

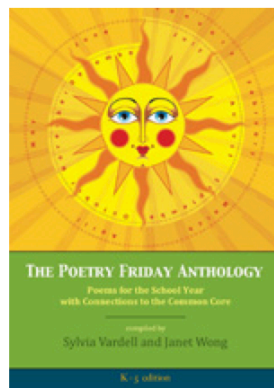
Praise from IRA's *Reading Today* for
THE POETRY FRIDAY ANTHOLOGY
by Sylvia Vardell and Janet Wong

Vardell, Sylvia, & Wong, Janet. (Compilers). (2012). *The Poetry Friday anthology: Poems for the school year with connections to the Common Core, K-5 Edition*. Princeton: Pomelo Books.

If there is one thing most teachers seem to be afraid to teach, it has to be poetry. Well, they need fear no more, thanks to this wonderful new poetry anthology put together by two former members of the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children Committee. This visually-appealing collection features 218 original poems written by 75 poets specifically for the anthology. Arranged by grade level, from kindergarten to fifth grade, the book features one poem on each page as well as poetic connections to the Common Core State Standards. Each poem has a "Take 5!" section with many suggestions about how to perform each poem, including simple props, and ideas about how to introduce poetry to children. The compilers have even provided references to poems or other poetry books with similar themes so that if students love one type of poem or one subject for a poem, they can easily find another similar one in this book or in another volume of poetry. Back matter includes a mini-glossary of poetry terms and a list of 25 websites and blogs devoted to children's poetry. There are memorable poems from some of the stalwarts of this type of writing: Arnold Adoff, Nikki Grimes, Julie Larios, J. Patrick Lewis, Jack Prelutsky, Laura Purdie Salas, Eileen Spinelli, Janet Wong, and Jane Yolen. While many of the poems feature familiar names, verses by others, such as Guadalupe Garcia McCall and Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, show that the future of poetry is in good hands. Be careful when reading this highly-addictive anthology. You may find yourself nodding vigorously in agreement at a poet's sentiments about a topic or chortling in glee. Find a place for this book on your desk since you'll be turning to it time and time again. You may even want two copies, one for your students and one for your own use.

- Barbara A. Ward, Washington State University Pullman

From *Reading Today*, a professional journal of the International Reading Association: reading.org/general/Publications/blog/BlogSinglePost/reading-today-online/2012/09/13/book-reviews-professional-reading



Praise from *The ALSC Blog*

Poetry Fridays

Posted at The ALSC Blog on October 16, 2012 by Jeanette Larson

Many teachers and librarians use poetry as a means to teach and encourage reading and over the years I've seen a lot of creative and interesting ways to include poetry in the classroom and library. Some methods strive to make it easy for kids to pick up a poem and read, taking a poetry break. We also know that many kids love poetry when it is not being forced on them and dissected. Poetry is important enough that it is included in the Common Core State Standards and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Of course, that importance also may mean that students are hit over the head with poetry and forced to consider "meaning" and "structure" instead of simply enjoying the beauty of the words.

Poetry Friday started in 2006 and, much like "casual Fridays" is intended to casually imbue students with poetry. To help the cause, poet Janet Wong and poet guru Sylvia Vardell have compiled poems use from kindergarten through fifth grade for every week of the school year. From "Happy Song for the First Day of School" by Patricia Hubbell through "The Last Day of School" by Deborah Ruddell, there are 36 poems for each grade level (enough for the typical nine month school calendar) plus two for everyone to start and end the year. That is 218 original poems by 75 poets, a substantial anthology by any measure. But wait, there's more!

In addition to the poetry, Vardell and Wong offer Take 5! ideas that focus on reading each poem aloud and for talking about the poem with follow up guidelines for oral and choral reading of more poetry. "When the Rain Falls" by Susan Taylor Brown, for example includes suggestions for choral reading where students would say three lines together to allow for increased volume and greater emphasis as Thunder trembles, or when *Rainbows reappear*. But wait, there's more!

Vardell and Wong have actually prepared *two* anthologies. The poems and the Take 5! ideas are the same but depending on the volume you purchase (so be careful!) you will find information and guidance for linking poetry to either the Common Core State Standards or the TEKS. And yes, there is still more!

The appendices include suggestions for building a poetry library, lists of poetry web sites and blogs, professional resources, and a glossary of poetry terms. The poem credits serve as an index to specific poets and although there is no subject indexing, *per se*, the 36 week list at the beginning of each grade level chapter provides information about the topics and themes included in case you want to switch subjects around a bit. This is a lot of resource and professional development for \$29.99! So, as Stephanie Calmenson says in her poem for first grade, week 29:

*A poem a day
keeps the blues away.*

The Poetry Friday Anthology: Poems for the School Year with Connections... is published by Pomelo Books. Feel free to use more poems to make every day a Poetry Friday. And please share the ways you use poetry with the kids at your library and school. We want there to be even more! Poetry!

<http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2012/10/poetry-fridays/>

Celebrate Poetry Friday!

PoetryFridayAnthology.blogspot.com
PomeloBooks.com