

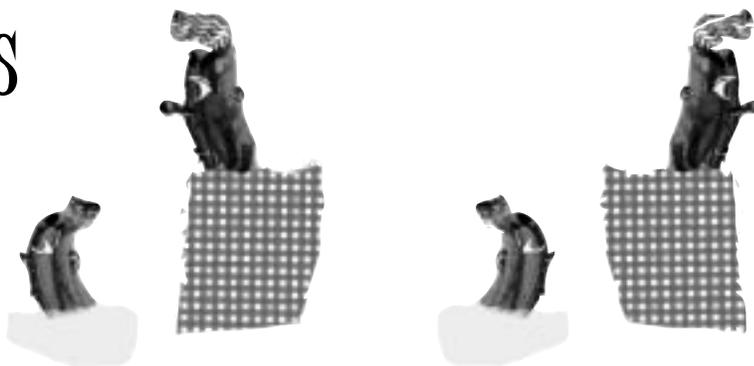


TRICKS

OF

THE

TRADE



### Tips from Paul B. Janeczko—editor of *A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems*—for writing concrete poems

#### What is concrete poetry?

The concrete poems in *A Poke in the I* are wild! You can't read them the same way you read a "regular" poem.

Sometimes, they can't be read aloud at all! Good concrete poetry is almost like a painting—only instead of watercolors or oils, the arrangement of words, letters, and space catches your eye. At times a concrete poem may look like a collage of words, but the poet designed the placement of each word, and even the font, color, and size of each letter, to emphasize the meaning of the poem.



as  
big as  
ball as round  
as sun... I tug  
and pull you when  
you run and when  
wind blows I  
say polite

ly  
H  
O  
L  
D  
M  
E  
T  
I  
G  
H  
T  
L  
Y

#### How can I write a concrete poem?

Grab a pencil and a few sheets of paper, and you're ready. A simple concrete poem alters one word to illustrate the word's meaning, as Robert Carola does with "Stowaway" in *A Poke in the I*. A shape concrete poem forms pictures by varying the length of the lines of the poem, as in "Balloon" by Colleen Thibaudeau (see next page).



(over)



• **Writing a Single-Word Concrete Poem**

How can “explode” look more interesting? Change the size and shape of the letters, or play with space and color. Good words for concrete poetry might be dramatic words in nature, like lightning, or everyday things, like electricity, or action words, like soar or sink. When you find a good word, turn it into a concrete poem.



M  
E  
R  
G  
I  
F  
N  
I  
G  
C  
T  
R  
A  
F

• **Exploring a Shape Concrete Poem**

List objects with simple or distinctive shapes, like a baseball bat or an umbrella. Then sketch the object you'd like to write about. Next, list its characteristics and consider what it does or how it is used. Finally, list things you associate with the object. A baseball bat, for example, might make you think of a game you saw with a friend. Look at your lists and, without thinking too hard, circle the ones you like best. Write these words alongside your sketch. For example, if you are writing a poem about a rainstorm, you might write puddles, wet feet, and downpour at an angle to imitate driving rain. More words might come to mind.

Look at your concrete poem. How can you make it better? Maybe share it with a friend. Does it catch her eye? When you revise your poem, think about the size and style of the type, the color and shape of the letters, and the space in and around the shape.

• **What should I remember when I write my poem?**

Imagination rules! Don't be afraid to try something different. You may be pleasantly surprised with your poem. One last thing: **have fun.**

WRITE YOUR OWN  
CONCRETE POEM HERE!

