

Marshmallow Clouds: Poems Inspired by Nature by Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek, illustrated by Richard Jones

Walker Books 9781529507072

Look Around: What do you see? A clown balancing a pie in a tree or an empty nest perched on a leafless branch? A frothy wave at the ocean's edge or shiny white pebbles tossed up by the farmer's plough? The poems in this book, framed by the four elements, are about art and reality, fact and fancy, each inspired by the magic of nature.

Poets Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek, along with illustrator Richard Jones invite you to let your imagination run wild and celebrate unique visions.

This collection was shortlisted for the 2023 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre
- To know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from a poetry collection
- To understand that poems are written for different reasons
- To interpret poems for performance
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader

This is a CLIPPA (CLPE Poetry Award) Teaching Sequence for Years 2 to 4

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over 15 sessions, but teachers will want to use their own judgement about the length of time their class will need to spend on each of the sessions.

The first sessions in the sequence look at the purpose of poetry, introduce the two poets and the illustrator and explore children's pre-existing knowledge about poetry. Children will have the opportunity to listen to, respond to and perform a range of poems from the collection to make connections with the poems, their meanings and the types of poetry contained within the collection.

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The next part of the sequence moves on to a focus on poetic form. Within these sessions there will be an exploration of how to create imagery in a poem and the accompanying illustrations and how to convey this effectively in a performance.

The sessions will then explore how poetry can be used to describe personal experiences and evoke an emotional response in a reader. There is a focus on getting to the heart of a poem, understanding the events described and themes raised by exploration of how the poets have used language judiciously and for effect and how the layout of the poems also contribute to their meaning. There will also be a focus on how to convey emotion effectively in a poem and performance. These sessions provide the opportunity to reflect critically upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and group discussion prior to personal reflection on poems explored form an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

Throughout the sequence, pupils will have the opportunity to read poetry, listen to poems being read, offer personal responses to the poems, to prepare them for performance and to write their own. The whole sequence builds towards the chance for the class to write and perform their own poems on a subject of interest to them.

The pupils will have the opportunity to use the knowledge they have gained about poetic form, devices and structure throughout the sequence to decide how to present their poem on the page as well as consider how these could be performed to an audience. The poems will be published in a variety of ways to be shared with the school community and beyond.

Teaching Approaches	Writing Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Aloud Hearing poems performed by a poet Performing poetry Visualisation Observational drawing Looking at Language Re-reading and revisiting poems Responding to poetry Learning about poetry from published poets Modelled writing Responding to writing Publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance of the poet’s poetry Identifying poetic language and devices Text marking and annotations Evaluation of performances Poetry Journal with ideas and inspirations for writing Own written poems Performances of children’s own original poetry

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This collection gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices:

- Alliteration
- Personification and Metaphor
- Enjambment
- Free verse
- Assonance

Cross Curricular Links:

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Many poems in the collection relate to children's direct and personal experiences. They will be able to connect to and share their feelings and experiences linked to family and everyday experiences and the wider world.
- Ensure that the class share a common understanding that there is no expectation that they have to share their responses or personal connections to poems read, but that if they choose to do so this is a safe and secure forum for listening, not judging, and that nothing shared will be shared outside the room or used against anyone or that no one will react in a way that makes anyone sharing experience feelings of shame or disgrace, or be treated in a less favourable way because of anything they choose to share.

Music:

- Performing the poems aloud for an audience allows children to use their voices expressively and creatively.
- Children could explore simple beats and rhythm with body percussion to accompany performances.
- When rehearsing poetry recitals and performances, children could be encouraged to experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.

Art:

- The children could use Richard Jones as an illustrator study to look at drawing techniques for representing nature. Look at materials used, lines drawn, scale and perspective and accuracy, so that readers can easily identify the subjects being represented.
- Children could make their own hand drawn and lettered 'Little Guides' to the nature in the local area, exploring shapes and patterns in the drawings they create.
- Model drawing live for the children so that they can see how certain effects are created, ideally using a visualiser, so that they can see lines and movements accurately. Explore how to add colour using watercolours to mix exact shades and represent objects naturalistically.

Computing:

- Poetry is a wonderful vehicle for exploring how technology can help children to store and organise their writing. Using a word processor, children can input poems and play with how the writing works on the page.
- They can explore line breaks, arrange poems into different formations easily and play with how words and text look for impact on the reader.
- When they are happy with how their poems look, they can save and print these for publication in individual or class collections.

Science:

- When they are happy with how their poems look, they can save and print these for publication in individual or class collections.
- Look closely at the natural and humanly constructed world. Children will need to engage with the natural world using all of their senses when responding to and writing poetry.
- The way the collection is organised allows children to readily engage with, observe and understand the elements and seasonal change. Because of this, you may want to revisit the collection at the start of each new season, revisiting and re-reading poems, allowing children to relate to these in the season in which the poems are based, breathing new life and understanding into the words and emotions within. The weather is a particular focus across the collection, giving ample opportunity to explore this in an authentic context.
- Children can also be supported to name plants and trees in the local environment using books such as Charlotte Voake's *A Little Guide to Trees* and *A Little Guide to Wild Flowers*.
- The poems also offer a way into finding out about animals and their habitats. Native animals, such as birds, small creatures like mice and squirrels, minibeasts and insects including ants, and pets such as cats and dogs are explored throughout the text and illustrations. Children should be given ample opportunity to explore animals in their local environment, naming them and their parts, categorising into groups, and observing their characteristics. To support this, you could set up opportunities to encourage nature into the school environment, such as the children creating bird feeders, bug hotels, hedgehog homes, mini ponds or snail settlements. *The Wild City Book* by Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks has a whole section on 'Wildlife in the City' to support activities like this and Dawn Isaac's *101 Things for Kids to Do Outside* shares how to make a butterfly feeder, build a bird hide, trail ants, watch worms work and many more activities.
- Children could also explore changing states as part of the sequence, looking at how wood changes when it is burned in a fire, the effects of water when mixing mud and sand, and how water freezes in cold temperatures such as icy puddles in winter.

Geography:

- The collection offers a range of opportunities to explore human and physical geography. The focus on weather and physical features of the native environment allows for this to be studied in context and comparisons made with different localities worldwide.

- Children can name and map physical features of their locality and should be encouraged to explore seashores, hills, woods, forests, parks and open spaces near to the school environment.
- The weather can be observed and measured in different ways with specific projects planned to match conditions. *The Wild Weather Book* by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield gives a wide variety of ideas for projects that could support learning in this area.

