

## Focus on Writing Poetry in ABOUT WAR

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Be inspired by one of the slides in *The Darkness of War* or *What War is Like*

1. Write a **sensory poem** following this model:

Touch	_____
Smell	_____
Sight	_____
Sound	_____
Taste	_____
Subject	_____

**Example:**

Burning hot  
Acrid choking smoke  
Blinding flames  
Cracking and hissing  
The taste of blood and ashes  
My home set on fire.

2. Write a **4-Line Reaction Poem** following this model:

Subject	_____
Action	_____
Simile	_____
Reaction	_____

**Example:**

My brother  
Thrown in the river  
Like a wooden log.  
I was in shock.

**3. Write a *Then - Now Poem* following this example:**

Horse

Once proud, with a mane like silk and legs like pistons,  
He could run like the wind for hours.

Now, a broken-down nag,  
His mane like straw and his legs creaky and stiff.  
He waits in his stall, unneeded.

**4. Write a *Contrast Poem* about war and peace following this model:**

Night and Day

Night is darkness,  
Silence,  
A piece of velvet;  
A black book closing its covers.

Day is noise,  
Crowded sidewalks,  
Honking horns,  
Brass-button sun warming everything.

**Source:** T.L. Westmount High School, Montreal, published in Powell, Brian, (1976) *Their Own Special Shape*. Don Mills: Collier Macmillan Canada, Ltd.

**5. Write a tanka based on one of the slides in *The Darkness Of War or What War Is Like*.**

Note: The **tanka** is a Japanese form of verse related to the haiku. It is a short verse form with five non-rhyming lines, with this pattern of syllables: 5-7-5-7-7. A tanka in English, however, may consist of 5 short lines without any specific number of syllables.

The magic of a good tanka lies in the use of vivid details, simile, metaphor and personification. It deals with strong emotions.

## EXAMPLES OF TANKAS:

Subtle hints of spring  
In the wet bark of the tree  
Dew dripping from leaves  
Then runs down the russet trunk  
Pools round the roots and is drunk

*Can Sonmez*

At a dead man's throat  
lies the rain drenched woolen scarf  
that stifled his screams.  
Cold Wind howls through decayed trees  
- witnesses in the shadows.

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**6.** Write a poem inspired by William Blake's *Tyger Tyger* asking a question inspired by the gallery in Unit 4, **What War is Like.**

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp,  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

***Examples of student poems based on this model:***

Oh mischievous puppy, why do you eat my shoes?  
Oh why do you jump into bed with me?  
Oh why do you bark and bark and bark?

I eat your shoes because they taste like you.  
I jump into your bed to nuzzle against you.  
I bark and bark and bark with the joy of living with you.

To The Falcon

Falcon, why have you nested in my tree?  
Is it because of my bird feeders and the tasty morsels you find there?  
Is it because of my bird bath which provides drink and comfort?  
Is it because you are a wild bird?  
But the sparrows are wild too.  
Don't you see how much your prey is like you?  
You fly so high.... To the top of my tallest tree.  
Try to fly even higher.  
Please consult God.  
Ask her to give us a better way for you to feed your fledglings.