

Two Prompts Today...Pick Either

In Words of One Syllable III

(Round three...a variant used in April 2013 prompts another in 2023)

The old saying for plain, direct speech is "tell it in words of one syllable." Robert Pinsky

Try a poem that uses only words of one syllable. To make it harder, you might even forbid your poem the use of any form of the verb "to be." This will push you into non-Latinate language and short, active verbs. It is interesting to observe how these restrictions complicate the writing while simplifying what is said. The restrictions necessarily alter what's expressed. It is difficult to find examples of poems written with only single syllable words; it is less difficult to find poems you could easily translate into words of one syllable.

You might start by making a list of really strong one syllable words: scum, bash, fierce, fire, wind, stole, grief, bite, night, fade, dream, climb, news, dawn, wall, life, death, love, whole, piece, earth, ground, soil, plant, coax, clown,

Sometimes when you start with given words, the poem writes itself.

Alternate Prompt for Wordle Players

Use only those words in one (or even several) days' journeys to solution. These won't result in great poems, but they are fun.

Examples:

Breaded Wordle Poem

(image, beast, eager, clean, knead)

Place the risen eager beast of image
in your bread bowl
knead it into life
on your clean bread board.
Squeeze it into the pan,
bake until firm
and brown-topped.
Palatable, yes tasty,
slathered with
butter on the plate
of your poem.

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Wordle Poem With Clowns

(train, dozen, spoon, clown, blown, flown)

The old man
in the *train* dining car
had poised with one hand
holding his *spoon* in air
above his bowl
of butternut soup.

That pause was all,
his only reaction,
when a *clown*,
then a *dozen* more,
had *flown* through
like colorful *blown* leaves.

As they disappeared
amid the laughter of other diners,

the quiet old man
resumed with his spoon
silently eating
his butternut soup.

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