



## WHO AM I?

A guide to using poetry  
– based on your name –  
to create a deeper, more  
poetic expression of who  
you truly are.

## Key stage 3/4

### Etymology

The title given to me was Light Weaver.  
Sometimes I imagine myself,  
Lonely sorceress, crafting  
Shining dresses, shadow cloaks.  
People say I look like light but really  
I'm a shadow, I prefer to stay hidden.  
Why couldn't I get a normal title?  
One that doesn't come out of a fairy tale.  
But it is better than my brother's name.  
Better to be called a candle or torch than Farmer.  
I am a special torch.  
A light weaver.  
A sorceress.  
Maybe I do have magic.

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from *20:20 Vision: An Anthology by the First Story Group at Saint Gabriel's College*  
ed. Francesca Beard (First Story 2020)

# NATIONAL POETRY DAY 2020

## See It Like a Poet



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**FIRST STORY**  
CHANGING LIVES THROUGH WRITING



**1st OCTOBER 2020**

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The famous words “Know thyself” are inscribed by way of greeting above the entrance of the ancient Greek temple of Apollo – the god of prophecy and wisdom. Interestingly, a common Zulu greeting is “Sawubona” which means “I see you” – not in the sense of just looking at someone, but in the more profound sense of really understanding someone. This is also seen in the Hindi greeting ‘Namaste’ which, in a spiritual sense, means “I bow to the divine in you”. These greetings, drawn from a range of cultures and contexts, share one thing in common: they all suppose that there is wisdom in truly seeing yourself and others for who you/they truly are. Read Lucy Webb’s poem and follow these steps to construct a poem of your own based on your name.

## 1. WHAT’S MY NAME?

Etymology is the study of the origins of words. Your name and your surname almost certainly have meanings. Use Google to find out those meanings and write them down in the middle of the page and draw a bubble around each. Now create a ‘word association’ mind map of *anything* that springs into your mind about those words.

## 2. MERGING THEM

Have a play with fusing words from those two categories together to make seemingly nonsense statements about yourself. For example:

- I am a sorceress’s cloak.
- I am a shining dress.
- I am a magic spider.

Try to create as many combinations as you can. Once you’re done, add some personal touches. To do this, continue with the idea of the statement, tacking on details of your own creation. For example:

- I am a sorceress’s cloak, hidden in the shadows, shirking the sun.
- I am a shining dress; I sparkle in the light of attention and wither in loneliness.
- I am a magic spider: I spin love as fine as silk.

## 3. WHO AM I?

Write five statements about yourself using these sentence starters:

- I think... (e.g. I think I am special.)
- I imagine... (e.g. I imagine myself as lonely.)
- I wonder... (e.g. I wonder if I’d have preferred another name)
- I look... (e.g. I look like light.)
- I do... (e.g. I do have magic.)

Try not to be too literal, and play with unusual phrases. Don’t worry too much about things “making sense” – poetry has its own logic!

## 4. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Write down your favourite sentences from steps 2 and 3. You might have something like:

*I am a sorceress’s cloak, hidden in the shadows, shirking the sun. I look like light.*

Keep repeating this until you have integrated all of your sentences to form the first draft of your poem. Then you can begin editing, remove or rearrange parts, and play around with line breaks. Keep tinkering until you have a poem that reflects a deeper truth about you!

**Top tip:** Why not repeat the process writing about someone you care about, like a family member or friend?

