

A Poem To Learn English - A poem a day keeps the mind at play

By Marianne Raynaud

Fill in using the words at the end. The first letter is given. It will be easy to find them if you remember that they should rhyme. Words/syllables to be stressed as the poem is read are in bold.

Who **am** I, you **ask** and **patiently w** _____
 For **me** to **explain** my **life** and my **f** _____
 Well, for **you**, dear **child**, I'll **tell** you a **t** _____
 You'll forever **recall** every **day** without **f** _____

With this **story** and **all** of the **words** that I **c** _____
 You'll **learn** a **language** you **never** will **l** _____
 You'll **find** out **about** all my **joys** and my **p** _____
 And my **verse** will echo in your **mind** once a _____

I **come** from a **country** where the **flowers** smell **s** _____
 Where **farmers** give **people** fine **croops** they can **e** _____
 Where the **sky** is blue, the **lakes** pure and **c** _____
 The **children** play **games** with nothing to **f** _____

The **neighbors** they **hail** you, "How **are** you **t** _____?"
 "Are you **happy**, **contented**? Are you **planning** to **s** _____?"
 For this is a **land** where the **people** are **f** _____
 The **smiles** on their **faces** is a **joy** to **s** _____

But it **isn't** so **easy** to find this **place** in the **s** _____
 For **this** is where **everyone** is **trying** to **c** _____
 You aren't **alone**, and what you **have** you must **s** _____
 Your **time** and your **money** plus **all** you can **s** _____

I've been through **hardships**, I have had **p** _____
 I have felt great **anguish** over and over a _____
 Have I **suffered** a **lot**? Have I **shed** real **t** _____?
 Yes, but I **haven't** felt **sorrow** as **much** as my **p** _____

When I was a **child** just like **you**, my young **m** _____
 We were **poor**, with no **home**, we **lived** in a **c** _____
 We couldn't **do** what we **liked**, free **thought** they
 f _____
 We were **always** **worried** and **always** a _____

We **had** to build **courage** and **decide** we should **f** _____
 To a **place** where we'd **feel** in **peace** and **h** _____
 So we **traveled** for **weeks** with no **firm** land in **s** _____
 Till we **reached** our **journey's end** far into the **n** _____

My **parents** there **settled**, worked **hard** all their **l** _____
 I was **sent** to **school**, and **later** they **found** me a **w** _____
 They **wanted** for **me**, what they **hadn't** a _____
 The **learning** and **skills** they hadn't r _____

So I **studied** at **high** school and **made** some good **f** _____
 But **that** is not **where** this **long** story **e** _____
 I **learned** a profession, then found **work** I could **d** _____
 Became a **carpenter's aid**, I would **saw**, **polish** and **g** _____

So I **earned** my living and could **make** ends **m** _____
 We had **food** on the **table** and our **neighbors** we'd **g** _____
 My **wife** she was **pleased** and our **kids** got **al** _____
 I **saw** how they **grew**, became **tall** and so **s** _____

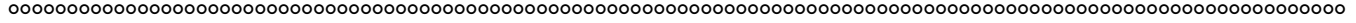
They **studied** Chinese, **higher** physics, and **F** _____
 Their **thirst** for **knowledge** they **never** could **q** _____
 They **played** the piano and their **parents** did **p** _____
 They **went** onto **college**, got prestigious **d** _____

I'm **talking** to **you**, I'm **telling** you **t** _____
 I **expect** you to **listen**—not a **single** word **m** _____
 I want **you** to be **quiet**—and **nothing** d _____
 I'd **like** you to **focus** and my **thoughts** u _____

If **you** learn by **heart** just **half** of these **l** _____
Respecting word **order**, **stress** and all of the **r** _____
 You'll speak good **English** and wherever you **g** _____
 You'll be **welcomed** by **people**—acts of **friendship** they'll
sh _____

So **isn't** this **poem** worth **trying** to **l** _____?
 Reciting **complex** **lexis** is not our **c** _____
 I don't **ask** you to **know** the **names** of all **b** _____
 I just **want** you to **speak** well and **use** the right **w** _____
 Won't **you** make an **attempt**? Yes, **just** do your **b** _____
 No one will **mock** you; we won't **give** you a **t** _____

The **effort** you **make**, you will **never** r _____
 And my **story**, I **daresay**, you'll **never** f _____
 May you **find** good **fortune** through **work** and through **l** _____
 I **trust** your **family** will **help** you if ever you're **s** _____
 But I **know** that the **skills** you **learn** when you're **y** _____
 Are **those** that will **make** you the **man** you'll **b** _____



Below are the words to be placed in the poem. When you transcribe them be sure to mark the stressed syllable, which is indicated in bold lettering. Two words are used twice.

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|----------|--------|------------|
| achieved | concern | forget | lose | regret | sweet |
| afraid | degrees | free | luck | rhymes | tale |
| again (2) | demand | French | man | see | tears |
| along | do | friends | meet | share | test |
| become | eat | glue | miss | show | this |
| best | ends | go | night | sight | today |
| birds | fail | greet | pain (2) | spare | understand |
| choose | fate | harmony | peers | stay | wait |
| clan | fear | learn | please | strong | wife |
| clear | flee | life | quench | stuck | words |
| come | forbade | lines | received | sun | young |

Exercise on vowel sounds and the International Phonetic Alphabet (with American pronunciation)
Place the same words as above in the right boxes. Mark the stressed syllable. It is indicated in bold.

Example	Symbol IPA	Words from the poem (end of line rhymes) D = Diphthongs
<i>day (D)</i>	/eɪ/	
<i>here</i>	/ɪ/	
<i>bed</i>	/e/	
<i>feet</i>	/i:/	
<i>five (D)</i>	/aɪ/	
<i>no</i>	/oʊ/	
<i>food</i>	/u:/	
<i>cat</i>	/æ/	
<i>heard</i>	/ɜr/	
<i>where (D)</i>	/ɛər/	
<i>ship</i>	/ɪ/	
<i>hot</i>	/ɒ/	
<i>cup</i>	/ʌ/	
<i>leg</i>	/ə/	

Assignment: Learn the poem by heart and be able to recite it to your partner.

