

Read all the rules all the way through!

1. Kind of submission:
 - a. Reprints allowed? Multiples allowed? Simultaneous submissions allowed?
 - b. Any constraints on who may submit?
2. How to format:
 - a. Identifying information. (Yes/No? Where to put it. Sometimes only in body of email/on a form.)
 - b. # of lines including spaces between stanzas & title.
 - c. # of characters across the line including spaces.
 - d. Font & font size.
 - e. Left justified. (Or okay to do your own thing?)
 - f. # of words.
 - g. Single/double spaced. (Most poems are single spaced.)
3. Checking the text:
 - a. Title. (Use standard title conventions. Test it in <https://capitalizemytitle.com>)
 - b. Spelling. (Catch misspells but also wrong words spelled correctly. Read through—slowly! Catch those tricky words: farther/further, effect/affect, etc. Are you using the correct one?)
 - c. **Consistency.** (Use your eyes—go slow!)
 - i. Caps or no caps at the start of each line?
 - ii. Punctuation.
 - Any end line punctuation? If so, decide whether the whole thing should be punctuated, or no punctuation. Usually all or nothing. (When needing emphasis, you may have an occasional punctuation mark, such as a question mark or exclamation point, or dash.)
 - If using complete sentence punctuation, check on sentence lengths. Are some really long so it's difficult for a reader to take a breath? Vary the complete sentence lengths.
 - Are both parentheses there, if using. Both quote marks? American English end line punctuation goes inside the last quote mark.
 - If you use an incomplete sentence as a parenthetical remark, put punctuation after the last parenthesis (like this). (Or you could use a comma if there were more to the sentence.) If you have a complete sentence as a parenthetical remark, punctuate the sentence within the parentheses as any complete sentence. (See above.)
 - iii. Spacing.
 - Is the whole thing single spaced (or occasionally double) within stanzas?
 - Are the empty lines between stanzas spaced in a regular pattern?
 - If left justified, does it all line up? Easy to miss one empty space. (Use a ruler if you have to.)
 - No accidental double spaces within the text? Only one space at the end of sentences.
 - Are there lines that stick way out? Can you bring those in to fit the pattern of your stanzas?
 - iv. Stanzas.
 - If working with a pattern, are all stanzas about the same length? Width?
 - Or all stanzas can be different.
 - If only one stanza is different from all the rest, is there a reason for that?
 - If the stanzas or subsections are numbered—are the numbers consistent in font, size and placement?

**Keep a spreadsheet for submissions. Or use a submission manager to keep track of poems submitted, dates, responses, and where first published.*