

## CONNECTING WITH POETRY PROJECT # 1

### MATHEMATICS AND DESIGN

#### MAKE A POEM LOOK ITS BEST: INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAYING OUT A POETRY BOOK PAGE:

When book designers lay out pages in poetry books, they have to make some decisions — **how many pages** the poem will take, **what size of margins** on the sides, the top and the bottom of the page; **where to put an illustration** whether at the top, middle, bottom, or along the sides as a frame; **where to start the poem** whether at the top left or somewhere else, **what typeface** to use. Look at some poetry books to see how different designers have decided these things.

The first job is to choose a poem — your own or one by someone else.

The second job is to choose your medium — hand printing or writing, calligraphy, typewriting, or computer printing. In calligraphy, typing and computer printing, you may have a choice of typeface. Choose one that suits the mood of the poem — serious, light-hearted, antique, or modern. You may want a different typeface for "by" and the author's name.

Although most print is best in plain black or blue, occasionally a word, a title or a line in another color may suit the meaning better. If you use pencil, be sure to use a 2B or softer so that when you need to photocopy, the pencil will show up. Be careful that whatever you do is easy to read.

Next make a perfect copy of the poem including the title and the author's name at the bottom. Your perfect copy should include all punctuation. If you have a poem line that is too wide for your page, you will have to decide how to handle that and make the poem look its best.

The next choice involves placing the poem on the page to show it best . Cut out the poem from the paper you have copied it on. On a blank sheet, try the cut-out poem in different positions. If the poem is just a bit too long for one page, you may cut it in half so it can look balanced on two pages. Here are some different positions to try — left and top justified (the usual position), centered, left and bottom justified, centered and left justified. "Left and top justified" means that the poem begins at the top margin and each line starts at the left margin. If there are several sections, you may want to experiment with different positions for each section.

Making a copy of the poem in the positions you have chosen will depend on the method you are using. **If you have a computer or typewriter**, it will be a matter of positioning the poem using spaces. You may need to know how many lines the computer is set to print on a page and how many characters it prints across the width. Print out and make any final adjustments. **If you are doing it by hand**, get a piece of graph paper, tape it to a window or light box and place the poem on top. Now, position the poem so it is straight, across and up and down. Mark the position with a light pencil mark at each corner. Fasten the poem in that position with tape or glue. Now photocopy the result.

#### POINTS FOR FOCUS AND EVALUATION:

1. Did you choose an appropriate typeface?
2. If you chose pencil did it show up well? If you chose color, did it help the reader?
3. Did you make a perfect copy of the poem?
4. Did you cut out the poem and try it in different page positions?

5. Did you chose an arrangement that makes the poem easy to read and attractive to look at?
6. Did you make a final copy?
7. If you worked with a partner, did you cooperate to finish the job well? What could you have done differently to make the job easier or better?