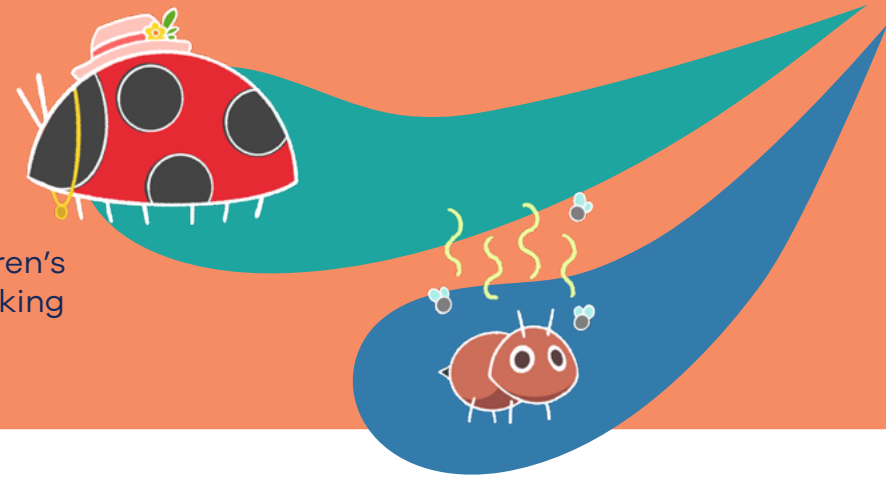


Poetry Prompts: Week 32

Bugs

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 32 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's poetry prompt, you were looking at bugs. Here's a poem about another common insect to read and explore...



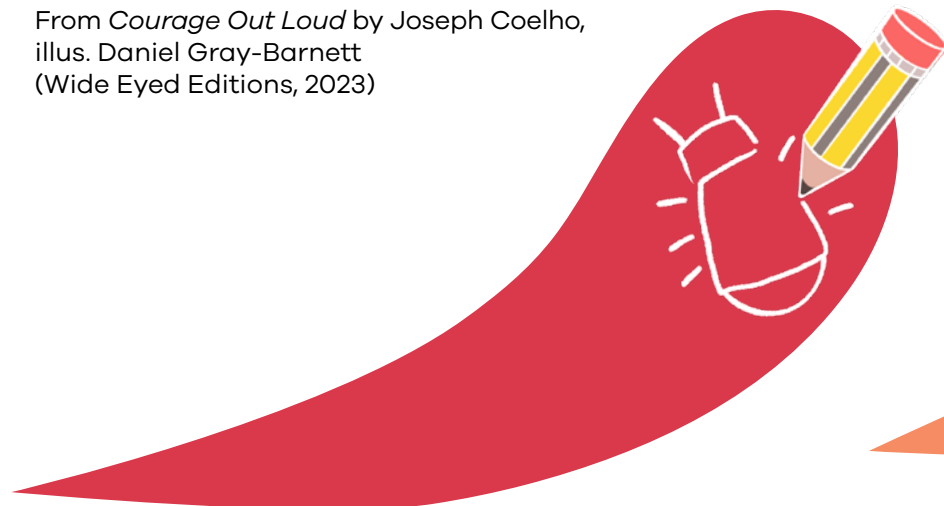
Read the poem:

Read the poem aloud. You could read this to yourself, with a friend or have someone else read it to you:

Caterpillar

**A brave caterpillar spins a cocoon,
not knowing what it will become
but dreaming of flight.**

From *Courage Out Loud* by Joseph Coelho,
illus. Daniel Gray-Barnett
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2023)



Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just read or heard. What do you learn about the caterpillar from the poem? What words tell you these things? What do you feel about the caterpillar? What makes you feel this way?

Take some time to connect the poem with what you already know about caterpillars. What other things do you already know about caterpillars? Which of these things do you see in the poem? Which do you not see? What has Joseph Coelho chosen to focus this poem on? Why do you think he chose this aspect of the caterpillar's life?



