

The material below serves as a model for the “explanatory headnote” that should be appended to any submission related to the Common Reader. We wanted to illustrate what your first page would look like with the title, the headnote, and the text. We have presented an imaginary scenario where the poem *Beowulf* was the Common Reader. Since the author is unavailable to speak at a convention, this would be an unlikely choice. The headnote would look the same no matter whether the submission was critical or creative. We present a sample of very bad poetry written by our convention chair. It is formatted as if it is the first poem in a collection.

Not At All Fuzzy

[Common Reader Note: This poem responds to the Common Reader by building upon my recollections of reading *Beowulf* for the first time. It also imitates the alliterative meter of the poem. Other explanatory headnotes will make the connections between the submission and the Common Reader clear to evaluators, whether the submitter has composed a work that critically analyzes the Common Reader or that uses the same setting as the Common Reader. The headnote should be no more than 100 words and will not be counted against the 2,000 word limit for the submission.]

The Brown Book

Sandwiched safely between library stacks
She hides behind her Hair, to guarantee
No interlopers disrupt determined reading.
Die-impressed dents announce a name
Selected solely, silently, by old Germans
Crafty critics who reconstruct the words
From burnt edges that bleed their meaning away.
Upon opening her eyes amazement, bliss deferred
Until right rhythms roll from her tongue.