
Write a Poem About Art!

An *ekphrastic poem* is written in response to a work of art. In addition to describing the artwork, it captures the feelings and imaginative connections a viewer makes. It’s a work of art about a work of art!

**How to Write An Ekphrastic Poem:**

There’s no right or wrong way to write an ekphrastic poem. But if you don’t know where to start, try these tips:

1. Begin by describing what you see. Consider various visual elements of the art: color, shapes, contrasts, shadows, etc.
2. Whenever your description sparks a feeling or memory, include it.
3. If you feel overwhelmed, focus on a single detail of the art.

**EKPHRASTIC POEM CHALLENGE #1 – LIFE SAVER**

This is a picture of a lifejacket made by artist Zoë Sheehan Saldaña. Zoë sewed Life Saver from waterproof nylon and stuffed it with milkweed fluff to make it float. It would really work in an emergency!
Here are some ideas to help you write a poem about Life Saver:

- What does the color of the life saver remind you of?
- When you get very sad or worried, who or what makes a good “life saver” for you?
- How do you think the life saver feels, waiting to do its job?

Level B - Grades 6-8

Write a poem on the theme of life saver. If you need help, choose one of these prompts:

- Write a poem about a time when someone was a “life saver” for you. What was the problem or crisis you were facing? How did the person “rescue” you? How did it feel to know that someone cared enough to help?
- Write a poem about a time when YOU were a “life saver” for someone else. What did you do to help? How did it make you feel?
- Write a list poem about all the different things and people that are “life savers” for others and how they fulfill that role (example: a sunny day can be a life saver for someone very sad because it fills them with the hope that flowers will soon bloom).

Level C – Grades 9-Adult

Write a poem on the theme of life saver. If you need help, choose one of these prompts:

- If you wanted to create a metaphorical life saver, what “materials” would you use?
- Religion, poetry, exercise, music, bingeing on movies, helping others—how have you found relief during this or another time of crisis?
- In an art installation by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, the grey columns of the Minneapolis Institute of Art were wrapped in 2,400 life jackets discarded on the shores of Lesbos by refugees fleeing war in Syria and Afghanistan. Describe an artwork that you would create in commemoration of any humanitarian crisis the world currently faces – COVID-19, climate change, homelessness, addiction, etc.

Please share your ekphrastic poems with us!

* Post them on any social media platform with the hashtag #AldrichAtHome.
* Email them to nbayarsaihan@aldrichart.org – please include your name.