

# Write a poem that imagines the secret life of an animal you wonder about.



## The Donkey

I had a donkey, that was all right,  
but he always wanted to fly my kite;  
every time I let him, the string would bust.  
Your donkey is better behaved, I trust.

—Theodore Roethke

## The Hippo

A head or a tail—which does he lack?  
I think his forward's coming back!  
He lives on carrots, leeks and hay;  
he starts to yawn—it takes all day—

Some time I think I'll live that way.

—Theodore Roethke



## Nature poems =

[ Place + Wildlife + You ]

When you write, try to combine three elements:

1. Details from a specific **place** that you know. For instance, a pasture, forest or shoreline.
2. **Animals or wildlife** that you know visit this place too, or animals that you would like to encounter.
3. **How it makes you feel** to spend time in this place or with this animal.

Tips for making your poem come alive:

- Use your senses to describe the colors, patterns, scents, and sounds of both the place and the animal that is moving through the place.
  - Describe everything you can about the animal: What do they look like? How do they move? What details capture their personality or behavior or favorite things?
  - Describe what makes you curious. What questions do you wonder when you think about the animal you are describing?
  - Don't be afraid to make it funny or surprising or silly.
- What if you make up something wildly outlandish about what would happen if you interacted with the animal?



One seal particularly I have seen here evening after evening. He was curious about me. He was interested in music; like me a believer in total immersion, so I used to sing to him...

—from Elizabeth Bishop's "At the Fishhouses"

I am given a pony for my birthday, but it is the wrong kind of pony. It is the kind of pony that won't listen. It is testy. When I ask it to go left, it goes right. When I ask it to run, it sleeps on its side in the tall grass..."

—from Zachary Schomburg's "Testy Pony"

## Other poems to read:

"Three Foxes by the Edge of the Field at Twilight" by Jane Hirshfield

"The Pasture" by Robert Frost