

***And I Climbed and I Climbed* by Stephen Lightbown, illustrated by Shih-Yu Lin**

Troika 978-1-912745-29-6

Cosmo is a young boy whose life has been changed forever after falling out of the tree he loved to climb. Now, he is disabled and uses a wheelchair. And now, Cosmo wants to have a conversation with the tree.

In this outstanding debut collection for children, Stephen Lightbown draws on his own personal experiences as a wheelchair user, while creating a unique and utterly engaging character in Cosmo. Written in Cosmo's voice and peppered with contributions from the boy's family, these poems take the reader on a journey of challenges, questions, hurts, explorations and triumphs. Cosmo is endlessly open and curious, and his observations and reflections are at once perceptive, raw, hilarious, confronting and enchanting.

How can Cosmo come to terms with, and adapt to, this seismic change in his life? Is his life as he knew it gone? Could there be new possibilities ahead, and also new abilities that Cosmo doesn't yet know he possesses? And will the tree ever reply to his number one question: *why?*

This collection was shortlisted for the 2024 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence:

- to explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre;
- to explore rhythm and rhyme in poetry;
- to know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from a multi-poet 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 teaching sequence is designed for a Year 5 or 6 class.

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 poet and explore children's pre-existing knowledge about poetry.

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The sessions will then explore how poetry can be used to describe personal experiences and evoke an emotional response in a reader. The collection of poems takes the reader on a journey with Cosmo as he tries to come to terms with his life-changing accident and experiences a wide range of complex emotions. There is a focus on getting to the heart of a poem, understanding the events described and themes raised by exploration of how the poet has 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 forms an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

The next part of the sequence moves on to a focus on how the poet paints a picture for the reader through language choice and rhythm and rhyme and how children might draw on personal connections and poetic techniques to create their own compositions. Within these sessions there will opportunity to respond to and create artwork and illustration in response to the poetry and the illustrative techniques of Shih-Yu Lin.

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.

Overview of Approaches and Outcomes:

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading Aloud
- Hearing poems performed by a poet
- Performing poetry
- Looking at Language
- Re-reading and revisiting poems
- Responding to poetry
- Learning about poetry from published poets
- Modelled writing
- Responding to writing
- Publication

Outcomes:

- Performing poetry
- Identifying poetic language and devices
- Text marking and annotation
- Evaluation of performances
- Poetry journal with ideas and inspirations for own writing
- Independently written poems
- Performances of children’s original poetry.

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free verse ▪ Epistolary (letter) poems ▪ List poems ▪ Kenning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opposition ▪ Rhythm ▪ Refrain ▪ Repetition ▪ Enjambment ▪ Line breaks ▪ Personification and Metaphor |
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Cross curricular links:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Children could be supported in exploring a range of emotions with which they identify, such as anxiety, embarrassment, loneliness, grief, anger, frustration and joy. Support the children throughout the sequence to broaden their repertoire of emotive language, modelling through discussion and philosophical reflection.
- Through exploration of this book, children will be helped to develop their sense of citizenship, as well as moral responsibility and begin to understand that their own choices and behaviour can affect other people’s well-being and ability to take part in shared activity.
- You could explore equality in greater depth with visits from representatives from disability, mental health and neurodiversity charities. This could lead to a campaign to raise awareness and increase access for all.

Design and Technology

- The book and sequence are an ideal starting point for investigating how advances in technology can support inclusion, access and equality for all in every sphere of life and experience. For example, you might want the children to investigate inventions that have been life changing for people with disability and explore new ideas of their own.

History

- The children could explore the lives and achievements of significant figures who have faced and overcome challenges.
- They could explore the history of equality law in the UK or their own country and worldwide and how it impacts on them as children and people more widely.

Music:

- The last part of the sequence focuses on the importance of rhythm in poetry. This work could be extended into music sessions, allowing pupils the opportunity to create their own rhythms using instruments and experiment with writing and setting words to rhythms.

Links to other texts and resources:

Other books by or featuring Stephen Lightbown or Shih-Yu Lin

- *An Ordinary Story* by Shih-Yu Lin (Troika Books)
- *Things That Should be in a Poem* by Coral Rumble, illustrated by Shih-Yu Lin (Troika Books)
- *Little Light* by Coral Rumble, illustrated by Shih-Yu Lin (Troika Books)

Other poetry collections for Key Stage 2 linked to the styles and themes of this collection:

- *The Final Year* by Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton (Otter-Barry Books)
- *The Same Inside: poems about empathy and friendship*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Be the Change: Poems to help you save the world*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Cloud Soup*, Kate Wakeling, illustrated by Elina Brasliņa (The Emma Press)
- *Stars with Flaming Tails*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Hot Like Fire*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Debbie Lush (Bloomsbury)
- *The Rainmaker Danced*, John Agard, illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura (Hodder)
- *The Language of Cat*, Rachel Rooney, illustrated by Ellie Jenkins (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things*, Michael Rosen, illustrated by Joe Berger (Puffin)
- *Werewolf Club Rules*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by John O'Leary (Frances Lincoln)
- *Belonging Street*, Mandy Coe (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Things You Find in a Poet's Beard*, A.F. Harrold, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Burning Eye Books)
- *If I Were Other Than Myself*, Sue Hardy-Dawson (Troika)

Other books to support wider understanding of disability:

- *I Am Not a Label* by Cerrie Burnell and Lauren Mark Baldo
- *A Kids Book About Disability* by Kristine Napper (Dorling Kindersley Ltd)
- *What Happened to You?* By James Catchpole and Karen George
- *Can Bears Ski* by Raymond Antrobus and Polly Dunbar (Walker)
- *El Deafo* by Cece Bell (Abrams)
- *I Talk Like a River* by Jordan Scott and Sydney Smith (Walker)
- *The Secret of Haven Point* by Lisette Auton (Penguin Random House)
- *The Sister Who Ate Her Brothers* by Jen Campbell and Adam De Souza (Thames and Hudson)
- *Wilma Rudolph (Little People Big Dreams)* by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara
- *Stephen Hawking (Little People Big Dreams)* by Maria Isabel Sanchez and Matt Hunt

- Frida Kahlo (Little People Big Dreams) by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara
- *Stevie Wonder (Little People Big Dreams)* by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara and Melissa Lee Johnson
- *You're So Amazing!* by James and Lucy Catchpole and Karen George (Faber)
- *A Kind of Spark* by Elle McNicoll (Knights Of)
- *Show Us Who You Are* by Elle McNicoll (Knights Of)
- *The Visible Sounds* by Yin Jianling and Yu Rong (UCLan Publishing)
- *My Other Life* by Polly Ho-Yen and Patricia Hu (Bloomsbury)
- *Fighting for YES! The Story of Disability Rights Activist Judith Heumann* by Maryann Cocca-Leffler and Vivien Mildemberger (Abrams)

- **For educationalists:** *Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally* by Emily Ladau (Ten Speeds Press)

Before beginning the sequence:

- 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).

Session 1: Introducing the poet, Stephen Lightbown

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 poet Stephen Lightbown and the illustrator, Shih-Yu Lin. *Have you heard of either of these people before?* Provide a picture of them for the children to see and add these to the display alongside the front cover of the text. You might use the illustrations created by Shih-Yu Lin on pages 94 and 95.

