Poetry

Did you know that April is National Poetry Month?

Do you enjoy poetry?

Why or why not?

What is poetry?

- Poetry is a type of artistic writing, that attempts to stir a reader's imagination or emotions.

- Poets do this by carefully choosing and arranging language for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.

Tips for reading poetry:

- Read the poem slowly.
- Look up words you don’t know. (Poets choose their words very carefully)
- Look for repeated words and phrases.
- Look at the shape of a poem, how lines are laid out
- Think about what the poem is trying to say— what feelings does it evoke?
- Don’t overthink it! Poetry is meant to be enjoyed on many levels!

There are many types of poetry such as:

- **Nursery Rhymes-** simple traditional song or poem for children
- **Haiku-** ancient form of Japanese poetry that consists of only three lines
- **Free Verse-** as the name suggests, there is a lot of freedom when writing this type of poetry. It can rhyme, but doesn't have to
- **Sonnets-** Fourteen line love poem made famous by Shakespeare
- **Acrostic-** spells out a name, word, phrase or message with the first letter of each line of the poem
- **Limerick-** funny (and sometimes rude!) poems which were made popular by Edward Lear in the 19th century. The last line is often a punchline
- **Epic-** a long narrative poem that tells of a hero's deeds long stories written or recited in verse. They tell of the journey of a hero or group of heroes struggling against all odds to achieve a goal. The hero usually encounters gods, monsters, and mythical beings that help or hinder their quest, and often has the fate of the world at stake in their mission

<u>Nursery Rhyme</u>: simple traditional song or poem for children

- Humpty Dumpty
- Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
- I'm a Little Teapot
- This Little Piggy
- Itsy Bitsy Spider

Some Nursery Rhymes have grim origins such as:

- Ring Around the Rosie
- London Bridge is Falling Down
- Jack and Jill
- Mary, Mary Quite Contrary
- Rock-A-Bye Baby

Haiku: ancient form of Japanese poetry that consists of only three lines

“[The west wind whispered]”
by R.M. Hansard

The west wind whispered,
And touched the eyelids of spring:
Her eyes, Primroses.

Typically, every first line of Haiku has 5 syllables, the second line has 7 syllables, and the third has 5 syllables.

Did you know we have our very own Haikuist here in Eastport?

Catherine J.S. Lee

Free Verse: as the name suggests, there is a lot of freedom when writing this type of poetry. It can rhyme, but doesn't have to

Fog

by Carl Sandburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Sonnet: Fourteen line love poem made famous by Shakespeare. It ends with a rhyming couplet

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 dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
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.

Acrostic: spells out a name, word, phrase or message with the first letter of each line of the poem

*This spells Alice Pleasant Liddell

"A Boat, Beneath a Sunny Sky"

by Lewis Carroll

A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July—

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear—

Long has paled that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die:
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream—
Lingering in the golden gleam—
Life, what is it but a dream?

(1871, *Through the Looking-Glass*)

Limerick: funny (and sometimes rude) poems which were made popular by Edward Lear in the 19th century. The last line is often a punchline

"There was an Old Man with a beard
Who said, "It is just as I feared!"
Two Owls and a Hen
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

(Edward Lear)

Epic: a long poem that tells the story of a hero's journey. The hero usually encounters gods, monsters, and mythical beings that help or hinder their quest. Often has the fate of the world depends on the success of the mission.

