

INSPIRED POETRY



for Valentine's Day

Inspired Poetry for Valentine's Day

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INTRODUCTION

Trellis Magazine is proud to present our new booklet *Inspired Poetry for Valentine's Day*.

This edition contains the best poems from our Valentine's Day Poetry Contest 2010.

Trellis Magazine challenged writers of all ages and skill levels to read and study a famous romantic poem. The study poems were called Inspiration Poems. Each writer could choose to study and draw inspiration from any aspect of an Inspiration Poem, such as theme, imagery, language, simile, metaphor, voice, rhyme, rhythm, or poetic form.

After sharpening their minds, the writers sharpened their pencils and composed their own romantic poem. We invite you to enjoy the resulting contest poetry.

The poetry is arranged in sections according to the Inspiration Poems. The Inspiration Poem is on the first page of each section, followed by the contest poems inspired by it. Poetry Notes at the end of each section include information about the Inspiration Poem and the contest poems.

In the Conclusion of this booklet, we have provided tips on how you can write a romantic poem for someone special for Valentine's Day or any other occasion using an Inspiration Poem. The Conclusion has a list of many possible Inspiration Poems with study materials.

Happy Valentine's Day!

SECTION 1 — INSPIRATION POEM: SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET 18

Sonnet 18

by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Come Here

by Nick Harris

She's like a sunbathed fragrant tulip.
She's filled with dew that's sweet.
I wish to tip this cup of julep
and taste her liquor's heat.

For, I am drunk on love with her.
It's on her breast of lace;
I wish to lie and not to stir
in her two arms' embrace.

But there! It's now she waits for me
beside the sheltered bay
and daffodils along the sea
are gentle in their play.

The wind is whispering in my ear,
"Come in, my love. Come here."

Sonnet 18.5

by Elizabeth Kirsch

Priti, this is for you

Shall I compare thee to a modest man,
A gentleman worthy of many charms?
I want to try but know not if I can
Deserve to rest in those kind gentle arms.
So sweet-lipped and mild I never could curse,
Nor such tender adoration deny:
Your sweet snaking smile enshrines me in verse,
And I sit and accept in ecstasy.
For I am fair, and my beauty is well,
And thy praise fair speaks of my splendor pure;
Your verse doth enchant as if 'twas a spell,
And softly adores my fairness demure.
But though rosebuds in my complexion lie,
My beauty is naught to your modesty.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare (published 1609) was written in iambic pentameter, using the rhyme scheme *a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-f-g-g*, typical for Shakespeare’s sonnets. To fit all the words into the iambic pentameter rhythm, he used an apostrophe in several words (dimmed, untrimmed, ow’st, wander’st, and grow’st) to indicate a dropped letter “e” and hence one less syllable for the pronunciation of the word.

“Come Here” by Nick Harris is a sonnet inspired by Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”. Nick gave this description of his writing process for his Valentine’s Day poem: “I decided to do a sonnet with a natural theme. I liked using the couplet at the end and the rhyme scheme. While Shakespeare’s poem is a love poem about poetry as well as a woman, mine is just a love poem for a woman. I like iambic pentameter, but decided on something a little different – I have iambs of 4,3,4,3... I also put flowers in my poem like his ‘darling buds of May.’ My poem also takes place on a beautiful ‘summer’s day.’ I decided on quatrains as it’s a more modern poem, but it still has an old world feel. Rather than compare ‘her’ to a summer’s day, I used a tulip for the comparison, but the ideas are quite similar in that both fade, physically, with time... I once read a poem by Wordsworth about daffodils along the sea so I included that image. I like comparing women to flowers, not to be sexist, but as it is an enduring metaphor especially when writing an old world type poem.”

“Sonnet 18.5” by Elizabeth Kirsch was written as a response to Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18” during a recent college English assignment. In her Valentine’s Day poem, Elizabeth used the same poetic form and similar language as Shakespeare. This poem is actually the first sonnet in a set of three sonnets she wrote as her response.

SECTION 2 — INSPIRATION POEM: BYRON'S FIRST KISS

The First Kiss of Love

by George Gordon, Lord Byron

*Ha barbitos de chordais
Er ota mounon aechei.*—ANACREON

Away with your fictions of flimsy romance,
Those tissues of falsehood which Folly has wove;
Give me the mild beam of the soul-breathing glance,
Or the rapture which dwells on the first kiss of love.

Ye rhymers, whose bosoms with fantasy glow,
Whose pastoral passions are made for the grove;
From what blest inspiration your sonnets would flow,
Could you ever have tasted the first kiss of love.

If Apollo should e'er his assistance refuse,
Or the Nine be dispos'd from your service to rove,
Invoke them no more, bid adieu to the Muse,
And try the effect, of the first kiss of love.

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art,
Though prudes may condemn me, and bigots reprove;
I court the effusions that spring from the heart,
Which throbs, with delight, to the first kiss of love.

Your shepherds, your flocks, those fantastical themes,
Perhaps may amuse, yet they never can move:
Arcadia displays but a region of dreams;
What are visions like these, to the first kiss of love?

Oh! cease to affirm that man, since his birth,
From Adam, till now, has with wretchedness strove;
Some portion of Paradise still is on earth,
And Eden revives, in the first kiss of love.