- Open out the book to reveal the whole illustration across the book cover and gather the children's initial responses to the title and illustration. *What are your first impressions? What does it make you think about or feel? What do you notice; how does your eye move across the page – what effect does this have? How does the title and illustration work together to create meaning and mood? What sense do they give you about the kinds of poems you might find in this collection and what they might be about?*
- Jot the children's ideas around a copy of the front cover of the text to add to the poetry display and to revisit at the end of the teaching sequence.
- Now read aloud the blurb on the back cover and give the children time to discuss and respond to what they have heard. Allow time for the children to revisit and discuss the book cover together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration and to raise questions that they have about this, the poet and the poetry collection to come. You might use prompts to support thinking: *How does it connect to their earlier ideas about what they thought this poetry collection might be about or the form the poems might take? What more do you learn about the poet? Is there anything in the blurb that you find particularly memorable or striking? How does it work with the illustration to create meaning? Does anything puzzle you?*
- Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the book cover as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - What they know or think they know about the poet and his motivation for creating the character Cosmo and for writing this collection.
 - What they think they know about Cosmo; what he has and might experience; the kind of things he might express in the poems; what he might be thinking or saying to the tree in this illustration, for example.
 - Why the poet might want to create a **unique and engaging character in Cosmo** for the reader whilst also drawing on his own experiences as a wheelchair user; what he might want us to learn about him as we are taken on a **journey of challenges, questions, hurts, explorations and triumphs.**
 - The mood created by the bright, joyful, summertime tree and the uplifting title *And I climbed And I climbed* working in opposition to the disclosure that Cosmo fell from this tree and now cannot walk but also how the reader is encouraged to notice Cosmo's independence in the illustration and the humour, resilience and agency echoed in the blurb, for example in the line, **He also wants to have words with a certain tree.** And the complex emotional journey he takes us on, from frustration expressed at the beginning of the blurb, **'Why didn't you catch me? Why, Tree? Why?'** to the end, **'You're a good listener for a tree.'**
- Now open the book and turn to the title page, pausing to reflect on the choice of illustration here. Children might recognise Buzz Lightyear on the floor – a toy popular with young children like Cosmo, possibly drawing attention to his young age and providing a snapshot into his interests

which may be similar to their own. The children may know that this character from the Disney Pixar *Toy Story* films also believes he possesses the power to fly “To Infinity and Beyond” as if real but he is surrounded by friends who encourage him to continue to believe in himself and develop new strengths and capabilities. They may discuss the illustrator’s choices here in choosing this particular toy for the title page illustration; what it might suggest about Cosmo as a character and what they might expect from the poems in the collection.

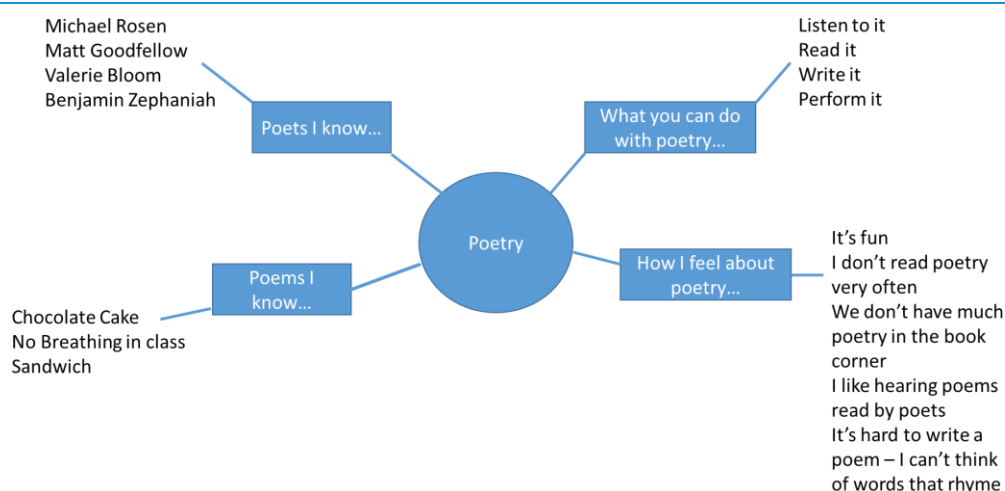
- Take the opportunity here to recognise and value the range of interpretations readers can offer when finding meaning in both text and illustration and ensure you allow children to draw their own conclusions. [Later they will see this is a snippet from the full illustration of the poem, ‘Everyone Tells Me What I Can’t Do, Apart From Mum’ in which Buzz, the pencil and crayon featured here are just part of the mess Cosmo has left on his bedroom floor which his mum insists he *can* tidy in his wheelchair if he was able to make the mess in his wheelchair. This might then suggest an alternative interpretation; that the items might represent a tension common between children and their parents as well as what is still possible, even if as mundane as tidying up your own mess.]
- Now read aloud Stephen Lightbown’s Introduction on pages 8-9. Invite the children’s responses. *What more do you learn about his life and motivations for writing this poetry collection?*
- Ask the children to reflect on the poet’s belief that it is important that poets and writers with lived experiences like [his] will get to tell their own stories, so that the voices on the page are authentic. *What do you think this means?*
- Take the opportunity to explore with the children what they think they already know about disability and of wheelchair users, inviting them to share where they have gained these insights and if they are an authentic and trustworthy source. Then reflect on the kind of knowledge and experience they think Stephen Lightbown will be able bring to us as readers and why this is important.
- Support the children to acknowledge where their knowledge and understanding may be strong or limited and why that might be, as well as anticipating what they might learn through Cosmo’s voice, developed through Lightbown’s lived experience; what kinds of thoughts and feelings may be expressed through the poems. This will be revisited throughout and at the end of the sequence.
- You might engage in wider work around finding authentic voice, drawing on real people’s experiences, and ensuring children come to websites and online materials they might be using with a critical eye for fake or misleading information. Trusted websites, in which you can mediate and select age-appropriate material, could include:
 - [CBBC Newsround](https://www.cbbc.com/newsround)
 - [Scope](https://www.scope.org.uk/)
 - <https://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.british-sign.co.uk/>
- Re-read the line, **I wish that, when I was younger, I had seen more people like me in the books I was reading.** Invite the children’s responses to this. *Why would it have made a difference to him?* Ask the children to reflect on any connections they are making to their own lives and reading

experiences. *Have you ever felt like this? How do you feel you are represented in the books you read? Why is this important for all of us as readers and writers?*

- You might take the opportunity to review the books in the classroom book corner and school library and how they represent the pupils and their families in the school and in wider society. This could lead to wider work on improving representation on the bookshelves as well as in your curriculum book choices.
- Draw the learning together by discussing with the children why people are motivated to write – for example as a means of expression or to communicate, to learn, to remember, to connect, to affirm. Stephen Lightbown says that he wanted to write about the experiences of becoming a wheelchair user from a child’s perspective; that having disability represented is important to him and especially if the voices on the page are authentic.
- Provide the children with their own poetry journal in which they can begin to note what they might write about from their own lived experience; the unique perspective they could offer; what they would like to see represented in reading material; and the impact they hope it will have on themselves as well as their readers.
- If the children feel comfortable, they might share these ideas with each other or the wider group.

Session 2: Introducing the collection – and poetry as a genre

- Open up discussions which will allow you to gain a sense of the children’s initial perceptions of poetry. *What do you think of when the word poetry is mentioned? How do you feel about poetry? Which poets or poems do you know and like? Do you like reading poetry; performing poetry? Do any of you write your own poetry?*
- To support them in shaping their ideas, allow time for the children to consider all the ideas and feelings (positive and negative!) that they have about poetry from the discussions they have had and to note these ideas down in their poetry journals. They can choose any way that is helpful to organise their thoughts, for example in a spider diagram or concept map, e.g.



- Come together to watch Stephen Lightbown talk about his feelings about poetry and look at the similarities and differences with the feelings of the children, [using his videos on CLPE's poetry pages](#).
- 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.
- Now, watch Stephen Lightbown read the first poem in the collection: '[Broken Back](#)' (pages 10-11) on his website, in which he introduces this collection. Do not yet sharing the text or illustration.
- Give time for the children to share their initial responses to the text. *What does this poem make you think about? How does the poem make you feel? What makes you feel like this? Is there anything in the poem that is particularly memorable to you, any words or phrases that are particularly vivid? Why is that? What do you think this poem might tell us about Cosmo; what he understands and how he feels about what has happened to him and about his situation? How does it relate to what they have discovered so far by reading the illustrations and text on the book cover and in Stephen Lightbown's 'Introduction'?*
- Consider with the children who the intended audience for this poem might be. *Why do you think Stephen Lightbown has chosen for his character Cosmo to write to the tree and not a friend or member of his family, for example?*
- Consider the form that this poem takes. *What ideas might it give us about the collection as a whole? Does it fit with the ideas that you had about poetry? Why or why not? Have you read an epistolary - or letter - poem before?*
- Now share the poem on the page, enlarged on the IWB or through a visualiser, and listen to the poet perform it again or read it aloud yourself. *How does seeing the poem on the page support your understanding?* Children might begin to notice the way the lines and stanzas are organised and how that impacts on the way it is read aloud and paced; which parts are emphasised and which flow, which are intonated through rhythmic and punctuation choices.

