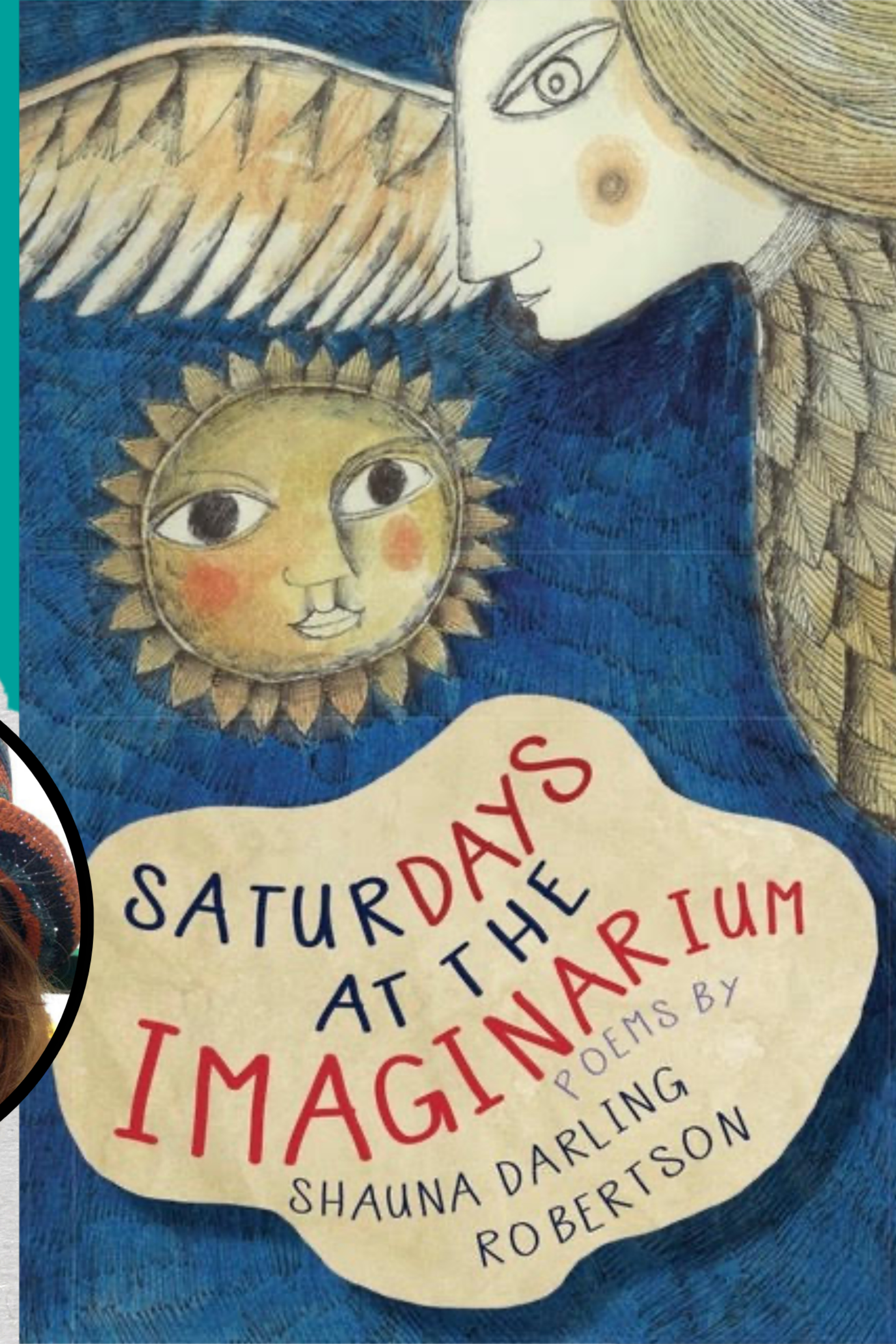


Getting the most from
Saturdays at the Imaginarium



troika

A world of ideas, questions & possibilities

“An imaginarium is a ‘place devoted to the imagination’ – an excellent way of describing this creative and thought-provoking collection of wonderings and reflections. The poems play with words and ideas, often honing in on the everyday, but considering them with a quirky eye and plenty of originality. The illustrations by Jude Wisdom are as imaginative as the poems! A wonderful collection to explore again and again.”

