**Sample Student Responses for the Readathon**

**From:** [**http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/353**](http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/353)

**On "Hope is the thing with feathers" by** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poets.org/edick)  
  
Have you heard the cry of a bird in Antarctica? Have you heard the chirp of desperation? Hope rises above all. The bird symbolizes Mother Earth who takes care of everything. She tells the kids in poverty to hold on. If everyone abandoned hope, the world would be gone. Instead, hope is what makes the world flourish. And the thing that keeps so many people pushing ahead every day even when they are in the chilliest land.   
  
Pauline Zheng  
Samantha Davis’ 8th Grade Class  
Floyd Dryden Middle School  
Juneau, AK

**On "How to Eat a Poem" by** [**Eve Merriam**](http://www.poets.org/emerr)  
  
I think this is the perfect description of how one should read poetry. You shouldn’t hesitate, you should just dive in and start reading. Poetry is always ready to be read, whenever you are ready to read it. It will never go bad! It is definitely cleaner than eating a fruit, but it has the same aspect of indulging yourself with food, except it’s food for your brain. Everyone knows what it is like to bite into an apple or a peach and feel the juice running down your chin, so it was smart to compare a familiar sensation to reading poetry. The poem reminds me of eating mango water ice.   
  
Rebecca Smith  
Denise Miller’s 7th Grade Class  
Unami Middle School  
Chalfont, PA

**On** [**"A Divine Image"**](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15842) **by** [**William Blake**](http://www.poets.org/wblak)  
  
The poem’s subject is very interesting. It says that cruelty has a human heart. I believe that he means that every human heart has cruelty or is cruel to at least one thing in the world. Jealousy has a human face. I agree. Everyone is jealous of something, and they show how they are through their face. Terror and secrecy create a horrific mystery. That creates drama, which is present in every human being. I think the iron is forged from the fire of unnecessary anger. The poem I believe was true because all feelings he describes are in every single human being on this planet.   
  
Dan Dyer  
Andrea Spinello’s 8th Grade Class  
Spotswood Memorial School  
Spotswood, NJ

**On** [**"The New Colossus"**](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16111) **by Emma Lazurus**   
  
Emma Lazurus’s "The New Colossus" is a poem [whose] subject is the Statue of Liberty that stands tall in New York City. The poem strongly describes Lady Liberty as a portal, or a gateway to freedom to all exiles coming to America. The statue seems to be welcoming all... but recently it seems the people who come here are not as wanted as the statue represents. Basically, the statue’s arms are not as wide open as they used to be. With all these new immigrant laws trying to be passed, it felt weird to read about something that is so loving and so welcoming to all.   
  
A. J. Guerra  
Valerie A. Williams’s 8th Grade Class  
Central Middle School  
West Melbourne, FL

**On** [**"The Kraken"**](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16157) **by** [**Lord Alfred Tennyson**](http://www.poets.org/laten)   
  
Lord Alfred Tennyson’s poem "The Kraken" deals with the immense sea monster of Norwegian legend. He uses images of dark and desolate sea floor as well as the great age of the Kraken to make him appear to be a force of nature, just waiting for a moment when he will rise and reek havoc. By using phrases like "huge sponges of millennial growth and height" and "giant arms the slumbering green," Tennyson gives us visions of the appearance and enormous size of the Kraken. These create a fear of the Kraken, as Tennyson might have had at the time.   
  
Chad Perryman  
Catherine Koss’s 8th Grade Class  
Providence Heights Alpha School  
Allison Park, PA

**On "First Love" by Carl Lindner**I think the poem "First Love" is about his first love, basketball. I could tell it was basketball because of the words he used, such as "layup," "jumpset," and "backboard." But what I thought was interesting was not once did he actually say the word basketball. Also, what I thought was interesting was how he ended the poem by making himself part of the ball falling into the hoop. A friend of mine once said, "To be good at a sport like basketball you must feel the ball go into the hoop." That’s what I thought the poem was trying to say.   
  
Alanna Sozynski-Lauter  
Ms. Cortes’s 7th Grade Class  
East Hampton Middle School  
East Hampton, NY