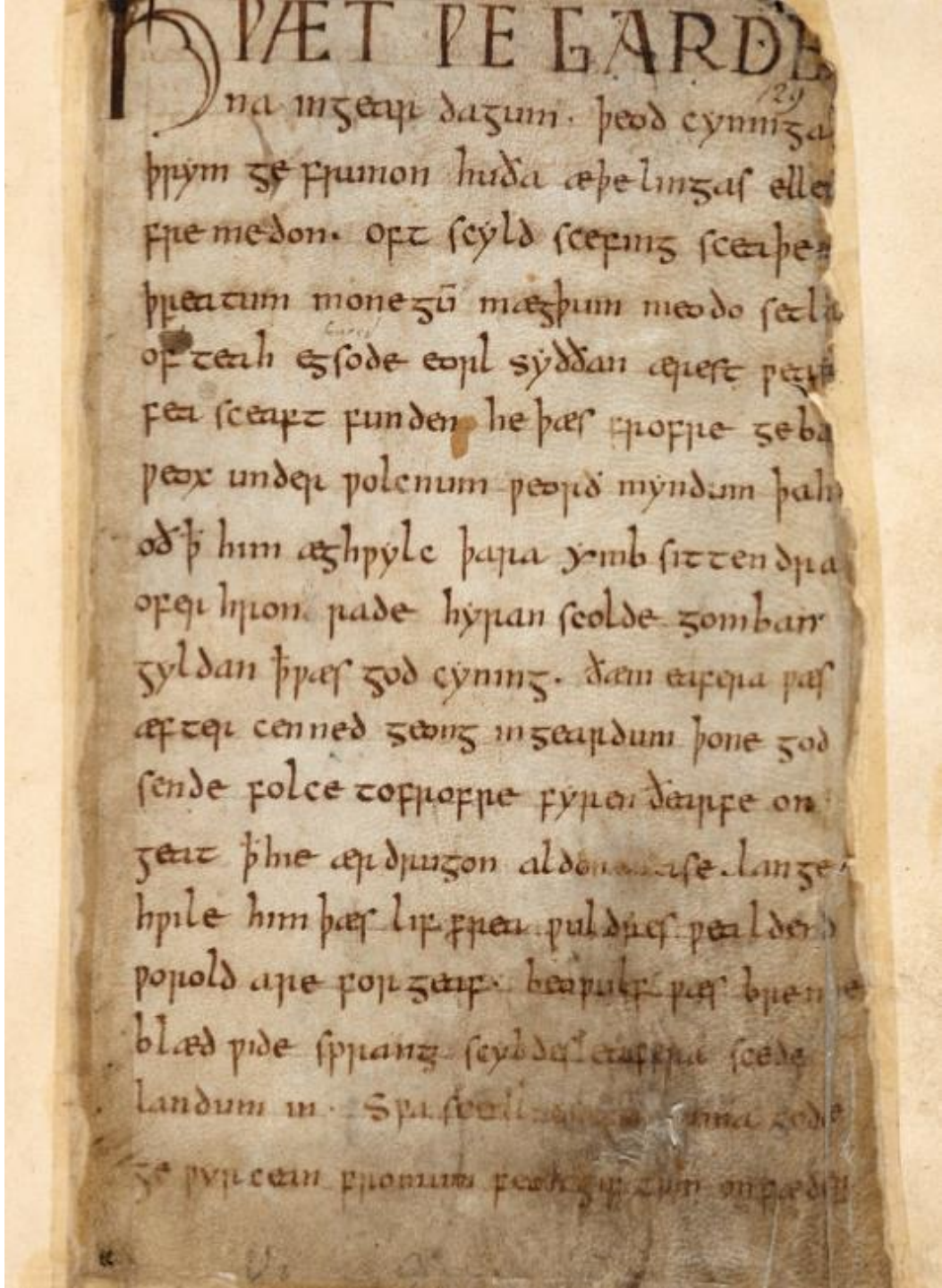
Epic of Gilgamesh

The “Epic of Gilgamesh” is an ancient Mesopotamian poem that dates back to the 3rd millennium BCE. It is the oldest epic poem.

Epic of ‘Gilgamesh’ clay tablet

Beowulf

The oldest poem in English is “Beowulf”. Since the manuscript bears no date, handwriting analysis suggests the poem was written about a thousand years ago. Nobody knows when the poem was first composed.



