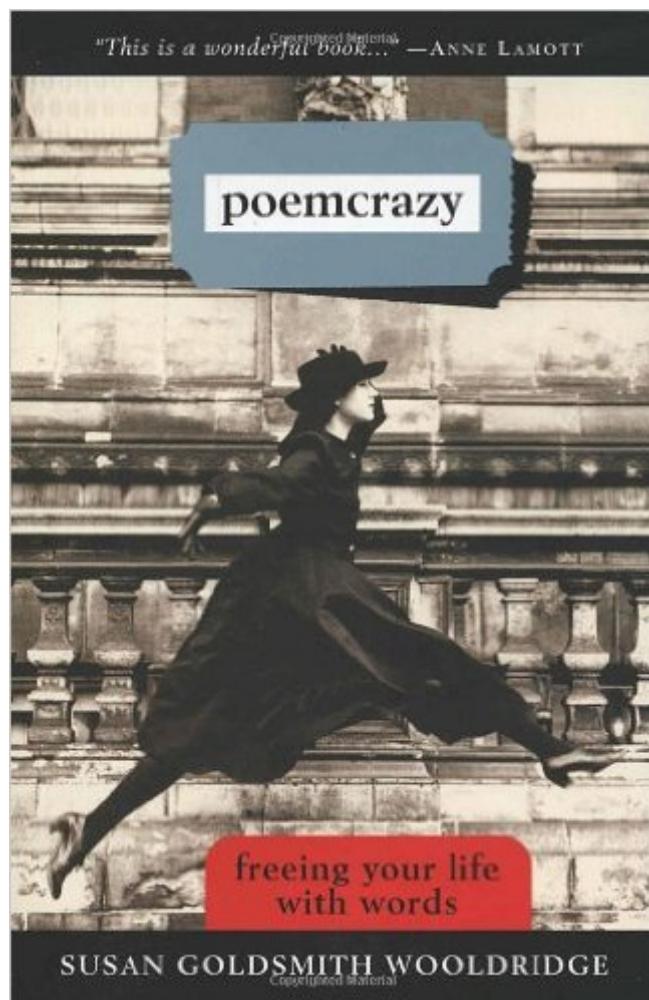


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# Poemcrazy: Freeing Your Life With Words



## **Synopsis**

Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge is a poet and teacher who conducts workshops privately, as well as in the California Poets in the Schools program. Her exuberant, critically acclaimed teaching guide takes instructors, writers, and general readers into the very heart and intensity of life and the craft of expressing what one feels through the written word.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I was one of five people who started a weekly writing group last year. At first we languished a bit, trying to find a way to get ourselves going. Then one week I brought in my little stash of word tickets I had made after reading Poemcrazy. It was as though a sudden rain had made the desert bloom. We have been pouring out poems and stories and vignettes at a rare clip ever since. One of the most important things about the techniques the author presents is that they force one away from contemplating one's own belly-button, so to speak, and bring one's attention to the limitless possibilities for poetry that spring forth when chance words and phrases put the imagination in overdrive. Too often writers of my generation think that poetry has to be about our deepest and most dramatic emotions, which often leads to some pretty deadly stuff being committed to paper. But when you pull out word tickets that say things like "fronds" and "slashed" and "cutting up the remnants," it's hard to be self-absorbed. In fact, it's hard to be anything but deeply original. Everyone I have introduced to the author's exercises and methods has fallen in love with them. Even my six-year-old nephew became enamored and proceeded to rename everything and everyone in his

environment--a procedure that created some hilarious yet apposite new names. (I am now "Needs to sing," his sister is "Pistachio," his grandmother is "Finding secrets....")I adore this book.

Reading this book was soothing to my spirit, calming, a balm.I like Wooldridge's writing style very much; I would describe it as gentle, casual and very clear.I love how she consistently makes references to the outdoors, nature and the pastoral way of living throughout.Within its pages you will become acquainted with such things as: wordpools, word tickets and the image angel.The book is divided into 5 sections; each section averages right around 10 to 12 chapters. All the chapters are either short or very short. I found that very refreshing, like sips of cool water. Take a small drink, stop and think. Take another sip... At the end of most chapters there is a "Practice" which is nothing more than a simple non-threatening creative exercise or suggestion; they are genuinely good ideas in my opinion, practical and clear.I think that the overall message from the author is that poetry is freedom when all the restrictions are removed and when you allow yourself to look for poems everywhere, because that's where they are, everywhere.I recommend this book without any reservations.

A friend of mine picked up this book when we were in a book store, knowing that I had come to an almost sudden halt in my poetry writing for the past year or so after having been a poet for four or five years. I was pretty depressed about my writer's block, so I thought, "What the heck," and I bought the book. Not long into the book, which is magnificently written, I began to write again. I haven't stopped since, and my poetry has made massive improvement. The book helps to inspire and recreate that passion that writers can sometimes lose in the midst of the stresses of our days and our constant state of change and growth. --And best of all, it's fun, easy reading!

The title "Poemcrazy" caught my eye at the bookstore, and it has proven to become the most valuable book on writing I have. Susan Wooldridge enabled me to write more introspective, symbolic poems. I began playfully collecting words, and concentrating for the first time on their music, instead of limiting myself to only their meanings. Following her simple directions and creative activities I began arranging words, finally tossing aside the internal editor that often cripples many a poet. The results were so astounding, so unlike my previous poetry, that I asked myself "Who wrote this?" In fact, the product from one interview activity (Who was I in your dream?) resulted in a poem that I submitted to a literary magazine, and the editor applauded the vivid imagery and rich symbolism. She enthusiastically accepted this poem for publication.I hope that Susan Wooldridge continues to

produce books full of similar exercises that prod the unconscious of the poet. The methods she presents are embraced with as much enthusiasm by the third graders I teach, as by the adults in my writing workshop. This book is a **MUST HAVE!**

Poemcrazy smoothly integrates Susan Wooldridge's personal experiences and observations with wonderful suggestions for writing exercises! As a high school creative writing teacher, I find the book to be particularly useful when I am searching for ways to help me and my students approach familiar subjects from unexpected directions. Poemcrazy also helps get the mental ink flowing when it seems to be running dry. In terms of exercises, Poemcrazy is comparable to, but not quite on par with, Natalie Goldberg's "Writing Down the Bones." Still, even if you don't actually use the exercises, the narrative makes for interesting enough reading on its own.

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