

A Monday Morning Spark of Inspiration . . .

December 1, 2025

FULL TEXT LINKS:

[The Midnight Library](#) by Matt Haig

Viking Sept 2020 978-0525559474

Serious Duo for a M/F Pair

2023 National Qualifier

Suicide

PG-13 High School Appropriate

[Follow the prompts to download the .pdf file] About Nora, a woman whose suicide attempt leads her to a literary purgatory, of sorts, that offers her glimpses into lives and loves that might've been.

Somewhere beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better? Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

[Don't Play Games with Me](#) by Matt Thompson

Heuer Publishing 2009 978-1615885305

Humorous Interp for Any Gender(s)

2024 National Qualifier

Misc. Comedy

PG-13 High School Appropriate

Set during a group therapy session for board game fanatics. There is an English professor who plays Scrabble in Latin. Then there's the housewife who doesn't recycle the pieces of paper she uses in Pictionary. Finally, there's the married woman who fears that she is falling in love with the way another man plays Monopoly.

[Paper Bag Princess](#) by Robert N. Munsch

Annick Press Feb 1992 978-0920236161

Humorous Interp for a Female or Humorous Prose for Any Gender(s)

2010 National Qualifier; 2022 National Qualifier- MS – HI

2021 National Qualifier- MS – PROSE

Fairy Tales

G Appropriate for All Audiences

Elizabeth, a beautiful princess, lives in a castle and wears fancy clothes. Just when she is about to marry Prince Ronald, a dragon smashes her castle, burns her clothes with his fiery breath, and prince-naps her dear Ronald. Undaunted and presumably unclad, she dons a large paper bag and sets off to find the dragon and her cherished prince. Once she's tracked down the rascally reptile, she flatters him into

performing all sorts of dragonly stunts that eventually exhaust him, allowing her to rescue Prince Ronald. But what does Prince Not-So-Charming say when he sees her? "You smell like ashes, your hair is all tangled and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you are dressed like a real princess." (At least he has the courtesy not to mention that the princess's crown resembles a dying sea anemone.) In any case, let's just say that Princess Elizabeth and Prince Ronald do not, under any circumstances, live happily ever after.

Mister Monster – A Program with poems by Dorothea Lasky, Phil Bolst, and Bobbi Katz and Rudy Francisco

Various Various Various [\(See links to individual poems below\)](#)

Serious Poetry for Any Gender(s)

2025 National Qualifier – MS

Women's Issues

PG-13 High School Appropriate

[Contains Monsters by Dorothea Lasky, The Monsters in my Closet by Phil Bolst, October by Bobbi Katz and Monster by Rudy Francisco] Growing up comes with plenty of challenges, but for young girls there is an added twist: learning to pick up on the subtle cues that someone of the opposite sex isn't safe. Maybe it's the boy at school who thinks it's funny to sexually harass girls, or the college guy who doesn't take "no" for an answer, or the older man at the mall whose stare lingers just a bit too long. Being aware of possible red flags, no matter how trivial, is what girls must learn to keep themselves safe. Potential threats can sometimes be obvious, but not in every case. The hard truth is that many unsafe men look perfectly ordinary. How do you heal from a monster you never saw coming?

- **[Monsters](#) by Dorothea Lasky**

Poetry Foundation Sept 2013 ASIN: B0DM215BXH

[Found in Volume 202, #5] Follows a speaker who first treats "monsters" playfully, like raccoons, skunks, and imagined creatures under the bed, before revealing a deeper, more intimate monster: a "little one" who demands more than snacks or soothing. As the monster's hunger grows, it becomes clear he wants something essential from the speaker, their soul. And when the speaker finally submits, they merge with the creature, seeing only whiteness and then fog through its hollow eyes. The poem ultimately shifts from whimsical to unsettling, suggesting that becoming one with a monster (whether fear, love, or an inner darkness) means surrendering clarity and stepping into an indistinct, consuming void.

- **[The Monsters in my Closet](#) by Phil Bolst**

Running Press Adult Nov 1991 978-0671747695

[Found in Kids Pick the Funniest Poems, Pgs 76-77] Describes a child whose closet monsters aren't scary at all but helpful, quirky companions who wake up after school to tidy the room. Each has its own personality—some grumble, some shed, one has odd tastes—but together they keep things lively. Flaws aside, they're affectionate, dependable, and ultimately the sweetest friends a kid could have.

- **[October](#) by Bobbi Katz**

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Jan 2006 978-0152163976

[Found in Once Around the Sun: A Year of Poems] Captures the playful mystery of October, when early nightfall, glowing jack-o'-lanterns, and rustling leaves set the stage for costumes and

imagination. It highlights the fun of becoming anything you want and the tradition of neighbors offering treats to keep mischief at bay.

