



**LIT LEAGUE**  
**Spring Poems**

Enjoy reading these poems as a family! Add to the enrichment by rereading the poems and then discussing each poem using questions like the following: Which line did you like best and why? What are some of the things you pictured while listening to the poem? What words stood out to you in the poem? Are there any words you didn't know? If so, let's talk about what each unfamiliar word might mean and then look each one up. Once you know the meaning of the word, revisit the line that contained each unknown word and discuss what was meant by the line. What are some of the main ideas in the poem? What do you think the poem might be trying to say? Which poem did you like best overall and why? Which of the poems rhyme? What are some of the rhyming words?

After reading and discussing the poems, older readers may enjoy writing poems of their own. They may simply write poems about spring, or you can use our suggestions to guide them in writing different types of poems in response to each of these classic poems. You or your young readers can always pick the poem ideas you most like, and simply write those.

## **Young Lambs**

by John Clare

The spring is coming by a many signs;  
The trays are up, the hedges broken down,  
That fenced the haystack, and the remnant shines  
Like some old antique fragment weathered brown.  
And where suns peep, in every sheltered place,  
The little early buttercups unfold  
A glittering star or two--till many trace  
The edges of the blackthorn clumps in gold.  
And then a little lamb bolts up behind  
The hill and wags his tail to meet the yoe,  
And then another, sheltered from the wind,  
Lies all his length as dead--and lets me go  
Close bye and never stirs but baking lies,  
With legs stretched out as though he could not rise.



John Clare's poem describes a little lamb, an animal often seen as a sign of spring. Write a poem that describes one of your favorite animals.

## *Spring (Again)*

by Michael Ryan

The birds were louder this morning,  
raucous, oblivious, tweeting their teensy bird-brains out.  
It scared me, until I remembered it's Spring.  
How do they know it? A stupid question.  
Thank you, birdies. I had forgotten how promise feels.

Consider what events, moments, or changes you associate with the spring season. Write a short poem that captures one of these aspects of spring, as Michael Ryan did with the birds' singing.

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## *After the Winter*

by Claude McKay

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves  
And against the morning's white  
The shivering birds beneath the eaves  
Have sheltered for the night,  
We'll turn our faces southward, love,  
Toward the summer isle  
Where bamboos spire the shafted grove  
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill  
Where towers the cotton tree,  
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,  
And works the droning bee.  
And we will build a cottage there  
Beside an open glade,  
With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,  
And ferns that never fade.

Claude McKay's beautiful poem shares a dream of something he wants to have happen one day. In his poem every other line rhymes. Write your own rhyming poem about something you would love to have happen one day or a place you would one day like to go.

## ***Spring Storm***

by William Carlos Williams

The sky has given over  
its bitterness.  
Out of the dark change  
all day long  
rain falls and falls  
as if it would never end.  
Still the snow keeps  
its hold on the ground.  
But water, water  
from a thousand runnels!  
It collects swiftly,  
dappled with black  
cuts a way for itself  
through green ice in the gutters.  
Drop after drop it falls  
from the withered grass-stems  
of the overhanging embankment.



In many places it rains during the spring season, as is described in this poem by William Carlos Williams. Write your own poem describing the weather during any time of year. You could choose to write a poem about rain, as Williams did, or you could write about other types of weather, such as sunshine or snow.

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## ***Light exists in Spring***

by Emily Dickinson

A Light exists in Spring  
Not present on the Year  
At any other period —  
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad  
On Solitary Fields  
That Science cannot overtake  
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,  
It shows the furthest Tree  
Upon the furthest Slope you know  
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step  
Or Noons report away  
Without the Formula of sound  
It passes and we stay —

A quality of loss  
Affecting our Content  
As Trade had suddenly encroached  
Upon a Sacrament.

Emily Dickinson's poem describes some of the things that happen during spring, as well as feelings associated with that time of year. Write your own poem to describe a time of year: this could be one of the four seasons or a special holiday time. Older readers may consider imitating other aspects of Dickinson's poem, such as the use of four line stanzas, the use of irregular capitalization to highlight key words throughout the poem, and the use of periodic end rhyme and slant rhyme (where the ends of some of her lines rhyme in an almost sort of way).