

## **A KICK IN THE HEAD: AN EVERYDAY GUIDE TO POETIC FORMS**

### **Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 3-5**

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**A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms** selected by Paul B. Janeczko.  
Illustrated by Chris Raschka. Candlewick Press, 2005. 64 pages.

#### **Summary**

This exuberant collection of poetry complemented by fantastic mixed-media collages that bound across the pages will capture the imaginations of children and inspire their own creations. The poems are by Paul B. Janeczko and other highly recognized poets. This is a wonderful book to get kids hooked on poetry. Everything about the book (design, color, form, and content) is fun and enticing. The twenty-nine poetic forms used in the book are described and explained at the back of the book.

#### **Awards**

*Claudia Lewis Award for Poetry Winner 2005*  
*Lupine Award Winner 2005 Picture Book*  
*Parent's Choice Award Gold 2005 Picture Books*

#### **Author's Biography**

Poet and anthologist Paul B. Janeczko taught high school English for twenty-two years. He is passionate about inspiring young people to read, write and enjoy poetry. He has written and compiled books that include his own poems, compilations of other poets' works, and instructions about how to write poetry. He lives in Hebron, Maine with his wife and daughter where he is active in the literary community.

<http://www.pauljaneczko.com/>

<http://www.candlewick.com/authill.asp?b=Author&m=bio&id=2178&pix=n>

#### **Other Titles by Paul B. Janeczko**

*Brickyard Summer*

*Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems in Different Voices*

*Hey, You!*

*Poetry from A to Z: A Guide for Young Writers*

*A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems*

*Seeing the Blue Between: Advice and Inspiration for Young Poets*

*Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers, and Secret Writing*

*Worlds Afire*

#### **Illustrator's Biography**

Chris Raschka grew up in Chicago and says that he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up from an early age—he wanted to become a biologist! Fortunately, he shifted his focus to painting and drawing. His goal is to create artwork that embraces the idea of the book but does not overpower the text. Raschka has illustrated over forty books including the 2006 Caldecott Medal winner *The Hello, Goodbye Window* and the 1994 Caldecott Honor book *Yo! Yes?* He now lives in New York with his wife, son, and pets.

[http://www.kidspoint.org/columns2.asp?column\\_id=1318&column\\_type=author](http://www.kidspoint.org/columns2.asp?column_id=1318&column_type=author)

<http://www.candlewick.com/authill.asp?b=Illustrator&m=bio&id=2049&pix=n>

### **Other Titles Illustrated by Chris Raschka**

*The Hello, Goodbye Window* (2006 Caldecott Medal)

*Yo! Yes?* (1994 Caldecott Honor)

*Another Important Book*

*Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*

*Five for a Little One*

*Skin Again*

### **Related Titles**

*Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme* by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. This is another good book to help introduce the world of poetry to children.

*Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems* by Joyce Sidman. Illustrated by Beckie Prange. (Caldecott Honor Book) This book offers another artful look into the world of poetry.

*Technically, It's Not My Fault: Concrete Poems* by John Grandits. This book gives a whimsical look at concrete poetry.

*For Laughing out Loud: Poems to Tickle Your Funny Bone* by Jack Prelutsky.

*Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* by Paul Fleischman.

*Pieces: A Year in Poems and Quilts* by Anna Hines.

*The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* by Jack Prelutsky.

*Side by Side: Poems to Read Together* by Lee Bennett Hopkins.

*You Come Too: Favorite Poems for Young Readers* by Robert Frost.

### **Classroom Connections**

#### **Writing Poetry Forms**

- Have the students write their own poems after instructing them about different poetic forms and reading examples from the book. Ask the students to select a specific poetic form, such as a couplet, quatrain, or clerihew.

#### **Create Acrostic Poems** (the first letter in each line spells out the subject of the poem)

- For example, “**D**oes **O**nly **G**ood” **DOG** or “**C**an’t **A**void **T**rouble” **CAT**.
- In science class have students create an acrostic for the animal life or plant life they are studying. Have the children identify each letter of the word (such as the dinosaur “brachiosaurus”) and create an acrostic poem.

#### **Concrete Poems**

- Concrete poems form a shape or picture when arranged according to the subject of the poem. Show examples of concrete poems and let the children use their imaginations to create their own.
- For example, the words in a poem about a ball look like they are spiraling into a ball.
- To assist students with the idea, give them basic shapes such as squares, triangles, a crescent moon, etc. and have them start from a central dot or point in the center and write their poem outward.

### **List Poems**

- List poems can be used to reflect the students' personal lives.
- Using the example of a list poem from the book, ask children to respond to the topics listed or to topics of their own.

### **Figure Poems**

- Have the students glue construction paper to create arms, legs, and a head onto an index card.
- After gluing the limbs to the index card torso, ask the students to write a short poem describing the figure they just created. Is the figure happy? Where's he/she going? Is he/she dancing?

### **Poetry Tree**

#### **Lesson Plan: Pro Teacher/ Poetry/ Poet-Tree**

- <http://www.proteacher.net/archive/posts/2002/06/29/40057.html>
- Have students write poems on a piece of construction paper cutting them out to look like a leaf. Using brown paper creates a tree shape and tape on the wall. Place the children's poetic leaves at the top of the tree. Title the art project "Poetry Tree."

#### **Lesson Plan: Forms of Poetry for Children/Couplets/ Lesson 21**

- <http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/couplet.htm>
- Have the students write couplets.

### **Art**

- Have students draw, paint or make collages to illustrate a poem that they like.

### **Web Sites**

#### **Authors On The Web**

<http://www.authorsontheweb.com/features/0204-poet/kid-poet-authors.asp>

This site contains links to children's poets and books geared to younger readers.

#### **Poetry Books & Other Media Popular with Elementary Students: Bibliography**

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poeheis.htm>

Bibliography of poetry and other media giving recommendations to many titles. The books are appropriate for elementary grade levels.