Links to other texts and resources:

Other books by Ted Kooser:

- *A Man With a Rake*, Ted Kooser (Pulley Press)
- *Cotton Candy, Poems Dipped Out of the Air*, Ted Kooser (University of Nebraska Press)
- *House Held Up by Trees*, Ted Kooser, illustrated by Jon Klassen (Walker Books)

Other books by or featuring illustrator Richard Jones:

- *Perdu*, Richard Jones (Simon & Schuster)
- *Where Have you Been, Little Cat?*, Richard Jones (Simon & Schuster)
- *Little Bear*, Richard Jones (Simon & Schuster)
- *The Squirrel's Busy Year*, Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Richard Jones (Walker Books)
- *Paper Planes*, Jim Helmore, illustrated by Richard Jones (Simon & Schuster)
- *The Proper Way to Meet a Hedgehog and other How To-Poems*, Paul Janeczko, illustrated by Richard Jones (Walker Books)
- *Winter Dance*, Marion Dane Bauer, illustrated by Richard Jones (Houghton Mifflin)

Other poetry collections linked to the natural world:

- *When Poems Fall From the Sky*, Zaro Weil, illustrated by Junli Song (Troika Books)
- *I Am The Seed That Grew The Tree*, selected by Fiona Waters, illustrated by Frann Preston-Gannon (Nosy Crow)
- *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*, selected by Fiona Waters, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup (Nosy Crow)
- *Out and About*, Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *Thinker, My Puppy Poet and Me*, Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Ehsan Abdollahi (Tiny Owl)
- *Hopscotch in the Sky*, Lucinda Jacob, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill (Little Island)
- *Adder, Bluebell, Lobster*, Chrissie Gittins, illustrated by Paul Bonmer (Otter-Barry Books)
- *The Lost Words*, Robert Macfarlane, illustrated by Jackie Morris (Hamish Hamilton)
- *The Lost Spells*, Robert Macfarlane, illustrated by Jackie Morris (Hamish Hamilton)
- *Cosmic Disco*, Grace Nichols, illustrated by Alice Wright (Frances Lincoln)
- *Dancing in the Rain*, John Lyons (Peepal Tree Press)
- *A Year of Nature Poems*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Kelly Louise Judd (Wide Eyed Editions)
- *Hot Like Fire*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Debbie Lush (Bloomsbury)
- *Stars with Flaming Tails*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Ken Wilson Max (Otter-Barry Books)

- *Cherry Moon*, Zoro Weil, illustrated by Junli Song (Troika Books)

Teaching sessions

Before beginning the book:

- Ensure that individual Poetry Journals (small notebooks, which could be handmade) are available for each child to use throughout the unit to note ideas and inspirations. Set the context for how these will be used; they will be for the children's own thoughts, ideas, inspirations and drafts of poems. They will not have to share these with anyone else, unless they specifically want to, but they should be using these all the time to collect and craft ideas for poems that could be worked up to finished pieces at the end of the unit.
- Create a focus display or poetry corner, where you can display a copy of the front cover of the book, a copy of the text and other poems or poetry collections that the children know or could be inspired by (see links to other texts).
- It is useful at the start of a poetry sequence to debunk the myth that exploring poetry means only deconstructing the use of language in the poem or only examining the poetic form and devices, it is primarily and initially about responding emotionally and personally to a poem and considering what it means or says to you individually.

Session 1: Introducing poetry as a genre and the poets and illustrator in this collection

The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of children's knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves. So it is important that it should be as rich, interesting and 'ear-catching' as it can be. It is important that voices other than the teacher's should be heard interpreting a poem. In this way, a range of accents, dialects and voices can be introduced into the reading. It can be particularly valuable for children to hear the poets themselves reading their own poems. This allows authentic voices to be heard.

- Share the front cover and the title of the collection with the children. Read the name of the poets Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek and the illustrator, Richard Jones. *Have the children heard of any of these people before? Do they know what a poet or illustrator is and what they do?* Provide a picture of them for the children to see, and add these to the display alongside the front cover of the text.
- Gather the children's initial responses to the title and the illustrations. Do they find them interesting, intriguing or amusing, for example? How do they work together? What sense do they give you about the kinds of poems you might find in this collection? Jot the children's ideas around a copy of the front cover of the text to add to the poetry display and come back to at the end of the unit.
- Now, watch the illustrator Richard Jones read the first poem in the collection: 'A Disappointment': <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>, without yet sharing

the text or illustration. Give time for the children to share their initial responses to the poem. *What do you like/dislike about the poem? How does the poem make you feel? What makes you feel like this? What do you think the poem is about? What do you think this poem might tell us about the writer? What ideas might it give us about the collection as a whole?*

- If they have not already discussed it, draw their attention to Richard Jones' illustration, which is also itself a response to the poem. *What do you think the illustration aims to convey? Do you like it? Why? Why not? Do you feel it adds to your engagement with and appreciation of the poem? How?* You could ask children to consider how they might illustrate the poem if asked and provide art materials so they can do so. Any artwork created can be added to the children's own Poetry Journals or to a shared Poetry Journal.
- Come back to talk about how the subtitle of this collection: 'Poems About Nature' introduces us to the theme of the whole collection. *What are the children's own thoughts about nature? What does this make you think about the poems in the collection? What sorts of subjects might there be poems about?*
- Now come back to explore the children's initial perceptions of poetry as a genre. What do they think of when the word poetry is mentioned? How do they feel about poetry? Which poets or poems do they know and like? Do they like reading poetry? Performing poetry? Do any of the pupils write their own poetry?
- Take note of the children's responses and perceptions to come back to throughout the sequence. Come together to watch any poets that the children have identified as their favourites, using the videos on CLPE's poetry pages: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets>, about their feelings about poetry and look at the similarities and differences with the feelings of the children. If the children were unable to identify poets that they like, you may wish to share Joseph Coelho and Kate Wakeling talking about how poetry makes them feel.
- Note down any poets and poems mentioned by the children during initial discussions around poetry and ask children to bring in books or copies of their favourite poems. You can help children to source poems and collections in school, using your school or local library if you have one, if they don't have copies of these themselves.
- Read the Afterword from Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek. What do we learn here about the poets' motivations for writing this collection and their views on poetry as a whole? Does this resonate with any of you?
- Poetry gives a wonderful way in to exploring language and vocabulary, including the ways in which words sound and how these look on the page. Come back to look at the words on the page in 'A Disappointment'. Consider the way the poem is written as free verse using enjambment. Enjambment is the continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line, couplet or verse and is a key poetic device used in this collection. *Why has the poem been written like this? How does this affect the way this*

poem may be read aloud? Is this the sort of poem you would think of when asked to think of poetry?

- Return to and re-read the poem and allow time for the children to discuss the poem more deeply, talking about what they like, any questions they have, how the poem sounds to them. *Are there any words or phrases that the children like or that are interesting to them?* They might find some phrases more alluring or memorable, perhaps picking up on poetic devices like assonance or figurative language that aids visualisation, such as ‘clowning around on top of the hill’.
- Divide the children into groups and give each group an enlarged copy of the poem. Have the children read it through for themselves, tuning in to the narrative and highlighting words or phrases that they find interesting or puzzling. *How might they read these with expression for an audience to bring out the meaning of the words on the page?* Allow the children to play with ideas then come together to share with the other groups.

Session 2: Initial Response and Performance

If poetry is not given a voice, if it just stays on the page as a printed object, then it is not going to come alive for most children. Giving voice and sound to poetry is an important key to unlocking the meanings and music contained in each poem. It is through performing poetry that the quality of rhyme and verse form, and the power of language can be explored and realised. Presenting poetry to an audience in this way might also lead children to recognise more clearly the humour in a poem or reflect more thoughtfully on its meaning.

