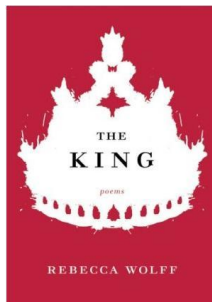
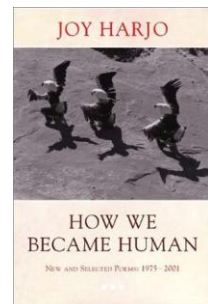


literary **mama**

reading for the maternally inclined

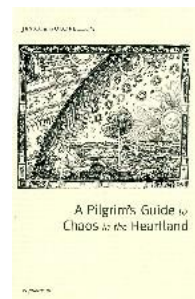
Celebrate National Poetry Month with one of these fascinating titles!

Columnist [Cassie Premo Steele](#) shares, "The book of poetry I turn to over and over again is Joy Harjo's [How We Became Human](#). Joy Harjo is a Native American poet, a member of the Mvskoke (Creek) tribe from Alabama whose family was removed to Oklahoma, where she grew up. This book is a must-have for literary mamas -- it's a collection of many of the poems from her long and wonderful writing career. Mothering is a theme in her poetry, but it's mothering in the largest sense -- the earth, the plants, the animals, the stars, and how we as humans fit. Check out her [website](#) -- she has a new children's book called [For a Girl Becoming](#) and she also is an award-winning musician, transforming her poetry into song."

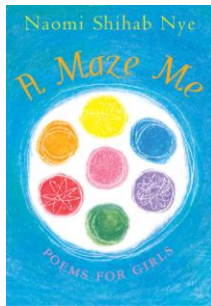


[Caroline Grant](#), Editor-in-Chief and [Columnist](#) writes, "I read Rebecca Wolff's collection, [The King](#), all in one evening, thinking (as if it were a bag of chips), "I'll just read one more." And when I was finished, I turned back to the beginning and started reading again, more slowly, savoring each one. The poems -- which arc from pregnancy to postpartum in sections titled The Condition, The Baby, The King, The Man, The Baby, The Lord -- are terrific: sharp, funny and deeply felt but not at all sentimental."

[Suzanne Kamata](#), Fiction Co- Editor, says, "I love the story of how numbers came to appear in some of the poems in [A Pilgrim's Guide to Chaos in the Heartland](#) by Jessica Goodfellow. Goodfellow, a former financial analyst and university math teacher, was preparing a report for work with her one-year-old son on her lap, and her 2 1/2-year-old son banging away at the numeric keypad on her keyboard as she typed. Later, she discovered that the numbers created an interesting visual effect, and decided to use random numbers in a poem about the randomness and chaos of events that occur in

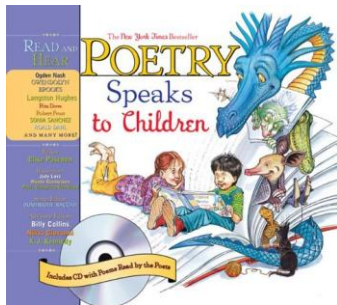
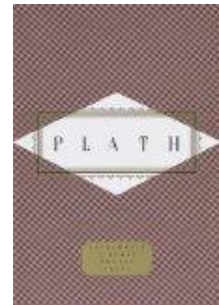


ordinary lives. You don't have to be a math whiz, however, to love the poems in this collection which also concern infertility, marriage, and motherhood."



Columnist [Heather Cori](#) shares, "The year the city of Lacey sponsored Naomi Shihab Nye as the "Lacey Loves to Read" author, I was introduced to Naomi's work and had the opportunity to meet her. One of the books that boys and girls liked was [A Maze Me](#). The small, colorful book opens with the poem of the same name. My daughter was a second-grader at the time and rolled her eyes in delight and clapped her hands when she heard the poem 'If the Shoe Doesn't Fit': 'If the shoe doesn't fit/ you take it off/ of course you take it off/ it doesn't worry you/ it isn't your shoe'. There are many simple poems with great depth and opportunity for discussion. It's not just for kids; I love it too."

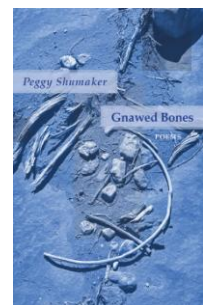
Literary Reflections Assistant Editor, [Christina Marie Speed](#), says "[Plath: Poems](#) features a succinct collection of Sylvia Plath's poems written from 1956 to 1963. Plath turns the ordinary into the extraordinary; claims important space for women's issues; creates complex images from few words. In short, her expert use of language offers readers an unusual view of the world which leaves the reader reeling in awe -- and seeking, in the same moment, both more of her words and a reprieve."



[Christina Marie Speed](#) also recommends [Poetry Speaks to Children](#), edited by Elise Paschen. "I ordered this book for my children well before we'd enjoy it together. Now five and seven, my sons and I regularly pull it off the shelf. The book features a wide compilation of such treasured poets as Dahl, Nash, Frost, Dove, Giovanni and Cummings. It is a delight to thumb through and is a good introduction to the range of shapes and sounds that poetry can have. Plus, it comes with an audio CD which is great for the car,

or quiet time at home. Among our favorites are 'hist, whist', by E. E. Cummings and 'Casey at Bat', by Ernest L. Thayer."

Columns Editor, [Nicole Stellon O'Donnell](#), writes "I've been reading Peggy Shumaker's new book [Gnawed Bones](#). Shumaker has a gift for gritty confrontation and truth telling. In this collection, she juxtaposes her elegant lyric nature poems with narrative poems dealing with loss and pain -- an accident she survived, her father and mother's



deaths, her own surgeries. Shumaker asks in the title poem, 'If language is bones, hard parts / of speech, what do skulls of pack rats / crushed into owl pellets / have to tell us?' After reading these poems, I was left with deep gratitude for the hard parts that do have something to tell us."