

WRITE YOUR 2023 REFLECTION POEM

A Step-by-Step Guide by James A. Pearson

Welcome! Thank you for picking up this worksheet.

2023 is almost over. But if you're like me, you're already thinking back and trying to remember what the year was all about.

What happened this year? What changed in my life? How did I change?

There are lots of “year in review” templates that will help you tally up your wins and losses. And those can be really helpful!

But I wanted to make something different. Something to capture the tides moving beneath all the ups and downs. Something you might cherish for years to come.

That's what poems are for.

A poem is like a clown car for human experience. It's this tiny little vessel, but open it up and a whole world rushes out. Or in our case, a whole year.

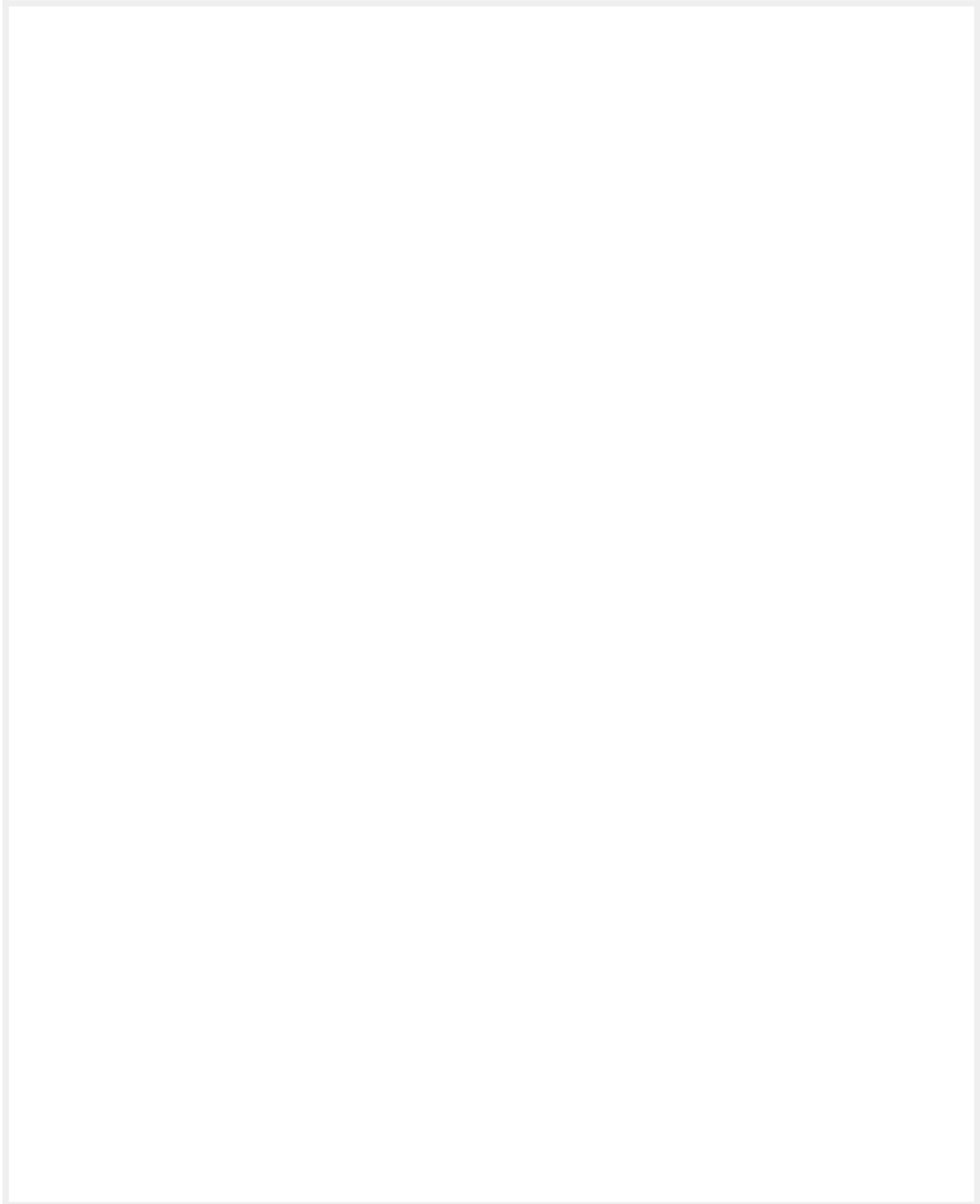
So below you'll find a 4-step process for writing *your* year-end reflection poem. Here are a few tips to get the most out of it:

- Don't skip ahead. Try to complete each step before reading on to the next one.
- Set aside about an hour for it. It's great if you want to spend longer, but try not to rush through it.
- Make it your own! This is poetry, not baking. Wanna tweak the recipe? Add different ingredients? Do it!
- [Tag me on Instagram](#) with your finished poem! I'd love to see what you create.

I hope you get as much out of this process as I have.

Warmly,
James

1. (*10 min*) Look through your photos and calendar from 2023. In the space below, note down the events that feel important and any moments or images that feel poignant. (Don't worry about going into detail—for now it's enough just to name them.)