When age chills the blood, when our pleasures are past—
For years fleet away with the wings of the dove—
The dearest remembrance will still be the last,
Our sweetest memorial, the first kiss of love.

The Mystique of Love

by Keith M. Burkholder

Love touches us.

Its mystique surrounds us one and all;

Its magic will always capture our hearts.

That's love and its endless boundaries.

Coochi Coo

by Robert Sonkowsky

To my wife of 53 years

When I roll over at night in bed
and reach my hand toward her head,
my fingers touch that softest skin
and stroke beneath her chin
along her neck, and her shoulder
rises to hug my hand, while I grow bolder.

Color Me Pink

by Tammy L. Whisman

Words tease

soft lips whisper

sweet nothings of something

rising color blushes pale cheeks

--Oh my!

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “The First Kiss of Love” by Lord Byron was written in 1806. The quatrains are rhymed *a-b-a-b* and employ a roughly anapestic tetrameter rhythm with variations. The epigraph is a Latin transliteration of the ancient Greek poetry of Anacreon, whose favorite topics were wine, women, and song.

“The Mystique of Love” by Keith M. Burkholder was written as a response to Byron’s poetry, in which the four-line form of a quatrain and the romantic content of his Valentine’s Day poem were inspired by the form and content of “First Kiss”.

“Coochi Coo” by Robert Sonkowsky is a rhyming Valentine’s Day poem that was inspired by the theme of Byron’s poem, and by his love for his wife, about which he said, “My wife of 53 years and I keep within us always that first kiss.”

“Color Me Pink” by Tammy L. Whisman is in the modern five-line poetic form known as a cinquain. The form was invented by Adelaide Crapsey, an American poet, who was inspired by the Japanese syllabic form known as a haiku. Crapsey’s cinquain uses the following syllable count for the five lines: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2. Tammy drew inspiration for the romantic content and style of her Valentine’s Day poem from Byron’s poem, which she described this way: “Byron’s Kiss to me is like a teasing dare. What promises await....”

SECTION 3 — INSPIRATION POEM: TENNYSON'S PRINCESS

The Princess: Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.
The firefly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake.
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Moonflower

by Neil Ellman

To Gail

Your numbing scent,
Your arms outstretched
Moonflowers that bedevil me
Draw me into you.

The petals of your smile
Reach out
On moonless nights
And I am drawn into
Your purple warmth.

Supernova

by Cassidy Geborkoff

In celebration of us, and the way you make me feel to: Nathan Daniel Beam

When you sleep,
I lie with my head on your chest;
I can feel you breathing
the life into my world
each time you take me to soar
through the dark night's sky-
to float with bright stars
in ecstasy, my Supernova.

Breathe.
In. *Out.* In. *Out.*
As we meld together,
becoming one
with the milky way.
By-passing every black vortex
of depressing nothingness,
together.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: *The Princess* by Alfred Lord Tennyson was published in 1847 as a novel-in-verse. The particular section known as “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal” is an excerpt from Part VII of the novel. The stanzas of this section are written in the poetic form of blank verse, which is unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter. The blank verse stanzas in this section include the uncommon device of the repetition of the same word (“me”) at the end of each stanza.

“Moonflower” by Neil Ellman was written for his wedding anniversary. His poem uses the flower imagery found in many famous romantic poems, such as “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal.” He drew special inspiration from the unusual nature of moonflowers that blossom in the night.

“Supernova” by Cassidy Geborkoff’s is a poem for Valentine’s Day that was inspired by a romantic relationship and by Tennyson’s “Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal” poem. Cassidy’s poem uses night-sky imagery like Tennyson’s poem.

SECTION 4 — INSPIRATION POEM: WORDSWORTH'S PHANTOM

She Was a Phantom of Delight by William Wordsworth

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament:
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death:
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

My Flame

by Don Thackrey

You are the candle flame,
And I your moth on fire.
With blackened tongue I name
You as the candle flame.
Ah, Love, you're not to blame
If I from heat expire—
You but the candle flame,
I your moth on fire.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “She Was a Phantom of Delight” by William Wordsworth was published in 1807. This poem is about Wordsworth’s wife Mary. The three stanzas use ten lines in five rhyming couplets of iambic tetrameter. Each stanza describes his deepening understanding and love for his wife as the years go by.

“My Flame” by Don Thackrey was written after he studied two famous romantic poems. Both of the inspiration poems he used — Wordsworth’s “Phantom of Delight” and Edmund Waller’s “Go, Lovely Rose” — employ rhymed and metered lines in stanzas. (Links to read Waller’s poem are provided in the Conclusion section of this booklet.) Don described his inspiration and writing process for his Valentine’s Day poem in this manner: “I study formal love poetry to learn how poets shape the music of their verse.”

SECTION 5 — INSPIRATION POEM: LEAR'S OWL AND PUSSYCAT

The Owl and the Pussycat

by Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong-tree grows
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

'Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

The Cow and the Vampire Bat

by RJ Clarken

To Rich, Ryan, Caitlin and Corky – My Funny Valentines

A Cow and Vampire Bat went to town
in a giant stretch limousine,
They took some loose change, which might seem strange,
as they wanted to visit the Queen.
The Cow looked up to the stars above,
And sang in the long limo car,
'O handsome Vampire! O Vampire my love,
What a handsome Vampire you are,
You are,
You are!
What a handsome Vampire you are!'