- If they have not already discussed it, draw their attention to Shih-Yu Lin’s 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? From where are we positioned as the reader? What impact does this have? Do you feel it adds to your engagement with and appreciation of the poem? If so, how? If not, why not?*
- Now, give the children a copy of the poem, including the illustration, in mixed pairs or groups and give them time to re-read and discuss the poem for themselves. Encourage the children to text mark and annotate the poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions about it.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The fact that this poem rhymes. *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.
 - The impact of the poem being written directly in eight-year-old Cosmo’s voice and not looking back from adulthood or written about him. *What impact does this have on us as the reader? What insights does this give us? What do we learn about Cosmo’s experiences – how he makes sense of them, how he might be feeling? If the tree is Cosmo’s audience, where are we positioned as the reader? What effect does this have on us?*
 - The way in which the tense changes from past to present as the poem moves from having Cosmo’s current situation explained to him by the doctor to recalling memories of the accident and back to the here and now in the final stanza.
 - The tone of the poem and how it changes from drawing on the doctor’s explanation and mirroring the medical facts and terms used, to questioning and reflection, and finally to a statement of fact. The children might make a note of the range of emotions, thoughts and feelings that Cosmo may be experiencing throughout the poem and in a given stanza. They may note when themes and ideas are repeated or revisited through the poem, and the impact this has.
 - The connection the poet creates between Cosmo and the tree, for example in the comparisons made: **Is that how many branches as you have? ...like you, I can’t walk.**
 - The imagery created in the way the tree and events relating to it are described, and the personification in the line, **...when I fell from your arms.** *What does this make you think about? How does it make you feel? Why?*
 - 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 effect does it have on us? How does this technique strengthen the imagery he creates for us?*
 - What this poem inspires in their own thinking. Are there things that you wonder about Cosmo? *How does this poem relate to what you think you already know or understand?*

- Invite the children to use their poetry journals to note any responses that the poem has evoked, anything that it has inspired them to consider or think about. Provide writing and art materials so that they can choose whether to use words or to illustrate their response to the opening poem.
- Make accessible to the children a range of poetry collections, reading poems aloud daily and inviting the children to read them together and for themselves. Throughout this experience, model how one might choose poems from anywhere in a collection, for example in *Stars with Flaming Tails* by Valerie Bloom and illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max (Otter-Barry Books), or when one might choose to read poems in a particular order to support understanding, such as in the collection, *On the Move. Poems About Migration* by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Quentin Blake (Walker).
- Introduce verse novels as a form, perhaps choosing one such story told in poems for class story time, such as *Little Light* by Coral Rumble, illustrated by Shih-Yu Lin (Troika); 2017 CLIPPA shortlist title, *Booked by Kwame Alexander* (Anderson Press); or 2024 CLIPPA shortlist title, *The Final Year* by Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton (Otter-Barry Books).

Session 3: Response to Poetry

- 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 'Broken Back' make on you?*
 - *How do you feel about reading further into the collection?*
 - *What expectations do you have about the rest of the poems in the collection?*
- Revisit Stephen Lightbown's Introduction and consider the way in which it might make most sense to read the poems in this collection, if we are 'accompanying Cosmo on his journey'. Whilst he hasn't called this collection a verse novel he has introduced it as 'a collection of poems that tells the story of Cosmo...' To help us understand the journey Cosmo takes as he comes to terms with what happened to him, agree with the children that we could read the poems in order, in the first instance, as well as taking plenty of opportunity to revisit and re-read individual poems together.
- Explain that, over the next two sessions, you will be re-reading the opening poem 'Broken Back' then reading and revisiting next few poems from start of the collection. They will then have the opportunity to deepen their response through performance.
- Share the poems up to 'Weeping Tree' (page 19), by reading them aloud for the children to hear and giving them time to talk about their initial responses to the six poems as a collection as well as individually. *How did the poems make you feel? What were you thinking as they were read? Did any poems stand out for you - why? How do the poems relate to each other? What do each tell us about Cosmo's experiences, his thoughts and feelings? What connections are you making?*
- Choose one to explore in more depth, such as 'Catch Me If You Can' (pages 16-17), reading it aloud again. Ask them this time to think about the ideas that come to mind as the poem is read, modelling this type of response and valuing all interpretations. *How did this poem make you feel?*

What were you thinking as it was read? What do you think it was about? Did any words or phrases stand out? What links can you make between this one and the others read in the collection so far?

- Go on to explore the way the poem looks on the page. Share with the children a large-scale copy of the poem – perhaps on a screen or give out copies to each pair or group — reading it aloud again and allowing them to follow the words in the text. *Why do you think the poet has set out the poem in this way? What do you notice about the font or the line breaks or the way in which the poet has used punctuation? Why do you think he has done this, how does it affect the way we might read the poem?* Make notes of significant responses on post-it notes around a large copy of the text on a Working Wall display or in the shared Poetry Journal.
- Now, give the children a copy of the poem, including the illustration, in mixed pairs or groups and give them time to re-read and discuss the poem for themselves. Encourage the children to text mark and annotate the poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions about it.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The opposition created by the title, **‘Catch me If You Can’**, which mirrors the playground chant in a catching game, in contrast to the gravity of the situation when the tree didn’t catch Cosmo.
 - The repetition in the poem and what effect this has on us as readers in sharing Cosmo’s journey up to the top of the tree as well as his emotional journey in reliving and coming to terms with the life-changing consequences of falling; the impact of repeatedly asking the tree, **Why...** including the italicised last word used in the poem; the impact of the repeated line (from ‘Broken Back’), **...when I fell from your arms.**
 - The personification in this line as well as in the name it is given – **Tree** – as a proper noun and in the idea of a tree that could actively **‘help’**, **‘listen’**, **‘catch’**, **‘let [him] fall’** and the affect this has on us in understanding Cosmo’s feelings about his accident, the role of the tree and his relationship with it now.
 - The imagery created for us as readers through the descriptions, such as the perspective and scale created by Ana’s position and voice from stanza to stanza; the foreshadowing in her shouting and begging Cosmo to come down; the repetition.
 - The enjambment from line to line and stanza to stanza and the imagery this creates as Cosmo climbs; the way in which it impacts on meaning and the way we might read this part of the poem. The contrast created between the first and second part of the poem; the enjambment in the first part of the poem on the first page and the way that every line is then punctuated on the second page - from the moment Cosmo stopped and realised how high he’d climbed.
 - The illustration created to accompany this poem and the way in which it works to create meaning alongside the words, how it works on the page with the text.
 - The space on the page and provided by the line breaks for the reader to fill in the gaps, imagine what else was happening, what Cosmo would be thinking or doing. Children are invited to imagine what Cosmo might have said when he asked Tree to help him down, what it didn’t listen to.

- Watch Stephen Lightbown reading the poem on his [poet page on CLPE's website](#). This time, as the children watch and listen, ask them to continue to think about the ideas that come to mind as the poem is read, but also to consider the way the poem sounds. *How does the way the poem is set out affect the performance? What is the rhythm of the poem? When are there pauses? Which parts are loud or quiet – how does the change in dynamics impact on the meaning being created for the audience?*
- Allow children time to try out different ways of reading the poem. *Can they experiment with different stresses, pace, dynamics, and rhythms? What impact does changing any of these have on the way the poem is read? Does it affect the way you feel about the poem?*
- Follow up by handing out copies of all six opening poems to pairs or groups: 'Broken Back' (pages 10-11), 'In Hospital' (pages 12-13), 'Some Days I Hate You' (pages 14-15), 'Catch me If You Can' (pages 16-17), 'It's Hard To Push a Wheelchair With A Splinter In Your Finger' (page 18) and 'Weeping Tree' (page 19).
- Encourage the children to look more deeply at the poems, exploring the themes and concepts introduced and the poet's use of language. Then ask the children to pick one poem to discuss in more depth (other than 'Catch me If You Can' which has already been explored as a class). Ask them to talk about the poem together, discussing what the poem makes them think about, how it makes them feel and what makes them feel this way and any questions that have about it.
- You can use this as an opportunity to re-introduce children to the names of specific forms or devices to look at what makes their chosen poem poetic. 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 devices like repetition, enjambment, alliteration, imagery, rhythm and sound. *Can they identify any of these in their chosen poem? How do they impact on the way the poem is read and understood?*
- Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their chosen poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions.
- Come back together to discuss: *Why did you choose a particular poem? What did it make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you feel the same throughout the poem or did your feelings change at different points? How or why do you think this is? What connections did you make with the poem? Did it connect to any other poems you have read or to personal or real-life experiences you've had? What did you find particularly effective about the poem?*

Session 4: Poetry 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.

