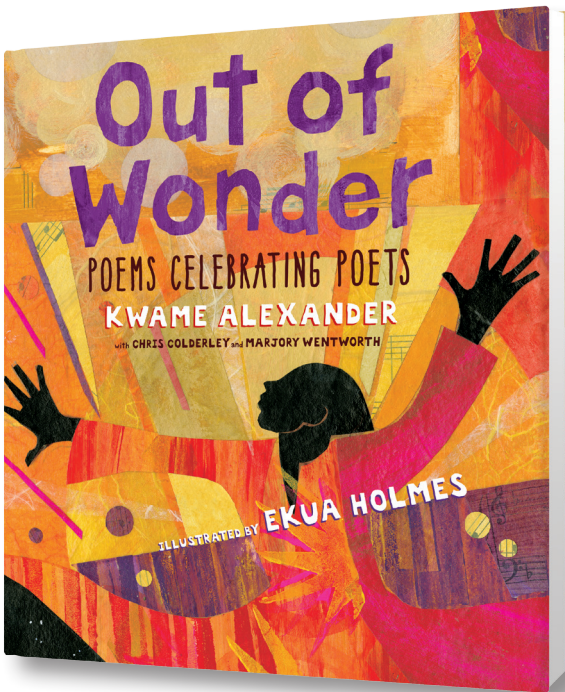


# Out of Wonder

## POEMS CELEBRATING POETS

**KWAME ALEXANDER**  
with **CHRIS COLDERLEY** and **MARJORY WENTWORTH**

illustrated by **EKUA HOLMES**



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### About the Book

*Out of Wonder: Poems Celebrating Poets* sprang from an appreciation of the work of twenty diverse poets across centuries and around the world. It is a collection of original poems by Newbery Medal-winning author and poet Kwame Alexander, along with poems by teacher-poet Chris Colderley and Poet Laureate of South Carolina Marjory Wentworth. Each of the poems in this book is an ode to one of the twenty celebrated poets, to their work, or to the act of writing poetry. As Kwame Alexander writes in the preface, "I believe that by reading other poets we can discover our own wonder."

Children will enjoy hearing these poems read aloud, and they will enjoy reading them independently. As readers grow in their ability to understand with more complexity and sophistication, and as they experience a greater exposure to poetry, delight will increase when they discover the influence of the celebrated poets' work on the poets and poems in this book.

The vibrant mixed-media illustrations by Caldecott Honor-winning artist Ekua Holmes offer a visual invitation to readers to enter the world of each of the poems.

### Prereading Activities

To introduce students to the idea of creating original art or poetry in honor, celebration, or appreciation of another artist or writer, choose one or both of these activities.

1. Before sharing the book, show students the painting *The Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh (or another famous painting of your liking). Discuss the colors, shapes, and subject matter that dominate the painting, then let students create their own work of art inspired by the one you've shared.
2. Provide students with copies of the poems "The Road Not Taken," "The Pasture," and "Reluctance" by Robert Frost. After reading these three poems together, share the poem "In Every Season" from *Out of Wonder*. Have students identify how Marjory Wentworth uses words, phrases, topics, and ideas from Robert Frost's poems to create her poem of celebration.

### Common Core Connections

This teachers' guide, with connections to the Common Core, provides a variety of ways for students in grades 3–8 to interact with and enjoy the poems in the collection. Activities and discussion questions are also provided for a deeper dive into the poets and poems being celebrated.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After reading *Out of Wonder*, use these questions for classroom discussions or writing prompts.

## ***“I Like Your” celebrating e. e. cummings (page 6)***

Poets sometimes break or bend rules of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in order to convey meaning and emotion. What rules does Kwame Alexander break in this poem? How does it contribute to the poem? How does it mirror the style of the poet being celebrated?

## ***“Snapshots” celebrating Nikki Giovanni (page 9)***

In your own words, explain one of Chris Colderley’s examples of what poetry is. What concrete example would you use to describe what poetry is?

## ***“Jazz Jive Jam” celebrating Langston Hughes (page 10) and “Tambourine Things” celebrating Judith Wright (page 23)***

Poets use stanzas for many reasons. Sometimes stanzas organize the poem around the rhythm and rhyme scheme. Other times they direct the reader by creating pauses in the poem or focusing attention on important words or images. Describe how the poets’ stanza breaks help you as a reader.

## ***“The Blue Alphabet” celebrating Terrance Hayes (page 17)***

A metaphor compares one thing to another without using the words *like* or *as*. A metaphor says that one thing is another unrelated thing. What metaphors does Marjory Wentworth use in this poem? What unlike things does she compare?

## ***“How Billy Collins Writes a Poem” celebrating Billy Collins (pages 18–19)***

What are some of the things you notice when you first wake up?

## ***“Walter, Age Ten” celebrating Walter Dean Myers (page 14); “The Music of the Earth” celebrating Pablo Neruda (page 20); and “Song of Uhuru” celebrating Okot p’Bitek (page 34)***

A particular place is important in each of these poems. How did the poets give readers a sense of that place? How are the places the same? How are they different?

