

Poetry Prompts: Week 39

Fantastical creatures

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 39 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's Poetry Prompt, you met some bizarre poetic animals. Here's another poem by Joseph Coelho, which is all about a world full of fantastical creatures. See how many you can spot as you read it...

Read the poem:

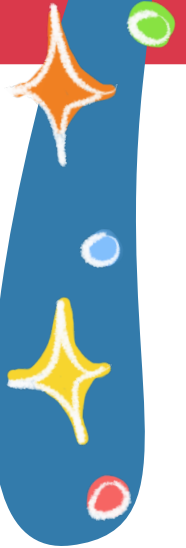
Read the poem aloud. You might do this yourself, with a friend or someone else could read it to you:

Something Wondrous

Peer from your window in the deep of night,
watch as the moon is tickled by the stars.
Take a deep breath and hold it tight,
fantastic creatures roam near and far.

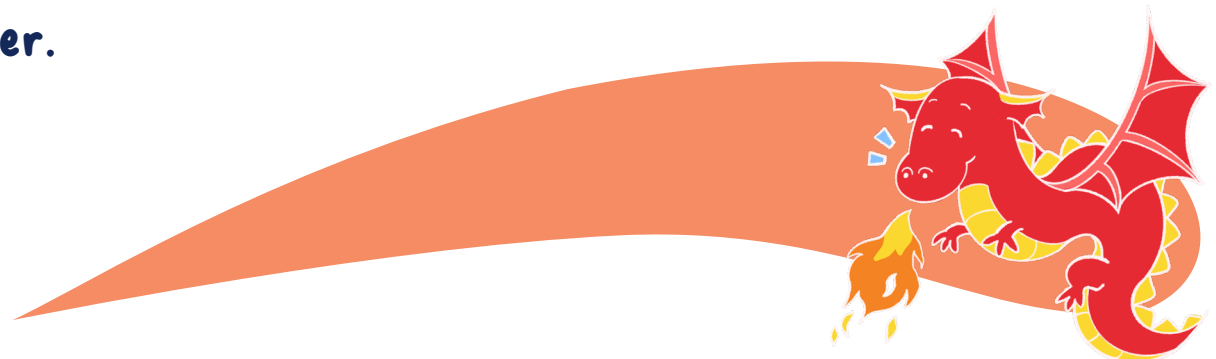
A unicorn nibbles the gold leaf tree,
Hobgoblins fist-fight in every flower.
Mermaids flop from a luminescing sea
Earth-giants show-off their hidden power.

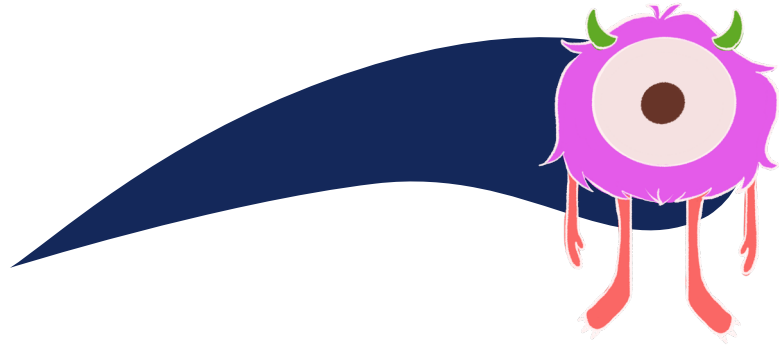
From *Poems Aloud* by Joseph Coelho
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2020)



Look-out from your window of midnight snow
watch as their gold eyes stare back.
Gasp as their curiosity grows,
have no fear, they won't attack.

These creatures have seen something wondrous too –
these creatures are awed by the sight of you.





Look at the language:

- This poem is **full of imagery**; Joseph Coelho has specifically chosen words and phrases to **help you to imagine this experience**, describing things in a way that makes **you feel like you are in the moment**. **Circle or underline any words or phrases** that help you **see, feel or experience** what is happening. Are there any words that you don't know the meaning of – like '**luminescing**'? What do you **think this word might mean**, reading the rest of the line? **Use a dictionary or online dictionary** to find out the meaning. You may need to **first search for the root word 'luminesce'**.
- The **first and third lines** and **second and fourth lines** in each verse **end in words that rhyme**. This is called an **ABAB pattern**. **Find the pairs of rhyming words**. Do they have the **same spelling** pattern, as in '**night**' and '**tight**' or are they **spelt differently**, as in '**tree**' and '**sea**'?
- Read the poem once more to yourself. As you read, **consider the images** that the words used **place in your mind**. If you were going to illustrate the poem, **what would you draw**? Take some paper, a pencil and some colouring pencils, felt tips or crayons if you have them and **create an illustration** to accompany the poem. When you have finished, **read the poem again**. Which **words or phrases do you think helped you to create your illustration**? What **stood out** most to you? Why do you think this was?

