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NerdPoetry

Poetry after language. Presence as form.

NerdPoetry is a post-digital constraint practice for the 2030s. When text becomes infinite and presence becomes optional, the work relocates poetry into the body: breath, weight, duration, repetition, and location. One body, in one place, reaching safe fatigue. The 52-week protocol is documented here as one practitioner's experiment (2026), but the practice itself is open: anyone can begin, adapt, or share their own versions.

Why NerdPoetry Matters

In a world flooded with infinite language and AI-generated text, NerdPoetry explores the last non-replicable poetic resource: human presence. By shifting constraint from words to body, time, and space, it extends historical experimental poetry into a post-digital, embodied practice. Safe, replicable, and globally legible, it demonstrates that poetry can still surprise, provoke, and matter—even when everything else can be everywhere.

Explore

- **[Manifesto]** — principles, boundaries, and the logic of the practice
- **[Protocol]** — the 52-week structure, exercises, and safety rules
- **[Why Here, Why Now]** — relevance, contemporary contribution, and cultural context

Start Practicing

Begin with the first exercise.
End when the body signals stop.
No harm. No endurance heroics. One location, one body, one moment.

NerdPoetry builds on global and Italian traditions of experimental, performative, and constraint-based poetry—from Oulipo to contemporary embodied practices—while extending them into a post-digital, body-focused, presence-driven exploration.

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Manifesto

1. Ground Condition

Digital language is free, infinite, and diluted. Space is not. You cannot occupy two locations at once. Presence is the last non-fungible resource.

2. Principle

In an age without limits, poetry becomes the art of reduction.
When anything can be said, say less.
When language proliferates, return to breath.
When presence is optional, make it required.

3. Method

- **Spatial Constraint:** One body in one location. Co-location when possible.
- **Fatigue, Not Injury:** End when muscles tire, voice rasps, or attention drifts. Pain ends the practice.
- **Safe Boundaries:** No injury risk, deprivation, breath restriction, or harmful environments.
- **Iterative Reduction:** Remove words until nothing remains but gesture, breath, presence.
- **Execution Over Text:** A score only exists when enacted. Silence is the natural endpoint.

4. Taxonomy

- **BREATH** – respiratory effort, vocal endurance
- **WEIGHT** – gravitational resistance, muscular fatigue
- **REPETITION** – iterative action until dissolution
- **DURATION** – time-based attention
- **SPATIAL** – co-location, place-specific practice
- **SOLO / COLLABORATIVE** – one body or multiple bodies sharing space

5. What This Is

A safe, provisional, open-source poetics of embodied constraint.

A reduction of language toward presence.

A practice defined by what can be safely done in one location, with one body, for one duration.

6. What This Isn't

Not mysticism.

Not extreme endurance.

Not anti-technology.

Not harm, deprivation, or pain.

Discomfort instructs; pain warns; injury ends the work.

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Protocol

52-WEEK EXERCISE LIST

Each exercise is documented via written logs and fatigue records. The archive will be publicly accessible as the practice unfolds.

Weeks 1–13: Foundations (Single Constraints)

1. **One Breath Phrase** – Speak one phrase repeatedly until voice tires.
2. **Quiet Counting** – Whisper numbers until the whisper dissolves.

- 3. One Exhale Gesture** — Repeat a simple gesture on each out-breath.
- 4. Hands at Horizon** — Hold arms parallel to ground until muscular fatigue.
- 5. Object at Heart Level** — Hold a light object chest-high until tiring.
- 6. Still Standing** — Stand in one spot until attention drifts.
- 7. Timed Sitting** — Sit still for a set duration, ending at mental fatigue.
- 8. Slow Lift** — Lift a light object slowly, repeatedly, without strain.
- 9. Soft Repetition** — Repeat a single word until it loses meaning.
- 10. One-Minute Breath Cycles** — Maintain a steady breathing rhythm until focus breaks.
- 11. Palm Weight Shift** — Transfer weight between hands until shoulders tire.
- 12. Return to Neutral** — Alternate between one gesture and rest until form dissolves.
- 13. Minimal Description** — Describe the room until language naturally thins.