The Bat said to the Cow, 'I do avow
how charmingly sweet you moo!
I won't draw much blood while you chew your cud!
O darling, how you do woo!'
Then they pulled to the curb and heard a superb
Dog who was howling a tune.
His baritone growl appealed to the Cow:
and they both did hasten to swoon,
to swoon,
to swoon,
They both did hasten to swoon.

'Dear Dog, will you croon but another bright tune?'
'Oh yeah!' woofed the Cool Dog, 'I will.'
So he took it away, just like Street Cabaret
or perhaps more like Old Vaudeville.
The Cow tossed Dog the change, but because of some mänge,
that ended for now his routine;
And after all that, the Cow and the Bat,
rode off to visit the Queen,
the Queen,
the Queen,
They rode off to visit the Queen.

Heart Stones

by Frank Hubeny

On the shore there's a stone waiting for you alone.
Water smoothed it to seem like a heart.
Should you take it one day and not break it you may
Let it tempt you to risk a fresh start.

Many ways do exist. The sun's rays lift the mist
And you see a path opened for you.
By your side strolling there may we hide every care
As the hearts that were hard become true.

We will patiently find all we say can be kind.
Between hearts there's a chance love may grow.
With the sun let us shine. What we've done will be fine
By the shore where the warm waters flow.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “The Owl and the Pussycat” by Edward Lear was published in 1872 in his book *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets*. The poetic form is based on a form often used in nursery rhymes: alternating 4-beat and 3-beat lines of accentual meter in quatrains rhymed *a-b-a-b*. Lear took this simple poetic form and built on it with longer stanzas that end with a refrain.

“The Cow and the Vampire Bat” by RJ Clarken is a humorous parody of Lear’s poem written for Valentine’s Day. She said about her inspiration and writing process, “I’m a fan of humorous poets/writers like Edward Lear, Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, Ogden Nash, and Dorothy Parker. I’ve always loved this particular poem, from the time I was a child, and I thoroughly enjoy writing humorous poetry. So, it seems like the perfect pairing: using ‘The Owl and the Pussycat’ as a jumping off point to rewrite it as a love parody poem.”

“Heart Stones” by Frank Hubeny is a more serious poem than its inspiration poem by Lear. He described the process for composing his Valentine’s Day poem as follows: “Lear’s poem ‘The Owl and the Pussycat’ provided a core metrical form that I tried to imitate. I added an additional rhyme constraint in the odd numbered lines, kept the meter uniform, and removed the repetition in each stanza, but otherwise the pattern is the same. The inspiration poem reminded me that I don’t have to make the content logical as long as the content hints sufficiently at the desired meaning to keep the reader’s interest. I didn’t stray as far from reality as the inspiration poem did, but it gave me the courage to mildly suggest that two heart stones might find each other on the shore. I wrote a short, humorous poem about a heart stone some years ago after finding one on a beach and that gave me the idea for this piece, although in content they are very different.”

SECTION 6 — INSPIRATION POEM: DOBSON'S YOU BID METRY

You Bid Me Try

By Austin Dobson

You bid me try, blue-eyes, to write
A Rondeau. What! -- forthwith? -- tonight?
 Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
 But thirteen lines! -- and rimed on two!
"Refrain" as well. Ah, Hapless plight!

Still, there are five lines -- ranged aright.
These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
 My easy Muse. They did, till you --
 You bid me try!

That makes them eight. The port's in sight --
'Tis all because your eyes are bright!
 Now just a pair to end in "oo" --
 When maids command, what can't we do?
Behold! -- the rondeau, tasteful, light,
 You bid me try!

Quinceañera Serenata

by Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo

“And what was really, really special was that on Saturday, five o’ clock in the morning when the sun was coming out, the boys used to play the guitar and serenade everybody, and it was so beautiful to hear the music in Spanish.”

—Carmen Torres Roldan

*Mi quinceañera, en tela blanca,
como linda flor de la mañana,
blushes before an open window’s light.
A virgin veil sweeps black coquettish eyes,
and hands hold prayers like fiery drama.*

Dawn calls me to sing my *serenata*
for this child-bride, this *niña querida*,
verses for young apricot cheeks. *Ayay,*
mi quinceañera.

Cantante, your song inside my soul gnaws.
Skin burns to feel a man’s eyes on my flaws.
Virgin hands clasp prayers while wild eyes
desire things unaware, and dawn invites
mi quinceañera.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “You Bid Me Try” by Austin Dobson is a rondeau published in 1877. The romantic poem for a maid he calls “blue-eyes” references its own poetic form. The rondeau form is thirteen full lines in three stanzas rhymed *a-a-b-b-a a-a-b a-a-b-b-a* and two brief refrain lines. The refrains repeat the first word or words of the first line of the first stanza (in this case, “you bid me try”) at the end of the second and third stanza.

“Quinceañera Serenata” by Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo was composed using the rondeau form Dobson employed in “You Bid Me Try”. She described her writing process for her romantic poem in this way: “I was reading the book *Chavez Ravine* by Don Normak, which has interviews with people and beautiful photographs. I was struck by a photo of a young girl dressed in white for her rite of confession (not quinceañera), and at the same time by a description of young men serenading the town at dawn. I thought I wanted to try and write what one of those songs might have sounded like, and I found the rondeau to be a good form for such a song.”

