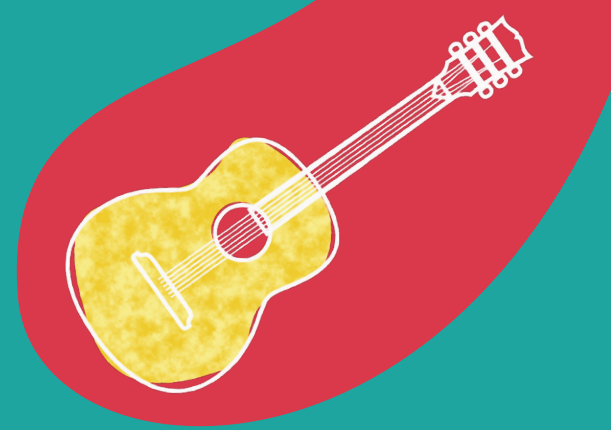


## Poetry Prompts: Week 6

# Writing poems to describe yourself

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 6 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week's Poetry Prompt focussed on writing poems to describe yourself. Here's another 'I am' poem written by Joseph Coelho.



### Read the poem:

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

#### **I am a writer**

**I am the clash and collide of the stars  
because I create worlds.**

**I am the awareness of the trees  
because I hear the wind.**

**I am the sweat of a rainbow  
because I refract all colours.**

**I am the blood in a pen  
because I ink arteries.**

**I am the blade in a sharpener  
because I make nibs vanish.**

**I am the edge of a rubber,  
rounded, worn and softened by mistakes.**

**I am the conversation of notes,  
discussing melodies.**

**I am the holes in a flute,  
knower of unknown tunes.**

**I am the skin of a drum.  
Every hit, beat and bang  
bouncing off me,  
forming music from nothing.**

From *Werewolf Club Rules* by Joseph Coelho  
(Frances Lincoln, 2014)



### Think about the poem:

The poem refers to lots of imagery around nature, writing and music. Why do you think Joseph Coelho has chosen to focus on these things? How do you think they might relate to writing poetry?

This is another 'I am' poem. The 'I' in a poem can be anyone – a speaker who is quite unlike the poet, an historical figure, a fictional character who shares characteristics with the poet, real people from the poet's life, or sometimes the poet themselves. What does the poem make you think about the narrator or the 'I' in the poem? What do you infer about their character? How do you feel about them? What picture do you have of them in your mind?

### Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and **circle or underline any words** or phrases that relate to nature, writing or music. How do the actions in the second line of each verse relate to the subject of the first line of each verse? **What can you infer about the narrator** of the poem from each choice made? How does he show us, rather than directly tell us about these characteristics?
- What kinds of things are **you interested in or passionate about**? If you were to write an 'I am' poem, what would you want to relate your imagery to?

## Perform the poem:

- The poem is written from a first-person perspective, which means the narrator, or the 'I' in the poem, is directly telling you about them. Think back to **what you think you know about the narrator** from your reading of the poem. What does each verse allow you to infer about them? How might this affect the way you perform each verse?
- Try out different ways of using your voice to read the poem. Make sure you keep your words clear as you perform, so your audience can understand them. How can you **use your voice in different ways to bring out the meaning** of the words and the character of the narrator? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you make sure any actions you may decide to include add to the performance, not detract from it?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. What is their impression of the narrator of the poem from your performance?

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

## Write your own!

- After stepping into the shoes of the narrator and their characteristics, now **take time to think about yourself**. What words would you immediately use to describe yourself? **Write these down in a notebook** or on a sheet of paper. Now, think about any words other people might use to describe you, and add these to your notes in a different pen or pencil.
- Now think about the **things you are interested in or passionate about** and consider how these might link to the words you've noted down to describe yourself. For example, if you're an animal lover and you're also independent, you might describe yourself as a cat, doing as you please. If you're a sports lover and you're also competitive, you might describe yourself as the away team manager, desperate for victory.
- Use your thoughts to **try and draft some verses of your own**. You might mix and match your interests, like Joseph Coelho does in the original poem. When you have some different verses, try to put them together on the page, considering which order works, and how to end the poem.

## Find and explore more of Joseph Coelho's poems 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: [www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk).