happened within the past week. Take some time to think about the week and look for event that has some emotional meaning for you, but not so much that it would be painful for you to write about. Sometimes smaller moments have more meaning. Feel free to post your poem in the comments or on your own site with a link back to here. This will give other people the opportunity to read your poem.
24. Write a poem that discusses a real moment in your life without discussing its larger meaning or attempting to lead the reader to a conclusion.
25. Write a poem that begins and ends with the same word.
26. Write a poem that repeatedly uses numbers.
27. Write a poem that includes directions to get somewhere.