SECTION 7 — INSPIRATION POEM: MARLOWE'S PASSIONATE SHEPHERD

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

by Christopher Marlowe

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

Southern Belle

by Marilyn S. Moran

For those who loved so long ago

Grand dame with old-style southern charm, she lays her limbs upon the ground.
For decades growing, spreading far, she's grateful for the rest they've found.

What tales she'd tell, if humankind, of times long gone and gracious ways,
Perhaps two hundred years ago, she shaded folks in gentler days.

Did lovers in old fashioned dress once come to sit beneath her core...
...then steal a kiss and promise true to love each other ever more?

In tribute to her aging frame, soft silky Spanish moss collects
and covers every craggy branch; with love and reverence it protects.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Passionate Shepherd” was written circa 1588 by Christopher Marlowe and published in 1599. The poetic form is quatrains rhymed *a-a-b-b* with lines of iambic tetrameter. It is a pastoral poem, extolling the quiet and simple life of a country shepherd.

“Southern Belle” by Marilyn S. Moran is a romantic poem that was inspired by the rhythm and rhyme of “Come Live With Me”. Her poem’s rhythm and rhyme are similar to but different from Marlowe’s poem. She has arranged each line as two phrases of iambic tetrameter with a small pause in the middle, and the long lines are rhymed as couplets. She was also inspired by Marlowe’s theme and imagery, which she described this way: “As the shepherd describes the fair scene to his beloved - rocks, streams, singing birds, a bed of roses, a beautiful gown, cap of flowers, dancing and singing - he hopes she will find it so appealing that she will come to live with him and be his love. My poem also depicts a scene that, in this case, is a lovely shaded spot beneath an ancient moss-covered tree where lovers met centuries ago to steal a kiss and promise their love. Each of the poems evokes a pleasant picture of a welcoming place for love to blossom.”

SECTION 8 — INSPIRATION POEM: BROWNING'S LOVE AMONG RUINS

Love Among the Ruins

by Robert Browning

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all
Made of marble, men might march on nor be prest
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-spreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks

Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
O heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

Believe

by Robert Hosking

The unseen force that drives the will
To reach and twist where nothing is,
Once led my heart to paths forgone,
As fleeting as the morning mist.

But none the less my strong desire
Had lifted something there inside,
To which I trust was meant for this,
And so embraced was its design.

Not I nor you may know the turn,
Our grasp so loosely held.
What drives us toward this empty place,
What hides inside this shell?

Where towers fell and kings once stood,
Where love had triumphed long before,
And yet uncertain once again,
We trust the mystery evermore.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Love Among the Ruins” by Robert Browning was published in 1855 as the first poem in his book *Men and Women*. The poem is in rhyming couplets with the unusual arrangement of a long line paired with a short three-syllable line.

“Believe” by Robert Hosking is a poem that drew inspiration from famous romantic poetry such as “Love Among the Ruins.” Robert wrote his Valentine’s Day poem using modern language that he felt was more appropriate for today’s audiences. The poem is in quatrains of unrhymed lines of iambic tetrameter, with two shorter lines in the questions of the third stanza.

SECTION 9 — INSPIRATION POEM: POE'S ELIZABETH

Elizabeth

by Edgar Allan Poe

ELIZABETH -- it surely is most fit
[Logic and common usage so commanding]
In thy own book that first thy name be writ,
Zeno and other sages notwithstanding;
And I have other reasons for so doing
Besides my innate love of contradiction;
Each poet -- if a poet -- in pursuing
The muses thro' their bowers of Truth or Fiction,
Has studied very little of his part,
Read nothing, written less -- in short 's a fool
Endued with neither soul, nor sense, nor art,
Being ignorant of one important rule,
Employed in even the theses of the school --
Called -- I forget the heathenish Greek name --
[Called anything, its meaning is the same]
"Always write first things uppermost in the heart."

We Are Free

by Frances Drabick

To Jean: Free for Nineteen Years

We are free to love,
else we wilt
amongst those whom
rise against our same-same
elemental dreams of
finding a love that
reaches over walls that
encloses a truth others
easily get to embrace.

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Elizabeth” was handwritten by Edgar Allan Poe as a book inscription circa 1831 for Elizabeth Rebecca Herring. This is an acrostic with the first letters of the lines spelling her name. Poe also wrote other acrostics for his cousin Elizabeth.

“We are Free” by Frances Drabick is a Valentine’s Day poem written after reading Poe’s “Elizabeth” and studying acrostics. Frances described her inspiration and writing process in this manner: “I recently found out I have significant Greek/Crete DNA in me, among a few dominant others in the Levantine area. It felt right to try an acrostic; to try something my genetic ancestors created. Valentine’s Day is about love, but love for all is not always accepted or even a given right under some laws. I just went from there.”