- Begin the session by briefly reviewing the previous session:
 - Why do you think poetry is important, why do we write it, and what is it for?
 - What impression did the opening poem ‘A Disappointment’ make on you?
 - How do you feel about reading further into the collection?
 - What expectations do you have?
- Explain that in this session the children will be looking at the collection as a whole and will have the opportunity to deepen their response to one of the poems through performance.
- Read the blurb on the cover sleeve to the children titled ‘Look Around’. Here we learn more about the collection being ‘inspired by the magic of nature’ and ‘framed by the four elements’. Provide a list of the titles of all the poems in the collection on strips of paper and encourage the children to organise these titles under four headings: Fire, Water, Earth and Air. *How did they decide where to place the poems just from the title? Does the title of the poem give us any clues about what the poem might be about? Which poems were easy to categorise, and which were not? Why?*

- Show the children how the poems are organised into the four elements as follows:

Fire	Water	Air	Earth
Meteor Shower	Boat	Tawny Owl	Winter Ponies
Thunderstorm	Spring	Fly Swatter	Book
July	The World Without Me	June Afternoon	A Bad Dream
A Secret	Tadpole	Marshmallows	The Village Tennis Court
Fuel	Why Pets Don't Write	Harpist	Barn
In November	Sleep	Remote	Cow Pie
Fireplace		Butterfly Luck	Trees

- Now they can see the poem titles organised in this way, invite the children to share their initial responses. What more do they think they might know about what these poems might be about? What do they expect from these titles? Are there any poems that they are instantly drawn to and want to read to find out more?
- Encourage the children to share with each other within small groups which ones they are drawn to and begin to consider what the poems could be about. Model this process to the children by talking about which poem titles you are drawn to and provide reasons why.
- Establish that poetry tends to draw on personal experiences, often of the poet but also that poetry can spark a personal connection in us. *Are there any poem titles that you can make a personal connection with? Why might this be?*
- Introduce the poem 'The World Without Me', which is written in first person and encourages us to think about the way in which the poet connects with the poem itself but also with the theme of the poem. Remind the children of the thoughts of Ted Kooser in the afterword to support this.
- First, invite the children to explore and respond to the illustration. What do you notice? What do you understand about what could be happening here? How does the picture make you feel?
- Invite the children to offer predictions as to the content of this poem. *What kinds of*

things do they expect to hear given the title and illustration? Children could draw on the illustration to think about how this might spark their real world knowledge of what is depicted as well as making intertextual connections. Note the children's ideas and responses around a copy of the illustration on the working wall or class poetry journal. This will allow opportunity for the children to be introduced to, express and access vocabulary that they may encounter in the poem they are about to hear.

- Now read the poem aloud. Allow the children to discuss their responses to the poem in small groups and then as a whole class. What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? Why? What did you picture in your mind as you were listening? Were there any words or phrases that stood out and helped you create the picture in your mind?
- Give out copies of the illustrated poem for the children to read in more detail and annotate. As in the previous session allow time for them to respond to the language and layout of the poem as well as the illustrated response. *What do they notice? What words or phrases interest them the most? Are there any words or phrases that you are unsure about? How could you find out what they mean? What has the illustrator picked up on in the poem? What else might you add to this illustration?* Following this session, the children could be provided with larger sheets of paper, and drawing or collage materials with which to extend the illustration with any description or imagery they enjoyed in the poem.
- Still working in their groups, ask the children to think about how they could perform this poem for others to listen to. Will they split the poem into parts? Will there be parts they perform together? How will they use timbre, tempo and dynamics to create effects? Are there words or phrases that might be whispered or echoed or shouted or sung? Are there places where they might slow the reading down and others where it could be sped up?
- Give them time to annotate their copies of the poem ready to perform and then to rehearse. After sufficient rehearsal time, invite groups to share their performances. Consider any aspects of the poem that came through strongly in the different performances. *Were there some groups which captured a particular image or moment from the poem? What impact did this have on you as a listener?*
- After listening to the poem, take time to reflect on the possible meanings and feelings behind the poem more deeply. What do you think the poem tells us about the natural world around us? How did the poet's viewpoint come through in the performances?
- Having spent time reading and re-reading the poem aloud, is there anything else they notice about the language, the form or the structure? Children might talk about the enjambment, imagery or any recurring patterns that they have spotted.
- How would they compare it to the first poem that was shared from the collection?
- Now listen to Richard Jones reading this poem:
<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>. How does it compare to their own

performance?

- Explain that this poem is rooted in personal experiences that the poet has had with walking after the rain. Have they ever had a similar experience? How did they feel? What is memorable about this experience? Are there any images from the poem that evoke these memories in particular?

Session 3: Performance and Movement

- Share three further poems from the collection with the class: 'In November', 'Butterfly Luck' and 'Sleep'.
- In groups or as a whole class, allow children to start by responding to them as they have the previous two poems from the collection. *What did the poems make them think about? How did they make them feel? What words or phrases particularly interested them? Did they notice anything else on a first listen? Is there a poem that they prefer? Why?*
- Now guide the children's thinking toward poetry performance; *If they were going to choose one of these poems to perform which would they choose and why? How do they think it would be best performed; individually, in pairs or in a small or larger group? What might they do to help lift the poem from the page? What would bring a performance of the poem to life?* Recap some of the performance choices that were made during the previous session – tone of voice, timbre, dynamics, tempo. *Are there any of these poems – or the others we have read so far – where the performance would be enhanced by movement from the performers?*
- Discuss as a class some of the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating movement into a performance. Too much movement or ill-considered actions can be distracting and detract from the meaning of the poem; while carefully considered, well-chosen movement decisions can emphasise the meaning and support the audience in appreciating some of the nuances of language, imagery, theme and sense.
- Ask children to decide which poem they would like to prepare for a performance. It might be one of the 3 poems introduced in this session or one of the poems from a previous session that they would like to return to and refine the performances already begun. Organise children into groups according to their preference. In addition to the aspects of performance that they were considering in the previous session, ask them to consider how well-chosen movements (including how the people in the group are positioned in the space) might enhance the meaning and emotional response that they are trying to communicate.
- Share the advice of Steven Camden on performing poetry:
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/steven-camden-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry> Consider what he says about what the poem makes you feel and how you should 'find your point of connection' in the poem, 'speaking as though you mean it'. Encourage the children to think back to how they felt when they read the words. *How can they use their performance to share these feelings?* If you have children who may be reluctant to

perform in front of their peers, you could share the advice of Roger McGough on performing poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/roger-mcgough-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry>

- Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance. Allow the pupils to watch, reflect on and evaluate each other's performances. You might also share videos of other school groups who have submitted videos for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme in the past. *How have they used movement and voice effectively to communicate to the audience?* Shadowing Scheme videos can be found here: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry>
- If you are completing this session before 15th June 2023, this could be filmed and submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme to win poetry prizes, including the opportunity to perform as part of the 2023 ceremony, see: https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/CLiPPA/shadowing_scheme

Session 4: Telling a story with poetry: Exploring Free Verse & Narrative Poetry

Free Verse poems have no rhyming structure and often don't have a particular rhythm or syllable patterns; like their name suggests, they are simply 'free'. Free verse, like abstract art, is where the definition of poetry becomes complicated. Reading free verse poetry and discussing with the children why it is a poem, what about where the lines break and the use of longer or shorter lines support meaning making in the poem can support children's understanding. It is very important that children have the opportunity to practise reading these poems aloud using the punctuation and the line breaks to support their reading. Free verse is by far the most common form that contemporary poetry is written in.

Narrative poems tell a story, usually about a very specific moment in time. They can be written in rhyme and with strict rhythmic pattern but are most often in free verse.

