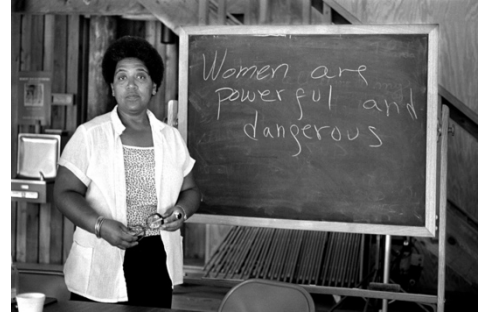


## Communicating through Poetry

A self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” Audre Lorde (1934-1992) dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Lorde was born in New York City to West Indian immigrant parents. Of her poetic beginnings Lorde commented in *Black Women Writers*: “I used to speak in poetry. I would read poems, and I would memorize them. People would say, well what do you think, Audre. What happened to you yesterday? And I would recite a poem and somewhere in that poem would be a line or a feeling I would be sharing. In other words, I literally communicated through poetry. And when I couldn’t find the poems to express the things I was feeling, that’s what started me writing poetry, and that was when I was twelve or thirteen.”



(Source: [www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/audre-lorde](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/audre-lorde))

Audre Lorde talks about “speaking in poetry”. Using the poetry from LGBTQ+ people on the next page, find lines, or parts of lines, that speak to you. If the poems included aren’t inspiring you, you can check out more poems at <https://poets.org/text/lgbtq-pride-month-poems-kids>

What line(s) speak to you when you’re having a good day?

What line(s) speak to you when you’re having a bad day?

What line(s) speak to you when you’re with your friends?

What line(s) speak to you when you’re doing homework?

What line(s) speak to you when you’re \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in any situation]?

**The Cabbage Butterfly**  
Minnie Bruce Pratt

The human brain wants to complete—

The poem too easy? Bored. The poem too hard?  
Angry. What's this one about? Around the block  
the easy summer weather, the picture-puff clouds  
adrift in the blue sky that's no paint-by-numbers.

In the corner garden, the cabbage butterfly  
bothers the big leafy heads, trying to complete  
its life cycle by hatching a horned monster to  
chew holes in the green cloth manufactured so  
laboriously by seed germ from air, water,  
light, dirt. There's no end to this, yes, no end.

Even when we want to stop, stop, stop! Even  
when someone else calls us *monster*. Even when  
we fear and hope that we will not have the final  
word.

**Star Gazer**  
Crisosto Apache

overnight, inside  
the lithe of white linings  
bends a beautiful  
explosion,  
that leave  
bruises  
and swells,  
of spotted red  
amid  
the violent  
spread, emitting  
a bountiful  
bouquet  
of sensual decay

*Haiku by Shelley Krause*

close your eyes  
to see more clearly —  
I'm still right here

Tonight  
mai c. doan  
  
i want  
a party of skin  
and smoke  
and phosphorescent  
light. i want to be  
out late twirling  
under some queer  
luminescence and vibrating  
with sound.  
i want us to be  
sick together and then  
sweat it all out  
together.  
i want us to find ourselves  
outside in some  
glittering alley  
as purple spreads across  
the sky  
everyone still awake  
and everyone  
still alive.

**Survival Guide**  
Joy Ladin

No matter how old you are,  
it helps to be young  
when you're coming to life,

to be unfinished, a mysterious statement,  
a journey from star to star.  
So break out a box of Crayolas

and draw your family  
looking uncomfortably away  
from the you you've exchanged

for the mannequin  
they named. You should  
help clean up, but you're so busy being afraid

to love or not  
you're missing the fun of clothing yourself  
in the embarrassment of life.

Frost your lids with midnight;  
lid your heart with frost;  
rub them all over, the hormones that regulate

the production of love  
from karmic garbage dumps.  
Turn yourself into

the real you  
you can only discover  
by being other.

Voila! You're free.  
Learn to love the awkward silence  
you are going to be.

**Love, Maybe**  
Audre Lorde

Always  
in the middle  
of our bloodiest battles  
you lay down your arms  
like flowering mines  
  
to conqueror me home.