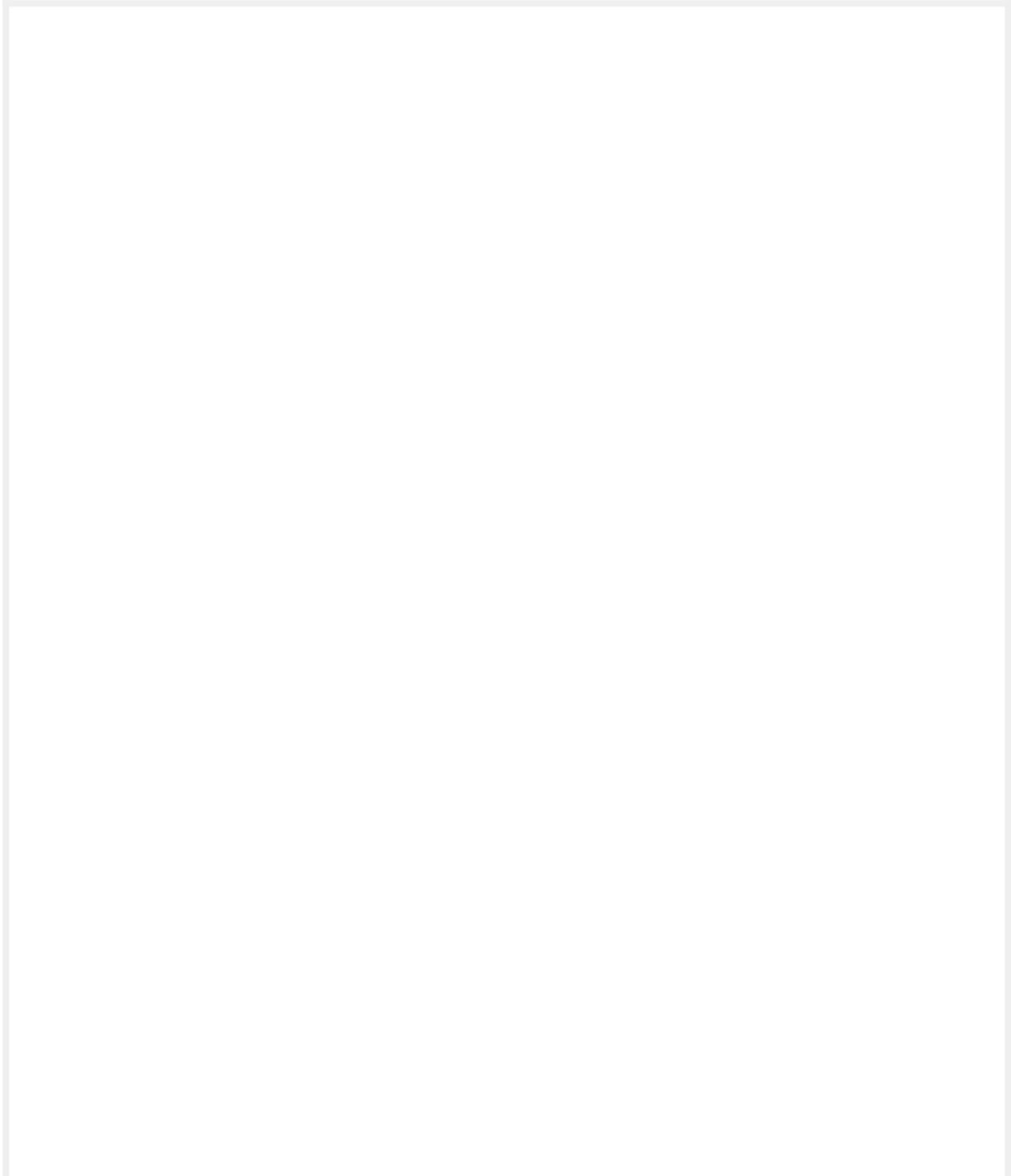
2. (10 min) Write a note to the person you were a year ago, to prepare them for 2023.

- What's going to happen in their life?
- How will it feel in the moment?
- Who will they become through it?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for writing a note to a person from a year ago.

3. (10 min) Now write a note to your future self, seven years from now, to tell them where you're at now and ask any questions you have.

- What crossroads are you at?
- What do you long for in your life?
- Who are you becoming?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for writing a note to one's future self. The box is currently blank.

4. (30 min) Now it's time to write your poem! The prompt below will guide you through it. Use the answers you wrote above to fill in the parentheses. Be playful with it! Try different ways of filling it in. Cut out parts of the prompt, add to it, or throw it out entirely! What matters is ending up with a poem that *you* love.

I remember (event 1).

The (noun) in the (adjective) (noun).

We (verb)ed under the (noun) until (noun).

I remember (event 2).

The (adjective) sky over (place).

When (person/people) (verb)ed in the (time of day) my heart (verb)ed.

What (noun) a year can hold!

Now I know that I am both

(adjective) and (adjective), a (noun) that has traveled
through every (noun) of (noun).

I will no longer (verb) my life.

This is the year I (verb)ed into the (noun)
of the world and said, "(insert whatever you want!)."

Example poem: Remember that your poem will probably look very different from this one—and that’s good! This is just one look at how all the parts can fit together.

I remember our summer road trip.
The swimming hole in the hidden river.
We laid under the scrub trees until dinner.

I remember my grandmother’s funeral.
The cloudy sky over the national cemetery.
When my nieces sang in the morning my heart rained.

What weather systems a year can hold!

Now I know that I am both
held and alone, a cloud that has traveled
through every season of sky.

I will no longer float through my life.
This is the year I stepped into the torrent
of the world and said, “Yes.”