

# Poetry

by Pablo Neruda (1904–1973)

And it was at that age ... Poetry arrived  
in search of me. I don't know, I don't  
know where  
it came from, from winter or a river.  
I don't know how or when,  
5 no they were not voices, they were not  
words, nor silence,  
but from a street I was summoned,  
from the branches of night,  
abruptly from the others,  
10 among violent fires  
or returning alone,  
there I was without a face  
and it touched me.

I did not know what to say, my mouth  
15 had no way  
with names,  
my eyes were blind,  
and something started in my soul,  
fever or forgotten wings,  
20 and I made my own way,  
deciphering  
that fire,

and I wrote the first faint line, faint,  
without substance, pure  
25 nonsense,  
pure wisdom  
of someone who knows nothing,  
and suddenly I saw  
the heavens  
30 unfastened  
and open,  
planets,  
palpitating plantations,  
shadow perforated,  
35 riddled  
with arrows, fire and flowers,  
the winding night, the universe.

And I, infinitesimal being,  
drunk with the great starry  
40 void,  
likeness, image of  
mystery,  
felt myself a pure part  
of the abyss,  
45 I wheeled with the stars,  
my heart broke loose on the wind.

## Instructions!

1. Identify words you do not know (highlight, circle, etc.). As we review these words in class, write simple definitions in the margin. Also, note any literary devices you recognize.
2. Review the poem and select a word or phrase that describes the way you feel today, your first/second day (back) at Townview. Use the space below to explain the connection between Neruda's poem and your present personal experience. (You will be sharing this with the class, out loud, standing up, so please be prepared.)

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