

Poetry Prompts: Week 51

Clothing

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 51 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In today's poetry prompt, Joseph Coelho encouraged you to use an item of clothing as an inspiration for a poem. Here's another poem by Joe, which is inspired by a different piece of clothing.

Look at the poem:

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

Trainers

**They started that day red and shining,
thick laces woven in white rows.
They were blinding,
my foot-bound silver lining.**

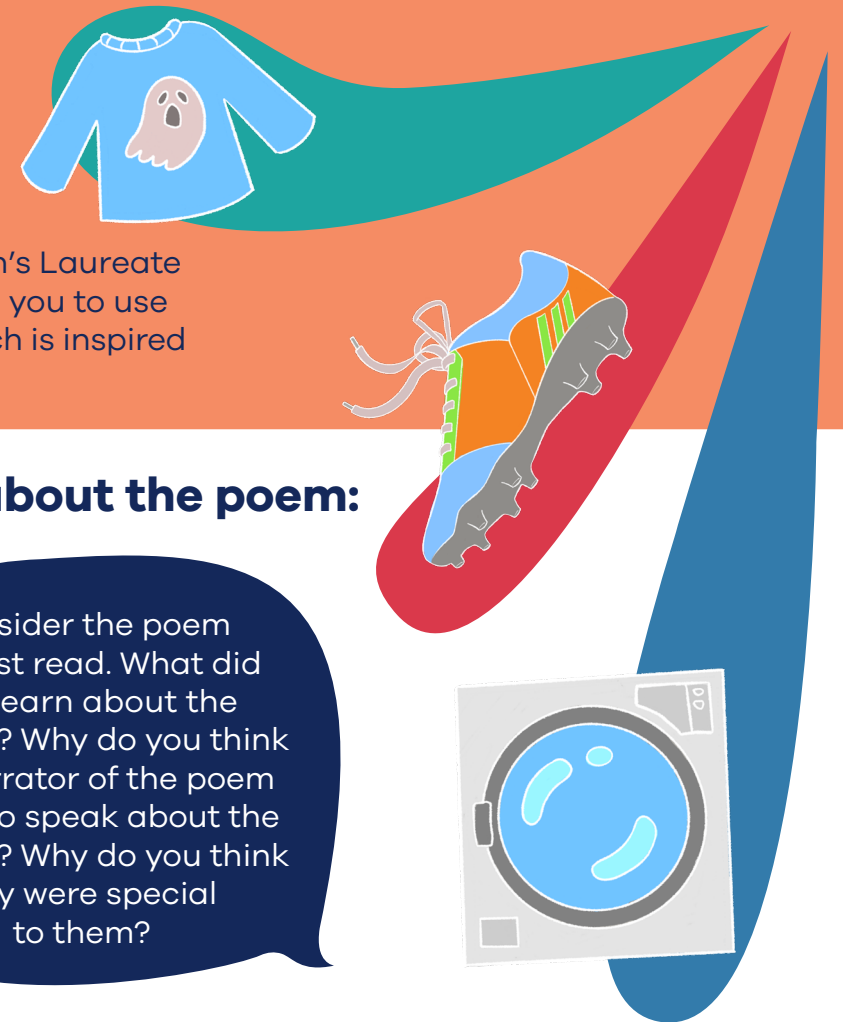
**I didn't want them to get old,
I didn't want them to get wrecked.
They were trainers from my dad
and they were perfect.**

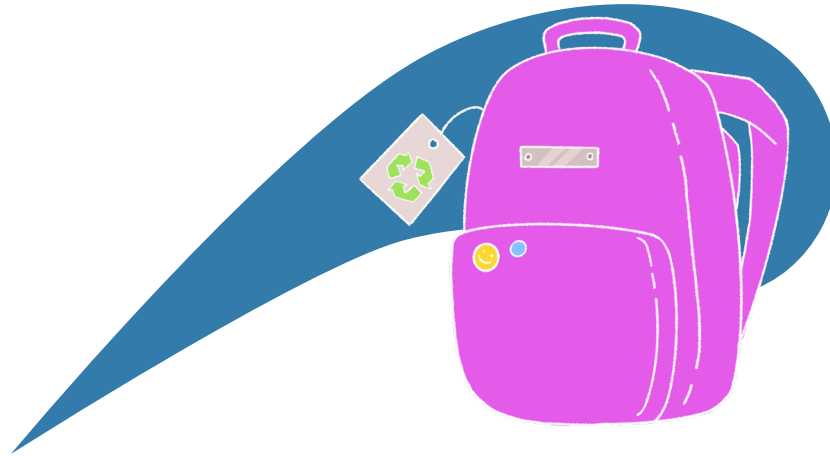
From *Overheard in a Tower Block* by Joseph Coelho
(Otter-Barry Books, 2017)

Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just read. What did you learn about the trainers? Why do you think the narrator of the poem chose to speak about the trainers? Why do you think they were special to them?