- Share with the children 2019 CLIPPA winner, [poet Steven Camden's thoughts on performing poetry](#). Consider what he says about connecting with the words and fitting your emotional connection to the words into your performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this in their performance.
- Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Allow them time and space to think about or discuss this, if they are working in a pair or group, and to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes before trying out ideas, adapting where necessary and rehearsing their performances to share with the rest of the class.
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLIPPA School Shadowing Scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem or the subject matter? How was the performance different from hearing the poem read aloud?*
- Reflect on how these opening poems as a collection worked together and invite the children to summarise what they feel they convey of Cosmo's experience and journey so far. *How are they unique and what connects them?* The children might talk about the range of emotions Cosmo expresses towards the tree or in coming to terms with his injury – both within and across individual poems as well as across the collection of six poems. They might identify 'secret strings' the poems share and how these impact on our understanding and reading journey alongside Cosmo. They might identify overarching themes they interpret in the poems, such as repeated recollection, making sense of a memory, reliving a moment, regret, frustration and the constancy of asking 'Why' when reflecting on a 'what if' moment.
- Allow time and space for the children to add to their visual organisers with any new ideas about poetry that they gained from this session and to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems in their poetry journals linked to their own experiences. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. Allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if dealing with more sensitive issues, such as those explored in some of these poems. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them.

- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, modelling ideation and composition and how to develop ideas into drafts, talking through stuck points and where ideas may not be working and have to be abandoned or how these can be worked around.

Session 5: Poetry can help us to explore memory and capture moments in time

- Read aloud the poems from ‘Everyone Tells me What I Can’t Do, Apart From Mum’ (pages 20-21) to ‘Biscuits’ (page 33), pausing for the children to offer initial reflections and comments
- Invite the children to share their immediate responses to what they have heard in this new set of poems. *How does it make you feel? What does it make you think about? What connections do you make? What are we learning about Cosmo’s experiences, thoughts and feelings? How do these relate to the opening poems; do you feel they have similar themes or perspectives, or do they differ in some way? Who else features in the poems and how? What perspectives are shared? What impact does this have?*
- Now give mixed pairs or groups a copy of one of these poems, so that they can look at it on the page, including the illustration. Explain that they will have the opportunity to re-read it and think about it in more depth before coming back together as a group to share their responses.
- Give the children time to re-read and discuss the poem for themselves. Encourage the children to text mark and annotate the poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions about it. Remind them what was modelled in the previous sessions, when exploring how the poet has achieved a specific effect on them as a reader through the poem’s ‘secret strings’ – language and punctuation choices, layout and line breaks, rhythm and sound, repetition and patterns, etc.
- Come back together to re-read the set of poems again, this time enlarged on the IWB or under a visualiser, so that the children can read the poems with the eye as well as with the ear.
- Then discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The viewpoint and perspective shared in their poem; what a particular person is thinking or feeling and how it makes the children feel – what it makes them think about. *Do you think Cosmo is influenced by the people around him? What makes you think that? Why do you think the poet is sharing these views? Are they his own? What might he want you to think about?*
 - The way in which their poem indicates how Cosmo might be feeling at this stage in his story. The emotional journey he may experience within their own poem and throughout the poems as a whole. *What new experiences and perspectives is he sharing? How is Cosmo feeling about his new reality? How do you know? Is there an overarching theme developing in this part of the story? How is it similar or different to the opening poems?*
 - The repetition of certain words, phrases or ideas, for example: **board** in ‘Bedtime’ and what this might say about how Cosmo feels about having a board to help him get into bed instead of a ladder; **I wish** used by Cosmo and his mum across the poems and what affect this sense of yearning has on us as readers, what it helps us to

understand; the **biscuit** theme that threads through some of the poems and what impact this has on our understanding of Cosmo and his relationships.

- The patterns of negative language and refrains, for example: You can't; too many; always forgets; the only thing I can do; lost; stopped; avoids; gave away; I can't; I miss; slide; shuffle across [the board]; BAD...VERY BAD...REALLY BAD; I have to get used to them; too high; beyond; stuck; I'm back on stabilisers again; I can't reach; One more thing I can't do. *How does this affect us as readers? What imagery does it create? What might it say about how Cosmo feels about his new reality or how he may or may not be viewed now he is a wheelchair user? How does this contrast with descriptions of his experiences before the accident?* For example: smile; playing outside; pride; whizzing; sense of humour; cheeky ways; feeling as free as a squirrel; peddling as fast as I could; You should have seen the gash on my knee!; still laughing from how amazing it felt to be on two wheels; Beds with ladders are the best; loved climbing; EPIC; *Is everything negative? Are there experiences or capabilities that Cosmo or his family is discovering or that remain the same as before?* For example: *If you can make your room untidy in your wheelchair then you can definitely make it tidy in your wheelchair;* beam up through the floor; That's really cool; I like that, it always feels like he's near.
- The way that the poet conveys, lifts or shifts mood throughout the poem/s. *How is humour used in the poems? Why do you think the poet wants to include humour? What does it tell us?*
- The opposition in the contrasts created within and between poems and the imagery and effect this has on us as readers, for example: Cosmo's mum telling him what he *can do* as opposed to what others say he *can't do* and what this might say about her knowledge of and relationship with Cosmo; her concern that he has lost his imagination in 'A Poem from Mum' but his imagination is illustrated in the next poem, 'Bedtime', when he visualises what wrestlers, divers, stunt people would do with a board as opposed to what he has to do – **shuffle** rather than **snuffle**.
- The space on the page to imagine what has not been said. The pacing and impact created by longer or shorter stanzas. The choice of line breaks, enjambment and punctuation choices and how this affects the way we read the poem and the meaning made.
- The way the illustrations work with the text and support or add meaning. Children might discuss whether their eye was drawn to the illustration or text first or if they read them as one. They might notice in 'Everyone Tells me What I Can't Do, Apart From Mum' (pages 20-21) Buzz Lightyear and the stationery that features in the title page and talk about this observation has changed or confirmed earlier thinking.
- The role that Tree plays in for Cosmo, Ana and his mum. *What kinds of things do they tell it and why? How do they view the tree? Why do you think the poet has chosen to include a tree as the sounding board in some of the poems? What opportunities does*

this device offer him as a writer; what insights does it give us as a reader; how does it affect our reading experience?

- Reflect together on how we might summarise the mood of these poems and what they tell us about how Cosmo and his family are coming to terms with his disability.
- Re-read and revisit 'A Poem From Mum' (pages 22-23) and consider all the things that she lists that she feels Cosmo has left behind in the tree since the accident. *Do you think this is true? What tells you this? What might we say to her about Cosmo's imagination or sense of humour or cheeky ways, for example? What have we learned from the other poems that we could tell Mum about Cosmo?*
- Bring the learning together by asking the children to write to Cosmo's mum to share what they think they have learned about Cosmo which might reassure her as well as what he might be finding difficult. Ensure that the children are able to see how Cosmo and his family are facing many new challenges and that it is perfectly normal for them to be experiencing a wide range of emotions and moods throughout as well as drawing on the essence of their personalities and relationships that existed prior to the accident.
- Allow time and space for the children to add to their poetry journal anything that exploration of these poems has made them think about, emotions they have evoked or thoughts they have inspired in them and to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems based on their own lives and experiences. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. Again, allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if dealing with more sensitive issues, such as those explored in some of these poems. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them.
- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, modelling ideation and composition and how to develop ideas into drafts, talking through stuck points and where ideas may not be working and have to be abandoned or how these can be worked around.
- This is an excellent opportunity for the children to engage in wider cross-curricular learning to counter some of the ideas expressed by Cosmo and others about his disability and what he 'can' or 'can't' do. They can research and share with others how adaptations can be made to make activities possible such as, skateboarding, space travel, mowing the lawn, and surfing. The following links might be useful:
 - [Stephen Lightbown – Adaptive Surfer](#)
 - [England Football – Disability Football](#)
 - [Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 Highlights](#)
 - [Wheelz in the Air: Hitting the Skatepark on a Wheelchair](#)
 - [Skateboarding In The Paralympics | Adaptive Skateboarding](#)
 - [Meet the Climbing Champion With One Hand | Super Power](#)
 - [Making Space Travel Accessible For People With Disabilities : Short Wave : NPR](#)
 - [About - AstroAccess](#)
 - [The Case for Disabled Astronauts | Scientific American](#)

- [Adaptive Equipment – Living Made Easy](#)

Session 6: Poetry can express complex emotions and offer opportunity for personal response

Allowing ample time for pupils to explore and make personal choices and reflect on what resonates with them personally is an important investment that can heighten engagement with and response to poetry. Rather than looking at a poem as a puzzle that needs to be solved, or to be mined for specific language and technique, we need to encourage a personal and emotional response as a way in to looking at what it was about the writing that garnered the response.