Weeks 14–26: Combinations (Dual Constraints)

- 14. Breath + Weight** — Lift a light object on each exhale until fatigue.
- 15. Breath + Duration** — Speak on every out-breath for a set duration.
- 16. Weight + Duration** — Hold an object for timed intervals.
- 17. Repetition + Breath** — Repeat a phrase only on inhales or exhales.
- 18. Repetition + Weight** — Gesture repetitively until muscles tire.
- 19. Spatial + Duration** — Stand in a chosen location for a fixed time.
- 20. Spatial + Breath** — Pace a short path synchronized with breath.

- 21. Spatial + Repetition** — Repeat one gesture while fixed in place.
- 22. Collaborative Breathing** — Sit with another person, syncing rhythms loosely.
- 23. Collaborative Weight** — Pass a light object back and forth.
- 24. Collaborative Duration** — Share silence until one person naturally shifts.
- 25. Collaborative Repetition** — Echo each other's words or gestures.
- 26. Spatial Triangle** — Three points in room walked in slow rotation (solo or duo).

Weeks 27–39: Variations (Revisions of Earlier Exercises)

- 27. Silent Version** — Perform Week 1 without voice.
- 28. Weighted Version** — Add small weight to any Week 2 or 3 exercise safely.
- 29. Duration Extension** — Add time to any earlier practice without strain.
- 30. Soft Reduction** — Remove half the language from an earlier exercise.
- 31. Gesture Replacement** — Substitute gestures in any repetition practice.
- 32. Solo-for-Collaborative** — Translate a duo practice into self-mirroring.
- 33. Collaborative-for-Solo** — Add a partner to any solo gesture or repetition.
- 34. Minimal Protocol** — Reduce instructions to one sentence.
- 35. Environmental Variation** — Repeat an exercise in a new safe location.
- 36. Mirror Compression** — Perform an earlier practice facing a mirror or reflection.

- 37. Temporal Shift** — Repeat at a different time of day to test attention.
- 38. Reduced Duration** — Explore how brief an action can be and still “count.”
- 39. Reduced Weight** — Gradually decrease load until only gesture remains.

Weeks 40–52: Boundaries (Safe Edges)

- 40. Longest Comfortable Stand** — Stand still until discomfort begins.
- 41. Longest Soft Repetition** — Repeat a phrase gently for maximum safe duration.
- 42. Longest Light Hold** — Hold a very light object for as long as comfortable.
- 43. Most Minimal Instruction** — One-word score (e.g., “Hold.” or “Listen.”).
- 44. Ultra-Slow Gesture** — Slow a movement until it nearly stops.
- 45. Micro-Breath Score** — A breath-based action lasting under 10 seconds.
- 46. Boundary of Attention** — Maintain focus on one object until attention slips.
- 47. Boundary of Stillness** — Stay motionless until the first involuntary shift.
- 48. Near-Silence** — Vocalize at the edge of audibility until voice tires.
- 49. Softest Weight** — Use the lightest possible object (paper, thread).
- 50. Shared Moment** — Stand with another person in silence until one naturally ends.
- 51. Spatial Limit** — Move only within a one-meter square for a duration.
- 52. Final Reduction** — Choose any earlier exercise and remove everything nonessential.

What Makes This Poetry: Theory of Embodied Constraint

If poetry is structured deviation from standard language, then NerdPoetry is structured deviation from standard movement. A sonnet's formal constraints reveal dimensions of language that prose cannot access; these bodily constraints reveal dimensions of embodiment that utilitarian movement cannot access. The practice earns its claim to poetry not through metaphor or symbolic gesture, but through the same mechanism that makes a villanelle poetic: formal pattern generates insight beyond the constraint itself. This requires that constraint systems possess internal logic extending beyond simple fatigue documentation. Practitioners may introduce proportional relationships (Fibonacci breath counts, golden ratio durations, geometric progressions), call-and-response structures (symmetry followed by deliberate breaks, echo decay patterns, mirror alternations), combinatorial rules (if breath count reaches threshold X then switch to weight constraint Y, recursive nesting where one constraint triggers another), generative scores derived from environmental data (room dimensions dictate duration, body ratios determine object weight, time-of-day modulates tempo), or deliberate violation patterns (establish rhythm for N repetitions, break once, re-establish). The principle: constraint systems should create unexpected formal relationships and compositional architecture—the bodily equivalent of meter, rhyme, and stanzaic structure in written poetry.

