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### POETsmart

Susan Holbrook  
*University of Windsor*

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# POETSMART™ · TheWalrus.ca

By Susan Holbrook

## Imaginings

## POETSMART™

### From the [Walrus](#) magazine

[Print/PDF](#)

Just like people, poets can develop unhealthy, adverse, and sometimes dangerous habits. Poets are cute but, let's face it, they can disrupt a household. Like children, they need guidance and discipline to live happily and healthily with the "adults" in their lives. From fundamental manners to problem solving, anything is possible with a good education. poetsmart's professional Poet Training Instructors can help you teach your poet a variety of skills, from the basics of good behaviour to complicated tricks and everything in between. Developed by the world's leading poet trainers and behaviourists, this gentle and effective approach is fun for both poets and their families. Regardless of your poet's age or skill level, we have a course that will help him learn new, desired behaviours. Choose from the following three levels: **level 1: poet head start** Using positive reinforcement methods, you'll learn how to prevent unwanted behaviour and establish a bond with your poet. Training points include: • House-training and basic manners • Non-aggressive behaviour around other poets • Poet health care and grooming: you can't leave hair care and oral hygiene to poets themselves! • Common language and simple commands (e.g., "come" and "stay," as in "Come live with me and be my love" and "Oh stay, three lives in one •ea spare," etc.) • Learning to resist toys, pork chops, clichés, and overwrought endings when left alone **level 2: advanced learning** We'll focus on taking your poet out of the family nest and into the world of socializing. Here we also deal with common behavioural problems. Key topics covered in these classes include: • Performing, whether they've won any awards or not • Learning despite distractions (including other poets in heat) • Additional language ("heel," "lie down," "rose," "ode to . . .," "pallid," "marrow," "propinquity," and more) • Performance while "off-lead" or "free verse" • The special grooming needs of outdoor poets • Integrating anti-social poets: We've all seen it—concrete poets who can't stop objectifying the feminist poets, epic poets who should pick on someone their own size. They'll learn to respect the formal boundaries of other breeds. • Quieting extreme barkers: Some poets love the sound of their own voice! We'll save your relationship with the neighbours by subjecting your poet to particularly humbling workshops. Poet will learn to shut up and take critique. We are confident that by the end of Level 2, your poet's innate wildness will be tamed into orderly forms. Particularly talented and ambitious poets may want to proceed to: **level 3: career poets** That's right, some poets actually have jobs! We offer group training and personal lessons tailored to the specific demands of various poetic occupations. Some of the jobs our special courses address are: *Show Poets*: Those who are all style and no substance are great candidates. *Wilderness Rescue*: Poet will learn to dig victims out from under an avalanche of pure-driven nature poetry. We train your little saint to chip away tirelessly at pathetic fallacy and share her whisky. *Sniffer Poets*: If your poet can't stop sniffing other poets' assonance, why not train him to nose out marijuana, cocaine, opiates, and lsd, no matter how well-hidden on anyone's person or in their belongings. Also known as Beat poets. *Comfort Poets*: For good-natured poets willing to perform in hospitals and rest homes. Not for the mangy or sullen, this is an ideal occupation for poets who don't mind a little heavy petting. *Hunting Poets*: If you like to shoot off your mouth, they'll go and fetch you some dead metaphors. *Seeing Eye Poets*: For true visionary poets only. Visit a poetsmart store

**THE WALRUS**

today! Don't forget to pick up treats, toys, and a cozy poet bed—poets need lots of attention and some can sleep for up to twenty-two hours a day!

Susan Holbrook was a finalist for the 2010 Trillium Book Award for Poetry, with *Joy Is So Exhausting*.

