**Notes to Helpers:**

There is no one right way to write a poem. You have prompts and worksheets to help poets get started if they are having trouble with an idea. For poets who already have subjects in mind, allow them to write on what interests them, but encourage them to include the big ideas we are talking about:

1. **Some poems address a person or thing.** Katy Perry’s poem talks to an unknown person. Langston Hughes’ poem talks to a snail. You can write a poem that talks to just about anything; it doesn’t have to be about a person or animal.
2. Katy Perry uses a lot of **comparisons** in her poem.
3. Both **poets use full rhyme as well as near rhymes**. In “Snail,” “go” rhymes with “know.” “Go” and “rose” have long o’s but they do not quite rhyme. In “Firework,” “thin” rhymes with “again” but not “wind.” They all have short i’s.

There aren’t a lot of rules in poetry these days. Don’t worry right now if the poem doesn’t make a lot of sense to you. Help the poet get it down, and then we will look at it to see if we want to make any changes.

**For non-verbal poets**, the peel off labels may be used to help them create their own poems to the greatest extent possible. It’s okay if they don’t want to add extra words. Modern poems sometimes focus more on sounds and images than complete thoughts. But it is also fine to write a collaborative poem, where they pick words from the labels and you work with them to build a poem. If you add a lot of your own words, please identify this as a collaborative poem, including your own name and the poet’s as co-authors.

**Some non-verbal poets** may be unable to use the labels. We provide objects associated with animals and animal habitats. You can write a collaborative poem with poets needing extra support by writing about the objects as they touch them, or by presenting them with two objects and writing about the one that elicits a positive reaction.

**There are two sets of prompts in this packet.** We will walk the students through writing a poem that addresses an animal. **They don’t have to use a prompt and they don’t have to write about an animal, but they should write a poem that addresses someone or something.** The second prompt is for a poem talking to a person. This can be used by students who finish early or want to continue this activity outside of this workshop. It can be fun to do this second activity as a greeting card.

**Prompt Set 1, Talking to an Animal**

This prompt invites the poets to focus on related sounds as they write a poem that describes an animal. Pictures of animals, usually in their habitats, are provided to help the poets consider how they will write about them.

A great way to help the poets get started with the poem is to listen to them talk about the animal. As they talk, write down key words, especially words with similar sounds. Identifying words with similar sounds may be hard. There is a packet of color coded labels in the back of each folder labeled “Addressing an Animal. Words with similar sounds.” These words are grouped by color according to sounds. The poets can use these as building blocks for their poems. (Continued on back.)

**Sample Dialogue:**

Poet: I want to write about a frog, but I can’t think of what to say.

Helper: Oh, I bet you have a lot to say about frogs. What do you like about frogs?

Poet: How they splash.

Helper: Splash is a good word. Let’s write that word down. What else do you like about them?

Poet: They jump. They croak.

Helper, writing the words down: Where do you see frogs?

Poet: Ponds.

Helper: You know pond sounds a little like frog to me. They both have a short “o”--ah. Let’s write a line with frog and pond in it.

Poet: The frog is in the pond.

Helper: That sounds good. You mentioned “jump.” Can we work that in there?

Poet: The frog jumps in the pond. It makes a splash.

Helper: Oh look. The word “jump” is on this sheet with some other words that sound a little like jump. Can you use any of these words?

Poet: Plunge.

Helper: The frog jumps and….

Poet: plunges.

Helper: Jumps and plunges. The frog jumps and plunges in the pond. / It makes a splash.

Continue to assist the poet as needed. Encourage the use of descriptive words, for example, such as how the pond looks.