SECTION 10 — INSPIRATION POEM: BYRON'S SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She Walks in Beauty

by George Gordon, Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Dinner Theater

by Carl Palmer

into the menu smiling
cheeks reflect candlelit
white tablecloth islands
amid the carpeted scurry
of busboys and waiters
in the backdrop of our night

tinkling laughter and ice cubes
accompany depths of conversation
overheard yet unheard
from couples in quorum
around the raised platform
at the center of the room

noises diminish with
dimming lights as
all eyes are drawn
to the spot center-stage
except mine
which are upon you

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “She Walks in Beauty” was written by George Gordon, Lord Byron in 1814 in response to seeing an evening party guest, Mrs. Anne Beatrix Wilmot, the wife of Byron’s first cousin. The poetic form is three stanzas of six iambic tetrameter lines rhymed *a-b-a-b-a-b*.

“Dinner Theater” by Carl Palmer is a modern-style Valentine’s Day poem with a similar theme and similar stanza form as Byron’s “She Walks in Beauty,” but it was also influenced by the study of many romantic poems. Carl described his inspiration and writing process this way: “These inspiration poems are famous classics, examples/studies for students of all levels. I’ve attempted to portray lovers at any stage, at any age in my poem.”

SECTION 11 — INSPIRATION POEM: BURNS' RED, RED ROSE

Red, Red Rose by Robert Burns

O my Luv'e's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luv'e's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luv'e am I:
And I will luv'e thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luv'e thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luv'e
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luv'e,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Rainbows and Love

by Jenny Kelley

As a child, I loved rainbows.
After the rain and the sky had turned from gray to blue,
I searched for the rainbow with its lovely colors and hues.
Each rainbow was so beautiful and magical to me, I wanted it
to last forever as children wish for special things to do.

I'm much older now.
And a sad thing I've learned is rainbows fade away,
and no matter how much I long for them to stay,
like years, they seem to melt away leaving only memories
of yesterdays.

Rainbows come only after the storms and the rain, and
as with life, love and old age, they come with some pain.
The rainbows are lovely and beautiful while they last,
but much like life, they are impossible
to hold onto forever and grasp.

I wish rainbows could last forever, but if they did, they
would be common and not a precious gift to treasure.
God in his wisdom, made them to enjoy while they last,
and to remind us that some lovely things, like life,
don't last forever.

Love between the right two people can last a lifetime
growing more vibrant and beautiful with age.
But, unlike a fleeting rainbow, that love doesn't fade;
Rather, like a fine wine, it will mature....
and grow better and mellower with age.

Loved, By a Nose

by Anna G. Joujan

"My love is like a red red rose . . ."
With a corn cob pipe and a button nose?
That can't be right, that's not what I meant:
Don't worry, my darling, this poem's not spent!

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways . . ."
No one can eat just one . . . Lays?
Oh dear, no--most certainly not!
A potato chip? What a ridiculous thought!

Just one more attempt I shall make, one last time--
One more chance to woo with a romantic rhyme:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;"
With hair shiny black and eyes green & gray,
You make my heart flutter and grow delicate.

With you I am matched, in our profiles it shows:
As we reach for a kiss, but are blocked by a nose!

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Red, Red Rose” was completed by Robert Burns and set to music in 1794 for publication in collections of traditional Scottish ballads. The words are written in the type of quatrains often used for songs, with the unrhymed first and third lines longer than the rhymed second and fourth lines.

(English translations: “luve” is love, “gang” is go, and “weel” is well.)

(Abbreviations: a’ is all, wi’ is with, o’ is of, tho’ is though.)

“Rainbows and Love” by Jenny Kelley was inspired by the comparisons in Burns’ poem, as well as Burns’ theme of everlasting love. Her poem was also inspired by the definition of love in 1Corinthians 12:13, and by the love of her husband, with whom she says it has been an honor to share married life for 46 years. She described her Valentine’s Day writing process in this manner: “In his poem Burns compares his love to the beauty and feeling that the rose brings to him. In my poem I compare love to a rainbow. Like a beautiful rose, a rainbow, no matter how beautiful it is, and how much we wish it would last forever, will fade. But unlike the beautiful rose or rainbow, I feel and tried to express that real, true love does not fade with time but like fine wine, becomes sweeter, mellow and has a deeper taste or leaves a lingering feeling as it ages.”

“Loved, By a Nose” by Anna G. Joujan was written after studying three famous romantic poems: Robert Burns’ “Red, Red Rose”, William Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “Sonnet 43” (in the next section of this booklet). She mixed everything up as to stanzas, rhyme, and meter, and also included other familiar, popular phrases for a unique and playful result in her inspired humorous Valentine’s Day poem.

SECTION 12 — INSPIRATION POEM: BROWNING'S SONNET 43

Sonnet 43

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Secret Love Note

by Ariel Bell

You are a supernatural force
A presence so great, a feeling so right
That my every breath is taken away
Every day and every night

Like the skies without the sun
My heart darkens without your touch
My soul slips into a romantic hibernation
It's amazing how I love you so much

I will stand by you in life's storms
Hold your hand in the pouring rain
I long to be your secret remedy
Rid you of your hidden pain

The beauty of life glows within you
Residing in the depths of your soul
A light that remains to shine bright
Even as the days grow old

We are as eternal as the ocean
Lovers until we're no longer above
You are my reason for living, my angel
Forever you will be my love

Valentine's Day

by Phoebe B. Nir

You, my darling, are my vice.
How could I ever resist?
Melt me in your arms like ice.

Yes, my fingers twitch like mice.
Yes, I tremble when I'm kissed.
You, my darling, are my vice.

