

Poems for Shared, Choral, Paired, and Echo Reading

Compiled by

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City

- Langston Hughes

In the morning the city
Spreads its wings
Making a song
In stone that sings.

In the evening the city
Goes to bed
Hanging lights
About its head.

From: Yolen, J. (Ed.) (1996). [*Skyscraper/City Scape: Poems of City Life*](#). Illustrated by Ken Condon. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Mi casa

- Francisco X. Alarcón

es ruidosa
y alegre como
mi familia

día y noche
no déjã
de rechinar

como
los niños
del vecindario

quisiera
en la calle
también jugar.

My House

- Francisco X. Alarcón

is loud
and cheerful
like my family

day and night
keeps on
squeaking

just like
the kids from
the neighborhood

would rather
be playing
on the street

from: Alarcón, F.X. (2005). [*Angels Ride Bikes: Los Angeles Andan en Bicicleta*](#). Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. San Francisco, CA: Children's Books Press.

Being a Tree

- Opal Palmer Adisa

One time

I stood on the arm of the sofa
balancing on one leg
my arms spread wide
like branches.

I was a gigantic tree
in the deep green forest.
Many birds sat on my branches
chirping their happy songs.
Small animals nestled by my trunk
prancing and playing, being free.
And just as a blue jay
was about to land on my branch
Mom shouted, "Be careful!"
The blue jay flew away.
I fell, and my tree toppled over.

From: Agard, John & Nichols, Grace (Eds.). (1994). [*A Caribbean Dozen: Poems from Caribbean Poets*](#). Illustrated by Cathie Felstead. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

In the Inner City

- Lucille Clifton

in the inner city
or
like we call it
home
we think a lot about uptown
and the silent nights
and the houses straight as
dead men
and the pastel lights
and we hang on to our no place
happy to be alive
and in the inner city
or
like we call it
home.

From: Yolen, J. (Ed.) (1996). [*Skyscraper/City Scape: Poems of City Life*](#). Illustrated by Ken Condon. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Lluvia

- Alma Flor Ada

Plin, plin, plin,
la lluvia suena
como violín.

Borrombombón,
resuena el trueno
como violín.

Rain

- Alma Flor Ada

Plink, plink, plink,
the rain sounds like
A violin.

Booroomboomboom,
the thunder is
a deep trombone

Tomates

- Alma Flor Ada

Tomate fresco
en la ensalada,
en la salsa,
en la enchilada.
Tomate rojo
en la cocina,
en los taquitos
de mi madrina.

Tomatoes

- Alma Flor Ada

Fresh tomato
in a salad,
in the salsa,
in enchiladas.
Red tomato
in the kitchen,
in the little tacos
my godmother loves to make.

From Ada, A.F. (1997). [*Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*](#). Illustrated by Simón Silva. NY: HarperChildren's.

What I Love About Summer

- Douglas Florian

Morning glories
Campfire stories
Picking cherries
And blueberries
Riding bikes
Mountain hikes
Bird calls
Curve balls
Short sleeves
Green leaves
Swimming holes
Fishing poles
Nature walks
Corn stalks
Skipping stones
Ice cream cones
Double plays
And barefoot days.

From: Florian, D. (2002). [*Summersaults*](#). NY: Greenwillow.

Some Summers

- Douglas Florian

Some summers *blaze*.
Some summers *haze*.
Some summers *simmer*.
Some summers *shimmer*.
Some summers *sizzle*.
Some summers *fizzle*.
Some summers *flame*
Bo two summers
Are the same.

From: Florian, D. (2002). [Summersaults](#). NY: Greenwillow.

Dog Day

- Douglas Florian

It's hot and it's hazy.
My body feels lazy.
My clothing is clinging.
No songbird is singing.
The temperature's torrid.
My temperament's horrid.
Has anyone thrown
This dog day a bone?

From: Florian, D. (2002). [*Summersaults*](#). NY: Greenwillow.

Storm

- Ann Turner

Meadow flowers rub the sky
like kittens nuzzling
a mother's belly;
gold, white, orange
stretch and search until sky
licks them flat again
with its fierce wet
tongue.

From: Turner, A. (1994). [*A Moon for Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Robert Noreika. NY: Macmillan.

Storm

- Elizabeth Swados

Boom! Thunder!

Boom! Thunder!

First the lightning,

Crack!

It's frightening.

Then the **BOOM**,

Thunder,

Outside my room

BOOM, the thunder

And the rain pours,

Like nails on the roof

And **POOF!**

Out goes the lights.

What a night

BOOM, Thunder!

Night of fright,

Night of wonder,

BOOM, Thunder!

From: Swados, E. (2002). *Hey You! C'mere: A Poetry Slam*. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. NY: Arthur Levine.

