



Zim Zam Zoom!

Written by James Carter. Illustrated by Nicola Colton.
Otter-Barry Books £11.99 ISBN 978-1910959541

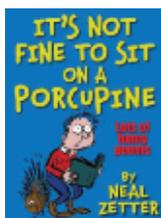
The catchy title captures the spirit of this collection of sixteen poems which are to be read ALOUD by children and to children! Titles such as 'Splish! Splash! Splish!' immediately appeal and the subject matter covers everything from rockets to dragons and fireworks to pirates; all guaranteed to make lots of noise and produce lots of fun. 'Hey, Let's Go!' uses the rhythm of rhyme and traditional fairy tale subjects. It is in this poem that the illustrations really come into their own echoing and reflecting the words and sounds. They are bold, but with a childlike naivety that is bound to capture both the attention and the imagination, providing a talking point for young readers. Older readers will appreciate the visual hooks used in 'BEwARe!' and the tongue twisting experiments with sound. 'Grump. Grump. Grump!' continues with the traditional 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' tale but reboots it as a rap rhyme for the 21st Century. The final poem in the collection, 'Take a Poem', is touching in the way it encourages children to see a poem almost as a friend, something to keep close yet share. The message is that poems should be enjoyed every day and everywhere, not just saved for special occasions.

Sue McGlen

It's Not Fine To Sit On A Porcupine

Written by Neal Zetter Illustrated by Rory Walker
Troika Books £6.99 ISBN: 978-1909991286

Children will indulge in a good chuckle at this lively collection of nearly fifty funny poems. Performance poet, Neal Zetter, takes ordinary and mundane subjects such as fridge doors, shoelaces and fire alarms and transforms these into the unlikely and absurd. 'Angry Shopping Trolley' features a "metal mean machine" with a bad attitude, 'Mr Teacher is Our Teacher' has the ludicrous scenario of a family of teachers whose surname is teacher. 'Down the Side of the Sofa', provides a vivid list of the motley delights which accumulate in this excellent secret hiding place including, "Dental floss/ Locks of hair/Labels from your underwear". The regular rhythms coupled with the simple rhymes make the poetry ideal for reading aloud. A series of cartoon caricatures which are scattered amongst the poems adds to the fun.



Elaine Chant



Adder, Bluebell, Lobster

Written by Chrissie Gittins Illustrated by Paul Bommer
Otter-Barry Books, £6.99 ISBN: 978-1910959558

In her introduction to this vivid collection of poetry about wild life, Chrissie Gittins explains a motivation for writing the poems is to reclaim words which she discovered have recently been withdrawn from the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* – words which name all aspects of nature; words such as hamster, gorse, leek and larks. What follows is an alphabetical compendium of poems, each one celebrating the unique characteristics of a creature or fauna that has sadly disappeared from the dictionary. Young readers will delight in the various personalities she attributes to a species including a cute newt, melons having a party and a street dancing hazel tree. Poems such as 'Bluebell', 'Otter' and 'Tulip' are more reflective and encourage a closer look at the natural world which surrounds us. Clear and simple line illustrations embody the spirit of the poetry. A very satisfying collection for its variety of moods and striking descriptive detail.

Elaine Chant

100 Brilliant Poems for Children

Chosen by Paul Cookson
Macmillan £6.99 ISBN: 978-1509824168

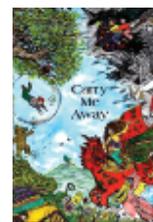


The poems gathered together in this new anthology really do live up to the "brilliant" description of the title. Like any carefully chosen and stimulating collection, there is a good mixture of the well-loved, the unfamiliar and that little forgotten gem. Starting with Paul Cookson's own poem, 'Let No One Steal Your Dreams', the tone is set for an inspiring journey through a myriad of thoughts and emotions which the poems excite. Billy Bragg's 'Song of the Iceberg' which personifies the natural innocence of the iceberg caught up in the Titanic disaster, rubs shoulders with John Donne's iconic 'No Man is an Island'. The rhythmic pleasures of 'Walking with my Iguana' by Brian Moses, nestles close to an extract from Walt Whitman's, 'I think I Could Turn and Live with Animals'. The collection contains some helpful informative notes for a selection of the poems.

Elaine Chant

Carry Me Away

Written by Matt Goodfellow
Illustrated by Sue Hardy-Dawson
Matador £6.99 ISBN: 978-1785892508



It's a joy to come across this fresh voice in children's poetry. Matt Goodfellow's first collection of poems is rich in imagery and atmosphere, insightful and, on occasions, enjoyably offbeat. Aptly titled *Carry Me Away*, the poetry celebrates, in lyrical terms, the pleasures and sensations from close contact with the natural world. There are also poems about magical encounters and life-changing situations. 'To This' is a moving example of the latter where the voice of a refugee conveys, so simply, the feeling of displacement. Elsewhere, the enigmatic 'The Boy Who came from the Underground' is an atmospheric, narrative poem based on a curious Scottish fairy tale. These skilfully crafted short verses will entertain the younger reader for their playfulness and vivid voicing of experiences which everyone can relate to.

Elaine Chant



How to Speak to Your Headteacher

Written by Robert Hull
BEAFRED £8.95 ISBN 978-0955927935

This is Robert Hull's fourth collection of poems written for young readers and his subject matter is both eclectic and far ranging. He is equally at home recalling childhood memories, describing the beauty of Nature and encouraging young readers to view Shakespeare in a new light. His background as a classroom teacher is evident in his poetry. The 'Ofnat Inspection' playfully juxtaposes the formal language of inspection with the Natural World which cannot be constrained and quantified. There is a nod to Shakespeare in this 400th Anniversary year and several of his poems give a provocative and appealing interpretation of familiar stories. Macbeth becomes a tale of "This bloke (who) met these 'ags on a 'eaf'". Many of his poems introduce the reader to the pleasures of sound and how important it is in poetry. This can range from the simple "whispering gravel" made by the hedgehog at night, to the rhyming and puns in 'Owed to Music'. The joy of these poems is that they will work on so many levels and will warrant revisiting time and time again.

Sue McGlen