

## POETRY FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

By Pegi Deitz Shea

April is National Poetry Month. But you don't have to wait eleven months each year to share and enjoy poetry. Poetry can keep kids' minds sharp over the summer. And it can bring even more fun and meaning to holidays and special occasions. Try these activities in your home.

"Poet of the Day" or "Poet of the Week" is a revolving honor for which each family member chooses a poem and shares it anytime throughout the day/week. Encourage acting it out, typing it out and illustrating it, reciting from memory, etc.

"Magnetic Poetry Challenge" involves those kits of word magnets (available at Borders, Barnes & Noble). On the refrigerator, family members must create a poem in a given amount of time, e.g. 60 seconds. Whoever achieves it gets to have their poem stay on the fridge all week long.

"Rhyme Time" is a simple rhyming game played in the car or anyplace else you find yourself bored or waiting around for something. One member says a word and others have to come up with as many rhymes as possible. Use your surroundings, e.g. a ball game, or create a theme, e.g. beachy words.

"Haiku You" is a good game to show that poetry doesn't necessarily have to rhyme. Modern haiku doesn't necessarily have to conform to the strict 3-line format. This game builds imagery-making skills. One person points to another and says, "Haiku you." That person must come up with a short poem comparing one thing to another thing. Ex. A leaf stuck/in the windshield wiper/waving goodbye goodbye goodbye If that person does come up with one, the original person must make one up.

Here are a few of my favorite poets for children. Adults will like them too: Lee Bennett Hopkins, Valerie Worth, Jack Prelutsky, Paul Janesco, Joyce Sidman, Joan Horton, and Bill Grossman. (These last three are friends!)