- Begin the session by listening to Richard Jones perform 'July': <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/ted-koosner>
- Allow chances for the children to respond initially to the poem. *How does this poem make them feel? What makes them feel this way? What do they like about the poem? Does it remind them of anything? What does it make them think about? Does anything in the poem surprise them?*
- Now, give a copy of the poem to mixed pairs or small groups of children to re-read and discuss. Allow them time and space to share their thoughts, observations, to look at the language used and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The fact that the poem doesn't rhyme. In fact, none of the poems in this collection rhyme. *What would we call this type of poem?* You could explore the

range of [poetic forms](#) shared on the poetry section of CLPE's website and decide which best fits this poem. You could also go on to look at what else it is that makes this piece of writing poetic, focusing on some of the [poetic devices](#) shared on the poetry section of CLPE's website.

- The imagery the poem creates in the descriptions, and what this makes them think about or how it makes them feel. They may pick out the use of similes and metaphors, in particular such as 'boiled and salted like a peanut' 'I was the meat in a heat sandwich'
 - The use of alliteration, such as 'crimson crayon' '...sun set and someone let the crickets out' 'firecrackers and flags'
 - The way that some lines run into the next. This is known as enjambment. Why do you think the poet uses this device here? What difference does it make? What affect does it have on us? How does this technique strengthen the imagery he creates for us?
 - What message they think the poet is trying to convey and what affect the use of imagery has on creating this message.
 - The way that this poem tells a story about a summer's day. *What makes this a poem, rather than just a narrative?*
 - What this poem inspires in their own thinking. What would they say about the month of July or indeed any other month of the year?
- Follow up by reading the poem 'Winter Ponies'. Give the children time and space to reflect on their initial responses to this poem. *What do they like/dislike about this poem? What is puzzling them? Can they make any connections to 'July' or other poems we have read so far?*
 - Explore in more depth the similarities and differences between this poem and 'July' both in terms of the content of the poem but also in the way it has been written to tell a story. *What narratives are the poems creating? Do any of these narratives resonate with you?*
 - Follow up by discussing how poetry can be written in a way that tells a story. This can sometimes be called Narrative Poetry. *Are there other poems in the collection that we have heard so far that tell a story or describe a particular moment in time?* The children may make links back to 'A Disappointment', which looked at the poet's thoughts on a particular situation in time and what events occurred during that time.
 - Encourage the children to think about something in their own lives that could be told as a narrative poem. This may prove difficult for children, so give the children some quiet time – at least 15 minutes - to sit, stare and think. *Do random thoughts, questions or ideas come to mind? Can they focus on a particular event or time of year that is important to them?* You may want to watch Ruth Awolola and Kate Wakeling talking about how they go about generating ideas in their writing as a starting point for this:
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/ruth-awolola-how-do-you-go-about-writing-your-poetry>
 and <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/kate-wakeling-how-do-you-go-about-writing-your->

poetry

- As things do occur to them, ask the children to jot down or doodle ideas in their Poetry Journals. They may like to theme these around a mind map, like Ruth does or write a splurge on the page like Kate does. As an enabling adult and model of the creative process, ensure that you do this in your own Poetry Journal, alongside the children.
- At the end of this focused time, ask the children to look back at the jottings they have made. *Did they have a number of different thoughts or a few thoughts that developed over time?* Share some of your own thoughts and ideas to open up the process and show that these do not have to be sophisticated ideas.
- Ask them to look over what they've done and pull out something that could have the potential to be built upon. Ask them to write this thing at the top of a new page in their journal and to use this stimulus to complete a piece of stream of consciousness writing. For this, give the children 5-10 minutes to pick up a pen and just keep writing. Encourage them to ignore punctuation, style, grammar, format - anything that stops them from writing. The idea behind stream of consciousness writing is that you write in a state of flow. It involves you writing down whatever comes to mind. Do this yourself alongside the children.
- After this period of writing, ask the children to come back to read over what they've written and to text mark and highlight anything that might be good inspiration to build up into a poem about their particular event or moment in time.
- Give the children a period of independent writing time, where they are able to work up these ideas into a poem of their own, drawing back on the two poems read to look at poetic forms and devices that they could use in their own writing. As they work on their poems, allow them to consider how and why they will break up lines and verses, drawing on what they found effective in the poets' own work. Work on your own poem alongside the children as they write, sharing your own process with any children who are struggling to get going or who need support in the craft of writing.
- When they have had chance to work up a draft, allow time for them to read this aloud to a response partner, who can tell them what they liked about their work, ask them questions about it, discuss any challenges and suggest improvements as a reader. Model this process by sharing your own work with the children first, looking at how to make edits on the page as challenges are explored and suggestions are made. Model that writing is a tentative, rough and often messy process as you shape ideas into a finished piece.
- When they have acted on the response, allow them time to present their poem for publication. This might be writing it up in presentation handwriting, typing up on a word processor or filming a performance of their finished poem. Collect these together and make a display, around copies of the two poems that stimulated their ideas. Allow the children time to reflect on their work and that of others, talking about what they liked, what they found challenging and how they feel about the finished compositions.

Session 5: Identifying & Using Imagery and Figurative Language

Imagery, in a literary or poetic sense, is the author's use of description and vivid language, deepening the reader's understanding of the work, by appealing to the senses.

- Prior to this session, you will need to prepare to light and experience a fire in a safe space in or around the setting. This is a valuable outdoor learning experience, but appropriate risk assessments will need to take place to prepare for this. *The Stick Book* by Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks (Frances Lincoln) has clear and helpful guidance in Project 01 – Share the Magic of a Fire. You will also need to be aware of any children who may have experienced the danger of fire and decide how best to mediate or deliver this session if this is the case for any of the children in your care.
- Watch Richard Jones read aloud the poem 'Fireplace': <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>, allowing the children to absorb and respond to the language and imagery contained in the poem. Allow time for the children to share their initial feelings and ideas about the poem, noting initial responses around a large copy of the poem in the shared journal or on the working wall. Look at the accompanying illustration and consider their initial impressions of 'fire' from this. Also record these thoughts around a copy of the illustration.
- Ask the children if they have ever been near a real fire. *Where was it, what was it like? Look at the way that the poet has described fire as 'a good eater' and 'never full, never satisfied'. What do they think this means? What other words or phrases do they notice that indicate what the fire is like?* Note children's ideas around the poem. Be sensitive here that children may know about or have experienced the severe dangers of fire and this will need to be explored sensitively with the children in additional PSED sessions. An accompanying visit from a Fire Officer on fire safety would be a useful cross-curricular addition to this session.
- Allow the children to experience safely a real fire being lit and burning. It is important not to be overly apprehensive about this activity but at the same time, do not expect every child to take part if this is an uncomfortable experience for them. Sitting around a fire as a group: learning, listening and singing can be a wonderfully communal and magical experience for children. It will stimulate their senses by letting them feel its warmth. They will watch the flames dance and experience its rich smell. As the children watch, allow them to talk about and describe what they see, feel, hear and smell, capturing the language of this multisensory experience. Re-read the poem to the children around the fire a couple of times, encouraging them to focus on the elements of the poem that most resonate with them, following this experience.
- After safely extinguishing the fire, return to the classroom to reflect on the experience. Read the poem aloud again, sharing the words and illustration with the children. Ask them this time to focus on the language used by the poets in the poem, which helps us to picture the fire, feel what it is like and see it in our minds. *Why do you think they start the poem by saying 'We keep our fire safe in a playpen'? Is it really? Why is it compared to a happy wolf pup? This is a*

simple use of metaphor which helps build a picture in the reader's mind of what the fire is like. How is the use of personification allowing us to understand how the fire 'behaves'? How does this add to the analogy of a 'happy wolf pup'? How does this compare to our own experiences of the fire?