- Begin by showing the illustration on page 35, without yet revealing the poem and its title. Invite the children's immediate responses. *What do they think is happening? How does it make them feel? What do they think Cosmo is thinking and feeling in this moment? Have they ever felt like this or know someone that has – in real life or stories? What words might you use to describe the emotions being portrayed in this scene – how has the illustrator achieved this?* Children might note Cosmo's slumped body position on the hard table; the stillness of the scene other than the falling leaf that he may or may not be watching, perhaps fallen from the same tree from which he fell. They may observe the pathetic fallacy device used in this scene, perhaps to deepen our understanding of Cosmo's emotional state.
- Now read aloud the poem and invite immediate responses. *Is this what you expected? Why? Why not? What imagery is being created in the poem? How has this been achieved? How does it relate to the illustration? Does anything puzzle you about what you have heard – do you have any questions?*
- Then show them the poem on the page, alongside the illustration and discuss further what this adds to our initial understanding. *What do we think that Cosmo is trying to express? How have both the poet and the illustrator achieved this? How does he feel about his tree? What connections is he making between himself and Tree and what does this tell us? How does the space on the page support us to imagine what else Cosmo may be saying. Which words tell us how he voices these thoughts?* As well as identifying words and phrases that make explicit how Cosmo is articulating his feelings (**calling, shouting, whispering**), the children may also begin to notice the ambiguity the poet includes in the poem, for example, in the last line as Cosmo whispers, **what did you do to end up like this?** *Who do you think Cosmo is referring to as he says this? What makes you think that?*
- Reflect further on the illustration and the way in which the illustrator responded to this poem? *How do the poem and illustration relate to each other; what meaning does the illustration add or support? Is this the image that resonates most for you when you hear and read this poem? What other images come to mind? How else might this poem be illustrated?*
- The children might be drawn to the imagery created by the personification and the comparisons Cosmo is making between his own situation and the inanimate objects made from wood (and trees). They might note that this illustration portrays a specific moment at the end of the poem, after Cosmo is **tired from shouting**. *Why do you think the illustrator has chosen this moment?*

What impact does it have on us as the reader? Is this the moment you would have chosen in this poem? What would you want to illustrate most and what would you leave to the reader to visualise?

- Invite the children to discuss what is most striking or significant to them about this poem; *which moment in the poem is most vivid or compelling to them – what could be left to the reader?* Provide them with a copy of the poem without the illustration and some art materials so that they can create new illustrations which portray their own responses and interpretations. They might want to sketch different ideas in their poetry journals before choosing the one that they think best illustrates the poem for them.
- Pin up the children’s artwork to create a gallery display alongside the original poem and Shih-Yu Lin’s illustration. If the children are comfortable, you might lay out their journals by the gallery wall so that they can discuss their developing ideas and responses.
- Invite the children to reflect and comment on what they think is interesting about each other’s interpretations and illustrative responses; how they have each captured the essence of the poem or a particular moment in it; how they are similar or how they differ and why; what in the poem evoked their responses and inspired their artwork.
- Now, read aloud the next seven poems from ‘What Was It The Table Said?’ (pages 34-35) to ‘Memory Wheel’ (pages 44-45), pausing for the children to offer initial reflections and comments.
- Invite the children to share their immediate responses to what they have heard in this new set of poems. *How do they make you feel? What do they inspire you to think about? Are there any poems that are particularly vivid or memorable to you? Why? What connections are you making? How would we describe Cosmo’s emotions at this point in the story? How do these poems relate to previous poems; do you feel they have similar themes or perspectives, or do they differ in any way? How would you describe the relationship between Cosmo and Tree; what connections are being made by the poet?*
- Again, give mixed pairs or groups a copy of one of these poems, so that they can look at it on the page, including the illustration. Explain that they will have the opportunity to re-read it and think about it in more depth before coming back together as a group to feedback and share their responses. Encourage them to consider what is at the heart of their poem and what they are learning about Cosmo or others at this stage in his story.
- Give the children time to re-read and discuss the poem for themselves. Encourage the children to text mark and annotate the poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions about it. Remind them what was modelled in the previous sessions, when exploring how the poet has achieved a specific effect on them as a reader through the poem’s ‘secret strings’ – voice, language and punctuation choices, layout and line breaks, rhythm and sound, repetition and patterns, etc.
- Come back together to re-read the set of poems in order again, this time enlarged on the IWB or under a visualiser, so that the children can read the poems with the eye as well as with the ear.
- Then discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The viewpoint and perspective shared in their poem; what a particular character is thinking or feeling and how it makes the children feel – what it makes them think

about. *Why do you think the poet is sharing these views? Are they his own? What might he want you to think about?*

- The role that Tree plays in this part of the story. Why do you think the poet has chosen to include Tree's viewpoint as well as the audience? What opportunities does this offer him as a writer; what insights does it give us as a reader; how does it affect our reading experience?
- The way in which their poem indicates how Cosmo might be feeling at this stage in his story. The emotional journey he may experience within their own poem and throughout the poems as a whole. *What new experiences and perspectives is he sharing? How would you describe Cosmo's emotions in each or throughout this set of poems? Is there an overarching theme developing in this part of the story? How is it similar or different to the earlier poems?*
- The way that the poet conveys, lifts or shifts mood throughout the poem/s. How is humour used in the poems? Why do you think the poet wants to include humour? What does it tell us? When might we feel optimism and why?
- The space on the page to imagine what has not been said. The pacing and impact created by longer or shorter stanzas. The choice of line breaks, enjambement and punctuation and how this affects the way we read the poem and the meaning made.
- The way the poem looks on the page – including font choices, such as italics for dialogue or articulations – and the way the illustrations work with the text to support or add meaning. Children might discuss whether their eye was drawn to the illustration or text first or if they read them as one.
- The imagery created, for example: through tense choices in verbs that capture a moment, a memory or convey time passing; through figurative language – personification, simile and metaphor.
- The repetition of certain words, phrases or ideas, for example: **Me. Tree. Me. Tree. Me** in 'What Was It The Table Said?' and what this might say about how Cosmo feels about his relationship with the tree; **Climb a tree** in 'Climbing' and what it helps us to understand about the scale of the climb and what Cosmo might be thinking or feeling when he recalls it; the questioning theme that threads through the poems and their titles, and what impact this has on our understanding of Cosmo and this stage of his journey.
- The opposition in the contrasts created within and between poems and the imagery and affect this has on us as readers. For example, the way in which Cosmo finds similarities between his situation and Tree's and continues to use it as a sounding board, to help him make sense of his situation and emotions as well as demonstrating anger and frustration with the tree for the accident. *What might this tell us about Cosmo and the journey he is on as he comes to terms with his injury?* Children might note the difference between Bertie's attitude to Cosmo being a wheelchair user and

some people Cosmo meets – *why has the poet used this device; what might we learn from this?*

- The sounds in the poem; the way rhythm creates or shifts pace and dynamics or how rhyme, assonance and alliteration draw attention to elements of a poem and create meaning.
- Allow time and space for the children to add to their poetry journal anything that exploration of these poems has made them think about, emotions it has evoked or thoughts it has inspired in them and to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. Again, allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if dealing with more sensitive issues, such as those explored in some of these poems. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them.
- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, modelling ideation and composition and how to develop ideas into drafts, talking through stuck points and where ideas may not be working and have to be abandoned or how these can be worked around.
- This is an excellent opportunity for the children to engage in wider cross-curricular learning, in relation to the theme of the poem, ‘Why Does Everyone Have Something To Say?’ Invite the children’s responses to what they have learned from this poem and what they might say to the people that Cosmo meets or experiences. Share appropriate reading material (see book list) as well as footage involving people with lived experience of disability so that the children can better appreciate Cosmo’s viewpoint and gain authentic disability awareness that they could share with others in a range of ways, for example:
 - [Talk to Me: Physical Disability Awareness](#)
 - [What it’s like to experience a disability \(Full Episode\)](#)
 - [Jen Campbell’s ‘The Sister that Ate Her brothers’ Book Announcement](#)

Session 7: Poetry can inspire deeper response and personal connection

Poetry requires careful consideration of word choices, order and arrangement to best convey the thoughts and feelings of the poet and inspire a response from the reader. This makes poetry a powerful and effective art form that can inspire profound, deep and meaningful responses and engagement.

