

# Allan Wolf

## General Biography

Allan Wolf is an author, poet, performer and educator who lives in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife and three kids. After three years teaching at Virginia Tech, Wolf became the Educational Director for Poetry Alive!, a national touring company that presents theatrical poetry shows for all ages. Wolf is also a founding member of The Dead Poets, a unique band that transforms classic poetry into toe-tapping tunes. An active organizer in the early days of the poetry slam competitions, Wolf's mission has always been to take poetry to the people. His home town made history in 1995 as the smallest city to ever win the coveted National Poetry Slam Championship title. Wolf now writes and presents full time. His books include *The Blood-Hungry Spleen and Other Poems About Our Parts* (Candlewick Press), and *New Found Land: Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery* (Candlewick Press), a novel in verse chosen as a School Library Journal Best Book, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, and an IRA Children's Book Award Notable. His most recent work is a book about writing poems titled, *Immersed In Verse: An Informative, Slightly Irreverent & Totally Tremendous Guide to Living the Poet's Life* (Lark Books). He is a veteran traveler through all the diverse worlds of verse from poetry slams to public schools, salons to saloons. With literally hundreds of poems committed to memory, Wolf is always ready to spin out a stanza or two. Got rhyme?



## Contact Info:

[www.allanwolf.com](http://www.allanwolf.com)

## Schedule & Booking Info:

Loyd Artists  
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## Allan Wolf

**Author. Poet. Performer. Educator. Person.**

**Allan Wolf, the Author.** Allan's published works include two books for teachers, an illustrated book of poems for kids, a how-to book for aspiring poets, a poetry chapbook, and a historical novel in verse. His seventh book, a verse novel for young adults, is due out soon. Allan's writing has earned many honors, including a School Library Journal Best Book, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, and an IRA Children's Book Award Notable. His books of poetry have been selected by Scholastic Book Club, Scholastic Book Fair, and the Children's Book of the Month Club. Wolf was also a finalist for the Southeastern Booksellers' Association Poetry Award.

**Allan Wolf, the Poet.** Wolf writes poems in a variety of styles and for a variety of audiences. His **poems for children** are carefully crafted and full of wonder. His children's poems never preach, but celebrate kids for who they naturally are—good and bad. His **poems for young adults and grown-ups** tackle more complex themes. The people who populate Wolf's poems live normal lives, yet to Wolf they are the heroes and heroines who make our Earth turn. With uncompromising wit and warmth, Wolf's poetry illuminates the beauty and absurdity of being human.

**Allan Wolf, the Performer.** Wolf's unique performance style results from his varied influences. He possesses the edgy intensity of a slam poet, the intellectual sensibility of an academic poet, the theatrical showmanship of an actor, and the aw-shucks ease of an Appalachian storyteller. Add to this a musicality drawn from his long tenure with The Dead Poets, the popular band that transforms classic poems into toe-tapping tunes. Wolf views performance the same way he views writing, as a craft to be mastered. Years of training and experience enable him to hold the attention of any crowd.

**Allan Wolf, the Educator.** Allan's stage savvy is complemented by his experience and skill in the classroom. After earning his Master's Degree in English, he taught writing at Virginia Tech, where he received the Richard L. Hoffman Teaching Award. He left this teaching position to join the poem performance troupe, Poetry Alive!, allowing him to travel the country visiting hundreds of schools and working with literally thousands of students from Pre-K to College. He served for fourteen years as co-director of Poetry Alive!'s Summer Institute for Teachers. Since leaving Poetry Alive!, Wolf writes and presents full time.

**Allan Wolf, the Person.** Allan was born February 26, 1963, raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and now lives in Asheville, NC. He is the father of three children. His pets include four chickens, two turtles, and a bearded dragon. His favorite things to do: reading, writing, playing music (drums and guitar), skateboarding, shootin' hoops, and traveling.

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### Stories

#### AS A CHILD:

Although I wrote poetry at a very early age, my life as a writer officially began on April 12, 1975 just after my twelfth birthday. That was the day I began to write on my bedroom walls. I started small, writing the date lightly in pencil, behind the bed where it couldn't be seen. It felt good. It gave me a feeling of peace and relief, as if I had just scratched a really urgent itch. A few days later I wrote some more. I gradually began using permanent markers and writing out in the open where the words were in full view. I wrote words and phrases, poetry and pictures. I wrote deep thoughts and shallow nonsense. My walls became a diary upon which I recorded the events of my life. I wrote on my walls every day for years until my room had become one huge continual tattoo of words and pictures that spread over all four walls, the ceiling, the floor, even some of the furniture.

#### AS AN ADULT:

I earned my Master's degree in English at Virginia Tech and taught college composition there for a while. I left the classroom to join a traveling troupe of poets and actors that performed poetry as theatre in schools all over the United States. My many years with Poetry Alive! showed me a side of poetry that I never saw in graduate school. Because of my experiences in school and with Poetry Alive!, it was only natural that I became an author of books for young people.

#### AS A WRITER:

My first book for kids, *The Blood-Hungry Spleen and Other Poems About Our Parts*, was inspired by a sixth grade life science class project I saw while working as an artist-in-residence at a school in Seoul, Korea. The kids created an anatomy chart of the human body by writing poems about all the various parts. On the long plane trip back to the U.S., I began writing. Because I consider myself a life-long learner, I like to write books that require some amount of research. My interest in American history led me to write a novel in verse about the Lewis and Clark expedition, *New Found Land*. If I really want to learn about something, I write a book about it.

I usually write by hand onto pads of paper. Then I type it all in later. I type very quickly and very inaccurately. I use an Apple MacBook Pro. With three kids and deadlines to meet, I've gotten pretty good at just plopping down anywhere and getting to work. But my best writing usually requires quiet and solitude. I converted my garage into an office where I am surrounded by wall-to-wall books. My office has a desk for writing, a sitting area for reading, and a "play space" for juggling, memorizing poems, playing the trombone, whatever.

# TEN THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ALLAN WOLF

- 10) Allan is a past National Sonnet Slam Champion.
- 9) Allan can recite hundreds of poems from memory.
- 8) Allan did not like school.
- 7) Allan has a pet chicken named Atilla the Hen.
- 6) Allan has two goldfish named Lewis and Clark.
- 5) Allan plays drums with a band called The Dead Poets.
- 4) Allan never watches television. (He doesn't even own one!)
- 3) To relax Allan plays guitar or juggles.
- 2) Allan dreams of one day living in a house with a secret room.
- 1) Allan can ride a skateboard standing on his hands.

