

How to Write a Poem in 7 Easy Steps

by Trevor Abes

1. Research how to locate and outline the chin of a toy terrier. Find a toy terrier, outline its chin, then count the hairs on said chin to determine the number of lines your poem will have.

2. Purchase a hatchet and 7 copies of your most loathed newspaper. Stack the newspapers and roll them together, fastening the resulting cake roll with elastic bands. Plate and freeze. In the morning, slice off a dessert-sized portion for melting next to your bowl of cereal and cup of black coffee. If, after breakfast, you cannot deduce at least one thing you hate about the newspaper from the soggy mush, its contents will determine your poem's subject matter. Otherwise, dump it in the trash and try the next slice tomorrow.

3. Suppose you spot the word "politics" upside down drooping over the plate onto the table and the name "Tibetan Mastiff" crossed with the word "court" in the middle where ink should be pooling. You decide to take as your theme the history of court cases in which both defendant and prosecution are of the Tibetan Mastiff breed.

4. Research famous Tibetan Mastiff trials and choose one. Suppose you choose *Price v. Shanti* 1983, where one Shanti Warren was accused of stealing one Price Kennedy's gold-encrusted leg of lamb and taking it abroad from Toronto to Botswana, where security discovered counterfeit AAA-grade kibble inside of it and duly detained her.

5. For rhythm, think of the last song you had to turn off to stop yourself from getting sick of it. Play it on repeat and improvise about the case; be how you wish you were most of the time; do this until your ears are worn to the metal. Then, continue in and relish the silence. Record using tape or laptop microphone.

6. From the resulting material, select sentences and passages you enjoy as they stand on their own.

7. Try to put them together.

