

Poetry Now!

"Invitation" poem

April Rain Song

Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.

The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.
The rain makes running pools in the gutter.
The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at night—

And I love the rain.

by Langston Hughes

© Langston Hughes (1902-1967). Hughes, one of America's most beloved poets, was born in Missouri but spent much of his adult life in New York's Harlem neighborhood. This poem is from The Dream-Keeper and Other Poems, originally published in 1932, but reissued in a beautiful edition illustrated by Brian Pinkney (Knopf, 1994).

Poetry Idea

This poetry idea is based on ideas in Barbara Esbensen's book *A Celebration of Bees: Helping Children Write Poetry*.

"April Rain Song" is what I call an "invitation" poem. You write one when you want something to happen! Spring, in my part of the country (Minnesota), needs a little encouragement. Try writing an "invitation" poem to spring—or to any other season or event. This kind of poem is fun to write with a friend:

1. Start by brainstorming spring words on a piece of paper: Spring sights, smells, sounds, colors, animals, insects, activities.
2. Then write your own poem to spring (or fall, or winter, or your birthday—or really, anything!), as if you were talking to it. Use your brainstormed ideas and start your sentences with these words (these are only suggestions—use any words you want):

Come . . .
Bring . . .
Remember . . .

Loosen ...
Let ...

Here is an example from two of my students:

Welcome, Spring!
by Siri & Anna

*Come make our tall trees stretch into green.
Bring us the wheat-colored sunshine.
Remember the flowing light breeze?
Loosen the fuzzy bees and the jeweled butterflies.
Let the brick-hard winter vanish for months.
Please come, Spring!*

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