- Personification is a feature of the collection as a whole and will be explored more closely in later sessions of this sequence.
- Ask the children to recall their experience of seeing the fire, sharing photos and videos of the experience to allow them to recollect more readily. What words and phrases would they use to describe: how the fire looked, how the fire smelt, what the fire sounded like, how it felt to be around the fire.
- Encourage the children to make notes of these words and phrases on word cards and sentence strips around a photo of the experience on the working wall. *Could they think of other things the fire was like? Other words to describe what it did? Things that happened around the fire?*
- Allow the children the time and space to draft their own poem to share their experience of being around the fire, using descriptive words and phrases gleaned from the real experience of being around the fire earlier in the session. Be clear to the children that it is their own personal reflection of the experience and they should describe it in a way that reflects their feelings about seeing and being near the fire.
- Model writing your own poem that shares how to do this with the children. First, share clearly how the experience made you feel and therefore shapes the language you might choose and use. If you thought that it was dazzling, but a bit scary at the same time, draw on how the poet put a cautionary phrase at the end of the poem to remind ourselves of the danger. Don't try to copy the structure of the poem, allow children to use language and structure that fits what they want to say, reflects their feelings and allows a reader to put themselves in their shoes. Talk about how you might shape your language using your experience - "the way the flames were moving looked like they were dancing, so I think I'll describe them as 'dancing flames, or I could just describe the fire as a dancer, like the poet described it as a happy wolf pup. How about a dazzling dancer?"". Draft as you would a first attempt, crossing out and changing things as better ideas come or as words are unnecessary so that children can see how to shape initial ideas into a poetic form.
- Allow time and space for children to try this out for themselves. Encourage them to read their words aloud as they write, trying things out, changing things and adding ideas. Ensure they know this is a draft and not a presentation piece of writing and they will be able to write it up to share when they are happy with what they have written. Work with groups and individuals to respond to writing and guide how the writing could be further shaped and developed.
- When they get to a point where they are happy with their draft, have them read it aloud to a partner and allow them to share responses before helping the children publish and present these. You could reflect on your own draft and this point and share with the children how you would work with it for publication, thinking about how it will be arranged on the page, where

line breaks might be, how it might be illustrated and how this might affect where the words sit. When they are ready to publish, they may want to use presentation handwriting, publish using ICT or read aloud into a voice recorder.

- Share the finished poems in a published anthology in a scrapbook presented with photos or the children's own illustrations, or as part of a wider display.

Session 6: Poetry Papering & Performance

As poetry has developed, it has become more page oriented. It is vital that children are given the opportunity to hear how poetry sounds different from narrative through regular exposure and to begin to make connections between the forms and devices that poets use and their impact on meaning.

- Explain that today they are going to explore some of the other poems in the collection and work up one of these to perform themselves.
- In preparation for this session, make copies of the following poems:
 - Meteor Shower
 - Thunderstorm
 - A Secret
 - Fuel
 - Why Pets Don't Write
 - Tawny Owl
 - Fly Swatter
 - Cow Pie
 - Remote
 - Book
- Pin these poems up around the classroom or another space for the children to find and explore at their leisure. They can read, pass over, move on and then select one they'd like to talk about with someone else. This encourages the children to enjoy the experience of simply reading a poem, to relish the uncertainties of meanings and the nature of the knowledge and emotional responses that poems invoke in them as readers. Tell them to stand in front of the poem they most want to investigate more and allow groups to take the poem back to tables for further work.
- Let them discuss their initial responses, why they selected this poem, how it made them feel, what they were particularly drawn to, personal connections they have with the poem, what it made them think about or questions it raised. *What is the picture they see in their minds as they read the poem or hear it read aloud? Is it the same as or different from others in the group?*
- Watch Richard Jones talking about which poems stood out for him in this collection: Does any of what he says resonate with you? What has he noticed/got to say that puzzles you or makes you think differently?
- Now encourage the children to look more deeply at the poem, exploring the use of

language. You can use this as an opportunity to introduce children to the names of specific forms or devices to look at what makes their chosen poem poetic, particularly given that these poems are free verse. You might introduce this by way of what Michael Rosen calls ‘secret strings’ (*What is Poetry?* Walker 2016). He talks about the importance of discovering how the poet might have used assonance, alliteration, imagery, rhythm and sound. *Can they identify any of these in their chosen poem?*

- Next, give time for the children to work up their chosen poem for performance. *Would it be best performed individually, in pairs or as a group? How will you pace the performance? How will you use your voice(s) to help share a clear picture of this moment? Will you use any movement or action? Will you emphasise the rhythm in the words?* Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance.
- Give time for the pupils to watch, reflect on and evaluate each other’s performances. *What impact did the individual performances have on you as a listener? What did each interpretation add to your understanding of the anthology as a whole? To what kinds of themes or subjects do these poems relate? Are there any connections to other poems we have already heard? How else do these poems help us to understand the world around us? How does this affect the way in which we perform them? What tone do we adopt? How do we include our audience?*
- If you are completing this session before the 15th June 2023, this could be filmed and submitted for the CLIPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes.

Session 7: Visualisation

Developing children’s response to poetry requires teachers to be innovative and creative themselves. Teachers need to model and encourage all forms of imaginative responses for pupils, allowing them to express ideas freely through a range of approaches, such as music, drama, dance and art.

- Briefly recap the children’s thoughts about the collection so far.
- Use the whiteboard or a visualiser to revisit some of the poems that have already been shared during this sequence. *How do Richard Jones’s illustrations capture his response to each poem?*
- You may want to watch the videos that Richard has made which talk about how he goes about illustrating, both for this collection but also for poetry in general by visiting these pages of the CLPE website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>.
- Explain that you are going to read aloud another poem from the collection – ‘Spring’. As you read, it is important not to reveal the accompanying illustration to the children.
- This time, as you read, say that you would like them to close their eyes and try to visualise what is being described in their mind’s eye. *Are there any words or phrases that they found interesting or memorable; that they are particularly drawn to or that inspire strong*

images? The children’s visualisation may not be based on literal description; it might be an image that comes to mind because of an emotion or a memory – a personal response that they have.

