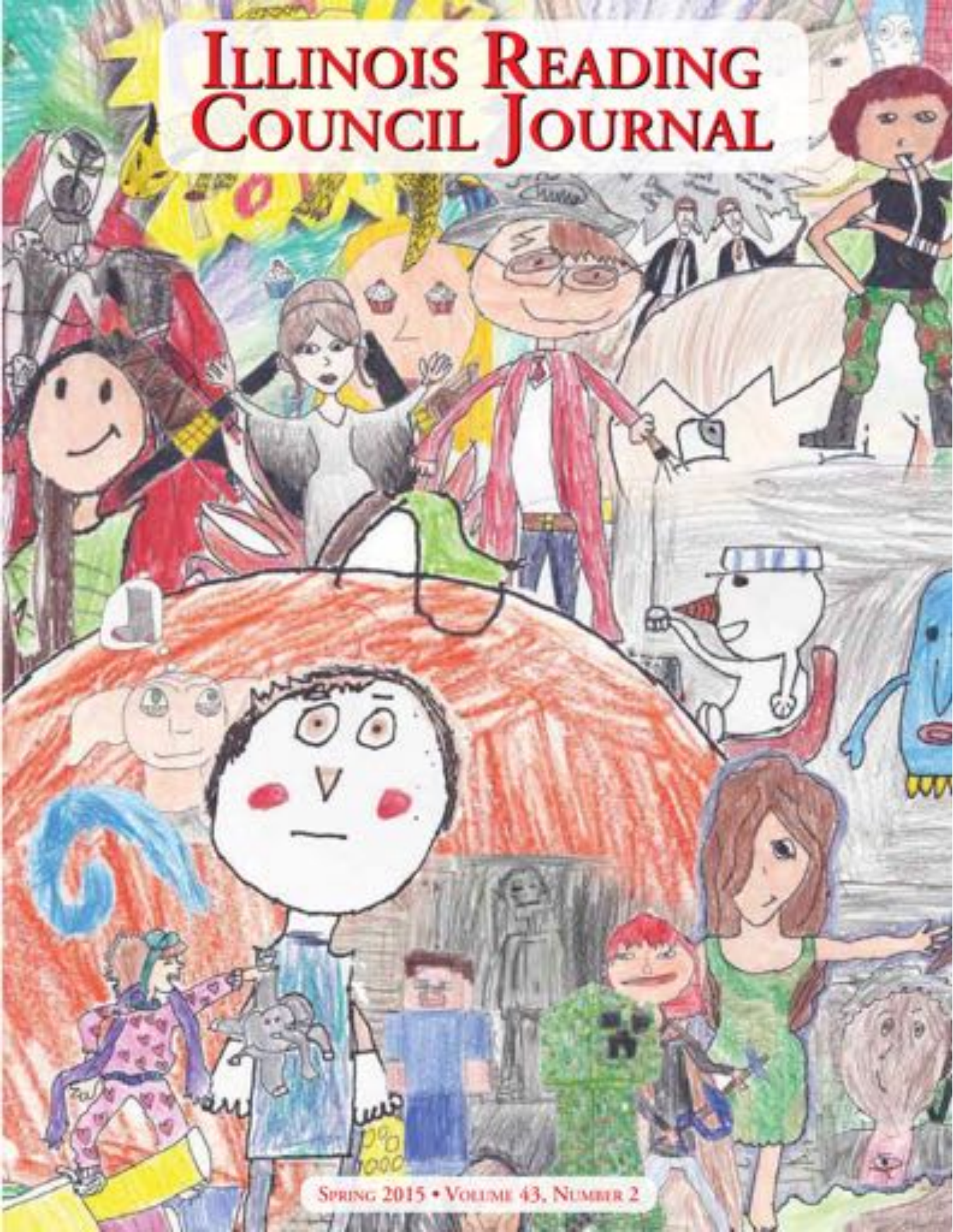


# ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL JOURNAL



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# ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL JOURNAL



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Spring 2015

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### ***About the Cover***

The artwork on the cover is from a digital mural showcasing the favorite book characters of the 5th and 6th graders in Tracy Jaconette, Jacque Lind, and Renee Corcoran's classes from Spectrum Progressive School of Rockford. The students were assisted in this project by Andrea Lily, the school's art teacher.

