How to Write a Rotten Poem with Almost No Effort

So you want to write a poem. You've had a rotten day or an astounding thought or an amazing observation and you want to record it for all time. You want to organize those emotions that are pounding through your veins. You have something to communicate via a poem but you don't know where to start.

This, of course, is the problem with poetry. Most people find it difficult to write a poem so they don't even try. What's worse, they don't bother reading any poems either. Poetry has become an almost totally foreign art form to many of us.

Fortunately, there is a solution for this problem, as there are for all imponderables. The answer is to make it easy for everyone to write at least one poem in his or her life. Once a person has written a poem, of whatever quality, he or she will feel comradeship with fellow poets and, hopefully, read their works. Ideally, there would evolve a society of poet-citizens, which would elevate the quality of life worldwide. Not only that, good poets could make a living for a change.

So, to begin. Have your paper ready. You must first understand that the poem you write here will not be brilliant. It won't even be mediocre. But it will be better than 50% of all song lyrics. You will be instructed how to write a four-line poem but the basic structure can be repeated at will to create works of epic length.

The **first line** of your poem should start and end with these words: *"In the _____ of my mind."* The middle word of this line is optional. Any word will do. It would be best not to use a word that has been overdone, such as *"windmills"* or *"gardens"* or *"playground."* Just think of as many nouns as you can and see what fits best. The rule of thumb is to pick a noun that seems totally out of context, such as *"filing cabinet"* or *"radiator"* or *"parking lot."* Just remember, the more unusual the noun, the more profound the image.

The **second line** should use two or more of the human senses in a conflicting manner, as per the famous, *"listen to the warm."* This is a sure way to conjure up *poetic* feeling and atmosphere. Since there are five different senses, the possibilities are endless. A couple that come to mind are *"see the noise"* and *"touch the sound."* If more complexity is desired other senses can be added, as in *"taste the color of my hearing,"* or *"I cuddled your sight in the aroma of the sunshine."* Rhyming, of course, is optional.

The **third line** should be just a simple statement. This is used to break up the insightful images that have been presented in the first two lines. This line should be as basic as possible to give a *down-to-earth* mood to the poem. An example would be *"she gave me a sandwich for lunch,"* or perhaps *"I walked to school this morning."* The content of this line may or may not relate to what has gone before.

The **last line** of your poem should deal with the future in some way. This gives the poem a forward thrust that is always helpful. A possibility might be, *"tomorrow will be a better day,"* or, *"maybe we'll meet again in July."* This future-oriented ending lends an aura of hope and yet need not be grossly optimistic.

By following the above structure, anyone can write a poem. For example, if I select one each of my sample lines, I come up with:

> *In the parking lot of my mind,*
> *I cuddled your sight in the aroma of the sunshine.*
> *I walked to school this morning,*
> *Maybe we'll meet again in July.*

Now that poem (like yours, when you're finished) is rotten. But at least it's a poem and you've written it, which is an accomplishment that relatively few people can claim. Now that you're a poet, feel free to read poetry by some of your more accomplished brothers and sisters in verse. Chances are, you'll find their offerings stimulating and refreshing. You might even try writing some more of your own poems, now that you've broken the ice. Observe others' emotions and experience your own--that's what poetry is all about.