- Hand out art materials – you may wish to give them some element of choice in what they use (watercolours, pastels, coloured pencils, ink, cartridge paper) – and explain that you are going to read the poem two or three more times and when they have a clear mental picture, maybe after another reading, you would like them to draw what they picture in their mind as you are reading. Give sufficient time for children to complete their drawings, perhaps reading aloud the poem again, if necessary, while they are working.
- As the children complete their artwork, ask them to annotate any words or phrases that could be used to describe what they visualised – these might be words or phrases that they remember from the poem, or their own words inspired by their visualisation.
- Then ask them to share their drawing with the person next to them, explaining what they were trying to convey; what they were feeling or the imagery they were trying to capture in their artwork. *What was it in the poem that helped you visualise it?*
- You may wish to conduct a gallery walk; allowing children time to walk around the room looking at all of the artwork created by their peers and considering the similarities and differences amongst the range of work and why these might be.
- Compare the children’s artistic responses with the illustrator’s. *To which aspect of the poem is the illustrator responding? How is it similar or different?*
- Invite the children’s emotional responses to the poem. *How did the poem make them feel? How did they show this in their artwork?* Consider the way in which the poem is organised as a short narrative episode. *What event is taking place in this poem? Do the children have any experience of this for themselves?*
- Share a video of a tractor ploughing a field in spring (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scViO6n6PbA> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUyUioNSfR8>) to support children’s understanding of the imagery being created by the poem and that of Richard’s accompanying illustration.
- After discussing children’s initial response and visualisation in relation to the poem, display the poem for children to read for themselves and allow time, either as a whole class or in small groups for children to explore the layout, language and some of the poetic devices used. Starting by asking children to share which words or phrases or patterns of language they were drawn to, is a good way to start understanding the possibilities of playing and experimenting with poetic devices for their own writing. *Why has the poet chosen this word or phrase? What does he want us to think and feel and imaging? How does the poet bring Spring alive for us? Is this what we think about when we think of Spring?*
- Some patterns or ideas that you and the children may raise in discussions include the use of:
 - Line breaks – Why does the poet break the lines where they do? What impact might this have on the way we read it?

- Metaphor – ‘black waves foamy with pebbles’. What difference does this make to the way we imagine the tracks the tractor makes?
- Personification – ‘a sky reaching out in every direction...’ How does this image support our understanding of what the sun is doing?
- The significance of the robin’s egg in the last two lines. How does ending with this image exemplify the season of spring and the intricacies of nature?
- Capture children’s responses to the poem and display on the Working Wall or add to your class Poetry Journal alongside their artwork.

Sessions 8 & 9: Response to illustration

- For these sessions, prepare to take the children to a nearby natural green space such as a local park or wood, where they can be part of the environment and describe and feel what it is like to be there. It is a good idea for you to visit first so that you can not only assess the potential risks or hazards but also to familiarise yourself with the space and what is there to support the children in becoming familiar with the environment. Conduct appropriate risk assessments and go through safety with the children and supporting adults beforehand, including what natural objects are safe and which hold risks, knowing that growing plants and wild flowers should not be picked etc.
- Before exploring further afield, begin this session by sharing the illustrations for ‘June Afternoon’ covering the text of the poem.
- Allow the children time to respond to the illustration, discussing what they can see, what the character might be doing and the fact that this illustration was also chosen as the cover illustration. *How do you feel about it now that you see the whole illustration? What does this add to your understanding of what could be happening here? Is anything familiar about this to you?* Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the picture and to talk together about what it contributes to their understanding. Lingering over pictures in this way invites prediction about possible themes and language that might be contained in the poem, and these possibilities can soon be modified and re-assessed when the text is shared. When discussing pictures, encourage children to point to evidence in the illustrations for their ideas and interpretations.
- Ask the children what they think the poem could be about and whether they could suggest what the title could be. They may want to look back at the list they created in the earlier session.
- Ask the children if they have ever done something similar to the character in the illustration – laying in an open space and looking up. *How did they feel? What were they thinking?*
- Go out into the playground or a similar outdoor space in the school grounds and encourage the children to lay down on the ground and look up at the sky. Encourage them to verbalise their thinking with a partner during this activity. *What is going through their mind? How do they feel? How do their experiences compare to each other? How about to the character in the illustration?*

- Encourage the children to capture their initial thoughts in their poetry journal and explain that later on we are going to be going to a local open space to spend an extended period of time outside exploring the environment around us more fully.
- Return to the classroom and come back to the illustration, this time revealing the text and reading the poem aloud, at least twice.
- Ask the children to discuss how the poem makes them feel and what experiences in the poem compared with their own experiences of being outside. *Did they use the same words or phrases to describe the experience?*
- It is likely that the children would not have described the experience in the same way as the poem does so this is a further opportunity to explore the poetic language used. Provide children with a copy of the poem in mixed pairs or groups and encourage them to highlight the particular words and phrases that help the reader to gain a picture of what the character in the illustration might be feeling about this June afternoon. The children are likely to discuss the use of metaphor to create the analogy of cobwebs being brushed away with a broom and what the poet might mean by this, the way the poem is written as free verse and what impact this has on the reader and what the message of the poem could be. *How does this compare with the other poems we have read so far? What do you think the poet meant by 'how did it come to this?'*
- Encourage the children to think about why it is important to take the time to stop and consider the world around us. *Do we spend enough time, taking stock of what we have? Do we enjoy spending time in the outside world? What sort of activities do we like to engage with when outside?*
- Share some videos from 2015 CLIPPA winner Joseph Coelho and CLIPPA 2021 winner Michael Rosen who talk about what inspires them to write, and how often poems come from what they have experienced and how important it is to have a notebook to capture these moments: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/joseph-coelho-what-inspires-you-poet>
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/michael-rosen-what-inspires-you-poet>
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/joseph-coelho-how-do-you-go-about-writing-your-poetry>
- Now that you have had time to explore the poem and listen to some poets talking about their experiences, take the children out into a local open space to create an experience with which they could be inspired to write a poem.
- Take the book or a laminated copy of the poem with you for reference in the space as well as some tarpaulin or a groundsheet big enough for the children to sit on in the space if it is likely to be wet underfoot. Ensure the children take their poetry journals, or a small notebook (these can be easily handmade) to capture descriptive language, make sketches etc, following the advice from Joseph Coelho.
- Allow plenty of time for the children to explore and ask questions about this environment using all of their senses. Supervise and support the children in identifying and naming features and objects in their surroundings.
- Take lots of video and photographs to capture the children's experiences in this

environment and make lots of observations of the children, capturing language that may be useful to draw on back in the classroom. Encourage them to use their personal sketchbooks to capture experiences through words, drawing and collecting safe and non-living objects for themselves. Encourage all the adults to make their own notes and drawings alongside the children and make your own too.

- Allow some time for the children to experience quiet time in this space. Look at the illustration of the boy laying in the grass and have the children replicate this pose on the ground, just like they did back in school.
- Read the poem aloud to focus their attention and settle them.
- As they are silent, encourage them to slowly take in the sights, smells and sounds around them and to focus their attention on how they feel in this space. Urge them to be really still and silent, noticing the small things. Give time for them to make notes or drawings describing their thoughts in their sketchbooks whilst quietly reflecting. Again, encourage all the adults to do this themselves alongside the children.
- Spend some time, whilst still in the space, sharing the things the children, you and the adults noticed in the setting, and how they have been described. Make notes alongside the earlier observations of the children of language that may be useful back in the classroom.
- When back in school, come back together to reflect on the trip to the natural space by looking at the photographs and/or videos taken and allowing the children to revisit their personal notebooks/journals
- Revisit the 'June Afternoon' poem and reflect on the description of this place. This was quite a large open space. *How do the words and phrases reflect that?*
- Now reflect again on what the wood or forest space was like in comparison, were you in a small and enclosed section or were you in a wide, open section? It might also be useful to revisit other poems like 'In November', 'July' and 'Spring' to look at some of the effective figurative language used. *What figurative language can we use to describe where we were? What could we see, hear, smell around us? How did it feel to be there? How could we describe this effectively for another person who hasn't been there?*
- Allow the children the time and space to draft their own poem to share their experience of being in the green space, using descriptive words and phrases gleaned from the real experience of being there. Be clear to the children that it is their own personal reflection of the experience and they should describe it in a way that reflects their own personal experience and the things they noticed, much like 'June Afternoon' is the boy's personal reflection of that space.
- Model writing your own poem that shares how to do this with the children. Talk first about how you felt in the space. Draft as you would a first attempt, crossing out and changing things as better ideas come or as words are unnecessary so that children can see how to shape initial ideas into a poetic form.
- Allow time and space for children to try this out for themselves. Encourage them to read their words aloud as they write, trying things out, changing things and adding ideas. Ensure

