# Poetry Editing Checklist

**Of all the different forms of writing, poetry is perhaps the most resistant to being reduced to a checklist, but this process will still get you the most polished version of your work. Be sure to use it one last time before calling your poem complete and sending it out. As with all advice, these are just general guidelines. Feel free to break the rules artfully.**

## Content and Structure

☐ Obeyed the principles of the structure.

☐ Arranged all lines in the best order, building toward meaning.

☐ Maintained the same POV throughout, unless breaking it was a deliberate choice.

☐ Included clear images that convey the tone.

☐ Used the same tense throughout the poem.

☐ Cut any unnecessary words.

☐ Designed the first line to captures attention.

☐ Ensured that the last line is memorable.

☐ Added vivid details of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

☐ Chose an evocative title.

☐ Made sure line breaks are deliberate and contribute to the meaning.

☐ Included some elements of surprise.

☐ Spent sufficient time on each word choice, experimenting, brainstorming, and making sure to choose the best word for the most impact on the reader.

☐ Eliminated clichéd phrases.

## Words

☐ Placed the words with the most meaning at the beginning or end of a line.

☐ Included both the abstract and the concrete.

☐ Searched for *is*, *was*, and *were* to check for passive voice and strengthen the verb.

☐ Searched for *ly* to root out adverbs.

☐ Examined every adjective to make sure it's necessary and that it adds to the poem.

☐ Used software to read the poem out loud to make sure each word is the intended one.

☐ Deleted all instances of the word *very*.

☐ Ran a spell-check.

☐ Carefully reviewed the text for problem words (*they're*, *their*, *there*; *your*, *you're*; *its*, *it's*).

## Rhythm and Style

☐ Read the poem out loud to make sure it has rhythm and edited parts where it didn't.

☐ Ensured that the poem doesn't tell the reader how to feel.

☐ Made use of literary devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, assonance, or alliteration to add rhythm and meaning.

☐ Checked that each stanza is the appropriate length.

☐ Played with the words to find those most appropriate for the tone, dialect, and purpose.