- Begin this session by listening to Stephen Lightbown read the poems ‘My Sister’s Legs’ and ‘Why Cosmo Is Annoying By Ana’ (pages 46-47) on his [poet page on CLPE’s website](#).
- Allow time for the children to discuss their initial reactions to the poems. *What thoughts or feelings did these poems evoke and why? Where did your sympathies lie as you listened? Did they lean toward Cosmo or Ana? Why? Why not? How did the poet evoke empathy for each of the*

characters at different points? How did Stephen's performance bring out the emotions evoked in the poems?

- Now, give out copies of the poems on the spread to mixed pairs or groups of children. Play the film of Stephen reading the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as he reads.
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration 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 share and summarise responses. *Why do you think the poet wrote these poems? Do you think he wrote them together? Why? What makes you think that? What do you think he is trying to convey about Cosmo and Ana? What can we learn from this? What wider connections might we make to the real world and to our own lives?*
- You might invite more evaluative responses, drawing on the children's personal experience and intertextual knowledge: *Can opposing views both be right? Is it possible to agree with or empathise with both perspectives or do we always have to choose one side or another?*
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: 'Tractor Boy' (page 48), 'With A Bit Of Practice' (page 49), 'The First Day' (page 50), 'Three Haiku' (page 51), 'Growing' (pages 52-53), 'A Poem From Nana' (pages 54-55), 'Choosing Things' (pages 56-57), 'Brave Boy' (pages 58-59), 'Biscuits for Dinner' (pages 60-61).
- Before the children read the poems, ask them to predict what they think the poems will be about; what ideas, emotions or viewpoints they might convey. *What makes you think that? What knowledge are you drawing on? Which interest you most and why?*
- Now ask the children to read the poems, encouraging them to look more deeply at them, exploring the themes and concepts introduced and the poet's use of language.
- Then ask the children to pick one poem to discuss in more depth. Ask them to talk about the poem together, discussing what the poem makes them think about, how it makes them feel and what makes them feel this way and any comments on the language, devices and layout of the poem. By now, the children should be more confident to discuss specific poetic devices and the affect they create for the reader. Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their chosen poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions.
- Come back together to discuss: *Why did they choose the particular poem they did? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? Did they feel the same throughout the poem or did their feelings change at different points? How or why do you think this is? What viewpoint was conveyed by the poet? With whom were you invited to empathise? Would it make a difference if an alternative perspective were shared, do you think?*
- Listen to Stephen Lightbown talk about his motivation for creating poetry on his 'What inspires you as a poet?' film on his [poet page on the CLPE website](#). *Why might he have chosen to tackle*

themes and subjects like this in his poems? How do you think writing about a challenging or difficult subject or issue might help the writer and reader of the poem?

- Ask the children once again, how they might bring out the emotion of these poems in a performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this. You may wish to draw on the advice for a successful performance, created for schools shadowing the CLiPPA, to guide their thinking with these particular poems.
- Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Allow them time and space to think about or discuss this, if they are working in a pair or group, and to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes before trying out ideas, adapting where necessary and rehearsing their performances to share with the rest of the class.
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
- Ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem, viewpoint or the subject matter? How was the performance different from hearing the poem read aloud?*
- Provide time and space for the children to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems in their poetry journals, based on their responses to the poems they have heard, read and performed in this collection. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. They might begin to develop ideas based on their responses to the ideas, themes, viewpoints conveyed or to empathies and emotions evoked. They might want to stay in the world of Cosmo's story or reflect on personal or real-world connections they are making. Ensure the children are aware that all responses are of value and worth noting, even tenuously.
- It is vitally important to allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if they are choosing to address more sensitive issues or express a personal viewpoint, such as those explored in some of the poems in this collection. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them, but they may or may not wish to share these publicly.
- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, exploring concepts and ideas that you would be happy to share and talk about with the children, and to come back to, to work up into full poems.

Session 8: Poetry can express voice and experience and evoke empathy and understanding

- Re-read the poems, 'Tractor Boy' (page 48), 'With A Bit Of Practice' (page 49) and 'Brave Boy' (pages 58-59). Give the children time and space to reflect on their responses. *What do you notice about these three poems together? Why do you think the poet has written them? What is he hoping to convey? What might he want us to think about?*
- Invite the children to make any connections to other poems read so far. Flick back to the poems, 'Everyone Tells Me What I Can't Do, Apart From Mum' (pages 20-21) and 'Why Does Everyone Have Something To Say?' (pages 38-39) and explore in more depth the similarities and differences between the five poems, both in terms of the content and in the way they have been written. *What messages is the poet trying to convey in these four poems? How do these poems and people's attitudes towards Cosmo differ to those of his immediate family? What kinds of interactions does Cosmo experience – what kinds of assumptions might people make about him; his abilities, his thoughts and his feelings?*
- Discuss how poetry can be written in a way that tackles social misconceptions and can help the writer or the reader to feel that their voice is being heard. *What have you learned through these poems about Cosmo and, more widely, about some people's experience of coming to terms with or living with a disability?* Scribe the children's thinking on a flipchart.
- Reflect on the wider cross-curricular research that the children are undertaking around disability, rights and inclusion - and the way in which wheelchair users like Cosmo can sometimes be treated or perceived. *What would we like to say to these people? What do you think they need to know about Cosmo?* Scribe further ideas on the flipchart.
- You might want to give the children more time to revisit and discuss their research findings in more depth and in smaller groups. Give the children plenty of opportunity to discuss the importance of affording everybody in society with equal dignity and respect, the importance of equity and inclusion and how this can be achieved, as well as exploring how different people with disability manage challenge, build on capabilities, contribute and achieve.
- Explain to the children that we are going to draw this learning together by writing a letter poem to someone featured in these poems – for example, Nana, Brian, pupils at school, the man in the park, the lady in the cinema – sharing how their responses to and interactions with Cosmo made him feel and why that might be. Or the children may decide they want to address their poem to a more general audience, such as the 'some people' Cosmo refers to on page 49, about what he and others experience of being a wheelchair user or living with a different kind of disability.
- Look at the way in which the poems have been written as free verse and how this differs to the form of epistolary – or letter – poem that the poet uses throughout the collection, in particular when Cosmo or his family members are directly addressing the tree.
- Ask the children to choose a few of these type of poems from what they have read of the collection so far and explore it in more depth. *How are the poems structured? What kind of language is used? Are there common patterns? How are views expressed? What tone is used – is the register formal or informal? What is expected of the audience – the tree?*
- The children may benefit from exploring this form of poetry further by reading epistolary poems written by other poets, as well as poems that use direct address, like:

- [‘I’m Nobody! Who Are You?’ by Emily Dickenson](#)
 - [‘Tomorrow Has Your Name on It’ by Roger McGough \(from *Poetry Pie*, Puffin\)](#)
 - [‘Dear Mum, BTEC’ by Steven Camden, illustrated by Aka Polarbear \(from *Everything All At Once*, MacMillan\)](#)
 - [‘For You’ by Karl Nova \(from *Rhythm and Poetry*, Caboodle Books \)](#)
 - ‘Hey Mum’, ‘Waves’ and ‘Dig, Did, Dig’ by Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Oriol Vidal (from [Let’s Chase Stars Together. Poems to Lose Yourself In](#), Bloomsbury)
 - ‘When Your Letters Came’ by Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Kate Milner (from [Overheard in a Tower Block](#), Otter-Barry Books)
 - [Windrush Child’ by John Agard, illustrated by Cathie Felstead \(from *Under the Moon, Over the Sea*, Walker\)](#)
 - [Choose Love by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Petr Horacek \(from *Choose Love*, Walker\)](#)
 - [‘The Migrants in Me’ by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Quentin Blake \(from *On the Move. Poems About Migration*, Walker\)](#)
 - [‘The Water in the Glass You Are Holding Right Now’ by Kate Wakeling, illustrated by Elĭna Brasliĭna \(from *Cloud Soup*, Emma Press\)](#)
 - [‘Dear Basketball’ by Kobe Bryant](#)
- Ask mixed pairs or groups of children to choose one of these poems to explore in more depth ready to share their responses to the poems that they have read with the wider group.
 - Allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration 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 feedback on their own poem and begin to discuss what they are finding out about this form of poetry more generally by exploring common patterns or features. *To whom is the poem addressed and why? What is the tone of the poem – where would you place it on the register of formality? How is it structured? What kind of language is used? What do you think the poet might want to gain by writing this poem – and in this way? What are the opportunities for a poet when adopting this form of poetry?*
 - Now, encourage them to lean on the structure of the epistolary - or direct address - poem to write a poem of their own. *To whom will they address their poem and why? What kinds of things would they like to say to them? What do they want their intended audience to think about or to feel? What kind of impact do they want their poem to have on their audience; to develop empathy and understanding, to re-evaluate misconceptions, to inspire action?*
 - Give them time and space to jot down their initial thoughts and ideas in note form, ready to expand and come back to when they start to draft their poem. Model your own thoughts and ideas alongside the children as they work.
 - Enlarge and re-read one of the epistolary poems again together, looking at how we might borrow from the structure of the original to start crafting our own ideas. Model this yourself, making

visible and using the notes you made. Talking through the drafting and crafting process in this way opens up the authentic ways in which writers work to the children and will help to model the kind of thinking they will do when they come to their own piece of writing.

