

## Poetry Prompts: Week 47

# Bike ride around the world

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 47 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's poetry prompt, Joseph Coelho was joined by Jenny Graham, who holds the fastest time for an unaided bike ride around the world. This poem from Joseph Coelho highlights the strength and determination of another cyclist...

### Read the poem:

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

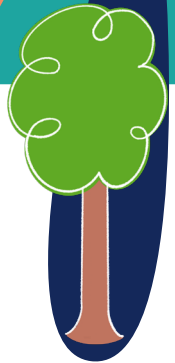
## Zainab Pedals

Zainab looks up and starts to pedal  
the hill is steep, will she reach the top?  
She entered this race desperate for a medal,  
now the fear sinks that she might have to stop.

The hill is steep, will she reach the top?  
Cyclists pass as her legs start to burn.  
Now the fear sinks that she might have to stop,  
the road behind her whispers "return".

Cyclists pass as her legs start to burn,  
she wipes her brow, breathes the air deep,  
the road behind her whispers "return".  
She shuts out the noise, new strength starts to seep.

From *Courage Out Loud* by Joseph Coelho  
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2023)



She wipes her brow, breathes the air deep,  
feels the fear within quickly fall apart.  
She shuts out the noise, new strength starts to seep,  
feels the gold of her lungs and her heart.

Feels the fear within quickly fall apart,  
she entered this race desperate for a medal,  
feels the gold of her lungs and her heart.  
Zainab looks up and starts to pedal.



## Think about the poem:

Consider the words that you just heard or read. What do you think you find out about Zainab from reading the poem? What do you think she is like? How do you feel about her when you read the poem?

Think about the poem with your own experiences in mind. Do any of her characteristics remind you of you or someone else you know? What is similar and different about you and Zainab? What characteristics do you think she might share with Jenny Graham? What characteristics do you think she shares with people who compete in sporting events? Why do you think these characteristics are important in events like this?

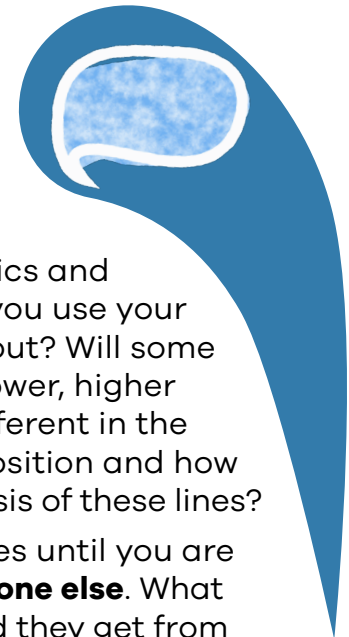


## Look at the language:

- Now look at the **words which you feel tell you the most about Zainab's character**. Highlight or underline these. Why do you think Joseph Coelho chose these words specifically? How do these words work to shape our thoughts and feelings about her?
- Read the poem again. What do you notice about the lines and verses? **This type of poem is called a pantoum**. You will notice that in each verse, some lines repeat and some new lines are added. Draw lines between the lines that repeat and see if you can work out and describe the pattern of the poem.

## Perform the poem:

- Think about how to bring Zainab's **efforts and determination to life** in a performance of the poem. Try out different ways to read each verse. Think about the different characteristics and emotions that are explored. How can you use your voice in different ways to bring these out? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? Will repeated lines sound different in the different verses, depending on their position and how this might shift the meaning or emphasis of these lines?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. What sense of Zainab and her experience did they get from your performance? What did they think you did that was most effective?



## Write your own!

- Think of a **sporting endeavour or performance that you could capture in a poem**. It might be linked to a personal effort of your own, it might draw on watching the performance of a friend, relative, school or local team, or you might draw on a national or international sporting achievement or victory.
- You could watch a video replay of this if you can access one, which might help you **think about the personal efforts of the people involved** and words and phrases to describe their performance and their characteristics. Look at whether these words and phrases can inspire or be used in drafting some lines for your poem.
- Consider whether you want to **write in the pantoum** form that Joseph Coelho used in the original poem or if you want to write it as free verse or in some other form. You might have also noticed that Joseph Coelho's pantoum rhymed. Not all pantoums do, so you can decide whether you want your lines to rhyme or not.
- Draft some ideas out on the page, exploring how to **lay your poem out in lines and verses**. As you write, read your writing back to yourself to check that you have captured the experience and characteristics of those involved effectively.
- When you've finished, **type or write the poem out in your best handwriting**. You could also create an illustration to highlight the characteristics of the person or people involved or something about the event you are describing.



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 sport and leisure 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).