Shake my worries out like dice.
Make them fade like morning mist.
Melt me in your arms like ice.

Do you have some secret spice
Wrapped inside your perfect fist?
You, my darling, are my vice.

You had to convince me thrice
Of the fact that you exist.
Melt me in your arms like ice.

In the name of God, be nice.
Let me know that I've been missed.
You, my darling, are my vice.
Melt me in your arms like ice.

I Tried to Write You a Love Poem

by Angela Consolo Mankiewicz

For Richard

I tried to write you a love poem
like the great love poems of the world, like
“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.”

But all I wrote were words,
words that make noise on a page, that prattle
like swooning ladies at old matinees.

I tried to write you a love poem,
one that trumpets the riches you give me,
the freedom to win, to falter, to feel.

But all I could think of were phrases
lifted from novels, titles of movies,
yesterday’s songs with their yellowed appeal.

I fancied the depth of my passion
would stun you, its eloquence carry you
breathless, your heart brimming over, ablaze.

I so wanted to write you a love poem –
why couldn’t I have written
“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways”?

Poetry Notes

Inspiration Poem: “Sonnet 43” was written circa 1845 by Elizabeth Barrett Moulton-Barrett during the year leading up to her marriage to Robert Browning, and published 1850 in her collection *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. “My little Portuguese” was Robert’s nickname for her. This sonnet uses lines of iambic pentameter, and a Petrarchan sonnet rhyme scheme of *a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a-c-d-c-d-c-d*.

“Secret Love Note” by Ariel Bell’s was inspired by the tone and style of Browning’s sonnet, which Ariel described in this manner: “I love the romantic tone in this poem, how it feels so personal and intimate, like a letter or love note from one love to another. I also like its rhythm and rhyme.” Her own Valentine’s Day poem is written in rhymed quatrains.

“Valentine’s Day” by Phoebe Nir was written in response to “Sonnet 43.” She described that she was inspired by “the pacing, the way the story emerged fully over the course of the poem.” For the form of her poem, Phoebe used the villanelle form of such famous poems as “Villanelle of His Lady’s Treasures” by Ernest Dowson (in the Conclusion of this booklet). The villanelle form has nineteen lines in six stanzas, two refrains (designated A1 and A2), and the rhyme scheme of *A1-b-A2 a-b-A1 a-b-A2 a-b-A1 a-b-A2 a-b-A1 a-b-A2*.

“I Tried to Write You a Love Poem” by Angela Consolo Mankiewicz was composed while Angela was in the midst of studying the famous sonnets of John Donne and William Shakespeare. The interesting poetic form of her Valentine’s Day poem uses tercets woven together with refrain lines and end-rhymes. She described her inspiration and writing process in this manner: “I was becoming so dissatisfied with my own attempts at a love poem that I consoled myself with this response to Browning’s glorious language.”

CONCLUSION

Writing your own inspired romantic poem

Would you like to compose a romantic poem for someone special, for Valentine’s Day or another occasion?

You can start by studying a famous romantic poem. We have provided the title and author of the Inspiration Poems from the contest, as well as other suggested Inspiration Poems, in the list on the next pages. We have provided suggested URLs for free sites where you can read and study each of the poems, to help you get started. You can find more study material about any of these poems by searching online using the poem’s title or first line, the author’s name, and a keyword (“study”, “analysis”, “guide”, or “discussion”).

You can choose to study any of the various aspects of the Inspiration Poem, such as theme, imagery, simile, metaphor, language, voice, tone, rhyme, rhythm, and poetic form. For information about the use of rhyme, meter, stanza, refrain, and other elements of poetic form, you can explore the magazines and other resources on this publisher’s website at www.TrellisMagazine.com. If you are interested in a particular aspect of one of the Inspiration poems, you can also search online for more study material about that particular aspect by using keywords such as “simile”, “sonnet rhyme scheme”, or “iambic pentameter”.

We encourage you to sharpen your mind by studying an Inspiration Poem. Then sharpen your pencil and write your own new, romantic poem!

If you would like to have your inspired romantic poem considered for publication by this publisher, see the publisher’s website [www.TrellisMagazine.com] for details about poetry submissions.

Romantic Inspiration Poems

“Sonnet 18: Shall I Compare Thee” by William Shakespeare (1609)

poem and study [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonnet_18]

study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/xSonnets.html#Rhyming>]

“The First Kiss of Love” by George Gordon, Lord Byron (1806)

poem [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_First_Kiss_of_Love]

Anacreon [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anacreon>]

writing quatrains [<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Quatrain-Poem>]

“The Princess: Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal” by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1847)

poem [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=174647>]

blank verse [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blank_verse]

“She Was a Phantom of Delight” by William Wordsworth (1807)

poem [<http://www.bartleby.com/106/174.html>]

study [<http://www.helium.com/items/1283781-the-perfect-woman-by-william-wordsworth---an-analysis>]

“The Owl and the Pussycat” by Edward Lear (1871)

poem with Lear’s drawings [<http://www.nonsenselit.org/Lear/ns/pussy.html>]

analysis [<http://www.helium.com/items/1111656-analyzing-the-owl-and-the-pussycat-by-edward-lear>]

rhyme, meter [<http://www.helium.com/items/1109760-poetry-analysis-the-owl-and-the-pussycat-by-edward-lear>]