Michael Is Afraid of Storms

- Gwendolyn Brooks

Lightning is angry in the night.
Thunder spans our house.
Rain is hating our old elm—
It punishes the boughs.

Now, I am next to nine years old,
And crying's not for me.
But if I touch my mother's hands.
Perhaps no one will see.

And if I keep herself in sight —
Follow her busy dress—
No one will notice my wild eye.
No one will laugh, I guess.

from: Hall, D. (Ed.)(2001). [*The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems*](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lemonade Stand

- Myra Cohn Livingston

Every summer
under the shade
we fix up a stand
to sell lemonade.

A stack of cups,
a pitcher of ice,
a shirtboard sign
to tell the price.

A dime for the big.
A nickel for the small.
The nickel cup's short.
The dime cup's tall.

Plenty of sugar
to make it sweet,
and sometimes cookies
for us to eat.

But when the sun
moves into the shade
it gets too hot
to sell lemonade.

Nobody stops
so we put things away
and drink what's left
and start to play.

From: Cullinan, B.E. (Ed.). (1996). [*A Jar of Tiny Stars: Poems by NCTE Award-Winning Poets.*](#)
Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Sun Is Laughing

- Grace Nichols

This morning she got up
on the happy side of bed,
pulled back
the gray sky-curtains
and poked her head
through the blue window
of heaven,
her yellow laughter
spilling over,
falling broad across the grass,
brightening the washing on the line,
giving more shine
to the back of a ladybug
and buttering up all the world.

From: Agard, John & Nichols, Grace (Eds.). (1994). [*A Caribbean Dozen: Poems from Caribbean Poets*](#). Illustrated by Cathie Felstead. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Sun

- Valerie Worth

The sun
Is a leaping fire
Too hot
To go near.

But it will still
Lie down
In warm yellow squares
On the floor

Like a flat
Quilt, where
The cat can curl
And purr.

From: Hopkins, L.B. (Ed). (1994). [*Weather: Poems for All Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Melanie Hall.
NY: HarperTrophy.

Jitomates Risueños

- Francisco X. Alarcón

en el jardín
plantamos
jitomates

los vegetales
más felices
de todos

alegres
se redondean
de sabor

risueños
se ponen
colorados

convirtiendo
sus arbustos
alambrados

en árboles
de Navidad
en primavera

Laughing Tomatoes

- Francisco X. Alarcón

in our backyard
we plant
tomatoes

the happiest
of all
vegetables

with joy
they grow round
with flavor

laughing
they change
to red

turning
their wire-framed
bushes

into
Christmas trees
in spring

from: Hall, D. (Ed.). (2001). [*The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems*](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

If You Catch a Firefly

- Lilian Moore

If you catch a firefly
 and keep it in a jar
You may find that
 you have lost
A tiny star.

If you let it go then,
 back into the night,
You may see it
 once again
Star bright.

From: Cullinan, B.E. (Ed.). (1996). [*A Jar of Tiny Stars: Poems by NCTE Award-Winning Poets.*](#)
Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Castanet Clicks

- Pat Mora

Uno, dos
one, two
baskets blue.

Tres, cuatro
three, four
one bell more.

Cinco, seis
five, six
castanet clicks.

Siete, ocho
seven, eight
copper plates.

Nueve, diez
nine, ten
count again.

from: Hall, D. (Ed.). (2001). [*The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems*](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Ode to Buena Vista Bilingual School

- Francisco X. Alarcón

here Spanish
goes to school
with English

uno-dos-tres
is as easy as
one-two-three

here children
of all races write
beautiful poems

in English
and Spanish
even in spirals

and following
the beat of teacher
Felipe's clave

here children
learn to sing
with their hearts

Oda a la Escuela Bilingüe de Buena Vista

- Francisco X. Alarcón

aquí el español
va a la escuela
con el inglés

uno-dos-tres
es tan fácil como
one-two-three

aquí niños de todas
las razas escriben
bellos poemas

tanto en inglés
como en español
hasta en espiral

y siguiendo
la clave del
maestro Felipe

aquí los niños
aprenden a cantar
con el corazón

from: Alarcón, F.X. (2005). [*Iguanas in the Snow and Other Winter Poems/Iguanas en la nieve: y otros poemas de invierno*](#). Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Oda a mis zapatos

- Francisco X.
Alarcón

mis zapatos
descansan
toda la noche
bajo mi cama

cansados
se estiran
se aflojan
las cintas

muy anchose
se duermen
y sueñan
con andar

recorren
los lugares
adonde fueron
en el día

y amanecen
contentos
relajados
suavecitos

Ode to My Shoes

- Francisco X. Alarcón

my shoes
rest
all night
under my bed

tired
they stretch
and loosen
their laces

wide open
they fall asleep
and dream
of walking

they revisit
the places
they went to
during the day

and wake up
cheerful
relaxed
so soft

from: Alarcón, F.X. (2005). [*From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems/Del Ombligo de la Luna: Y Otros Poemas de Verano*](#). Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Summer

- Elizabeth Swados

Tsss

Summer sounds,

Tsss

Concrete and heat

Sneakered feet on tar,

Stepping in a melted candy bar,

Squish

Crunch, crunch

Gravel on the street,

Whoosh

Hydrant waterfall,

Zzzzt

The sun's an orange basketball,

Bonk bonk

Summer sounds,

And then

Summer's gone.