North Somerset Teachers' Book Award

Watch the book trailer

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WT68jy-6BWo

Welcome to the Imaginarium

Saturdays at the Imaginarium is a poetry collection devoted to exploring, probing and playing with the human imagination. It's packed full of thought-provoking ideas and original illustrations that invite readers to fire up their own imagination and respond in a variety of ways. The collection is broadly aimed at KS2, though as with all good children's poetry books, the poems are multi-layered and readers of any age can enjoy them.

In her introduction to the book Shauna writes, “A lot of people seem to think that the imagination is just for children and poets, or inventors and dreamers, that it's something a bit frivolous. In fact, the imagination is an essential function of the human mind and a vital part of what makes us human.”

Shauna's poems set out to celebrate creative thinking, encourage curiosity and revel in the pleasure of looking at things from fresh angles. Inventive, provocative and playful, *Saturdays at the Imaginarium* asks big questions about how we think about ourselves, each other and the world. It invites children of all ages to explore the possibilities of their own vastly imaginative minds.

Here are a few ideas for sharing, reflecting and creating, using three poems in the book as a starting point. We hope you enjoy them!

Open Wide

Imagine if swallowing
were real –
if we truly
took things in
through our mouths
and they became part of us.

If my arms were made
of ham and marmalade,
my legs mainly contained
eggs / ketchup / lemonade

and my head was filled with the kind of fresh thinking
you only get from a chunk of chilli-chip ice-cream
slip-sliding on a red hot slice of peppermint pie.



Talk & share

'Open Wide' is written as if something real and quite ordinary were surreal and extraordinary. The poem's title could also be an invitation to 'open wide' our eyes and our minds to see things in different ways.

Read the poem together, on the page and aloud. The poem asks you to 'imagine'... what images come into your mind as you read, speak and hear the poem? Are any of your other senses involved?

Talk together about some of the processes involved in producing, finding, preparing and eating food. When you really think about it, do some of them seem quite extraordinary? For example, you plant a seed and a whole fruit tree sprouts out of the ground. You mix up several ingredients and put them into a warm (or hot, or cold) place and they turn into something completely different. You make a cup of tea in minutes, but how many hours and how many people has it taken to bring that tea to your cup?

Write

Choose something real and ordinary, something you see or do most days. Now, begin to ponder it with an 'open wide' mind. Are there some things about it that seem extraordinary, incredible or almost impossible when you really examine them? Now, write your own poem –

Imagine

if [] were real....

Draw

What are some of the things that you've 'swallowed' or 'taken in' over the past week? They might include foods you've eaten, sounds you've heard, words or ideas you've read or sights you've seen.

Imagine that these things have become part of you, and draw or paint a self-portrait.

WATCH & LISTEN

Shauna Darling Robertson reads 'Open Wide' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHxPQz4Ji0Y

No Such Thing

There's no such thing
as moonlight, they say.
But –

I've bathed in it, played in it
stayed up too late in it

walked with it, stalked it
and talked girl-to-orb with it

danced till I'm numb in it
stuck out my tongue at it

jumped over cows with it
made secret vows to it

tickled white fish in it
whispered a wish to it

munched midnight snacks in it
practised wise-cracks with it

drifted to sleep in it
knelt down to weep in it

hugged the cool breeze
splashed in warm seas
leapt high as fleas
and scuffed both my knees in it.

No such thing as moonlight?

Please!

*Technically there's
no such thing as
moonlight. It's really a
reflection of the sun's
light on the moon's
surface. Or so they say.*



Talk & share

This poem really lends itself to performance with its strong images, rhythm and rhyme. One person could be the reader while others act it out. Or you can work in pairs or small groups and perform it together. Perhaps you could even add a soundtrack, some percussion or other sound effects.