Think about the poem in relation to your own life. Do you have a favourite piece of clothing or footwear that is special to you? If not, what about a special object? What makes it special? Why is it your favourite?





Look at the language:

- Re-read the poem for yourself. **Circle or underline words or phrases that tell you something about the trainers, either what they look like or how the narrator feels about them.** If you had to summarise the trainers in one sentence, how would you do it?
- Now, **think about how the poem makes you feel.** What do you think the story behind the trainers is? Why might these mean so much to the narrator? What words or phrases make you think this?
- Think about the images you see in your mind as you look at the words. If you were going to illustrate this poem, how would you do this? **Take some drawing equipment and a sheet of paper and create an illustration to go alongside the poem.** Which words or phrases do you think influenced your illustration the most?

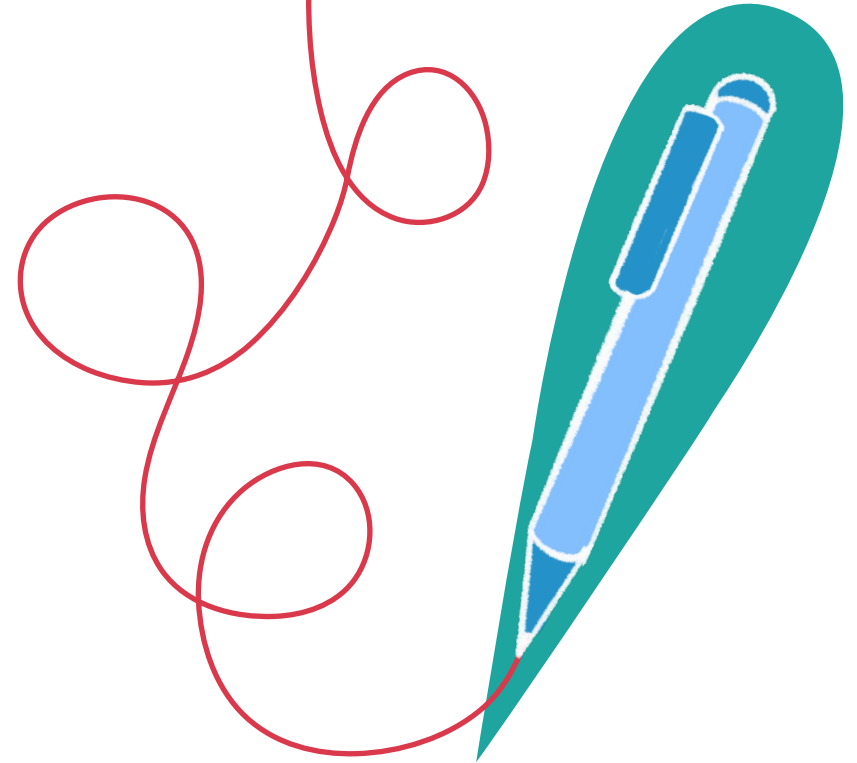
Perform the poem:

- Think about **how you might bring the story and emotions behind the poem to life for an audience.** It is a very personal poem, told in the voice of the narrator, about something which is special to them. Consider how you could use your voice to convey the story and the emotions of the poem to someone else. 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.** Make sure you keep your words clear as you perform, so your audience can understand them. 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!

- **Think of a piece of clothing, footwear or another object, such as a toy, that is particularly special to you.** Take some time to consider why this object is so special. What is it like? Who got it for you? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?
- Take some time to **jot down any words or phrases that come to mind when you think of this particular object.** It could be anything at all, how it looks, how it makes you feel, somewhere you remember being whilst wearing or having this object with you, how you first came to own it. Look through what you've written. Do any of the words or phrases inspire you to write lines for a poem of your own? Think about the story Joseph Coelho told in his original poem and how he shared the connection between the narrator and the trainers. How could you show the story of your object in your poem and how you feel about it? Joseph never uses any words that directly describe how the narrator feels, the way in which he speaks about the trainers allows us to infer this. How could you do the same?
- When you have a first draft, read it through to yourself. **Think about how you might break up the lines and verses.** Then, read it aloud. Think about how it sounds as you lift the words off the page. Does it make sense? What feelings are you left with? Is this what you want your reader to feel?
- When you're happy with your poem, **type it up or write it out in your best handwriting.** You could also create an illustration to accompany it.



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

Find and explore more poems about feelings 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.