### **MISSION**

*The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to educators as they promote and teach lifelong literacy.*

### **VISION**

*The Illinois Reading Council advocates quality literacy opportunities for all learners and serves as a primary organization that provides educators at all levels access to research, materials, and methodologies to promote and teach lifelong literacy and learning. Support of an active, well-organized system of local and special interest councils and state committees provides a viable network for communication, exchange of information, and grassroots involvement of a diverse membership. The Illinois Reading Council's publications, special projects, conferences, and workshops stimulate the personal and professional growth of educators.*

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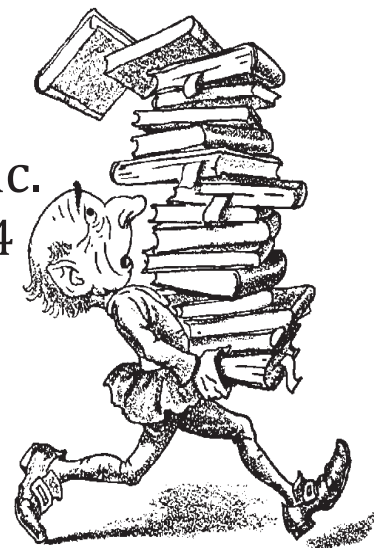
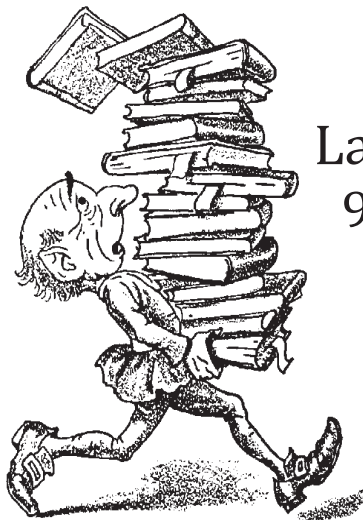
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# **Rox's Rec: IRCJ Editor's Spring Issue Wonderful Website: [www. TeachingAuthors.com](http://www.TeachingAuthors.com)**

Roxanne Owens  
*DePaul University*

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The **TeachingAuthors** site is managed by seven published children's/young adult literature authors: Esther Hershenhorn, JoAnn Early Macken, Carmela Martino, Carla Killough McClafferty, Bobbi Miller, Mary Ann Rodman, and April Halprin Wayland. In addition to writing their own books, they have a wealth of experience teaching writing to children, teens, and adults. Regular features on their website include teaching tips, author interviews, book reviews, blogs, lists of writing contests for children and young adults, links to other fabulous websites, and writing workouts. In honor of National Poetry Month, poetry writing ideas from the TeachingAuthors site are shared in this column. (All excerpts are cited with permission from the TeachingAuthors contributors. To find these and other fabulous current and past posts, go to [www.teachingauthors.com](http://www.teachingauthors.com) and link to "Teachers.")

---

April Halprin Wayland describes herself as "1/2 author, 1/2 poet, and 1/2 not good at fractions." She is the author of several books, including *It's*

*Not My Turn to Look for Grandma*, *The Night Horse*, *To Rabittown*, the award-winning *New Year at the Pier—A Rosh Hashanah Story*, and *Girl Coming in for a Landing: A Novel in Poems*. Her CD, which includes five stories, 17 poems, and a fiddle tune won the National Parenting Publication Association Gold Award for storytelling.

## **Writing Workout: One-Minute Journals (Blogpost: January 29, 2010)**

Finding the heart of the story is the key and for me, the biggest challenge.

Sometimes condensing an idea makes it more potent. More powerful. Years ago, I thought that I had to write every single thing that happened in my journal every night. It takes a long time to write a historical account of the day. I got tired just thinking about it! Finally, I stopped writing in my journal altogether.

Then, one of my friends, a screenwriter, shared her journal writing secret. Her rule is this: she only has to write for one minute each night.

One minute! I tried it—it's wonderful! It's freeing! Writing for one minute a night forces me to figure out the essence—the heart of that day—it helps me focus: what do I want to remember? The low cooing of a mourning dove? When a friend hurt my feelings? When the janitor winked at me and made my day? How a black cat swished her tail patiently by a pond? How slowly the classroom clock moved right before three o'clock?

Condensing the time I have to write is similar to fitting my words into a poetic form. My day as haiku.

### **St. Patrick's Day Haiku**

Even the ragged  
woman pushing the shopping  
cart wears green today.

Okay, it's your turn.

- 1) Date your page.
- 2) Look at the clock and write down the time.
- 3) Now, think about something you want to remember from today. You may write for only one minute.
- 4) Ready? Go!