- Give time and space for the children to come up with their own lines. Once again, it would help to model this process if you talked this through with your own lines first. Open up conversations that explore the process of responding to and editing writing. Engaging children in active explorations like this will demonstrate how to make conscious decisions about the writing with the effect it has in mind.
- Now, allow time and space for the children to explore, experiment with and compose their own writing in the same way. When they are happy with the lines that they have written, provide time for them to write or type these up to display around copies of the five poems explored at the start of the session: 'Tractor Boy' (page 48), 'With A Bit Of Practice' (page 49), 'Brave Boy' (pages 58-59), 'Everyone Tells Me What I Can't Do, Apart From Mum' (pages 20-21) and 'Why Does Everyone Have Something To Say?' (pages 38-39).
- Give time and space for the children to read and respond to each other's compositions, talking about how they think they might impact on a wider readership.
- You might decide to publish the poems as an anthology to reach such an audience, either in a bound book or digitally, so that it can be shared on the school website, social media account or blog page.

Session 9: Graph of Emotion

- Take the opportunity to reflect on the story so far and what we have learned about Cosmo's journey as he comes to terms with his injury and being a wheelchair user. *What is he learning and experiencing? What are we learning with him as a reader?*
- Consider how we might describe Cosmo's emotional journey from the beginning of the story to now. *Which parts of the story are most memorable to you – what emotions were evoked in this moment? What emotional peaks and troughs has Cosmo experienced – did he start out sad and is becoming happier or is it more complex than that?*
- Draw on the working wall or poetry journals to look back at the words you and the children have used to describe Cosmo's emotions when responding to the poems, such as: happy, sad, frustrated, angry, enraged, despairing, deflated, exasperated, joyous, proud, jealous, regretful. *Do you think there is one emotion that dominates? Why? Why not?*
- Give mixed pairs or groups of children time to reflect together on the narrative from the beginning to now ('Biscuits for Dinner' (pages 60-61), before asking them to imagine Cosmo's emotional journey as a graph line that shows his emotional peaks and troughs. Explain to the children that by creating a Graph of Emotion like this, they are able to track the emotions of Cosmo as the events of the narrative unfold.
- Children can draw this line on a whiteboard or use string or wool so that they can adjust it as they discuss their ideas together, afterwards recording it permanently or taking a photograph. Ensure

that you make your own graph alongside the children, thinking aloud as you do so to model the contrasting emotive language you are reflecting on.

- Pin up the graphs and discuss how they compare. *Why do you think the lines look like they do? What do you think Stephen Lightbown wants to convey to us about Cosmo's experience of coming to terms with a life-changing injury? What insights might it give us into his own lived experience?*
- Tell the children that you are now going to read the poems to the end of the story. Before doing so, ask the children to think about what they predict for the ending of the story and how they anticipate Cosmo will be feeling between now and then.
- Pin your own graph to the left of a roll of paper and use some string or wool to model extending the line graph to represent different ideas about Cosmo's emotional journey to the end of the book.
- Invite the children to talk together in their pairs or groups and extend their own Graph of Emotion to include their own predictions for the rest of the story.
- Now, read aloud the poems from 'Cloudspotting' (page 62) to 'Cosmo' (pages 90-91), pausing throughout to invite the children's immediate responses and comments. At the end, discuss: *Is this what you expected? Are you satisfied with the ending of this book? Why? Why not? What do you like or dislike and why? Are there any poems that are particularly memorable to you – how are they similar or different to those earlier in the collection? What connections are you making? Do you have any questions? Does anything puzzle you?*
- Ask mixed pairs or groups of children to re-read the poems on the page together, encouraging them to look more deeply at them, exploring the themes and concepts introduced and the poet's use of language as well as the way the words and illustration work together on the page to make meaning. They can take this opportunity to adjust their predicted Graph of Emotion to reflect Cosmo's actual emotional journey to the end of the narrative.
- Consider the story arc – and in particular the ending – of this narrative. *Does it remind them of other stories they know? Why do you think the poet has chosen to end the book with the poem, 'Cosmo'? What is he hoping to convey to us? Do they think this is the end of Cosmo's story? How might it continue? Return to Stephen Lightbown's own story and consider the parallels between his and his character's story. What do you think is similar and what is unique?*
- Now, ask the children to pick one poem of interest to discuss in more depth. Ask them to talk about the poem together, discussing what the poem makes them think about, how it makes them feel and what makes them feel this way and any comments on the language, devices and layout of the poem. By now, the children should be more confident to discuss specific poetic devices and the effects they create for the reader. Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their chosen poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions.
- Come back together to discuss: *Why did they choose the particular poem they did? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? Did they – or Cosmo – feel the same throughout the poem or did their feelings change at different points? How did the poet achieve this effect on you?*

- Ask the children, once again, how they might bring out the emotion of these poems in a performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this.
- Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Allow them time and space to think about or discuss this, if they are working in a pair or group, and to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes before trying out ideas, adapting where necessary and rehearsing their performances to share with the rest of the class.
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
- Ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem, viewpoint or the subject matter? How was the performance different from hearing the poem read aloud?*
- Provide time and space for the children to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems in their poetry journals, based on their responses to the poems they have heard, read and performed in this collection. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. They might begin to develop ideas based on their responses to the ideas, themes, viewpoints conveyed or to empathies and emotions evoked. They might want to stay in the world of Cosmo's story or reflect on personal or real-world connections they are making. *What issues are explored in this collection by Stephen Lightbown? What issues are important to you or reflect your own lived experience? What would you like to others to hear through your poetry?* Ensure the children are aware that all responses are of value and worth noting, even tenuously.
- Again, it is vitally important to allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if they are choosing to address more sensitive issues or express a personal viewpoint, such as those explored in some of the poems in this collection. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them, but they may or may not wish to share these publicly.
- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, exploring concepts and ideas that you would be happy to share and talk about with the children, and to come back to, to work up into full poems.

Session 10: Poetry can uplift

- Re-read the last poem, 'Cosmo' and reflect with the children on what they have learned about Cosmo through the poems in this collection. You could record the children's ideas on a class [Role on the Wall](#) whereby known facts about Cosmo are written around his outline and his inner

characteristics are scribed within it. In doing this, the children can think beyond him being identified solely as ‘disabled’ or ‘a wheelchair user’ and consider what he has in common with other children his age, such as the interests he shares or the toys with which he plays. They can consider how he has met certain challenges since his accident as well as the characteristics he displays that might be those of many other eight-year-olds or unique to him, in everyday situations or in how he relates to his family and friends.

