

## TECHNICALLY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT: CONCRETE POEMS

### Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2007 Grades 6-8

Submitted by Erin N. Chesnutt, Intern, Beauregard Parish Public Library, DeRidder and Graduate Student, School of Library & Information Science, LSU  
(Professor: Dr. Margie Thomas)

**Technically It's Not My Fault: Concrete Poems** by John Grandits. Houghton Mifflin Company (Clarion Books), 2004. 48 p.

#### Summary

Book designer John Grandits uses the voice of eleven-year-old Robert to present inventive poetry. This is a book that will appeal to kids (especially boys) who are looking for a quick, funny read. Grandits uses shapes, typefaces and other design techniques to enhance the various poems. Technically, they are not all by definition "concrete poems," but they are clever and eye-catching and will certainly appeal to even the most die-hard poetry-hater. Be forewarned about the subject matter, which not only includes standard fare, such as homework, pets and basketball, but also "The Autobiography of Murray the Fart" and "Spew Machine."

#### Awards

CCBC Choice 2005  
ALA Notable Book for Children 2005  
ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults 2005

#### Author's Biography

John Grandits, author and illustrator of *Technically, It's Not My Fault*, is an award-winning designer of both books and magazines. Author of several books, Grandits is also the creator of "Beatrice Black Bear," a cartoon for *Click* magazine and one of the creative drives for *Click* and *Muse* magazines. *Technically, It's Not My Fault* is his first book of poetry. He and his wife, Joanne, live in Red Bank, New Jersey with their pet cat, Gilbert.

[http://www.tla1.com/Talent/John\\_Grandits/JOHN\\_GRANDITS.htm](http://www.tla1.com/Talent/John_Grandits/JOHN_GRANDITS.htm)

#### Other Titles by John Grandits

*Pictures Tell Stories (Collections for Young Scholars)*  
*Blue Lipstick: Concrete Poems*

#### Related Titles

*A Poke in the I: Concrete Poems* by Paul B. Janeczko.  
*Outside the Lines: Poetry at Play* by Brad Burg.

#### Classroom Connections

See **Candlewick Press: Paul B. Janeczko—Tricks of the Trade**

[http://www.candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763606618.kit.1.pdf](http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763606618.kit.1.pdf)

This is an excellent site explaining how to write concrete poetry.

## **Language Arts: Writing Concrete Poetry**

- Have the students learn the technique of writing concrete poetry, then write their own concrete poem.

### **Connections by Elizabeth Dumas, Good Hope Middle School, West Monroe**

All three grades can use this book to select a poem(s) for their poetry booklet or journal mentioned in the poetry units.

#### **Grade 6**

##### ELA Unit 5: Poetry

Activity 1: Poetic Devices. These poems show another example of how the poet can create visual imagery.

#### **Grade 7**

##### ELA Unit 4: Ode to Me-Poetry

Activity 7: Writing Poetry. These poems will provide excellent examples of concrete poetry for students to consider when writing their own poetry.

#### **Grade 8**

##### ELA Unit 3: Life is a Poem-Poetry

Activity 10: Writing Poetry. These poems will provide excellent examples of concrete poetry for students to consider when writing their own poetry.

## **Web Links**

### **Author and Book**

#### **Nancy Keane's Booktalks**

[http://www.nancykeane.com/booktalks/grandits\\_technically.htm](http://www.nancykeane.com/booktalks/grandits_technically.htm)

This site includes a quick booktalk.

#### **Tehema County Department of Education: Lit Fest 2005: John Grandits**

<http://www.litfest.net/2005.html>

Biography of Grandits and a really funny photo of John when he was five years old.

#### **Transatlantic Literary Agency, Inc: John Grandits**

[http://www.tla1.com/Talent/John\\_Grandits/JOHN\\_GRANDITS.htm](http://www.tla1.com/Talent/John_Grandits/JOHN_GRANDITS.htm)

This page provides a short biography and a list of his works.

### **Concrete Poetry**

#### **About.com: Creative Writing for Teens.**

<http://teenwriting.about.com/library/weekly/aa041403g.htm>

Includes instructions on how to write concrete poetry.

#### **Candlewick Press: Paul B. Janeczko—Tricks of the Trade**

[http://www.candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763606618.kit.1.pdf](http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763606618.kit.1.pdf)

This is an excellent site explaining how to write concrete poetry.

#### **Internet School Library Media Center: Forms of Poetry for Children**

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

Concrete Poetry: <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poeform.htm#G>

Links about poetry.

**MsRogers.com: A Web for Educators**

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

**Thirty Days of Poetry: Day 1: Concrete Poetry**

[http://www.msrogers.com/English2/poetry/30\\_days\\_of\\_poetryday\\_1.htm](http://www.msrogers.com/English2/poetry/30_days_of_poetryday_1.htm)

Demonstrates how to write concrete poetry.

**Poetry and Technology**

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

The site includes lesson plans on teaching children about poetry in its various forms. The section on concrete poetry provides general suggestions for introducing children to the form and learning to appreciate and create their own poems.

**Wikipedia**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concrete\\_poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concrete_poetry)

Definition of concrete poetry.