

# 1000 Inspirational Poetry Prompts



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## A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Helen Cox is a Yorkshire-born journalist, novelist and bestselling poet. Her first two novels were published by Harper Collins in 2016. Helen's writing has been previously published in *The Guardian*, *Film4.com*, *The Spectator*, *Popshot Magazine* and the *TL; DR women's* anthology. Helen coordinates the poetry courses at City Lit, Covent Garden and teaches an annual poetry masterclass at Keats House in Hampstead. She is also launching a monthly poetry podcast. To listen to the show visit: [helencoxbooks.com/podcasts](http://helencoxbooks.com/podcasts)

## HOW TO USE POETRY PROMPTS

There is no more a correct way to use poetry prompts than there is a correct way to write poetry. It is, like all art forms, an individual process led by the poet's leanings, fascinations and willingness to take risks on the page. For those readers who would like a few pointers to get the ink flowing however, the ideas below may prove helpful.

### THINK BEYOND THE LITERAL

Just because you are using these prompts as a starting point doesn't mean you have to mention the wording of the prompt in your poem or follow it to the letter. The prompt may well form a first line or a last line. It may even work as a title. But it doesn't have to. You can use the prompt as a general theme or a jumping off point. The prompt is a poetic nudge in a particular direction, you decide what words end up on the page.

### CONSIDER FORM

There are lots of different types of poetry. When you are writing it, consider what form best suits the content of your poem. A lot of beginning poets use free verse to express their ideas. But if your poem has a strong love theme, you may wish to write a sonnet. If your poem contains obsessive ideas about a particular topic, villanelles can be very useful for conveying this. On a first draft you may just want to get the ideas down. In the long-term however, it's a good idea to consider which form might be the most useful to present your work.

### CONCRETE LANGUAGE

Where possible it's a good idea to use concrete language to convey an idea. This is the poetic version of the old adage 'show don't tell.' Concrete language or imagery is the use of concrete – or touchable – things in your poems. Objects, people, places, that might convey the general feeling or point. You could tell the reader you have a broken heart or you could describe how two continents were ripped apart by an earthquake – the latter conveys the theme of separation, and the resulting chaos without directly telling the reader. Something to consider in your writing!

## 100 POETRY PROMPTS

1. A door you are glad you closed.
2. The sun dreams of...
3. A letter to the thirteen year old you.
4. It never arrived...
5. Argue with some song lyrics.
6. A goodbye you never got to say.
7. Frosted heart.
8. What kind of armour do you wear?
9. The sound you most want to hear.
10. This grey city.
11. Describe a journey home.
12. What tomorrow knows.
13. A time when you abided by the rules.
14. The grand piano.
15. How to love a monster.
16. When the music dies...
17. She only smiles at midnight.
18. The letter he couldn't open.
19. A crown of wilting daisies.
20. Amethyst sky.
21. The poison I'd beg for.
22. Argue with a film title.
23. The violence of the tides.
24. A bruise that never fades.
25. Blossom like confetti.
26. Not the maid but the dragon.
27. Beautiful drowning.
28. Tears of the willow tree.
29. Fault line.
30. Where daffodils smile.
31. What she unearthed...
32. The spires of New York City.
33. A time when you broke the rules.
34. Childhood friends...
35. The people left behind.
36. Never tell me...
37. I breathe fire.
38. The wishes that fly from dandelions.
39. The stars were hidden...
40. Trapped in amber.
41. What they took from you.
42. The tartan scarf blowing in the wind.
43. In the café on the corner...
44. Scars like tattoos...
45. Blue silk.
46. Drifting apart.
47. Hide me away.
48. I built this for you...
49. I'll never sleep...

50. Tornado.
51. The chase and the kill.
52. The rain tastes different in Paris...
53. Have you ever broken a bone?
54. The best thing you ever said 'yes' to.
55. A moment you'd rather forget...
56. List the things that make you rich.
57. Winter means...
58. Gone by dawn.
59. The words are mine.
60. Storm clouds gather.
61. If I wrote the fairytale...
62. What stings the most...
63. Don't ask me to be your Valentine.
64. By the lighthouse.
65. When we kiss...
66. The river flows west...
67. The moment you never told anyone about.
68. Secrets only the moon knows.
69. My head upon your shoulder...
70. The face in the mirror.
71. That feeling of falling.
72. Revenge is sour.
73. Through the telescope...
74. By candlelight...
75. Memories dancing in the fire.
76. I never told you but...
77. The day her ship docked.
78. Ink is permanent.
79. What is in your blood and bones?
80. He always orders pie...
81. A dream you only half remember.
82. Describe an object you lost.
83. When the icebergs thaw...
84. A string of pearls...
85. Turn the page.
86. Dangerous silence.
87. You can't catch a rainbow.
88. Was I a stepping stone?
89. High voltage.
90. Penniless.
91. Fishnet stockings.
92. Tastes like honey.
93. When the leaves turn gold.
94. All the President's women.
95. Nowhere to go.
96. A conversation you overheard.
97. Alternate ending.
98. Do we need a map?
99. When the lights go out.
100. Always read the label.

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