But formal codification alone is insufficient. For bodily constraint to function poetically rather than merely systematically, the practice must generate one or more of the following: emergent tension between body and rule, where the constraint reveals something about embodiment that wouldn't surface through unmarked movement—not just “this is difficult” but “this specific difficulty exposes how the body organizes space, time, or effort”; perceptual reframing, where

the pattern forces attention toward aspects of bodily experience normally invisible—breath becoming architectural, fatigue becoming rhythmic, spatial relationships becoming grammatical; failure as insight, where the point at which the body cannot maintain the formal rule becomes the poem's volta, its turn toward meaning; or transmissible structure, where different practitioners following the same coded constraint discover similar formal-experiential patterns despite individual physical differences.

This last criterion addresses a critical question: an eighteen-year-old and an eighty-one-year-old will fatigue at radically different moments performing identical exercises. If the practice merely documents when different bodies tire, it remains physiological data collection with aspirational framing. The poetic claim depends on whether the constraint structure generates shared discoveries across that variance—whether both practitioners, regardless of endurance capacity, encounter similar perceptual shifts, structural revelations, or formal patterns at proportionally equivalent moments within their own practice. Like a haiku's 5-7-5 constraint working for both master and beginner, the bodily constraint should create aesthetic territory accessible across different physical capacities. The test: does the constraint system make you notice something about embodiment you couldn't access through ordinary movement, the way a sestina's repetition makes you notice something about language you couldn't access through prose? If yes, the practice earns its poetic claim. If no, it remains disciplined physical exercise with decorative mathematics. The year-long documentation exists to determine which outcome emerges.

What distinguishes NerdPoetry from its precedents is its combination of safe fatigue, formalized structure, and post-digital scarcity. Unlike Fluxus or Ono's instructional scores, which embrace open-ended indeterminacy,

NerdPoetry operates through repeatable constraint architectures with explicit safety limits. Unlike Hsieh's endurance works, it rejects harm and heroics, using fatigue only as a threshold for perceptual shift. Unlike Oulipo, whose constraints act on language, NerdPoetry applies comparable rigor to embodied action, relocating poetic scarcity from text to presence in a post-digital context where language is no longer limited. And unlike somatic practices focused on awareness or healing, NerdPoetry frames embodied constraints as formal poetic units—codified, replicable, and designed to generate compositional insight rather than therapeutic outcome.

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Why Here, Why Now

NerdPoetry exists because the conditions of the 2030s demand a different kind of poetic practice.

Language is infinite. Presence is not. When machines generate text faster than humans can read, the site of meaning shifts from words to bodies, from expression to location, from message to moment.

What this practice offers is simple: a return to the last scarce resources—attention, co-presence, and the safe limits of one body in one place.

1. Post-Digital Poetics

When language becomes cheap, poetry must find another economy.

NerdPoetry relocates poetic meaning from text to embodied constraint—breath, weight, duration, repetition, and spatial exclusivity.

Here, the poem is not written. It is enacted.

Not consumed. Performed.

2. Scarcity Through Presence

Digital space is infinite; physical co-location is finite.

You cannot be in two places at once.

This simple fact becomes the medium.

NerdPoetry uses the non-replicable event of “being here, not elsewhere” as its basic poetic unit.

3. Safe Embodied Constraint

Performance and endurance art have long tested physical limits.

This practice refuses harm and rejects heroics.

Discomfort instructs. Pain warns. Injury ends the work.

The 52-week protocol demonstrates that meaningful artistic tension can arise from safe fatigue, minimal instruction, and attention held just long enough to waver.

4. A Universal Poetic Language

These practices require:

- no shared mother tongue
- no literary training
- no specialized equipment

A breath, a gesture, a held weight—these are globally legible.

The work becomes accessible without becoming simplistic.

5. A Research Contribution

The year-long experiment produces:

- documented fatigue points
- constraint variations
- replicable scores
- an archive of embodied responses

This positions NerdPoetry within contemporary arts research as a test of whether constraint-based practices can function as a new mode of poetic form.

6. A Practice for the Present Moment

In an age when everything can be simulated, this practice offers what cannot be copied:
one body, in one location, reaching its safe limit, now.
That is the value.
That is the scarcity.
That is the work.

LINEAGES & REFERENCES

This practice builds on: constraint poetics (Oulipo), instructional scores (Cage, Ono, Fluxus), durational performance (Abramović, Hsieh), and post-digital theory (Cramer, Berry).