

## Poetry Prompts: Week 38

# World Refugee Day

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 38 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week's poetry prompt focussed on World Refugee Day, a day set by the United Nations to honour those who have been forced to leave their home country because of conflict or persecution. It takes incredible courage to leave behind everything you have and know, with no idea if or when you will ever be able to return. At the heart of every story is a person, and it's important that we find the stories behind every individual to come together to support those displaced with a shared humanity. This poetry prompt focuses on sharing your identity in a poem, inspired by this poem by Joseph Coelho.

### Read the poem:

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

## I Am a Father

**A father  
who more than anything wants to be  
with his daughter.**

**A father  
whose heart thumps solely for his  
daughter.**

**A father  
who can't always be with his  
daughter.**

From *Overheard in a Tower Block* by Joseph Coelho  
(Otter-Barry Books, 2018)

### Think about the poem:

Think about the poem  
you just read or heard.  
What did it make you think  
about? How did it make  
you feel? What do you think  
it was that made you feel  
this way?

Now think about the poem  
from the perspective of the  
narrator, or the 'I' in the poem.  
What do you know or think  
you know about them? What is  
important to them? What tells  
you, or makes you think this?  
What questions do you have  
for or about them?



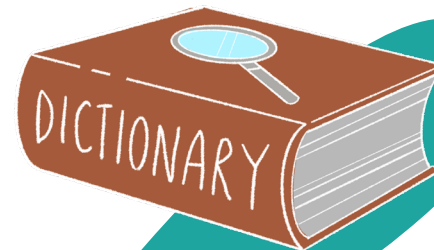
## Look at the language:

- Re-read the poem to yourself. **Circle, highlight or underline any words or phrases** which you think bring across the **thoughts and emotions of the narrator** of the poem. How do we know **what's important to them**? How do we know **how they feel**? What helps us to **empathise with them**?
- Think about the **repetition** in the poem. **What words** are repeated and **when are they repeated**? What is the **impact of this repetition**? Consider the last verse. How does this verse **make you feel** about the narrator and their situation? What do you think the **narrator thinks and feels** about his situation at this time? Have you ever had to **be apart from the people you love**?
- Now think again about the poem **from your own perspective**. If you were going to write a poem that shares an aspect of your identity so that people can get to **know you** and what is **important to you**, **what would you write about**? If you were to finish off the title, '**I Am a...**' what would **you say and why**? Write down **as many different ideas** as you can for ways that you could finish the title on a sheet of paper.

## Perform the poem:

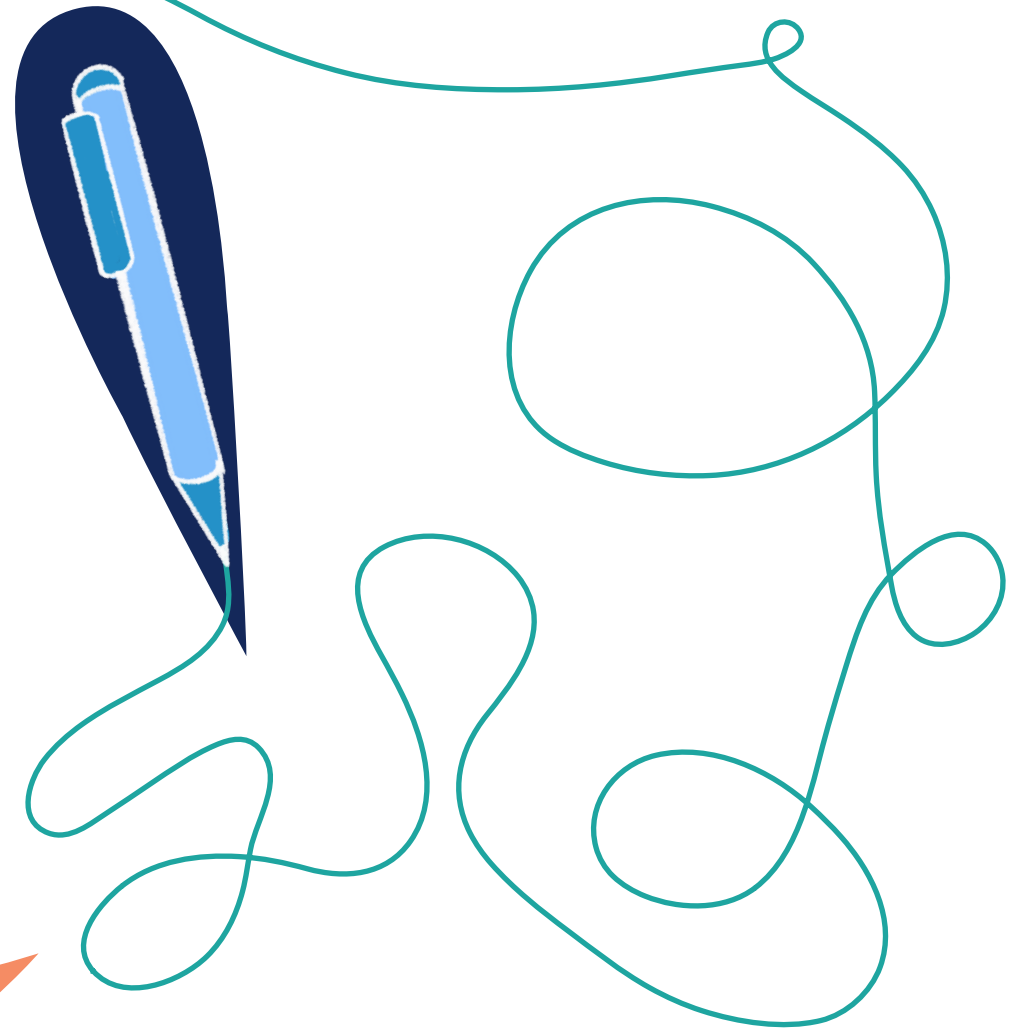


- Now, think about how you could **use your voice** to perform the poem. Make sure you **keep your words clear** as you perform, so your **audience can understand them**. How can you **use your voice in different ways** to draw the audience into this moment, **conveying the emotion** of the narrator in the words? 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**, and the **listener's understanding of the narrator and their emotions**, rather than detract from it?
- Rehearse this a few times then **perform it for someone else** to listen to. What did they think was **most effective** about your performance? What **impression of the narrator** did they gain from your performance? What gave them this impression?



## Write your own!

- Come **back to the options** you wrote down to finish the title of your own poem, '**I Am a...**' Which of these do you think **might be good to work up into a poem** to allow others to see **what's most important to you and your identity**?
- Think about the **power of the words** in the original poem, and how in a few short words, Joseph Coelho was able to **evoke emotion and empathy** in you as a reader. How could **you do the same** for your readers? What about you would make people **understand more** about what's at the **heart of you**? What **feelings** do you want to portray to your reader? What **words will allow you to do this effectively**?
- Think about the **use of repetition** in the original poem, what **words or phrases might you repeat** in your poem to support you in emphasising the importance of the **aspect of your identity** you have chosen.
- When you've finished, you could **handwrite your final poem in presentation handwriting or type it up on a computer**. Display this so it can be read by other people.



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)

### Find and explore more poems about identity 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](http://clpe.org.uk).