First page of ‘Beowulf’

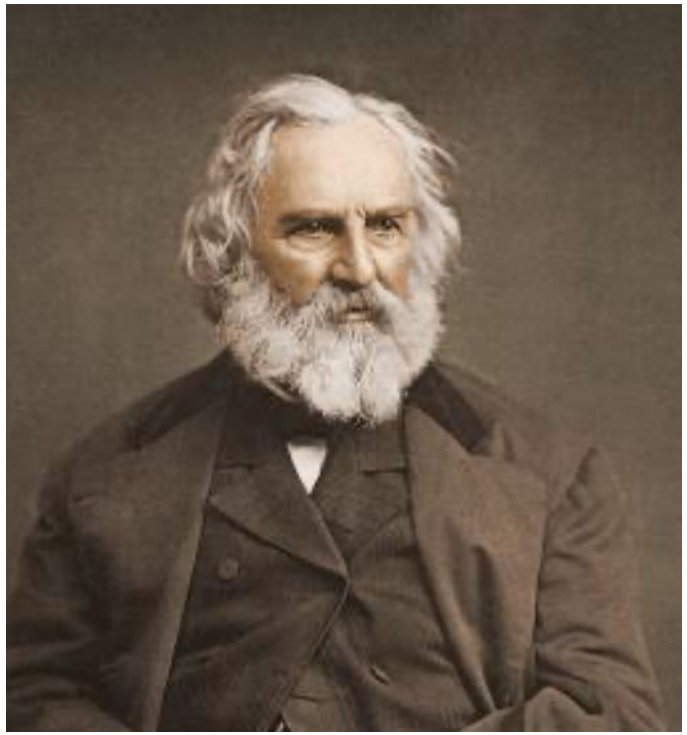
Mahabharata

A Sanskrit epic poem from ancient India, called “Mahabharata”, is the longest poem in the world. It has around 1.8 million words.

Manuscript illustration of the Battle of Kurukshetra from ‘Mahabharata’

Poets & Poems from Maine

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, in 1807. He became a national literary figure by the 1850s, and a world- famous personality by the time of his death in 1882.

(“Paul Revere’s Ride” is one of his most famous poems)

“The Rainy Day”

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

“The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls”

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The tide rises, the tide falls,
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;
Along the sea-sands damp and brown
The traveller hastens toward the town,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,
But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;
The day returns, but nevermore
Returns the traveller to the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Maine’s Poet Laureate

- A poet laureate is officially appointed by a government or institution.
- Typically, the poet is expected to compose poems for special events and occasions.
- The selection process is based upon a poet's written body of work. The subject matter is often specific to the state and the writing quality is demonstrated through honors, awards, and other forms of recognition.
- In 1995, Maine established a state poet laureate position, which is currently held by Julia Bouwsma, who was appointed to a five-year term in 2021.
- Bouwsma is the author of two books of poetry, including *Midden* (Fordham University Press, 2018).

Julia Bouwsma

“The Four Worlds”

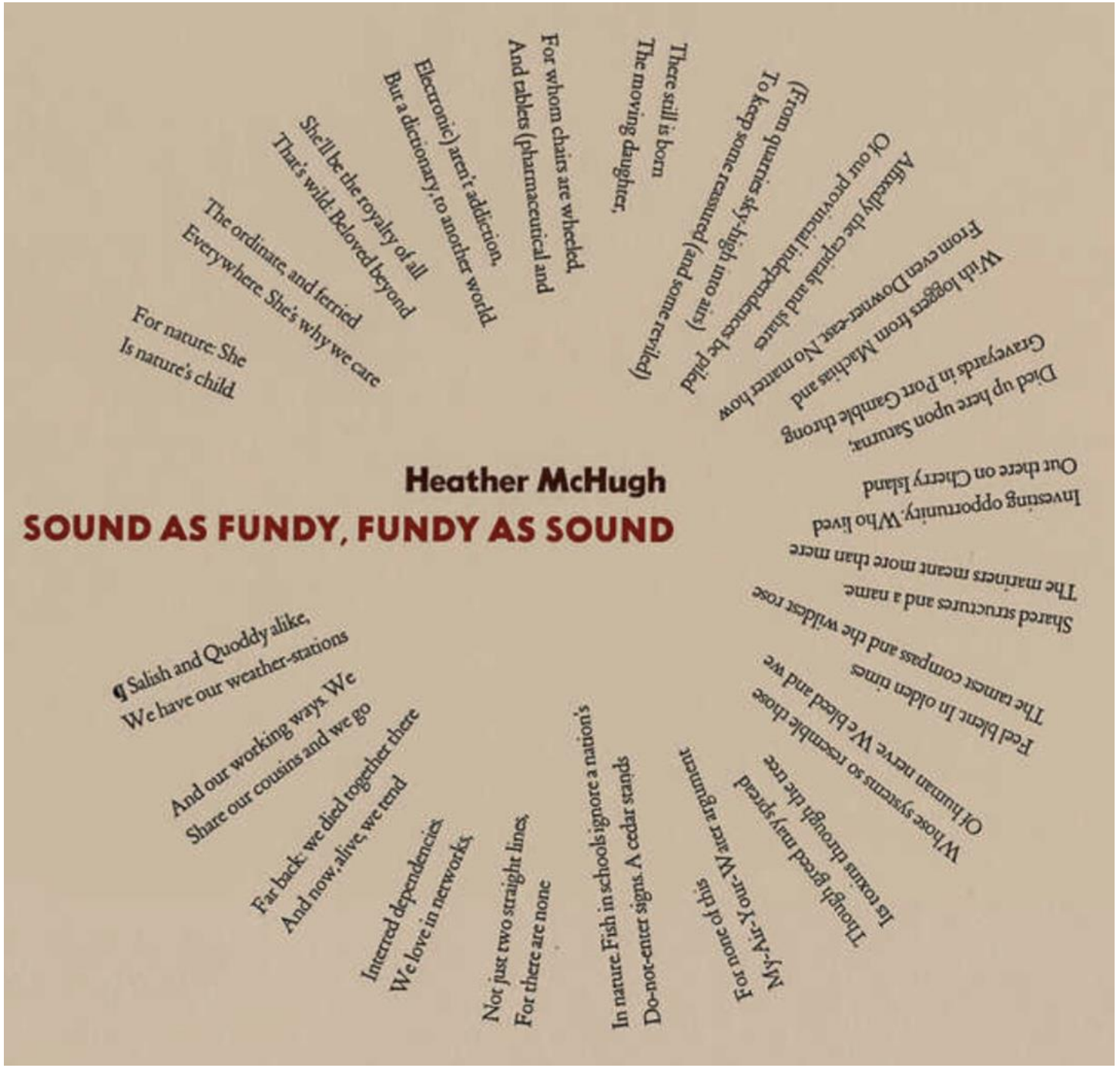
Spring makes me feel like a
Budded rose in blossom,
Flying from one world to the next,
Screaming all the while.
Yet it is beautiful
And will be forever.
I stand here all alone,
While the dancing shadows pass me by,
And the four worlds go on.

Heather McHugh

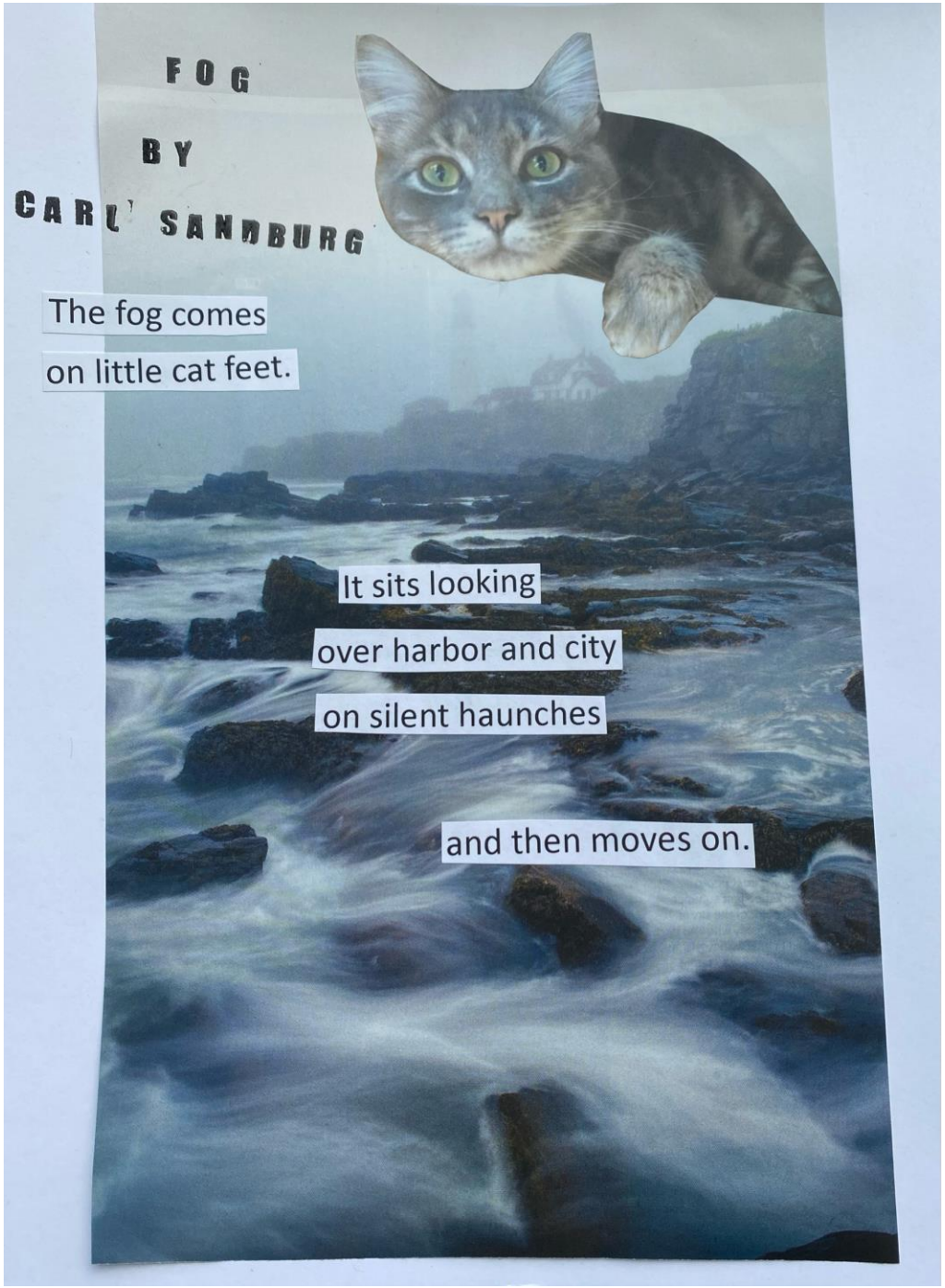
McHugh lived in Eastport for several years early in her career. She has led a long and highly successful career, publishing numerous books of poetry as well as works of translation. In 1984, she became writer in residence at the University of Washington in Seattle and in 2011 a professor of creative writing there. She continues to live in Port Angeles, Washington.

A large letterpress printed broadside of the poem “Sound as Fundy, Fundy as Sound” by the American poet, Heather McHugh published by the Tides Institute in 2015. The institute asked McHugh to write a poem that would be printed as a limited edition broadside.

Andrew Steeves of Gaspereau Press in Kentville, Nova Scotia designed the broadside for the institute and then typeset and hand printed 250 copies.



Poetry as Visual Art (Sample)



Instructions:

- Use one of the poems provided or pick one of your own. You can also find words from old magazines, books, or newspapers that inspire you.
- Cut out words or lines or even the entire poem and combine them with images from magazine pictures. You can also draw your own images.
- Letter stamps and an ink pad are also options if you'd prefer to print out words rather than glue them on.
- There really are no rules. You can create a poem, create an image inspired by a poem, rearrange a selected poem in a unique way. The possibilities are endless!

Materials:

- Magazines/old books/newspapers
- White cardstock
- Letter stamps (optional)
- Ink pads (optional)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils
- Black pens
- Printed poem (optional)