



# Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within

*Kim Addonizio*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within

*Kim Addonizio*

## Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within Kim Addonizio

"The creative process is just that," maintains Kim Addonizio. "Not a means to an end, but an ongoing participation." A widely acclaimed poet and finalist for the National Book Award, Addonizio meditates on her own process as she encourages writers to explore both their personal and political worlds, to seek inspiration from poets new and old, and to discover the rich poetic resources of the Internet. Lively, accessible, and informative, *Ordinary Genius* provides wisdom gleaned through personal experience and offers a heady variety of writing exercises. Chapters on gender, addiction, race and class, metaphor and line invite each individual writer to find and to hone his or her unique voice. This is the perfect book for both experienced writers and beginners eager to glimpse the angel of poetry.

## Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within Details

Date : Published February 16th 2009 by W. W. Norton Company

ISBN : 9780393334166

Author : Kim Addonizio

Format : Paperback 311 pages

Genre : Poetry, Language, Writing, Nonfiction, How To

 [Download Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within Kim Addonizio**

---

## From Reader Review Ordinary Genius: A Guide for the Poet Within for online ebook

### **Matt says**

Books like these are pretty diffuse, where you hope somewhere along the way you get enough fizzy and fun ideas that a) you put down the book to write something and b) come back for more. This one had enough in it for me to read all the way through, even though some chapters didn't do much for me. But in the end, I have a page of so of tightly spaced notes and an intention to go back to this and mine it for more good stuff...

---

### **Nijla Mumin says**

I really needed to read this book at this time in my life. I was starting to become doubtful, restless, and frustrated with my poetry, and my future as a poet.

This is a rather organic book that doesn't rely on quick fix- type solutions or ways to write poems. Addonizio instead writes of poetry as a journey, a winding road that is unpredictable and always informed by the passion and discipline that the writer brings to it. The writing exercises that she provides are excellent ways to begin those poems you've been thinking about writing but just couldn't get the words out. I wrote many promising poems using the exercises as my guide, and even started a new journal.

I am inspired by this book to say the least. I have a newfound belief in my own words and the rough road that comes with being a writer. Bring it on!

---

### **Geraldine says**

I want to get this and Ted Kooser's how-to-write-poetry-book and put them together on the shelf, just to make Ted really uncomfortable around Kim.

---

### **Joan Colby says**

Many of the prompts and exercises offered are ones I've used over years of teaching. Thus, while I didn't gather much news from this well-written and researched book, I'd advocate it strongly for those just entering the teaching of poetry and those who are neophytes in the writing of it.

---

### **Dominic says**

It may have taken me two months to get through this book, but that bears no light on the tremendous wealth this book contains. It's better than any textbook could possibly be on writing poetry, and it's a better guide to teaching poetry than anything I've read because it treats poetry as an art accessible to everyone and the reader (and potential teacher) as a poet as well.

---

I hate dog-earring pages but I couldn't help myself with this one. There were too many lessons I wanted to add to my teaching next year. Kim Addonizio helps me get closer to proving that students shouldn't just be writing literary analysis essay nor should we hold poetry up as some creative side-project somehow impossible to assess. This is an essential, wonderful book—and kind of a revelation since I simply stumbled upon this book in a stack of paperbacks at a teaching conference. Why aren't more people talking about *Ordinary Genius*?

For now, this is long-term bedside material.

---

### **Stefani Akins says**

Well, that's nice. I was writing a meaningful review when suddenly my program fritzed out on me and closed my browser. Thanks to Goodreads not saving ongoing work, the review is gone, and I simply cannot be arsed to redo it. Let's just say this book makes me want to work more on writing again and leave it at that.

---

### **Tracy Hart says**

There's a lot to like in this guide to writing poetry, and I took a lot of notes. My lightbulb moment was when Addonizio explained something about meter that has always eluded me. Being someone for whom the "music" of a poem is supremely important, I have always wanted to fully understand metrical conventions but never quite got it. This book blew me away with the simple explanation of the role that meter plays in the \*meaning\* of a poem: it contributes a compelling tension by the juxtaposition of \*how the words are actually said\* versus the reader's \*expectation of the how the beats will fall\*. Now I get it.

Also a ton of great quotes about poetry and art in this book, and not the standard ones that are always being trotted out in books on (basically) "creativity and how to get some." One of my favorite new quotes from this book is attributed to Joseph Joubert: "You will find poetry nowhere, unless you bring some with you."

---

### **Beth Browne says**

A beautifully written, wonderful book for just about any writer, not just poets.