From: Swados, E. (2002). *Hey You! C'mere: A Poetry Slam*. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. NY: Arthur Levine.

Arrivals

- Ann Turner

The swallows light
on sloping wires,
then tails flicking
they slice the clouds
more delicate than surgeons,
let summer in.

From: Turner, A. (1994). [*A Moon for Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Robert Noreika. NY: Macmillan.

On the Corner

- Carole Boston Weatherford

The shoeshine man pops a cloth
across black wing tips, his face
reflected in polished leather.
As little girls jump double Dutch,
beaded braids swirl and click.
Brothers with time on their hands
croon three-part harmony,
setting pace for foot traffic
up and down the sidewalk.
A boy with a boom box heads
for the blacktop to shoot hoops.
At the bus stop, a lady
toting a shopping bag tells me,
"Be careful crossing the street, honey."

From Weatherford, C.B. (2006). [*Sidewalk chalk: Poems of the City*](#). Illustrated by Dimitrea Tokunbo. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Sidewalk Chalk

- Carole Boston Weatherford

Big and bold now, write your name.
Draw an arrow, then take aim
at a puffy heart: "Kim loves Kyle."
Doodling's sure to bring a smile.
How about some tic-tac-toe?
You be X; I'll be O.
Draw a yellow happy face
or the finish line for a relay race,
a wide, wide river to leap across,
a little circle for beanbag toss,
a bigger circle to play dodge ball.
Trace a shadow ten feet tall.
Make a line for tug-of-war
and signs that no one dare ignore.
Create a sun with a beaming grin,
a great white shark with a giant fin.
Draw a square to make home plate,
a swirly figure eight to skate.
Big and bold now, write your name.
Keep score for sidewalk games.

From Weatherford, C.B. (2006). *Sidewalk chalk: Poems of the City*. Illustrated by Dimitrea Tokunbo. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Ducha diaria

- Francisco X. Alarcón

en el verano
llueve
a cántaros
todos los días

a las cinco
en punto
toda le gente
busca resguardo

pero pronto
se despeja
y de nuevo
sale el sol

las calles
las aceras
brillan de
tan limpias

después
de tomar
su docha
diaria

Ducha diaria

- Francisco X. Alarcón

during
summer
it pours
every day

at five
on the dot
everybody
takes cover

but soon
it clears up
and the sun
comes back

streets
sidewalks
shine so neat
and clean

after
taking
their daily
shower

from: Alarcón, F.X. (2005). *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems/Del Ombligo de la Luna: Y Otros Poemas de Verano*. Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Árboles

- Alma Flor Ada

Compañeros de mi infancia,
hermosos gigantes verdes.
Ciruelos, peral, pistachos,
durazneros, chabacanos,
almendros, naranjos, kiwi,
cerezos, nogal, manzanos.
Árboles que dan la fruta
que mis padres van pizcando.

Trees

- Alma Flor Ada

Companions of my childhood,
handsome green giants.
Plums, pears, pistachios.
peaches and apricots,
almonds, oranges, kiwis,
cherries, walnuts, and apples.
Trees that bear the fruits
that my parents harvest.

From Ada, A.F. (1997). [*Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*](#). Illustrated by Simón Silva. NY: HarperChildren's.

Summer Shower

- David McCord

Window window window pane:
Let it let it let it rain
Drop by drop by drop by drop.

Run your rivers from the top
Zigzaggy down, like slow wet forks
Of lightning, so the slippery corks
Of bubbles float and overtake
Each other till three bubbles make
A kind of boat too far to fit
The river. That's the end of it.

Straight
down
it
slides
and
with
a
splash

Is lost against the window sash.

Window window window pane:
Let it let it let it rain

From: Kennedy, X.J. and Kennedy, Dorothy M. (Eds.). (2002). [*Talking like the Rain: A Read-to-me Book of Poems*](#). Illustrated by Jane Dyer. NY: Little, Brown and Company.

City Noise

- Karla Kuskin

So what did you see?
An old tin can,
It was sitting in a gutter
I took it in my hand.
I held it very carefully against my ear
And listened, listened, listened.
So what did you hear?

