

# How to Write a Praise Poem

**Praise Poetry:** A tribute, central to South African political and literary expression.

- In Zulu (a South African language and ethnic group): Called *izibongo*, it defines and names individuals.
- Style: Bold imagery, distinct, carefully chosen language.
- Purpose: Reflects life events and sacrifices leading to the present.
- Literary Devices: Uses metaphors and similes, comparing the poet to objects, people, colors, or nature.
- Significance: Celebratory, affirming, connecting poets to their ancestry.
- Benefits: Enhances writing skills and strengthens voice.
- Examples: “*New Wings*” by Glenis Redmond and “*Praise Him, Nelson Mandela*” by Charles Jagongo.

Here are 2 examples of praise poems, “*New Wings*” by Glenis Redmond and “*Praise Him, Nelson Mandela*” by Charles Jagongo

## NEW WINGS

I am a *daughter of the dust*.  
I am a true *sister of the yam*.  
I come from a long line of serious brown women  
that don't take no mess or apologize for living.  
I am birth from the morning earth  
deep, rich and free.  
My middle name Gale  
describes how I move in this world  
sometimes gracefully other times stormy.  
Glenis, welsh for valley.  
I have dwelt there far too long.  
I am a raven  
I am a crow.  
I am a nappy bat.  
I am a mosquito.  
Call me anything black  
that has wings  
and  
flies.

## Praise Him, Nelson Mandela

Praise him, this son of Africa  
He withstood mudsling's of apartheid,  
From Roben Island, to lead a nation, to set a  
pace.

Count him not, with other comrades,  
Who cling on, un-ashamedly,  
Till they are pulled, no sympathy  
For subjects, heads had rolled,  
Praise him, Nelson Mandela, in peace  
He knew prosperity and peace  
Who all he did for peace!

# How to Write a Praise Poem

## How to Write a Glenis Redmond Praise Poem

A Praise Poem is not to be written in a linear fashion—the goal is more than ticking items off the list from one to seven. You must enter where your imagination calls the loudest. Yet, all seven guidelines should be included in the poem, but not limited to the list.

1. **Heritage.** (literal and metaphoric) For example: *I am as my grandfather's withered hands that pushed the plow on southern Carolina soil.*
2. **Height.** (literal and metaphoric height) For example: *I am as tall as my mother's earnest daily prayers cast up for me.*
3. **Color.** (personality and skin tone) For example: *I am sunburst orange with a streak of grey, or I am the color of cream adding joy to the recipe.*
4. **Animal.** Compare yourself to an animal. For example: *I am the crows who always remember the stories of the people below the treetops, or I am the play of intelligent dolphin reminding us to be our best selves.*
5. **Nature.** Compare yourself to the natural world. For example: *I am the rays of the sun shooting through the clouds.*
6. **How You Walk in the World.** For example: *I do not walk, I dance through life on tip toes that twist to the beat of my own drum.*
7. **Profession or Wannabe Profession, Pastime, or Hobby.** For example: *I am the burnt orange globe that is swallowed by the hoop. The roar of the crowd inspires me. The endless days of practice gives me a deep satisfaction.*