



In our quest to lighten poetry up a bit, we now turn to the acrostic. Unlike Adelaide's cinquains, an acrostic is not deep or meaningful. It is simply this: a poem in which the first letter of each line spells out your subject. Take for instance, this poem about a dog from [www.holycross.edu](http://www.holycross.edu):

**D**evoted,  
**O**n  
**G**uard.

The folk at [holycross.edu](http://holycross.edu) even got a bit cute and had the last letter of each line spell out dog:

Back-en**d**  
hello--  
waggin**g**.

As you can see, this is pretty easy going, but even simple exercises are good practice for a budding poet. So let's practice...

## Candle

**C**an you see the difference when the candles are  
**A**light? A room warms with their glow and the darkest  
**N**ight is no longer stark, but intimate as the  
**D**reamy  
**L**ight brings  
**E**ase and quiet and the day's respite.



## Oak

**O**ld, old friend  
**A**t the garden's edge, as familiar to me as  
**K**in.

When you get bored with unrhymed acrostics, you can try implementing a rhyme scheme for a bit of a challenge, like this one I wrote for Mrs. Schwimmer:

## Sibling Poem

**S**ometimes I really get bothered, and  
**I** yell and complain.  
**B**ut who can blame a girl who's got a brother that's a big pain.  
**L**ong ago when  
**I** was young, he cuddled me tenderly;  
**N**ow that I've  
**G**rown, he's changed his tone as we battle endlessly.

## Halloween Night

**H**aunted day when living and dead  
**A**re closer and meet in the dark.  
**L**ittle children, don your masks but  
**L**isten now and hark:  
**O**ver the years we've seen it come  
**W**ith rustling steps through leaves.  
**E**veryone feels that chill down the spine;  
**E**veryone hears it breathe.  
**N**ow stay on the paths where the street lamp glows --

BOO!!!

**N**ow stay where there still is light,  
**I**n darkest shadows it grows and  
**G**rows, increasing its size and its might.  
**H**ere it thrives and gleefully spreads -- this last wretched crop of the  
year.  
**T**o name it does not banish it. My child, it's called "fear."

## Cowboy

**C**an you resist the lore of the old,  
**O**ld West,  
**W**hen men squared off to see who was  
**B**est.  
**O**r when  
**Y**our hero wore a tin star on his chest?



## Deer-Season

**D**un-coloured fur to blend with the trees,  
**E**ight points on top of your head,  
**E**verything you do whispers "Silence" to me --  
"**R**emember, the noisy are quickly the dead."

## Halloween

**H** is for the howling wolves and the howling wind.

**A** is for the attic where a candle tempts you in.

**L** is for long shadows, stretching fingers out to touch

**L** is for low laughter and then you're in its clutch.

**O**, you scream, don't hurt me! as you struggle to break free.

**W** -- you're weakening and its too dark to see.

**E**ndlessly, this nightmare repeats itself for you.

**E**very year, around this time, it's something you go through.

**N** -- the night of All Hallow's haunts you more than most,

(But then again, most people aren't plagued by their victim's ghost.)

After you have practiced acrostics for a while, you may wish to play with a variation known as an abecedarian. This is a poem where each line begins with consecutive letters of the alphabet. Take, for example, this one from that very useful website [www.holycross.edu](http://www.holycross.edu):

**A**lphabet poems

**B**egin with A, B,

**C** and

**D**efinitely

**E**nd with X, Y,

**Z**.

Again, it provides a bit of a challenge -- an exercise for all those “little grey cells” we rely on. So here goes...

**A**utumn

**B**ringing with her shorter days and

**C**older nights and

**D**eep red and yellow to

**E**very branch.



Let's try an even more elaborate abecedarian with a rhyme scheme...

**A**ncestors -- I see in my own face:

**B**ernice, your pride and Mary, your grace.

**C**urve of brow and glint of eye,

**D**ad, that is your legacy.

**E**ach expression and laugh-line, mom,

**F**orever a gift you've passed to me.

Your turn to try it now...