

VERTICAL POEM

A Sharing Nature Activity by Joseph Cornell



To practice this exercise, first observe something that captivates you—perhaps a field of flowers or a secluded sea cove. Notice its effect on you, and choose a word that captures your feeling. Then use each letter of the word to begin a line of your poem.

The simple structure for a vertical poem makes it very easy to write. After successfully crafting their verses, people have exclaimed to me, “It’s been forty years since I’ve written a poem!”

THE VERTICAL POEM BELOW WAS WRITTEN IN A FOREST IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Fragrances of oak and pine
Open up the heart and mind.
Remain still awhile and listen:
Everywhere is Nature’s song—
Sometimes as silent as a leaf falling;
Time is suspended.

—Tom W.

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Write the word you’ve chosen, one letter on each line. Then use each letter to begin a line of your poem.
