



Spoken Word and Poetry Exemplars

THE ART OF PERFORMANCE

The following performances demonstrate how the delivery of a spoken word piece creates just as much mood and meaning as the words themselves. Notice, as well, how the spoken word genre celebrates authenticity of voice and subject matter. These artists are writing about what matters most to them, and expressing these sentiments in their own voice.

- Joshua Bennett (WtW's 2015 guest judge) performs "**Tamara's Opus**" at the White House
- Donovan Livingston (WtW's 2017 guest judge) performs "**Lift Off**" at the convocation for Harvard's Graduate School of Education
- Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman (WtW's 2018 guest judge) performs "**An American Lyric**" at the Library of Congress
- Caleb Femi performing "**Coconut Oil**" at SofarLondon
- Solomon O.B. performs "**Patterns of Behavior**" at Hammer and Tongue's Poetry Slam (grand prize winner)
- Solli Raphael performs "**Evolution**" at Australia's National Slam Poetry competition (winner)
- Sarah Kay performs "**If I Should Have a Daughter**" at TedTalks

Visit the **Youth Poetry Slam Festival** to witness more incredible performances from the Brave New Voices International competition.

THE ART OF LANGUAGE

Poetry can abide by rules of rhyme and meter or unspool like a musical riff. There's no one way to write a poem as long as the language is fresh, the rhythm inviting, the subject authentic. The following Write the World poets illustrate just how magically multifarious written poetry can be.

Stravelbach: Wood and Water

*Late afternoon.
I never knew a whisper, soft and sweet, could sing
In tranquil lapse...*

Sarina Adeline: First Communion of a Mestiza

*Rain on Easter Sunday,
Children play in the pews...*

AJNair: Void Deck Funeral

*A mournful wail beats up the air
Carried by charred paper-money wings...*

this_kid_is: A Letter To The Girl I Never Was

*Dear Dead Name,
Your long black hair is still woven
Between the spines of my old hairbrush...*

ecjpeach: She stares at the stars.

*And I'm glad the stars stare back, unblinking
With this prolonged eye contact, I'm given
The chance to stare at her and be thinking
Her hair, her hands, her eyes, what I'm living...*

Jennifer Chen: My Mother on a Late Summer Evening

*My Mother slushes dishwater around with her brush,
swipes dinner from the table:
slips of pork, broccoli branches, rice...*

River Song: The New Colossus

*This is what terror looks like.
It is—*

*bodies washing up on the shoreline,
seawater that tastes like copper...*

Gayatrirajan: Graceful Descent

*I envy the engineering of birds.
Descendants of dinosaurs, witness*

to every era.