

## Poetry Prompts: Week 58

# Under the sea

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 58 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week Joseph Coelho wrote a poem about a circus under the sea, inspired by a drawing he had made. Here's another poem about a creature from under the sea, which is full of excitement and adventure!

### Look at the poem:

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

### Funny Fish

I live in the sea,  
I'm as sweet as can be,  
I'm a tiny little clown fish  
but please don't stare at me.

I'm tiny and pretty,  
colours all around my body,  
a beautiful little clown fish  
living by a sea anemone.

I have no enemies,  
I'm dressed to please, you see,  
a wonderfully fashionable clown fish  
with a flair for modesty.

Here comes one to admire me,  
a handsome princely fishy  
who appreciates a pretty clown fish,  
what has he got for me?

His smile is so deadly,  
a handsome catch for me,  
just a modest pretty clown fish  
by her sea anemone.

He wants to speak to me,  
his lips part so slowly,  
I'm a giddy, pretty clown fish.  
What will he say to me?

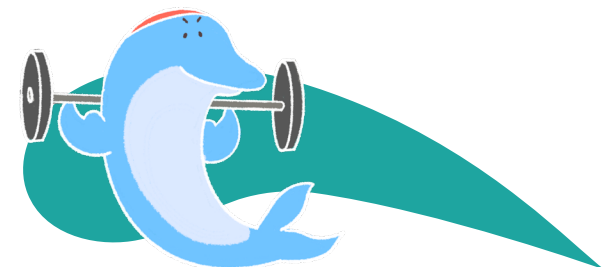
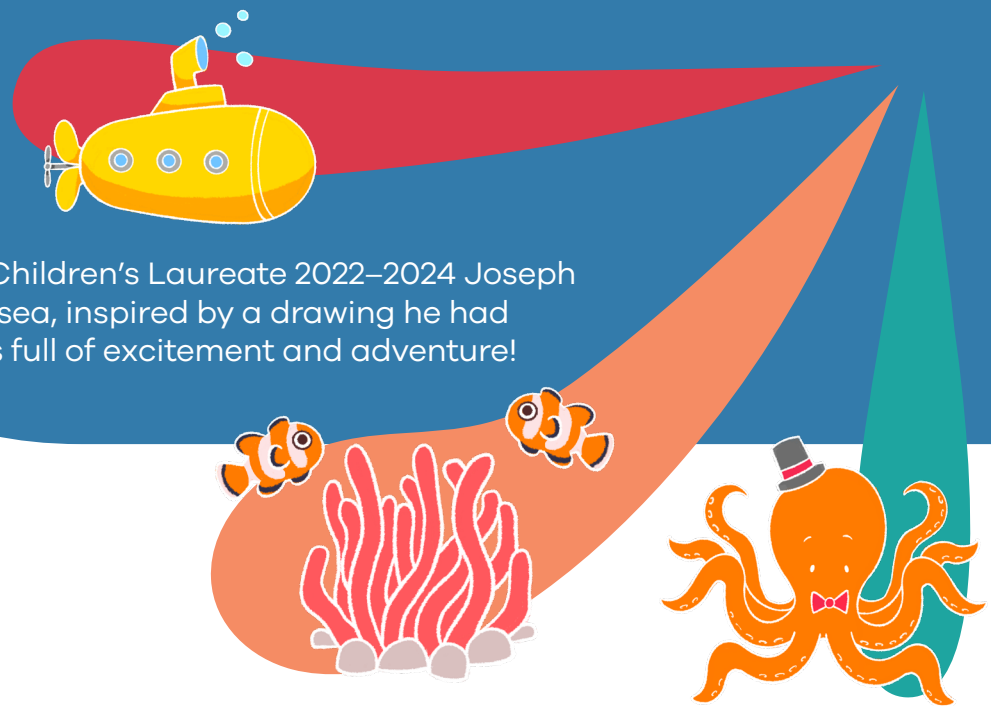
"Please swim to me,  
I find your anemone so stingy!  
Delicious little clown fish,  
I'm not your enemy."

I feel a little silly  
swimming to this handsome beasty,  
but he loves this little clown fish,  
I'm a stripy beauty.

"My little fish finger swim closer to me,  
My darling fish cake from the bottom of the sea,  
my scrumptious little clown fish  
you are the one for... DINNER!"

"Get into my tummy  
I want you for my tea,  
vainglorious little clown fish  
you're the treat for me."

From *Poems Aloud* by Joseph Coelho  
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2020)



## Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read.

Which creature is described in the poem? Have you heard about or seen this creature before? Do you know anything about them?