they know this is a draft and not a presentation piece of writing and they will be able to write it up to share when they are happy with what they have written. Work with groups and individuals to respond to writing and guide how the writing could be further shaped and developed. When they get the words right, recommend that they think about a fitting title for the poem, explore some different ideas for your own poem before giving them time and space to try out ideas for their own titles.

- When they get to a point where they are happy with their draft, have them read it aloud to a partner and allow them to share responses before helping the children publish and present these.
- Reflect on your own draft at this point and share with the children how you would work with it for publication, thinking about how it will be arranged on the page, where line breaks might be, how it might be illustrated and how this might affect where the words sit. When they are ready to publish, they may want to use presentation handwriting or publish using a word processor so that they can play with layout more easily.
- Share the finished poems in a published anthology in a scrapbook presented with photos or the children's own illustrations, or as part of a wider display. Allow those that wish to perform their finished pieces to the class or a wider invited audience if they wish to, perhaps consider performing outside and the impact this may have on the way it is performed. Encourage them to think about how the volume, pace and tone they use for reading could reflect how they felt about the place, drawing on what they learnt from Steven Camden about performance reading in session 3.

Session 10: Exploring Personification in Poetry

Personification is a poetic device where animals, plants or even inanimate objects, are given human qualities – resulting in a poem full of imagery and description.

- Share the poems 'Barn' and 'A Bad Dream' and play the video of Richard Jones reading aloud 'Trees': <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>.
- Allow children time in groups and then as a whole class to respond to the poems; how they made them feel, what they were particularly drawn to, personal connections they have with the poems, what they made them think about or questions they raised.
- Draw attention to how the poet uses language to make something beautiful of something ordinary, imbuing an everyday object with human emotion. In today's session, the children have the opportunity to widen their examination of this technique and to develop their own craft as writers.
- Split the class into six groups and distribute copies of these poems (with illustrations) so that two groups are each looking at one of these poems. Allow time and space for each group to explore their poem more closely, taking time to read it to themselves and to each other and to share their responses now they have seen these on the page.

- Support children to go beyond their initial responses by considering the way the poem looks on the page, and looking in detail at how the poet uses layout and punctuation, word choices and imagery in their poem.
- These general questions could be provided, on the IWB for example, to support their discussions:
 - What language most engages you, provokes a specific response or evokes a particular emotion?
 - What do you notice about the way the poem is laid out? How do the line breaks leave room for consideration, or shift or highlight emphasis?
 - What do you think the illustrator has seen in the poem, which has influenced his illustration choices?
 - How do you personally connect with the poem? Does it remind you of anything you have seen, felt, or experienced?
 - Has the poet used any specific techniques or devices that deepen our understanding as a reader, or help us connect with the poem or its themes more deeply?
- Encourage the children to look for where the poet has described the subject of the poem or elements of the poem using personification. Some examples they may discuss include the way the dream is described as 'trying my door' or the moon 'wearing latex gloves' in 'A Bad Dream' or the way the old barn's feelings are described as though it is human and how it 'pulls on its patched-up underwear of rotten boards' in 'Barn' and the way the trees are described as having brothers and sisters and how they 'reach out to touch each other' in 'Trees'.
- Then pair together the two groups who have looked at the same poem, inviting them to share, compare and contrast their responses to and understanding of the poem.
- Finally have each pair of groups share their poem with the whole class, reading it aloud and also outlining what they think the poet is saying and how. Support them in establishing what the similarities and differences are between the three poems, so that in each case, the children can focus on what has interested him, what feelings his representation evokes, and how he has achieved this.
- Now go out of the class to the playground or school grounds, so that the children can find an everyday inanimate object for themselves to be the subject of their own poetic study. They should take their Poetry Journals so that they can sketch the object in situ, and make notes on why it interested them, the feeling or mood it evokes, what it reminds them of, or what it might be doing, thinking or saying, using personification.
- When they return to the classroom they can consider how they can now represent their object to a reader, and what it is about it that they want to bring out, learning from Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek about how to create imagery and use language for effect on a reader, as well as learning from the choices they make in layout

through line and stanza breaks, to bring key words into focus or mark a shift of emphasis. They can also consider how they might illustrate their poem, and how their drawing can work with and beyond the text.

- It would be valuable to complete this exercise yourself alongside the children, modelling how you select an object and sketch and take notes on it in situ before working your ideas into a draft, reading aloud what you have written to fine tune your word choices and imagery, and how you use punctuation, line breaks and breaks between stanzas to pace and give rhythm to your reading. As well as reading your own draft, invite children to share what they have written, so that the class can give each other feedback on what they like and notice, and what might be improved.

Session 11: Writing own poems in response to the collection: Ideation

Following an authentic model for writing in the classroom allows students to feel what it is like to be a writer. It is so much more than simply 'doing' writing tasks.

Following an authentic process results in well-developed pieces of writing; pupils follow a truly creative process and have the impetus to write for themselves.

The core focus of an authentic writing process is on giving pupils a credible opportunity to develop their own voice, have a choice about what they want to say and how they say it and the chance to write with freedom.

Ideation is the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring where and how we get ideas from in the real world of writing and giving pupils time, space and stimulus to begin to form and shape ideas for their own writing for real life purposes and audiences.

- Reflect on all the poems that have been read in the collection so far. How would you describe the different poems? Do you agree with the way they were categorised as outlined in session 2? How might you organise them now that you know the poems themselves? What ideas do these poems give you about what poetry is and what it could be? What ideas do you have for poems of your own?
- Often, when people talk to writers about their work, one of the most commonly asked questions is where they get their ideas from. Listen to 2022 CLIPPA shortlisted poet, Matt Goodfellow talk about where he gains inspiration for his poetry on his poet page on the CLPE website: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-what-inspires-you-poet> as well as the earlier videos shared from Joseph Coelho and Michael Rosen. Ask children to reflect on what Matt in particular said and talk in pairs or small groups to list as many places as they can think of where a person can get ideas to help their writing. After a couple of minutes, get children to report back and create a class list. *Where can we get ideas from?* Children might mention: things that we see/notice, something heard, memories, other books that we've read, a song that

we heard, dreams, imagination, daydreaming, playing, films, toys, family events, arguments, etc.