Think about the poem:

Think about the poem you just read or heard. How did it make you feel? How could you describe the mood of the poem?

Look at the poem on the page again. How many different fantastical creatures can you spot in the poem? Have you heard of all of these creatures before? Which ones are you most interested in? Why is this?

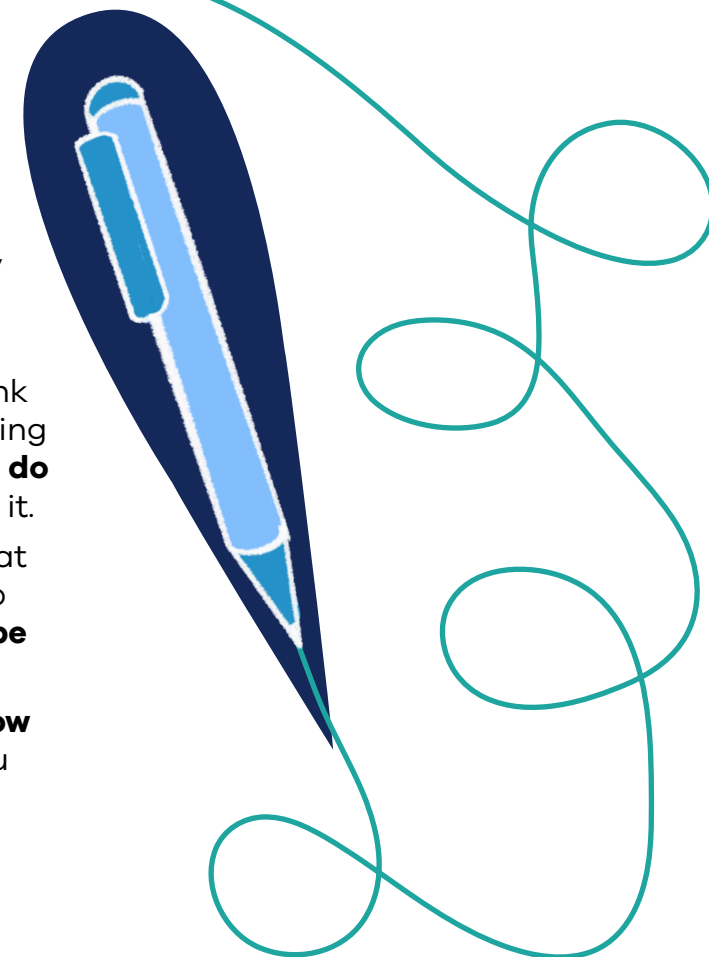
Perform the poem:

- Consider how to **create the sense of the moment** being described and **the feelings it creates** in a performance, as you move through each verse. Think about the **things being described in this fantastical world** and the **feelings you want to communicate** and how you might **use your voice** to do this. How can you use your voice in **different ways to describe** the fantastical creatures and **the mood** of the poem? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower?
- Think about whether you might incorporate any **facial expressions or actions** to accompany your performance. How will you make sure these **add to the performance**, not detract from it? **Rehearse this a few times then perform it** for someone else to listen to.



Write your own!

- Think about **your own fantasy world**. Maybe it's a place like this, where **strange and wondrous creatures live**. Perhaps it's a world that is in **itself fantastical** – a world made of chocolate or sweets, a land where dinosaurs still roam. **Use your imagination** to create any kind of world you want. Try and **picture a scene from your world clearly in your mind**. You could even **draw it**. This will help you picture the scene really carefully and **think about language that describes** your world. You could **write this down around your drawing**.
- Now, try to **describe your fantasy world in a poem** for someone else to read about. Think about how **Joseph Coelho drew you into his world** of wonderful creatures at the beginning of his poem **by inviting you to 'Peer from your window'**. Perhaps you **might choose to do this at the start of your poem**, before you start describing your world and what lives in it.
- Think about **all the imagery** Joseph used in his poem, and how you might describe what things **look like, sound like or feel like** in your world, and **how it feels to be there**. Keep **looking back at your drawing or imagining** your world in your mind to **help you describe it** really well to someone else.
- The original poem rhymed. Consider if **you want your poem to rhyme** too. You could **follow the same ABAB pattern**. If you're finding it difficult to come up with rhyming words, you could **try using a rhyming dictionary**, such as: <https://www.rhymezone.com/> or **you could choose not to make your poem rhyme**, and write it as **free verse**.



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

Find and explore more about imagery and other poetic devices 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.