Before you add any other sounds, though, try listening first to the sounds in the poem as you read it aloud. How do the poem's words and sounds feel to your ears as you listen, and in your mouth as you speak?

Use the poem to talk about your own experiences of, and feelings about, moonlight, and how they compare to the fact that there's technically 'no such thing'.

Write & draw

Choose another experience from nature – the heat of the midday sun, the gusts of a strong wind, a shimmering lake, a dense forest – anything you like. Imagine someone steps into the room right now and tells you that this thing doesn't actually exist, it's all in your imagination!

Write a poem telling that person why you don't believe them, by sharing some of the experiences you've had of that thing. The experiences you write about can be good or bad ones, pleasant or unpleasant. The important thing is to make them come alive – remember, your job is to convince that person that this is real!

Choose one of the experiences in your poem to illustrate. Make your illustration as vivid and full of life as you can.

WATCH & LISTEN

Shauna Darling Robertson reads 'No Such Thing' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3QSg72B6d0

Questions on an Empty Stomach

When's lunch?

What's for lunch?

If I eat lunch at four
will it still be lunch?

When I say lunch, you say dinner.
Who's right? When's tea?

Why does broccoli taste broccoly
and custard custardy?

If I pretend to like tomatoes
will they feel delighted or deceived?

How did all these things on my plate
get here?

Does lunch that's come a long way
taste tired?

Do fish from laughing rivers
go down better than glum ones?

Why doesn't everyone
have enough to eat?

And would it help if I skipped lunch
and just stayed here asking questions?

Talk & share

Read the poem aloud a few times. Try it with different moods or emotions, such as curious, impatient, bored or sarcastic. Does this change how you hear the questions? Do particular moods fit certain questions better than others?

Talk together about the questions. Which ones do you like or find interesting? Do all of the questions have answers? Try thinking up several different answers (it's up to you whether you choose 'true' ones or get wildly inventive – or both!).

Write

Write your own 'Questions' poem. What are you curious about? You might choose a topic you've always wanted to know more about, or perhaps pick something quite commonplace you've never really thought about and give it some closer attention.

Think about the mood of your poem, too. Are you writing about something that excites you? Annoys or bothers you? Mystifies and confuses you? Try playing with different feelings as you come up with your questions.

Mix up your media

Let's explore the feeling of curiosity in different ways. First, you need to really feel into the feeling of being curious. Take some time to do this using your imagination. (Tip: you can also use your memory to call to mind a time in the past when you felt curious). What does the feeling of curiosity feel like for you in this moment?

Vision: Gather together some drawing and painting materials, and maybe also some crafty things to make collages or sculptures. What might curiosity look like? What colours come to mind? What shapes? Keep feeling the feeling while you experiment with drawing, painting or making whatever comes to mind.

Sound: Get some musical instruments, or any objects you can use to make a variety sounds, and try the same process: feel into the feeling of curiosity and ask yourself, what might this feeling sound like? Then make some noise!

Movement: How might curiosity feel? How does your body want to move when you allow yourself to feel really curious? Get curious about it. See what happens!



WATCH & LISTEN

Shauna Darling Robertson reads 'Questions on an Empty Stomach' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=q41FMoCPiys

We hope you enjoy exploring this resource

If you use these ideas, we'd love to know how. Why not share your work with us by tagging [@TroikaBooks](https://twitter.com/TroikaBooks) on Twitter

This book can be purchased from www.troikabooks.com/saturdays-at-the-imaginarium



Find out more: www.troikabooks.com

Shauna Darling Robertson - shaunadarlingrobertson.com - [@ShaugaDarRob](https://twitter.com/ShaugaDarRob)

Jude Wisdom - strangelywild.uk

This resource is based on a model developed by Manchester Children's Book Festival and

Manchester Poetry Library at Manchester Metropolitan University. Text: Shauna Darling Robertson / Design: Dom Conlon.