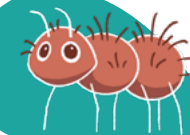


Look at the language:

- **Read the poem again.** It is a short poem, but **each and every word has been carefully chosen** to make us think or feel something about the experience being described.
- Look carefully at the words Joseph Coelho has **chosen to describe the caterpillar**, its thoughts and its actions. What is the **impact of the choice of adjective** he has used in the first line: A **brave** caterpillar? Why do you **think he chose this word specifically** to describe the caterpillar in this moment? Can you **think of any other adjectives you could choose or use?** What **impact would these have** if you placed them in the poem? Would they **change your thoughts and feelings** in any way?
- Now, **think about the verbs** he uses to describe the caterpillar's action in the **first line**: A brave caterpillar **spins** a cocoon. What does this word **specifically tell you** about the action of making the cocoon? What does it make you **imagine or feel** about the caterpillar? How is this different from using a word like **makes** or **builds**?
- Think about the **second line of the poem**: not knowing what it will become. What does this make us **think or feel** about the caterpillar?
- Now, consider the **last line**: but dreaming of flight. What does this line leave us **thinking or feeling** about the butterfly?
- Think about the **images you see in your mind** as you look at the words. If you were going to illustrate this poem, how would you do this? Take some drawing equipment and a sheet of paper and **create an illustration to go alongside the poem**. Which **words or phrases do you think influenced your illustration** the most?

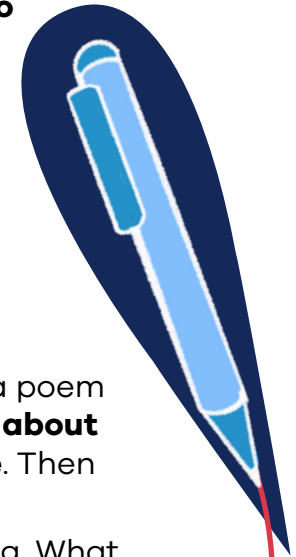
Perform the poem:

- Think about how to **recreate the detail** of this moment being described in a performance of this poem. How can you **use your voice in different ways** to describe the caterpillar, its **actions and its emotions?** Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you **bring out the meaning** behind the words chosen for the audience watching you? How will you **pace your performance** to weave the excitement and contemplation together?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. What sense did your audience get about this moment from the way you performed the poem? What did they think **you did that was most effective?**



Write your own!

- Bugs, insects and minibeasts are often seen as scary or as pests, but **they are powerful and necessary creatures**. Gardeners might get cross when a caterpillar eats the leaves of their plants, but Joseph Coelho's poem above describes them in a way that makes us **see the beauty of their existence**. Think about how **you might do this in a poem of your own** about a different bug, insect or minibeast.
- You may **have one in mind** already, or you might want to **do some more research** to find one to write about. You could look at a web page like this one from CBBC to get you started: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/ten-incredible-insects>.
- Write down as many **words and phrases to describe your chosen creature** and as many **facts as you know** about them on a piece of paper. You might also find it useful to **draw your chosen creature**; this might help you think of words to describe them. Then, **look at all the information you have** and think which words, phrases and facts might be good to base your own poem on.
- Think about how you might **bring across a sense of awe and wonder** about the creature you choose in a poem of your own, as Joseph did in his poem. Go back to the ideas you put to paper before and try to **think about the overall feeling** you want to capture to express how you want your **reader to feel about this creature**. Then consider what you could say about the creature to **engage your reader**.
- See if you can **use as few words as possible**, as in Joseph's original poem, which was only three lines long. What words will you use to **enable your reader to feel a certain way** about your chosen creature? What experiences will you describe to **capture their attention or teach them something** about your chosen creature? How will you do this?
- When you've had a go at writing, **read it through to yourself**, to check it makes sense and to see what feelings you've created, then **type or write it up in your best handwriting** to show or perform to someone else. What did **they learn or feel** about the creature from your poem?



Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate

Find and explore more poems about animals and their habitats on CLPE's website.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK-based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: clpe.org.uk.