- Consider with the children when Cosmo might feel most at ease with himself, most able, most confident. *What does he enjoy doing and why? Who does it involve?*
- Re-read now ‘My Heart Beats, I Dance’ (pages 69-71) and discuss how this poem makes the children feel, what it makes them think about. Some children may have chosen this poem to perform in the previous session which will support discussion, for example, you might:
 - Explore with the children how the poem and illustration work together on the pages to make meaning. *Why do you think the illustrator has responded to this poem in this way? What is the effect of the page turn on you as readers? How do the illustrations reflect the meaning being created in the poem?*
 - Reflect on the emotional journey Cosmo is taken on throughout this poem; from getting ready, to reflecting on how others see him, to positive affirmations, to the uplifting peak at the end.
 - Consider the rhythm of this free verse poem. *How has rhythm been used to create meaning and effect? What is the effect of lines with fewer syllables or end punctuation? Do you notice any patterns or repetition? What is the impact of enjambement as well as punctuation choices, such as the commas? How does the layout of the poem affect the way we read it?*
 - Look at the language choices. *What do the children notice about the verb tense used? Why would the poet want to use the present tense? What impact does it have on us as readers? What imagery is created through description and figurative language, such as the metaphor? Are there any words or phrases that are particularly vivid or memorable to you? Why is that?*
 - You could deepen children’s understanding of how dancing might feel for Cosmo by watching the following films together then revisiting the poem to discuss further:
 - <https://www.danceforallbodies.org/dancestyles>
 - <https://youtu.be/YAkoW-8FHvU?si=6TtQv1hvVJqmm4LC>
- Now, revisit what the children have found out about how everyone can enjoy and achieve in a wide range of activities, and how they say it makes them feel to surf, climb, play football, shoot hoops, run, swim, skate, or express themselves in any other way they might enjoy.
- Ask the children to talk about someone who has inspired them from their research; perhaps their engagement in a particular activity evoked a strong response or connection or perhaps they are particularly interested in the activity themselves and so are drawn to someone else who enjoys it too.

- Encourage the children to make personal connections. *How do they feel when they are engaging in this same activity? Is it exciting or calming? What do they think about when they are deeply involved in their activity? How does it feel to achieve and build on capabilities?* Give the children time to make notes in their poetry journals. These might be words and phrases that come to mind or they may begin with sketches that help them to articulate their ideas or descriptions.
- Invite the children to draw on the poem, 'My Heart Beats, I Dance' (pages 69-71) as inspiration for writing their own poem about how they feel when engaging in a particularly enjoyable, exciting or uplifting activity.
- Begin by re-reading the ninth and tenth stanzas in which Cosmo enjoys an almost transcendent experience, in which he is able to imagine being as free as a dolphin:

I close my eyes, cast out
 My fingers a hundred miles,
 Each note covers my whole body.
 I hear the squeak
 of pumps and I'm a

Dolphin,
 riding waves.
 Soaring through the surf.
 Alive in the sea.

- Discuss with the children what this tells us about Cosmo's engagement with the music and in his dancing. Ask the children to close their eyes and step inside a moment when they felt particularly engaged with their favourite activity. *What are they thinking and feeling? What is their body doing? How can they describe this to a reader to convey their enjoyment, involvement or enthusiasm?* Ask the children to open their eyes and fill a page in their poetry journals with ideas and imagery that comes to mind as this memory is evoked.
- Now ask the children to revisit their page and highlight one idea that particularly appeals to them and explore how they might develop this further. Model this by making visible and using your own journal notes to develop an idea and craft it into an uplifting line and then a stanza or two. Read it aloud to check the rhythm and pacing conveys meaning as intended and to consider how you might lay it out on the page to emphasise this further.
- Now, model how you might draw on the structure of the poem to support your own composition. You might begin, as Lightbown's poem does, by setting the scene for the reader, drawing them in slowly before shifting the mood to the emotional peak conveyed in the stanzas you have just crafted. Make your thinking visible, actively engaging the children in the process of choosing and responding to an idea, drafting and editing, shaping and crafting your writing.
- Now, allow time and space for the children to explore, experiment with and compose their own poems in the same way. When they are happy with what they have written, provide time for them

to write or type these up, with illustrations, to display around a copy of the original poem from Stephen Lightbown.

- Give time and space for the children to read and respond to each other's compositions, talking about how they evoke a particular response or draw the reader into the poet's experience.
- You might decide to publish the poems as an anthology to reach such an audience, either in a bound book or digitally so that it can be shared on the school website, social media account or blog page.

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? Can you categorise them under different headings? What would these be? What were different poems about? Could you categorise these into different topics or themes? What ideas do these 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 Stephen Lightbown talk about where he gains inspiration for his poetry on his [poet page on CLPE's website](#).
- You might also read aloud Stephen Lightbown's account of how he developed the character of Cosmo and worked up ideas into this collection in '[Making the Page Feel Real](#)'.
- Ask children to reflect on what Lightbown has said and talk in pairs or small groups to record together 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: personal experiences, emotions, 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 relationships or dynamics, interactions, etc.
- Listen to Lightbown and other poets talk about how they go about writing their poetry on the CLPE [Poet Videos website page](#). *What ideas can they pick up from this?* 2015 CLIPPA winner Joseph

Coelho, 2018 CLIPPA Highly Commended poet Ruth Awolola and 2019 shortlistee Philip Gross all talk about the importance of keeping a note of ideas in a notebook or on a phone.

- Come back to the poetry journals where children have been jotting down ideas, inspirations, sketches and drafts of poems. Remind the children that these books are only for them – there's not a particular amount of writing you expect them to do, they can write in any way they wish, and they can also sketch and draw. It's also important to make clear that you won't be marking them. Amina Jama talks about not censoring herself when she first jots ideas down.
- Now give time for the children to reflect back on the ideas they've collected and think about which they feel might be most successful to take forward to a draft piece of writing in the next session.
- It is important for you as a teacher of writing to reflect on your own feelings about writing alongside the children and review ideas you have collected in your own journal. Our recent research highlights the importance of teachers as writers of poetry. Share some of the ideas you would consider working up and why, and how you might start to think about doing this, then give the children some time to begin to work up their own ideas or to sit and think about how to do this.
- Some children may choose to start by drawing, doodling or sketching ideas initially. You might even refer back to some of the illustrations in the collection.
- The children could also draw on the ideas of practising poets. You might listen again to poets talk about how they go about writing their poetry. They might start by jotting down favourite words or phrases, they may want to splurge their ideas like [Kate Wakeling](#), they may have a line that is their starting point, like [Sue Hardy-Dawson](#), they might make a mind map around the theme or title, like [Ruth Awolola](#).
- 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.

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.

- Reflect on the ideas that the children have been noting in their poetry journals throughout the unit. *Which ones do they feel strongly enough about to take through to writing? How can you take your initial notes forward into crafting a poem?*
- Take a theme or topic from your own journal that you could begin working up into a poem. Model how you might begin crafting a poem based on one of the topics discussed during one of the sessions, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to communicate the right feelings and images for your reader.
- Think about the form the poem will take and if they will use any of the poetic devices you have explored in the poetry in this collection, such as rhyme, repetition, imagery, alliteration or assonance. You may have children in the class who are very adept at using rhythm and rhyme in their writing, some may be more comfortable to write in free verse and find it easier to express their thoughts and feelings in this way. Encourage them to select the form and devices that allow them to express their themes and feelings in the best way, as they have seen and responded to in Stephen Lightbown's writing and in other poetry they enjoy.
- Allow time for children to draft their own poems around the themes and subjects of their choice, then allow them to read these aloud to themselves, perhaps while walking around or moving so they can feel the rhythms of their writing before sharing with 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, adjust rhythms or make suggestions to improve the writing.
- 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. *Which of these had accompanying illustrations and which didn't? Why do you think this was? What is the impact of having the illustrations there? What does the reader have to do if the poem is not illustrated? What style of illustration do you think might best fit the theme and emotions captured in your writing?*

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 re-draft 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 need time 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 that poem 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 illustration sit and work together?*
- Children who need support to get their ideas down on the page might use dictation software, such as that provided on Word or Google Docs, to get their ideas down before playing with the poem on the page.

Session 14: Publishing Own Poems

Publication is the means to present writing in a way that is most appropriate for the purpose, audience and 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, proofreading 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 and presenting writing can bring.

- Allow plenty of time and space for the children to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly.
- Ensure time is given to consider ways to allow published poems to be shared with 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.
- 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?*
- 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.

Session 15: Reflecting on the Collection

- Ask the children to reflect on the poems that have been explored together and in more depth throughout the sequence. Invite them to share what their favourite poems have been, re-read some that the class suggest or invite them to read these to the class.
- To draw together all the work done in this unit, hold a discussion about the collection as a whole. *Which were your favourite poems? Which were the most memorable for you? 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?*
- 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 the poets, 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?*
- You could even Stephen Lightbown copies of the children's poems, with a covering note or letter thanking him for inspiring their work, via the [contact page on his website](#) or by tagging him @spokeandpencil into a school Instagram post.
- You may also want to look into the prospect of inviting him to the school for a poet visit, online or in person, through his [contact page](#).