



# WILD WORDS

Getting started





# **Welcome, writers!**

**In this guide, we'll explore the fascinating world of cross-species poetry. This means writing poems in collaboration with creatures, plants, places, and even the weather.**

**Why give it a try it? Because it sparks our creativity and helps us see the world from fresh, exciting perspectives.**

**Get ready for a poetic adventure beyond the human!**



## **Part 1: Meet your co-author**

**To begin, we need to select our cross-species co-author. You can choose an animal, plant, insect, place, or even the weather! Here are some activities to help you get to know them better and make your choice.**

### **Deep Listening Walk**

Take a quiet walk outside with a pen and paper. Pause often and listen closely to the sounds around you. Notice bird calls, insect noises, and the wind rustling through the trees. What rhythms and textures can you detect? What emotions do they stir in you?

### **Research Mode**

Explore how your co-author lives using resources like nature books and wildlife websites. We call this adopting an ‘ethological lens.’ It means observing closely how other beings behave and communicate. What intriguing details can you gather about their movements, perception of the world, and interactions with their environment?

### **Sensory Imagination**

Every organism experiences the world in its own unique way. This is called its ‘umwelt’. Imagine how your co-author’s world might differ from yours. For example, picture how a frog perceives a wet meadow compared to how you do. Jot down descriptive sensory phrases that capture these differences.

### **Mindful Observation**

Find a comfortable spot outdoors and sit quietly for 5-10 minutes, just watching and listening. What can you see, hear, smell, and feel? Write down your observations, trying to use all your five senses.



## Part 2: Creating together

**Now use your observations and research to start writing your cross-species poem. Poetry can take many forms. Here are some creative techniques to help you experiment with different styles:**

### Soundscapes

Listen closely to the unique sounds your co-author makes, like bird calls, insect chirps, or the rustling of leaves in the wind. Craft a poem that mimics these rhythms, patterns, and textures using words that conjure their acoustic experiences.

### Motions

Observe how your co-author moves through their environment. A tree might sway or flutter, a cloud might drift or roll, and a bird might hop or dive. Make quick sketches of their distinctive movements. Then turn those sketches into vivid action words and descriptive phrases to capture their motions in your poem.

### Conversations

Choose your own perspective on something in nature, like how you feel about a rainstorm. Then, imagine the contrasting viewpoint your co-author might have. For instance, a coming storm might ruin your plans, but a bird might see it as a chance to bathe and find worms washed out by the rain. Write a poem as a conversation between you and your co-author, revealing your different outlooks.

### Forms

Think about how your co-author moves and perceives the world. Let their unique qualities inspire an inventive poetic form. For example, a soaring bird might lead to longer, sweeping lines and stanzas, while an industrious ant colony could inspire a busy, compact shape buzzing with activity.



## Definitions

### Cross-species

Poetry created with or from the perspective of creatures, plants, places, or things that aren't human.

### Co-compose

Writing a creative work jointly with someone or something else.

### Ethological lens

A concept scientists use to study and understand how animals or plants behave in their natural environments.

### Umwelt

An organism's unique sensory world. Humans, plants, and animals all live in the same world, but experience it in very different ways. Think of a spider. It experiences the world through vibrations and chemical cues. Whereas a fly experiences the world through smells and air currents.

### Acoustic experience

All the things you hear in your surroundings, from music and voices to birds singing and the sound of rain falling.



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