## ***“(Loving) the World and Everything in It” celebrating Mary Oliver (page 24)***

Alliteration is the repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more words in a sentence. Can you describe the time of day you love most with alliteration, the way Marjory Wentworth names the “miracle of morning”? What other examples of alliteration can you find in this poem?

## ***“For Our Children’s Children” celebrating Chief Dan George (page 36) and “Majestic” celebrating Maya Angelou (page 40)***

In each of these poems, the poets speak directly to the reader. Although their messages are very different, the structures of the two poems are quite similar. Describe the similarity.

## ***“Spin a Song” celebrating Rumi (page 38)***

What kind of music makes you happy? Do you ever dance to cheer yourself up?

## ***Out of Wonder celebrating poets***

All the poems in this book were written in appreciation of a poet’s style, themes, or words. Talk about a poet who moves you to want to write a poem of appreciation.

# CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS

## COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

These questions correlate to Common Core ELA Reading: Literature Standards for Key Ideas and Details RL.3–8.1; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RL.3–8.7; ELA Reading: Informational Text Standards for Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RI.3–7.9; and ELA Speaking and Listening Standards for Comprehension and Collaboration SL.3–5.1.

## COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

These questions correlate to Common Core ELA Writing Standards for Research to Build and Present Knowledge W.4–6.9.A and Range of Writing W.3–8.10.

## COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

These questions correlate to Common Core ELA Speaking and Listening Standards for Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.3–8.4 and SL.3–5.5.

## Reading

1. Encourage students to find poems by the celebrated poets in anthologies or collections. Look for words, topics, and themes used by both the celebrated poets and the authors of the poems in *Out of Wonder*.
2. After students read one or more of the short biographies of the celebrated poets included in the back matter of *Out of Wonder*, help them find picture book biographies or online articles about one of the poets. Have students write short essays that compare and contrast the information from two different sources.
3. Have students choose a favorite illustration and explain to the class or to a small discussion group how the illustration and the words of the poem interact and complement each other.

## Writing

1. Ask each student to choose a poet whose work they love and write a poem in celebration of him or her or inspired by one of the poet's works.
2. Using "How to Write a Poem" (page 3) or "How Billy Collins Writes a Poem" (pages 18–19), have students write their own poems about writing poetry.
3. Using "Contemporary Haiku" (page 7), have students write a series of haiku that describe your classroom in a particular season.

## Speaking

1. As a class, create an audio book companion for *Out Of Wonder*. Record your students reading the poems aloud and make a presentation in a digital application such as PowerPoint, Slides, or iMovie. This could also be done by individual students.
2. Stage a whole-class reading of favorite poems from *Out Of Wonder*. Have students create original art to accompany each poem being read aloud.

## Integrating

*Out of Wonder* includes biographies of the celebrated poets in alphabetical order, as well as a list of the historical periods in which they lived (ancient through contemporary). As a class, make a time line of the poets, using their birth years, and map the countries in which they were born.







## About the Author

**Kwame Alexander** is a poet, an educator, the author of twenty-one books, and the recipient of the 2015 Newbery Medal for his novel *The Crossover*. The founder of two literacy organizations—Book-in-a-Day and LEAP for Ghana—he regularly travels the world presenting writing and publishing programs at schools and conferences. Kwame Alexander has owned several publishing companies, written for stage and television (TLC's *Hip Hop Harry*), recorded a CD, produced jazz and book festivals, hosted a radio show, worked for the U.S. government, and taught high school. In 2015, he served as the Bank Street College of Education's inaugural Dorothy Carter writer-in-residence. His recent books include the middle-grade novel in verse *Booked* and the professional resource *Kwame Alexander's Page-to-Stage Writing Workshop: Awakening the Writer, Publisher, and Presenter in Every Student*.



Photo by Charles Walker, Jr.

## About the Illustrator

**Ekua Holmes** is a fine artist whose work explores themes of family, relationships, hope, and faith. In 2013, she was the first African-American woman to be named as a commissioner on the Boston Arts Commission, which oversees public art projects on city property. She was awarded a Caldecott Honor, a Robert F. Sibert Honor, and a John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award for *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer*, her first picture book, written by Carole Boston Weatherford.



## About the Contributors

**Chris Colderley** was awarded a 2012 Book-in-a-Day poetry fellowship to study and write in Bahia, Brazil. His articles and poems have appeared in *The Poetry Magazine* and other publications. He is a poet and elementary school teacher in Burlington, Ontario, Canada.

**Marjory Wentworth** is the Poet Laureate of South Carolina. She is the author of *Noticing Eden* and other books of poetry. Her poems have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize five times. She teaches at the Art Institute of Charleston, and her work is included in the South Carolina Poetry Archives at Furman University.



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Mary Lee Hahn, a teacher-poet who practices her crafts in central Ohio, wrote this guide.