



## WILD WORDS CREATURE POEM WORKSHOP

A guide to writing a poem  
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Key stage 2/3

# NATIONAL Writing Day

24 JUNE 2020



# NATIONAL POETRY DAY 2020

## See It Like a Poet

She watches the world  
through star-gold eyes:

with awe but mostly  
suspicion; she'll sniff

at the air, she'll wait,  
she'll listen, she'll sense

the slightest footfall;  
she'll skulk through the night

in her old winter coat  
beneath an ocean of sky;

she'll leap over snow  
with limbs as fleet

as the wind's invisible wings;  
she'll follow the promise

of even the wisp  
of a meal.

Here in my dreams,  
those darkest woods,

nothing bewitches me  
more than her:

that great grey wolf.

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from *Weird, Wild & Wonderful - the poetry world of James Carter*  
Published by Otter-Barry Books (January 2021)



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## 1st OCTOBER 2020

#nationalpoetryday  
[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk)



## ONE

Have a quiet read of the poem 'She Watches The World'. Then again, out loud to yourself.

What do you like about the poem? Why? Are there any words or phrases that interest you? What images - pictures in your mind's eye - does the poem give you? How does it make you feel?

Read the poem to someone else and see what they think of it.

## TWO

Pick a wild creature. Nothing too cute! (A tiger? An eagle? A bear?) Spend a few days reading about this animal, googling it, watching documentaries about it on YouTube. Keep thinking. You do not need to be in a hurry to write about it yet.

Slowly start to make a list of words - anything that describes your creature. How does it move? What does it look like? Be specific, use detail - if you say 'scary', say why it is scary - above all, look for nouns, adjectives, verbs that paint the creature with words. Collect pictures if it helps. Think - where does the creature live/travel to? Is it hunting? Is it seeking a den/nest/home? Is it seeking out other creatures? Why is it on the move?

Now try a first draft. In line with the National Poetry Day 2020 theme of Vision, you could begin, as with my poem, with your creature looking out. Verbs like gazes, stares, peers might be useful. Then choose the habitat: forest, ocean or mountain, field, snow or river. One of many possibilities might be:

*He gazes over  
the golden savannah  
beneath a blazing  
midday sun...*

What is the creature really doing in that moment? Watching prey? Waiting? Resting? Listening? About to...?

I use repetition in my poem with 'she'll sniff/she'll wait/she'll listen': you could try the same thing too. There's alliteration throughout the poem: all those 'w' words,

including watches, world, winter, wisps, woods, plus the very last word, in which I reveal the creature, 'wolf'. It's as if the poem's slowly building up to that final sound.

Often it's more powerful to use alliteration than end rhyme. Rhyme would be too sing-songy for such a quiet, atmospheric, haunting poem as this.

Now get your creature moving. Would it walk, stagger, swoop, stomp, slither, pad, pounce, crawl, glide? Close your eyes and see it in your head. Try some similes: 'sneaky as a shadow' for example. Be as original as you can. I used the word 'skulk' as I wanted the wolf to be moving very slowly and cautiously.

And I was going to choose the phrase 'silver coat' but I went for 'old winter coat' so it would sound slightly human, and the word 'winter' suggests the coat is thick/warm/heavy. With 'star-gold eyes' I wanted a striking way of describing how golden her eyes are. Plus I chose 'ocean of sky' as I needed to suggest the sky was vast, infinite, awash with stars.

How will you end? Reveal what your creature is and how you feel about it, like I have? It's up to you. Maybe try a cliff-hanger, with the creature about to do something? I wanted to show how enchanted I am by wolves and I felt the best word was 'bewitched' as wolves have cast a magic spell over me.

If your poem ends up quite different to my poem, that's absolutely fine. Go where your creativity goes.

## THREE

Don't be in a hurry. Once you think you've done everything you can, leave it. Then come back later. How does it feel now? Read it out loud to yourself. Don't be afraid to lose some lines, even move verses around, changing the title or the opening.

My poem 'She Watches The World' came over many weeks. Sometimes I think about a subject for ages in my head before I write a single word, other times, a poem comes really quick, but that's rare. Most of all, I try and write something that I myself would want to read. Could you do that too? Be the writer for the reader that is you?



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