“You Bid Me Try” by Austin Dobson (1877)

poem [<http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/dobson01.html#5>]

rondeau form [<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5789>]

“Passionate Shepherd: Come Live with Me” by Christopher Marlowe (1599)

poem [<http://www.bartleby.com/106/5.html>]

study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides3/PassionateShepherd.html>]

study [http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/pfs_0000_0022_0/pfs_0000_0022_0_00020.html#Introduction]

writing quatrains [<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Quatrain-Poem>]

“Love Among the Ruins” by Robert Browning (1855)

poem [<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/283.html>]

study [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Among_the_Ruins_\(poem\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Among_the_Ruins_(poem))]

“Elizabeth” by Edgar Allan Poe (1831)

poem and acrostics [<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~poems/ps/html/acrostic.html>]

“She Walks in Beauty” by George Gordon, Lord Byron (1814)

poem and study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides5/SheWalks.html>]

“Red, Red Rose” by Robert Burns (1794)

poem [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Red_Red_Rose]

study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides5/MyLove.html>]

“Sonnet 43: How do I Love Thee” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1850)

poem [<http://www.eecs.harvard.edu/~keith/poems/count.html>]

study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides2/Sonnet43.html>]

study [<http://www.helium.com/items/1365470-poetry-analysis-sonnet-43-by-elizabeth-barrett-browning>]

“Go, Lovely Rose” by Edmund Waller (1645)

poem [<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/2249.html>]

carpe diem poetry [<http://theotherpages.org/poems/SubjIdx/carpe.html>]

use of simile and apostrophe: pages 34-37 in Shira Wolosky’s The Art of Poetry

[<http://books.google.com/books?id=ctSPhDOg3A8C&pg=PA34&lpg#v=onepage&q=&f=false>]

“One Perfect Rose” by Dorothy Parker (1926) (a witty female response to Waller’s poem)

poem [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=174100>]

analysis: “Probing literary language” pages 99-101 in Paul Simpson’s Stylistics

[<http://books.google.com/books?id=21-aRiC9sZkC&pg=PA99&lpg#v=onepage&q=&f=false>]

“A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” by John Donne (1611)

poem [<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15468>]

study [<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides3/Valediction.html>]

study [<http://www.sparknotes.com/poetry/donne/section5.rhtml>]

deeper analysis [<http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/cavanaugh.htm>]

"Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures" by Ernest Dowson (1896)

poem [<http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/1815/>]

villanelle form [<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5796>]

"A Letter to Daphnis" by Anne Finch (1685)

poem [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=180913>]

behind the poem [http://www.britsattheirbest.com/creative_brits/cr_finch.htm]

study of meter [<http://mason.gmu.edu/~stichy/564scansions.html>]

"Marriage Morning" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1867)

poem [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=180642>]

epithalamion [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epithalamium>]

rhyming [<http://www.howtodothings.com/hobbies/a2337-how-to-write-rhyming-poetry.html>]

"The Visiting Sea" by Alice Meynell (1875)

poem [<http://poetry.elcore.net/CatholicPoets/Meynell/Meynell008.html>]

rhyming [<http://www.howtodothings.com/hobbies/a2337-how-to-write-rhyming-poetry.html>]

deeper analysis [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_poetry/v038/38.1frawley.html]

"Villanelle of Ye Young Poet's First Villanelle to his Ladye and Ye Difficulties Thereof" by Eugene O'Neill (1912)

poem [<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/1537.html>]

villanelle form [<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5796>]

"Fireworks" by Amy Lowell (1915)

poem [<http://www.poemofquotes.com/amylowell/fireworks.php>]

analysis [http://poetry.suite101.com/article.cfm/amy_lowells_fireworks]

"i carry your heart with me" by E. E. Cummings (1952)

poem [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=179622>]

sonnet form [<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090419080656AA44IyA>]

use of parentheses: pages 220-221 [<http://www.engl.niu.edu/ojs/index.php/style/article/viewFile/18/15>]

use of enjambment [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enjambment>]

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Ariel Bell is in 9th grade at Lee High School in Alabama. Ariel just started writing seriously, but writing has been a hobby ever since she could pick up a pen. She has had some work published, mainly in essay and poetry contests.

Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo is a native Angelino poet in California with an MFA from Antioch University. Recently, she volunteered to teach a creative writing class to women in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Center, and continues to research and write on U.S. immigration and detention. She has been nominated for a 2009 Pushcart Award. Her work has been published in *Los Angeles Review*, *PALABRA*, *Glass: Journal of Poetry*, and *The Umbrella Journal*. She is head poetry editor for *The Splinter Generation*.

Keith M. Burkholder of New York has a bachelor's degree in Statistics with a minor in Mathematics. His creative writing has been published in *Sol Magazine* and *Creative Juices*.

RJ Clarken is a writer, photographer and graphic artist in New Jersey. Her work has been published in *Möbius*, *Asinine Poetry*, *USA Today Online*, *Sol Magazine* and *Trellis Magazine*, among others. She is the editor of *Goldfinch*, the literary journal of Women Who Write, a NJ not-for-profit women's writing collective. She is the author of two books: *Mugging for the Camera*, a quirky, offbeat collection of humorous poetry; and *Penny Wishes*, a young adult novel.

