

How to Eat a Poem

by Eve Merriam (1916–1992)

Don't be polite.
Bite in,
Pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice that
 may run down your chin.
It is ready and ripe now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon
or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core
or stem
or rind
or pit
or seed
or skin
to throw away.

Eating Poetry

by Mark Strand (1934–)

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

Unfolding Bud

by Naoshi Koriyama (1926–)

One is amazed
By a water-lily bud
Unfolding
With each passing day,
Taking on a richer color
And new dimensions.

One is not amazed,
At first glance,
By a poem,
Which is tight-closed
As a tiny bud.

Yet one is surprised
To see the poem
Gradually unfolding,
Revealing its rich inner self
As one reads it
Again
And over again.

What is a poem?

To My Dear and Loving Husband by Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize they love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.
They love is such I can no way repay,
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Is this a poem? Why or why not?

What is a poem?

The Preserve

By Lily Nathanson (7GP Winner, 2013)

This is my hope and
work. The land is fallow,
fickle and fleshy with water
that's barbarous and brink.
It sounds like a million
people hitting chestnut wood.

This is my place. It's serene
and pacific. The ground dazzles
and soon dims from within. It
has the power to possess you
from within.

When I see it every Thursday
I scream, "Bonanza, brilliant, blank,
alive." The ground enchants and
enlightens with one simple
slight step.

Once again, this is my
simple, special, sweet, slimy love.

Is this a poem? Why or why not?

What is a poem?

This is Just to Say

by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

The Red Wheelbarrow

by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

Are these poems? Why or why not?

What Cats Think

by Alvin Do, (7GP Winner, 2012)

Litter box not here
You must have moved it again
Your shoe will be fine.
Humans are so strange
Mine lies still in bed, then screams!
My claws aren't that sharp...
Small brave carnivores
Kill pine cones and mosquitoes.
Fear vacuum cleaner.
You never feed me
Perhaps I'll sleep on your face
That will sure show you!
The rule for today
Touch my tail, I shred your hand.
New rule tomorrow.