



I Am the Wind Poetry Kit

**A Book Guide to *I Am the Wind*
with Children's Writing Activities
by Lucinda Jacob**

Introduction

The first poem in our book *I Am the Wind*, called 'This Poem can ...' by E.R. Murray, takes us on a magical journey – and we hope that reading this poem and all the poems in the book will be like going on an exciting journey for you. This Poetry Kit is to help you on your way.

In it you will find lots of information about the poems and poets in *I Am the Wind*.

Depending on the poems and what we found out or noticed about them you will find information about the poem or the poet. Sometimes we have given some ideas for finding more poems that you might like.

You will also find lots of creative activities to inspire you to make your own poems. If you are going to write good poems, poems that you will be pleased with, you need to *read* lots of poems. That is why in this Poetry Kit we have sometimes gathered together several poems from *I Am the Wind* (for example all the poems about dogs). Our suggestion is that you read them all and then hopefully you will be inspired to write your own poems!

We have also come up with some great ways to display your poems or to turn them into lovely gifts.

Words in **bold** are explained at the end of this Poetry Kit.

This Poem Can ... by E. R. Murray

Page 1

This poem by E.R.Murray is about poems (which is why we thought it a good one to start our book!) and it is also saying poems can set you on a journey.

Be Inspired!

If you went on a journey, where would you go? Would it be a holiday or an adventure? Or both? Would you go to a real place or an imaginary one?

- Think about the place you would like to go. Maybe talk to someone and you are sure to come up with more ideas for your travels.
- Next make a collection of words and ideas. We like to write down our thoughts and words, but you may have another way of remembering things.
- Then use those words and ideas to make your own poem!
- It's completely up to you how you write it.
- If your collection of ideas has some words that rhyme you could write (or say if you don't like actually writing) a **rhyming poem**.
- If your ideas don't seem to rhyme you can write your thoughts down in whatever order seems good to you. Just start a new line when thought. This way of writing is called **free verse**.
- Of course if you don't like writing you can always say your poem instead.

When you are pleased with your poem you could use something that reminds you of travel to display it. How about using or making an old-fashioned luggage label with card and string and writing your poem out on that? Or fold a paper aeroplane and let your poem fly away!

I Am from Ireland, anonymous

The Mystery attributed to Amergin Glúingel, translated by Douglas Hyde

Pages 2 & 3

'I Am from Ireland' was written in the way English was spoken in medieval times. We don't know who wrote it so we say it is 'anonymous'. Our first female President, Mary Robinson, used it in her inaugural speech to invite people to come to Ireland. We love this idea, especially as we Irish have always traveled all over the world ourselves and it's now time for us to welcome everyone to come to us. And party!

Here is the poem as it was originally written. Can you understand it?

Icham of Irlonde

Anonymous

Icham of Irlonde

Ant of the holy londe

Of Irlonde

Goode sire, pray ich thee,

For of sainte charitee,

Com ant daunce wyt me

In Irlonde.

If you are interested in poems written like invitations or letters you could try and find 'Bee I'm Expecting You' by Emily Dickinson and here is 'Dear Tadpoles' by Lucinda Jacob:

Dear Tadpoles,

I haven't seen you in a while.

How are you? Keeping well?

*I have to stay in the shade
under this leaf
but my neighbour snail is here
so that's a relief.
I'll look out for you in the pond. Please write, or otherwise respond.*

*Well, must stop,
Got to hop,
All my love, Mum.*

Be Inspired!

You could write a poem like 'I Am from Ireland'. It could be a poem saying where you are from or it could be an invitation to a dance party. Or both!

If your poem is going to be an invitation have a look at other party invitations and use them for more inspiration. Here is how a typical party invitation is written:

Please come to my party

On (what day

At (what time)

Where

What to wear

How to reply

- You could make your invitation much more interesting!
- Who is it from?
- Who will they invite?
- Is your invitation to a real party or is it an imaginary event?
- How about decorating the paper it is on to make it like a real invitation –
- Then pop it in an envelope to give somebody!
- Perhaps they will turn their reply into a poem for you!

To display your poem or to give it to someone you could find or make an envelope and put your poem in it.

'The Mystery' is often called 'Amergin', after the person who possibly wrote it. It was written in an ancient Irish manuscript called 'The Book of Invasions'.

Did you notice that we like this poem so much that we used words from it as the title of our book?

In the poem the speaker seems to be creating Ireland for themselves and for us, as they call up the sea and the waves, the animals and the birds. They are even claiming to be all the things they see. This poet has magic powers!

In a way all poems and stories do this, as the words we read bring the things they are describing into our minds.

It was written in Old Irish. It is thought to be the first written poem in Irish, and we have chosen the translation by Douglas Hyde, Ireland's first president, for our book.

Here is the original poem in Old Irish:

Am gaeth i m-muir,

Am tond trethan,

Am fuaim mara,

Am dam secht ndirend,

Am séig i n-aill,

Am dér gréne,

Am cain lubai,

Am torc ar gail,

Am he i l-lind,

Am loch i m-maig,

Am brí a ndai,

Am bri danae,

Am bri i fodb fras feochtu,

Am dé delbas do chind codnu,
Coiche nod gleith clochur slébe?
Cia on co tagair aesa éscai?
Cia du i l-laig fuiniud gréne?

Be Inspired!

This poem doesn't rhyme but uses repetition of the words 'I am' at the beginning of each line to create a really strong rhythm.

You can use the 'I am' pattern to make your own poems. It's a great way to make a poem with friends or with your class. On your own is fine too!

It can be fun to make a list of your favourite animals and then put 'I am' in front of them. Like this:

I am a cat
I am a dog
I am a hamster
and so on ...

You can make it more interesting by adding what the animal is doing. Like this:

I am a cat yowling on a wall in the night
I am a dog howling at the moon
I am a hamster spinning my wheel in the dark
and you could add more ...

You can make your 'I Am' poems about the place where you live. Just look around you and make a list of the things you see. To make it extra interesting see if you can find things that other people hardly notice. And don't just say 'an old person' or 'a tree', say what you notice about them. What are they doing?

- If you are making a poem with friends or your class ask everyone to contribute one line.
- You could give everyone a strip of paper or a sticky note to write on.
- Each of these things will become one line of the poem.
- It could be very long!
- When you put them all together take some time to put them in the order you like best.

When you put 'I Am' in front of the things in your list you'll see how the poem suddenly comes to life – and it's as if you really are a part of the place. Just like Amergin!

We Are by Michelle Dunne

Snowdrops by Katie Donovan

Pages 4 &5

In her poem 'We Are', Michelle Dunne uses actions to say what some people are like. Who do you think they are? They are certainly doing things that are possible for us in Ireland.

Michelle Dunne uses what we call **kennings** in parts of her poem. It's a way of describing something by saying what it does. For example she describes the people in her poem as 'Hedgrow hunters', 'Puddle jumpers' and 'Conker collectors'. There are more too. Can you see any more?

Be Inspired!

Kennings were first used centuries ago when poets didn't want to rhyme but they made patterns in their poems using **alliteration**. **Alliteration** is when two words close to each other start with the same letter. One of the most famous old **kennings** is 'Whale-road' which a poet used when they wanted to say 'sea' but they wanted the word to **alliterate** with 'Wave'.

- