

In Your Own Words

Creative resources

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**National
Year of
Reading
2026**



Hello,

This booklet is for you to create your own piece, inspired by poems already written.

We encourage you to read the poems attached at the end of this booklet and answer the questions throughout the booklet.

Take your time. Pull the poem apart.

Think about:

- What inspired you?
- How did the poem/ words/lines make you feel?
- Is there a sentence in the poem that could be the beginning of your own piece?
- What are the themes from the poems? Can you relate to them? *Why/ why not?*

We hope you enjoy using these poems to create pieces In Your Own Words.

What words stand out to you?

What words do you like? Which ones made you think? Which ones inspired you?

What lines stand out to you?

Why do you feel connected to it? Is there a line you do not understand?
Translate it in your own words.

Write your piece...In Your Own Words

You can write a letter, a poem, a story – anything – In Your Own Words.

Reflection Points:

You can reflect on or write a response to the poem you read

How does the poem make you feel?

Does it explore a theme/topic you can relate to?

Is there someone you can imagine writing your piece to?



**“You can’t sit
around and wait
for somebody to
say who you are.
You need to write
it and paint it and
do it.”**

– Faith Ringgold

‘Our Deepest Fear’

by Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness

That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves

Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you *not* to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small

Does not serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking

So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,

As children do.

We were born to make manifest

The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;

It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,

We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we're liberated from our own fear,

Our presence automatically liberates others.

'Thirteen'

by Caleb Femi

You will be four minutes from home
when you are cornered by an officer
who will tell you of a robbery, forty
minutes ago in the area. You fit
the description of a man? – You'll laugh.
Thirteen, you'll tell him: you're thirteen.

You'll be patted on the shoulder, then, by another fed
whose face takes you back to Gloucester Primary School,
a Wednesday assembly about being little stars.
This same officer had an horizon in the east
of his smile when he told your class that
you were all supernovas,
the biggest and brightest stars.

You will show the warmth of your teeth
praying he remembers the heat of your supernova;
he will see you powerless – plump.
You will watch the two men cast lots for your organs.

Don't you remember me? you will ask.
You gave a talk at my primary school.
While fear condenses on your lips,
you will remember that Wednesday, after the assembly,
your teacher speaking more about supernovas:
how they are, in fact, dying stars
on the verge of becoming black holes.

'Freedom'

by Langston Hughes

Freedom will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.
I live here, too.
I want my freedom
Just as you.

'The ghosts of women once girls'

by Aja Monet

somewhere a little girl is reading aloud
in the middle of a dirt road. she smiles
at the sound of her own voice escaping
the spine of a book. she feeds on her hunger
to know herself. she has not yet been taught
to dim, she sits with the stars beneath her feet,
a constellation of things to come.
as if a swallowed moon, she glimmers.
her head wrap rolls out in a gutter, bare feet
scat the earth, the ghosts of women once girls
make bridge of the dust dancing behind her,
she decorates the ground in dimples
she stomps suffering out the spirit
hooves drumming the earth in circles
she holds gladness in her mouth
like a secret teased out of a giggle
joy like her sadness overflows
she is not the opinions of others
she is of visions and imagination
somewhere a little girl is reading aloud in the middle of a dirt
road.
she smiles at the sound of her own voice escaping the spine
of a book.
she is a room full
of listening, lending herself
to her own words
somewhere
a deep remembering of what was, she survives all.

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