---

### **Nina says**

Addonizio gives detailed examples with critique and explanation throughout this book. She uses classic poetry as well as modern to illustrate her points. The writing exercises are plentiful. She shares her own process for revision, and encourages poets to also read widely.

---

### **Kate says**

So many wonderful ideas for how to write a poem, and for how to spark and sustain the writing life.

---

## Dave says

### Breathe in, Breathe out

A lot of writing books are heavy on pep talks or the physical act of sitting down and writing. Or they have the best stuff in the first half.

This isn't one of those books.

The book builds the reader with a host of exercises and examples.

I found new forms like the American Sentence Blues Poem, and Pantoum. I have enough exercises to keep busy all year. I have new websites like postsecrets and addictionZ to bring out the pain.

Addonizio saved the hardest part - meter for last, so I was ready for it.

I read her memoir Bukowski in a Sundress and collection Mortal Trash. My favorite poem is Florida.

---

## Bill says

### Words as Tools

Addonizio, Kim (2009). Ordinary genius: A guide for the poet within. New York: W.W.Norton.

Poet Addonizio describes her process of creating poetry, supplemented with description of other possible methods, and plenty of fine examples of poetry. There are good discussions of how to observe keenly, working with metaphor and humor, making use of fairy tales and myths, mastering meter, and the process of revision. It's all solid, well-articulated advice, none of it too simple for even the most experienced poet.

I am intimidated by poetry. I thought if I had a better understanding of the craft of writing poetry, it would help my fiction writing. That strategy was only partially successful. I can see that I am no poet and never will be, because I simply do not share the author's fascination with words for their own sake. I like ideas. Words are tools. What I wanted to know is how to find better words for the ideas. Perhaps that is something that cannot be taught.

There are many excellent exercises, examples, and suggested readings that make the book highly worthwhile for any fiction writer. These, and the plentiful examples, did demystify poetry considerably for me.

When it comes to the crucial question of how, or from where, do you get the fur on the ball-turret gunner, there is no clue. Perhaps that can only come from poetic genius, whereas this book is about ordinary genius.

### The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner

Randall Jarrell

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,  
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.  
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,

I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.  
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

---

### **Sigrun Hodne says**

Parts of this book is basic, some (well trained and/or clever poets ...) will probably find it too basic, but there is lots of very interesting stuff in between. Addonizio has a direct and intimate voice, giving the reader-writer useful and practical advices, and also - at least in my case - confidence. A great workbook - I like it!  
<http://omstreifer.wordpress.com/2013/...>

---

### **Wendy says**

I read this book to prepare for teaching poetry in an Intro to Creative Writing class. The generative exercises and discussions of craft are somewhat useful, but best of all is the material on revision. I read through a half-dozen poetry craft books in a desperate search for craft essays that would convince students of the importance of revision. Found it here. Particularly helpful chapters for helping students learn how to undertake large-scale revision of their poems (such a difficult thing to teach!) include:

Chapter 22: "Metaphor 1: The Shimmer"  
Chapter 24: "A Bag of Tricks"  
Chapter 30: "A Poem You Love: Close Reading"  
Chapter 34: "Do-Overs and Revisions"

One section begins, brilliantly, with KA telling the reader that unless they learn to love revision, "How can I put this delicately? Your poems will suck." Exactly.

---

### **Marion says**

I've read (and loved) all of Ms. Addonizio's books and this is, by far, one of my favorites. She does cover some of the basics of poetry writing, but also delves into the deeper side of poetry with some fabulous examples - delicious tidbits thrown in by awesome poets like Sharon Olds, Billy Collins, Susan Browne, Lucille Clifton and Tony Hoagland to name just a few. The book is also overflowing with shimmering, thought-provoking quotes by other poets and writers. I wrote several in my "favorite quotes" notebook to refer back to.

I was also thrilled to find quite a few new poems by the multifaceted Ms. Addonizio. Her poetry is as unique, distinctive and beautiful as Ms. Addonizio. I was happy to see one of my old favorites included, "What Do Women Want?" Reading this poem many years ago inspired me to go out and buy my first RED dress. You have to read the poem to understand....

The book is divided into four parts with a total of 36 chapters:

1. Entering Poetry
2. Inner and Outer Worlds,
3. The Poem's Progress, and

#### 4. Toward Mastery

most with intriguing, motivating writing prompts to get your juices flowing. I read through the entire book and marked dozens of pages to go back to and re-read. I'm eager to get back into the book and try out some of the writing prompts.

If you love poetry and just need a jump start to your writing, then definitely buy this book because it'll do the job. If you just love to read poetry, this book is for you, too, because it's loaded with poems!

---