- [Monster](#) by Rudy Francisco

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Jan 2013

978-1482043112

[Found in Getting Stitches, Pgs 34-35] Traces the speaker's painful journey from comforting a child with the easy lie that monsters aren't real to confronting the brutal truth that the real monsters walk among us in human form. She describes witnessing the way predatory men carve nightmares into the innocent and hide behind ordinary faces, impersonating humanity while leaving women traumatized in their wake.

[The Humble Potato](#)

(A Good Place to Start Research)

Serious Informative for Any Gender(s)

MN State Qualifier

PG-Middle School Appropriate

Baked or fried, boiled or roasted, as chips or fries; at some point in your life you've probably eaten a potato. But potatoes have played a much more significant role in our history than just that of the dietary staple we have come to know and love today. In fact, without the potato, our modern civilization might not exist at all.

VAULT OF CUTTINGS:

November Extemp Questions have been uploaded to the [VAULT OF CUTTINGS](#) and added to the EXTEMP TOPIC GENERATOR

Barrel Fever by David Sedaris

Back Bay Books

June 1995

978-0316779425

Stored in Folder(s): [Humorous Interp / Male \(Multi-Character\)](#)

[Humorous Prose / Male \(Multi-Character\)](#)

2004 and 2025 National Qualifier – HI

2008 and 2010 National Qualifier – PROSE

Family

PG-13 High School Appropriate

CUTTING STORED IN THE VAULT: In Adolph's world, family bonding looks a lot like emotional dodgeball—everyone lobbing sarcasm, guilt, and questionable gifts at each other just to see who flinches first. His mother, a woman powered almost entirely by complaints and cafeteria Jell-O, turns her hospital room into a full-volume comedy special, starring herself and co-starring anyone unlucky enough to wander in. Mom . . . the gift that keeps on giving – may she rest in . . . well, never mind. [Cutting compliments of Heidi Trevithic of Denver, Colorado]

Beauty Mark by Craig Shafer

Create Space Independent Publishing

May 2015

978-1512244120

Stored in Folder(s): [Dramatic Interp / Male \(Monologue\)](#)

2015, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024 National Qualifier; NIETOC; CA, IL and KS State Qualifier

LGBTQ

PG-13 High School Appropriate

CUTTING STORED IN THE VAULT: [Found in Fast Horse Plays, Round 6, Pg 33-39] Cassidy Creech was only 13 when he considered suicide. He feared a world where no one would want anything to do with him – even his church-going parents, whom he worried wouldn't accept him for being gay. This feeling was already a reality in class, where he was relentlessly bullied at his small-town school despite not having gone public with his sexuality. Six out of 10 students reported feeling unsafe and ostracized in school because of their sexual orientation, according to a 2019 study from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. And now with an unprecedented number of anti-LGBTQ policies introduced and implemented across our nation, the status of LGBTQ students is even more perilous. No one should be afraid to go to school in America . . . But they are.

The Rememberer by Aimee Bender

Anchor **Aug 1999** **978-0385492164**

Stored in Folder(s): [Serious Prose / Female \(Narrator Only\)](#)

2024 National Qualifier – MS

Social Commentary

PG-13 High School Appropriate

CUTTING STORED IN THE VAULT: [Found in The Girl in the Flammable Skirt, Pgs 3-8] Aimee Bender turns Ben's surreal "reverse evolution" into a meditation on how love falters when thought overwhelms feeling. As Annie watches him slip from man to ape to sea turtle to salamander, she becomes the guardian of everything their relationship once held. She feeds him honey when he no longer remembers her, keeps him in a baking pan of saltwater, and replays memories of their last human night together when he insisted, "We think far too much." His physical regression mirrors the emotional truth he feared: that a world ruled by intellect drains the heart, leaving Annie to shoulder the grief, the remembering, and finally the painful choice to release him back into the ocean when she can no longer bear the thought of him shrinking into nothingness.

Save Our Planet with poems by Alan Brownjohn, Frank Farian and Giorgio & Gisela Sgarbi

Various **Various** **Various** [\(See selection for source information for each poem\)](#)

Stored in Folder(s): [Serious Poetry / Any Gender\(s\)](#)

2020 National Qualifier - MS

Environment

PG-Middle School Appropriate

CUTTING STORED IN THE VAULT: [Contains We are Going to see the Rabbit by Alan Brownjohn and We Kill the World by Frank Farian and Giorgio & Gisela Sgarbi] Is it too late to save our planet? One day we will find ourselves walking through concrete streets, searching for small signs of life we've almost wiped out. The trees? Gone. The fish? Struggling. The flowers? have Buried under parking lots. Do we care? We pollute our world and mourn the loss of anything natural and real. I'll call this realness the "only rabbit" left. By the time we finally think to search for the "only rabbit," it's already slipped underground, hiding from our technology, our noise and our disrespect. And we're confused. Why does nature keep disappearing?