



2026 Anne Bradstreet Poetry Contest
An Eye for the World
— What Do You See? —

Contest Prompts

Poetry begins with noticing. When we slow down and pay attention, the world offers us images, moments, and meanings that can grow into poems. For this contest, start by looking outward — at what you see, hear, and witness — and let your voice shape what it becomes.

Observation

- What is something small in the world that most people overlook, but you notice?
- Describe a moment when you saw something differently than before.
- What do you see every day that deserves a second look?

Observation + Meaning

(Outward first, inward second — aligned with Christa’s guidance)

- What challenges you about what you see?
- What in the world inspires you when you notice it?
- What do you see that makes you ask questions or feel wonder?

Witnessing

- Write about a moment when you witnessed kindness, struggle, or courage.
- What do you see in your community that others might not?
- What do you see that deserves to be remembered?

Sensory Attention

- What colors, textures, or movements catch your eye?
- Describe a place using only what your senses reveal — then reflect on what it means to you.

Metaphor & Imagination

- If the world were speaking to you, what would it say?
- What object or scene feels like a metaphor for something in your life?

Contest Prompts: Grade-Level Versions

Elementary School Version

Simple, concrete, sensory, playful

Look closely at the world around you. Poems begin when we notice things. Try one of these ideas:

- What is something small you see that others might miss?
- Describe a place you know well using your senses.
- Write about a moment when you saw someone being kind.
- What in the world makes you curious?
- If something you see could talk, what would it say?
- What colors or shapes in the world make you feel something?

Middle School Version

Concrete → reflective, with room for emotion and complexity

Poetry starts with paying attention. Look outward first — then let meaning grow from what you notice.

- What challenges you about what you see in the world around you?
- What inspires you when you notice it closely?
- Describe a moment when you witnessed something important — big or small.
- What do you see in your school, home, or community that others might overlook?
- What do you see that makes you ask questions?
- What object or scene feels like a symbol or metaphor for something in your life?

High School Version

More abstract, philosophical, and open to contradiction

Begin with observation. Let the poem rise from what the world shows you.

- What truth about the world becomes clearer when you slow down and look?
- What contradiction do you notice — and how do you hold it?
- What challenges you about what you see happening around you?
- What in the world inspires you when you truly pay attention?
- What moment of witnessing — kindness, injustice, courage, change — stays with you?
- What do you see that reveals something about who we are becoming?