- Visit the Poet Interviews section of the CLPE website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/videos> – there are videos available with a range of poets talking about how they go about writing their poetry, how they work on their poems, what inspires them as a poet and what advice they would give to aspiring poets. *After watching a few videos, have we got any other ideas for where ideas or inspiration can come from?* Add to the class list.
- Now give the children some time either to begin to write down ideas in their poetry journals or to sit and think about what they might write later. Some children may choose to start by drawing, doodling or sketching ideas initially. Refer back to Richard Jones’s illustrations in the collection. His paintings have been inspired by the words that the poets have written, but artwork can often inspire the words too. They might start by jotting down favourite words or phrases. *Will they write down things that their family says in a morning? Will they write down lists of words that they enjoy? Could they write down their craziest daydreams? Could they write down their earliest / silliest / scariest / happiest memories?*
- Remind the children that these journals are only for them – there’s not a particular amount of writing you expect them to do and you won’t be marking them.
- Remind them that they don’t have to start writing a poem straight away, they might just begin by collecting words, phrases, ideas and images that can be used later. However, if they have an idea that they want to start exploring immediately in a poetic form that is also fine.
- Keep notes and observations yourself during this time and model how you might come up with ideas for poems. Show the children how you as a writer come up with ideas, insights and poetic language inspired by experiences you have had, things around you or your own imagination.

Session 12: Writing Own Poems, Gaining a Response

Creation is the act of writing down and shaping ideas with a purpose, audience and form in mind. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring different ways to capture, work up and develop ideas in the journey to publication. Sharing the processes of real writers, for example their thoughts and advice and images of their journals, notebooks and sketchbooks can be a valuable part of this process, sharing how the work will often begin rough, in note form and tentative before being worked up more fully for an audience.

It is important to develop children as reflective writers by giving ample opportunity throughout the writing process to talk about themselves as writers, enable them to voice their views, listen to others and develop new knowledge and understanding.

- Demonstrate how you use your notes and ideas to create drafts of a poem, making

additions, changes and improvements as you write.

- Read aloud your work to the children, giving time and space for them to respond to your ideas, and support them in having discussions to support you in reflecting on your work, making changes or additions and redrafting if necessary. The children may also be inspired by hearing advice from poets on the CLPE website on how they go about writing their poems (<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/videos>)
 - Allow further time for children to select ideas and drafts of poems from their Poetry Journals or notebooks and to continue to work these up into poems.
 - Once the children have an initial draft or drafts, allow them to read aloud their poetry to a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed.
 - Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working or make suggestions to improve the writing. For example, writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them.
 - Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then redraft parts of their work, based on these conversations.
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- Start to think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding. Draw the children's thoughts back to what they saw in the poems in this collection and the impact this had on them as readers and use this knowledge to make notes about this on their draft.
 - You might also think about whether the poem will have an accompanying illustration, and if so, what this might be. Again, look back at the poems studied. *What style of illustration do you think might best fit the theme and emotions captured in your writing?* You might like to watch Richard Jones giving tips for budding young illustrators by watching this video: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/richard-jones>

Session 13: Editing Own Poems

Children's writing can be improved if they, a partner or their teacher reads it aloud at an early stage, giving it life and breath and helping the young poet see the patterns and tunes they have created. Just as an author would work with an editor, children should be given opportunities to help each other by reading their writing aloud and responding as readers. This allows them to support each other as they compose and structure their ideas. Writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them. Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then

redraft parts of their work, based on these conversations.

- Give further time for children to redraft any parts of their poems that they discussed with their response partner in the previous session, or to work on their poems further if they needtime to do this.
- When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes and that they are happy to present to a wider audience, start to think about how thatpoem could be best presented. *How will it look on the page? What form will it take? How will you use line breaks, spacing on the page to enhance the meaning or emotions behind your poem? Will you hand write it? Will you publish using a word processor? What script or font will you choose? Will you make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will you illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustrations work together?*

Session 14: Publishing Own Poems

Publication is the means to present writing in a way that is most appropriate for the purpose, audienceand form. This may be through the spoken as well as the written form and may also involve visual communication, if appropriate.

Prior to publication, writers should work with a supportive partner to polish the work ready for publication, proof reading work and checking for spelling and punctuation accuracy. Materials that facilitate the most appropriate forms of publication, reflecting those used by a practising writer working in this way should be provided to give writers the full sense of the satisfaction publishing andpresenting writing can bring.

- Allow plenty of time and space for the children to make a final draft and then publish theirwork accordingly.
- When they are happy with the way their poems look on the page, think about how this couldbe lifted off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each child a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. *Will you perform on your own? Do you need others to support you? How will you use voice, body movements and facial expression to enhance the listener’s engagement and understanding?*
- Ensure time is given to try out ideas and rehearse performances of children’s own poems before presenting to an audience and consider ways to allow published poems to be sharedwith an audience – as part of a display in a prominent area in the school, printed in an anthology to share in a public reading space or school library, on a class blog or the school website, or published on a school social media account – you could even tag in the poet or illustrator.
- Allow the children time to reflect on the writing process. *How did it feel to write their*

own poems? What was successful? What was challenging? Have they been inspired to write more poetry? Why or why not? If so, what else might they want to write about?

Session 15: Reflecting on the Collection

- Begin by returning to the afterword at the end of the collection. Having re-read the words of Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek and having now experienced most of the poems in the collection, how do you feel about the collection as a whole? *What are your most memorable poems? Why? What have you learnt about poetry that you didn't know before? Would you be encouraged to read more poetry after studying this collection? Why? Why not?*
- Read aloud one final poem from the collection 'The Village Tennis Court' and allow time for children to give their initial responses to the poem. *What did this poem make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? Why do you think we have chosen to end the sequence with this particular poem?*
- Encourage children to think about and reflect on nature and how as humans we have a responsibility to protect it; that nature will always find a way through, as this poem suggests.
- Revisit the poems that have been explored throughout the sequence. Ask children what their favourite poems have been, re-read some that the class suggest or invite them to read these to the class.
- Compare their current thoughts around the book with their first impressions. *What were you expecting? Was the poetry included in the collection what you expected it to be? Why/why not? Was there anything in the collection that surprised you? How would you describe this collection to someone else? What would you tell them about the poems? What might you keep back so as not to spoil their experience?*
- Come back to discuss the poems that they have heard performed by Richard Jones, heard read aloud or read and performed themselves and discuss the similarities and differences within them.
 - Spend some time now reflecting on the poems that the children have written. What kinds of poems were your favourite to write? What did you find it easiest to write about? What was more difficult or challenging for you? Why do you think this was?
 - Following this, you might hold a poetry festival for children to do readings from their collections to parents or other classes in the school or display their work as part of an exhibition, including the published poems and accompanying illustrations. For the children performing at the event, ask them to consider what they learnt from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed by other poets as well as trying out ideas in their performances of poems from this collection that they will need to remember when reading their own poems.
 - Display the children's own poems and artwork prominently in the library or other shared area, or on a blog, website or school social media account so they can be read

by a wider audience. Ensure you obtain each child's consent before publishing their work. This might lead on to wider explorations around the concept of copyright. You may wish to draw on the resources CLPE produced in partnership with the ALCS to explore this in more depth: <https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/ALCS-resources-on-copyright>.

- You could even send the poets and illustrator copies of the children's poems with a covering note or letter thanking them for inspiring their work, by email via the details on their websites: Ted Kooser: <https://www.tedkooser.net/> , Connie Wanek: <https://conniewanek.com/>, Richard Jones via his agent: <https://thebrightagency.com/uk/childrens-illustration/artists/richard-jones>