---

Looking for an idea to utilize key terms affiliated with a particular topic, subject, content area, or concept in a creative way? April recommends writing a Lingo.

**Writing Workout: Writing a Lingo (Blogpost: February 24, 2012)**

What's a Lingo? A *Lingo* is a poem based on the lexicon of a particular field of interest. Period.

- 1) Pick a song you love to sing.
- 2) Daydream about a profession or hobby that fascinates you. Weaving? Blackjack? Riding horses? Gymnastics? Plumbing? I chose blogging.
- 3) Search for a glossary of words for that profession or hobby.
- 4) Pick out the most interesting words and put them at the top of your page. In the poem below, I picked these words: *feeds, link, pingback, internet, blogging, podcast, post, rss, search engine, URL, spam, subscribe, entry, sidebar, tags, ping, permalink, Mister Linky, Poetry Friday, Kidlitosphere, dashboard, Blogger, Wordpress, LiveJournal, blogiversary, reciprocal link, link love, navbar, bookmark, tweet, facebook, draft, schedule.*
- 5) Find ways to fit some of these words to the beat of your song. You probably won't use more than a few words, but it's nice to have a big selection. You can see that I only used a handful of my words.
- 6) Make liberal use of a rhyming dictionary such as *rhymezone.com*.
- 7) Make sure you've installed <https://adblockplus.org> (which is free) or the ads on this site (and most sites!) will drive you crazy (at least they drove me crazy!).
- 8) Sing your song to your cat.
- 9) Sing it to a friend.
- 10) Sing it *with* your friend!  
The end.

**The Blogger Bears' Poetry Friday**

*by April Halprin Wayland  
with apologies to Jimmy Kennedy and John W. Bratton  
(sung to the tune of "Teddy Bears' Picnic")*

If you go onto the internet  
You're sure of a big surprise.  
If you go onto the internet  
You'd better go in disguise.

For every bear who hopes to express  
Will gather there to write on Wordpress  
Today's Fri-day, when every bear posts a poem!

Poem time for blogging bears  
The Kidlit blogging bears are having a lovely time today.  
Watch them, catch them unawares,  
And hear them rhyming on their holiday.

See them tweet their permalink  
They love to click in sync  
And never have any cares.  
At night they share on Mister Linky  
now they can go to bed  
Because they're tired little blogging bears.

If you go onto the internet  
You're sure of a big surprise.  
If you go onto the internet  
You'd better go in disguise.

For every bear chewing sunflower seeds  
Will gather there to read RSS feeds  
Today's Fri-day—when every bear posts a poem!

*poem (c) 2012 April Halprin Wayland*

---

TeachingAuthor Esther Hershenhorn is the award-winning author of *TXTNG MAMA*, *TXTNG BABY*, *S Is for Story: A Writer's Alphabet*, *Little Illinois*, *Chicken Soup by Heart*, *There Goes Lowell's Party*, and *The Confe\$\$ions and \$Ecret\$ of Howard J. Fingerhut*. In her October 12, 2011, blogpost, Esther recommended writing a form of a haiku called a "Thanku" poem.



---

### Writing Workout: Writing a Thanku

You could try writing something easy, like, say, a Thank You note.

The writer of a Thank You note knows his audience; he knows the purpose of his words; writing in first person allows his voice to ring true.

Or, you could try writing something short, like, say, a haiku.

The three-line poetic form is so very doable. The first line has 5 syllables, the second 7, the third 5. Together the three lines paint a picture often associated with nature, but not always

Bob Raczka wrote *Guykus*.

Andrew Clements wrote *Dogkus*.

Last April, the *American Library Association* created Twaikus, or twittered haikus.

Even better, though? You could write something easy and short.

You could write an original *Thanku*!

Googling “gratitude-themed haikus that go by the name *Thanku*” revealed none exist . . . ‘til now, that is.

And the Good News is: a heartfelt *Thanku* can make (at least) two people happy—the writer and the reader.

Here’s the *Thanku* I wrote for My Writers—those I teach, those I coach and those who visit our TeachingAuthors blog.

My teacher’s heart *kvells*\*  
like any Jewish Mother’s.  
Such storied treasures!

\*rejoice

---

In her November 21, 2012, post, TeachingAuthor Carmela Martino (author of *Rosa, Sola* and numerous poems) built on Esther’s idea of a *Thanku*. She suggested combining a *Thanku* with a poetry format called a tetractys. In her example, she even managed to integrate a reference to a famous children’s book.