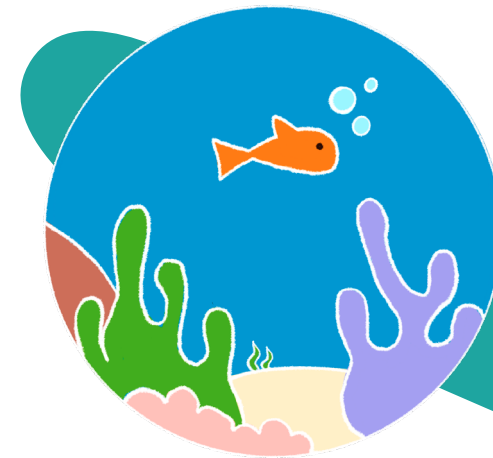
Re-read the poem again. What images stay in your mind as you read it again? Why do you think this is? What do you know about the place described in the poem? What things happen there? How do you think it feels to be there? Which words or phrases tell you these things?

## Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and **circle or underline any words that tell you anything about the clown fish**. What do you learn about the appearance of the fish from the words chosen? What do you learn about its character? What happened to the clown fish at the end of the poem? Do you think any aspects of the clown fish's behaviour contributed to this?
- Think about how you might **draw or paint the characters and events that are being described in an illustration** to accompany the poem. Gather together some paper, pencils and colouring pencils, crayons, felt tip pens or paints if you have them and have a go at creating an illustration of the experience being described. Read the words again to yourself. What words and phrases in the poem do you think helped you to create your illustration?

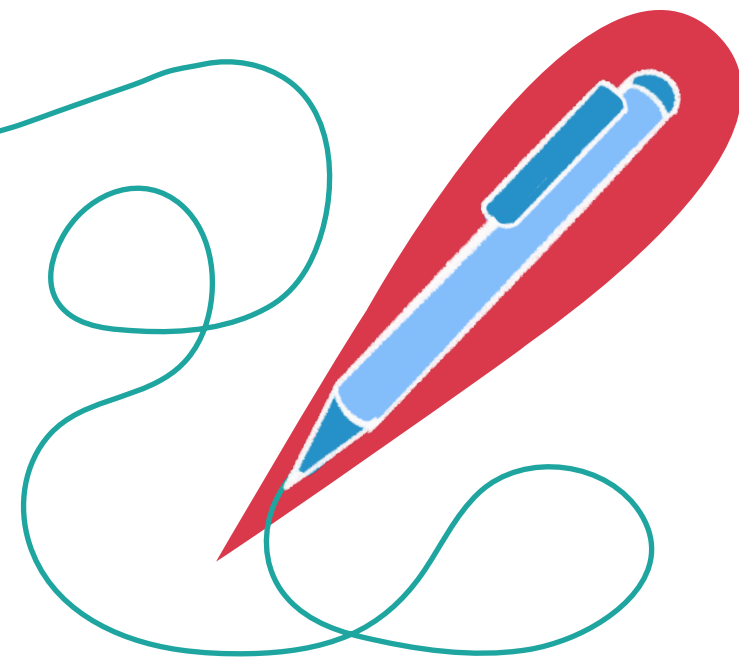
## Perform the poem:

- Think about how you might **bring the events described to life in a performance** of the poem. How will you bring out the characters of the two fish? How will you contrast the vanity of the clown fish with the danger the other fish presents? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you make sure any actions you choose to incorporate add to the performance, rather than detract from it?
- 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!

- Think about **other creatures that live under the sea, which you could write about in a poem**. You may want to watch a video for some inspiration, such as: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAphgHhIteM&t=34s>.
- Picture this creature in your mind and **write down words and phrases that help describe its appearance**. Then, think of what its character might be like. Joseph Coelho chose to make the clown fish vain because of its beauty.
- Now, **think about a scenario in which this creature's character could be the basis for an amusing story**, like in the original poem. How might the creature introduce itself? What might happen to the creature in its undersea world? Will it be a happy ending, or more sinister as in the original poem?
- When you have some good ideas, **think about how these can be shaped into a poem**. In the original poem, Joseph Coelho used rhyme. If you choose to use rhyming words, think carefully about how these are spelled. **Are the rhyming parts of the words spelled in the same way or are they spelled differently?**
- Think about how to **build up the story, verse by verse**. If you include speech, as Joseph Coelho did, **don't forget to use speech marks** to show where characters are speaking.
- When you're happy with what you have drafted, **write it out in your best handwriting or type it up** to share with or perform for someone else. You could illustrate it too.



Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at [booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate](https://booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate)

Find and explore more poems about rivers, seas and oceans 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](https://clpe.org.uk).