Squalling
Calling
Crashing
Rushing
Honking
Joking
Belching
Smoking
Buying
Selling
Laughing
Yelling
Running
Wheeling
Roaring
Squealing
Cars and garbage
Reds and greens
Girls and women
Men
Machines
Getting
Giving
Dogs and boys
Living Living Living
City noise.

From Kuskin, K. (1994). *City Noise*. Illustrated by Renee Flower. NY: HarperCollins.

Lou's Barbershop

- Carole Boston Weatherford

Inside the storefront, snake plants thrive,
gossip grows wild, and men trade jibes.
Between gulps of Coke, they shoot the breeze
and tell half-truths no one believes.
News of comings and goings spreads
while Lou minds his business and just cuts heads.
Two old men who must live in the shop
play a game of spades that never stops.
Lou wipes the seat and I climb right in.
Then he raises the chair and gives it a spin.
I sit very still and hairs fall to the cape
as clippers buzz and a style takes shape.
Dusted with talc, splashed with cologne,
I feel as if I'm a prince on a throne.

From Weatherford, C.B. (2006). [*Sidewalk Chalk: Poems of the City*](#). Illustrated by Dimitrea Tokunbo. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Sol matutino

- Francisco X. Alarcón

calentando
mi cama
en la mañana

el sol
me llama
por la ventana

“despierta
levántate
ven afuera”

Morning Sun

- Francisco X. Alarcón

warming up
my bed
in the morning

the Sun
calls me
through the window

“wake up
get up
come on out”

from: Hall, D. (Ed.). (2001). [*The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems*](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jackie Robinson

- Lucille Clifton

ran against walls
without breaking;
in night games
was not foul
but, brave as a hit
over whitestone fences,
entering the conquering dark.

From: Morrison, L. (Compiler). (1992). [*At the Crack of the Bat: Baseball Poems*](#). Illustrated by Steve Cieskowski. New York: Hyperion.

José Canseco

(jump rope rhyme)

José Canseco is a very nice man.
He hits all the home runs that he can.
How many homers did he hit today?
Let's count them up in a very new way.
One-a, two-a, three-a

From: Morrison, L. (Compiler). (1992). [*At the Crack of the Bat: Baseball Poems*](#). Illustrated by Steve Cieskowski. New York: Hyperion.

On a Summer Day

- Isabel Joshlin Glaser

Noon's lion-faced sun
shakes out
its orange mane.

Its tongue
scorches
leaves.

Ever the bugs
want
rain.

From: Hopkins, L.B. (Ed). (1994). [*Weather: Poems for All Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Melanie Hall.
NY: HarperTrophy.

Summer Moon

- Ann Turner

It doesn't stop,
the hurrying, growing,
even after the sun rolls up
the day
and voles sleep, swallows rest,
the moon pours out its light
on crickets, owl, and skunk
while plants stretch up
to that other sun.

From: Turner, A. (1994). [*A Moon for Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Robert Noreika. NY: Macmillan.

Manhattan Lullaby

- Norma Farber

Lulled by rumble, babble, beep,
let these little children sleep;
let these city girls and boys
dream a music in the noise,
hear a tune their city plucks
up from buses, up from trucks
up from engines wailing *fire!*
up ten stories high, and higher,
up from hammers, rivets, drills,
up tall buildings, over sills,
up where city children sleep,
lulled by rumble, babble, beep.

From: Yolen, J. (Ed.). (1996). [*Skyscraper/City Scape: Poems of City Life*](#). Illustrated by Ken Condon. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

When a City Leans Against the Sky

- Allan A. DeFina

When a city
leans against the sky,
buildings sneeze and
press for elbowroom
with the clouds.
The sky turns blue
and bursts into sun
or moon or stars.

From: DeFina, A.A. (1997). [*When a City Leans Against the Sky*](#). Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Stories

- Allan A. DeFina

Only a city
has more stories
behind each windowed
shelf
than a library
can hold
or a storyteller
tell.

From: DeFina, A.A. (1997). [*When a City Leans Against the Sky*](#). Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

To Walk in Warm Rain

- David McCord

To walk in warm rain
 And get wetter and wetter!
To do it again—
To walk in warm rain
 Till you drip like a drain.
To walk in warm rain
 And get wetter and wetter.

From: Hopkins, L.B. (Ed). (1994). [*Weather: Poems for All Seasons*](#). Illustrated by Melanie Hall.
NY: HarperTrophy.

Where I Live

- Carole Boston Weatherford

Where I live
there are no trees
to climb, but I still
reach for the stars.
My dreams take root
in concrete,
and my branches
lift the sky.

From Weatherford, C.B. (2006). [*Sidewalk chalk: Poems of the City*](#). Illustrated by Dimitrea Tokunbo. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

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