### Writing Workout: A Thanku and a Tetractys

I’ve written a five-line tetractys in Esther’s honor. A *tetractys* is a five-line poem in which the syllables per line form the series 1, 2, 3, 4, 10. Euclid, a mathematician of ancient times, thought the series had mystical significance because  $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$  ([www.Poetrydances.com/tetractys.php](http://www.Poetrydances.com/tetractys.php)).

#### Esther

Coach,  
Mentor,  
Cheerleader,  
Selfless teacher,  
But most important of all, a “true friend.”

In case you’re wondering, “true friend” is in quotes because it alludes to the ending of *Charlotte’s Web*:

*“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”* And so is Esther.

*Editor’s Note:* To extend the math connection to poetry, see [www.poetryfoundation.org/article/180219](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/180219) for examples of poems built on the Fibonacci sequence. See also [www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/lessons/where-math-meets-poetry](http://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/lessons/where-math-meets-poetry).

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TeachingAuthor JoAnn Early Macken, author of *Write a Poem Step by Step*, *Baby Says*, “*Moo!*,” *Waiting Out the Storm*, and *Flip, Float, Fly: Seeds on the Move*, as well as over 126 nonfiction books for young readers, was inspired to write a poem for Earth Day while walking along the Milwaukee River with her husband. JoAnn and her husband were dismayed at all of the trash along the river’s edge. JoAnn made a list in her notebook of every piece of garbage they took to the trashcan. As she did so, a poem formed in her mind. She shared the poem in her April 16, 2010, blogpost.

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### Spring Awakening (excerpt)

Dainty speckled dog's tooth violet  
leaves poke up from warming soil  
through a six-foot strip of muddy  
shredded plastic bag,  
    plastic straws, a root beer can,  
    caution tape, a bottle top,  
    a lip gloss tube, old newspapers,  
    a spray paint can, and one flip-flop.

Two red-bellied woodpeckers  
shriek and tap above our heads  
as we survey the rushing river  
and the garbage on its banks:  
    plastic lighter, cigarette butts,  
    chunks of broken Styrofoam,  
    coffee cups with plastic lids,  
    a bandage strip, a plastic comb.

Multicolored shopping bags  
    flutter from just-budding trees.  
Ducks glide past a bobbing bottle,  
    half a pound of plain cream cheese.

On and on, the river  
    carries everything we toss it,  
        and we toss too much to bear.

Wake up, people!  
Don't you care  
    what happens to this rushing river,  
        Mama goose,  
        the gliding ducks,  
        the fish,  
        red bellied woodpeckers?

Wake up and smell the dog tooth violets,  
    poking through  
        the shredded  
            plastic bags.

### Writing Workout: List Poem

I believe that as teachers, we have not only the opportunity but the responsibility to impress upon our students the importance—and the urgency—of taking care of our environment—not only on Earth Day, but throughout the year. We can study the effects of pollution, we can participate in cleanup efforts, and we can write!

The poem I wrote about the river is a list poem. Begin one of your own (or help your students write theirs) by thinking of a subject or a place you are passionate about. Observe it carefully or remember it and list its important details. Include more than just the list—tell the reader why the details are important. I used rhyme because I liked the singsong, carefree feel it implied and I wanted to lighten the heavy message, but your poem doesn't have to rhyme. Speak your mind and make your message clear.

*Editor's Note:* Another related resource to check out is Pinterest. Pinterest has a plethora of ideas incorporating poetry, art, and Earth Day.

---

### Parallel Poem to Reflect on the School Year

As the snow melts and plants begin to sprout, and the temperature rises to sweater-weather, we begin to think about all we have accomplished and all we have left to do during the remaining days of the school year. April Halprin Wayland suggested using a parallel poem format as a tool for reflecting on the school year. She refers readers to author Ellen Hopkins' use of the parallel poem format in her book *Crank* and explains that in a parallel poem, the words on the left side of the page create one poem in a stanza format, and the words on the right side create a related but different poem. April shared the steps she used in creating an end-of-year parallel poem in her May 21, 2010, blogpost.

### Writing Workout: Parallel Poem

- 1) I flipped through my school year calendar, thinking about what happened each month. Then I jotted down five events that brought up strong emotions.
- 2) I chose one of the memories.
- 3) I constructed a simple sentence (for the right side) that conveys some of what I wanted to say.
- 4) I wove the words of this short sentence into the stanzas on the left side.