Frances Drabick of Maine has been writing as a hobby since a well-veiled disability slowed her down physically in 1992. She is in "constant learning mode" and writes short stories of creative non-fiction and poetry in different forms. Her work has been published in several venues. She recently had a poem chosen by *Off The Coast* literary magazine for a Pushcart Prize from their Fall 2009 issue.

Neil Ellman is a retired educator in New Jersey who has had his creative writing published in numerous print and online journals in the United States and abroad. He has two chapbooks, one already in print, both inspired by works of art.

Cassidy Geborkoff is in 12th grade at Lee High School in Alabama, and a student in the school's Creative Writing Magnet. Cassidy has had poetry published by *Trellis Magazine*, *Creative Communications*, and *Pine Tree Poetry*, and short fiction published by the Huntsville Literary Association. Cassidy also writes for the local newspaper *The Huntsville Times*.

Nick Harris lives in Washington and is training to be a Peer Counselor to work with sufferers of mental illness. He was born in Uganda in the 1960's and subsequently lived in Lebanon, Greece, and India. He studied wood carving in Greece and sitar in India while working at the American Embassy School as a teacher's assistant in elementary physical education. He has recently graduated from Seattle University in the undergraduate creative writing program. His short stories have been published in the *Cartier Street Review* and the *Blue Fog Journal*, and one story won honorable mention in the *Dylan Days Creative Writing Contest of Hibbing MN*. His poetry has been published in *Pearle*, *Poets West*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and *Voices in Wartime*, and he participated in the *Reading at the Frye Art Museum* for poetry held by *Poets West* in Seattle.

Robert Hosking is a hobby poetry writer living in Michigan.

Frank Hubeny of Illinois has a master's degree in Mathematics and work as a database administrator and software developer. He has been writing poetry for about seven years, with a small portion of it published or posted on internet sites.

Anna G. Joujan was born in South Dakota, as a Canadian citizen, and was raised in Zambia, the child of missionary teachers. Since her family's move to the U.S., Anna spent her childhood and early adulthood traveling throughout the world thanks to various educational and work opportunities with France, China, Peru, and Jamaica as some of the stops in her journeys. Her undergraduate degree in French Literature led to a Masters in Information Sciences and to work in New Hampshire as a college and high school librarian, and a cross country coach. She has also returned to Zambia multiple times to teach for individual families and for local schools, all the while continuing pursuing her passions of writing, artwork, photography, and running to a fault.

Jenny Kelley is a wife, mother, and grandmother in Tennessee. She loves to read and compose poetry. Her favorite poetry verse is, "Come grow old with me. The best is yet to be."

Elizabeth Kirsch is a sophomore at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. Her mother teaches creative writing, and she has always loved writing. She is majoring in English.

Angela Consolo Mankiewicz of California has four chapbooks, the most recent of which are *An Eye*, published by Pecan Grove Press (2006) and *As If*, recently released from Little Red Books-LummoX. She has had publications of her poetry in journals such as *PRESA*, *Montserrat*, *Re)Verb*, *Sketchbook*, *Seldom Nocturne*, *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Arsenic Lobster*, *Temple/Tsunami*, *Butcher Block*, *Slipstream*, *Chiron Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Cerberus*, *Karamu*, *Lynx Eye*, *Pemmican*, *Blind Man's Rainbow*, and *ArtWord*. Recognitions include a Pushcart nomi-

nation from *Hammers*, a Grand Prize sestina in *Trellis Magazine*, and two awards from *JerseyWorks*. Other creative writing includes her children's stories, *The Grummel Book* (CD by Shoofly), and her novella *Laura Hanson*, which was serialized by *ESC! Magazine* in 2008. She has also been the Contributing Editor and Regional Editor, respectively, for the small (now defunct) journals *Mushroom Dreams* and *New Press*. Combining her poetry and her love of music, she is currently collaborating with composers on an experimental chamber opera and a song cycle.

Marilyn S. Moran works for a law firm in New York as their Director of Client Relations. Poetry, photography, and gardening are her hobbies, which combined well in her creative work that has been published in *Trellis Magazine*.

Phoebe B. Nir is in 12th grade at Fieldston School in New York. She is currently a finalist to become a Presidential Scholar in the arts.

Carl Palmer is a military veteran, retired from the FAA and living in Washington state with his wife. His creative writing work was recently nominated for the Pushcart Prize in poetry and the Micro Award in flash fiction.

Robert Sonkowsky is a Professor Emeritus in classical studies at the University of Minnesota. He received his PhD from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and enjoyed a long career teaching classics and theater. He is currently a writer and actor. His poetry has been published in several journals, and his chapbook *Unsound Science* will soon be out in print.

Don Thackrey was raised in the rural Sandhills region of Nebraska, and much of his formal verse reflects that experience. He is retired from teaching and administering at the University of Michigan, and lives in Dexter. His verse has appeared in a number of journals and anthologies.

Tammy L. Whisman resides in southern West Virginia. She's a member of the West Virginia Writers, Inc. and a frequent contributor to several on-line and print magazines. Tammy is "a small town girl living her dream of being a published author," with two books of poetry, *Fireflies*, *Moonlight and All That Jazz* and *Sliced Ice Cream*.

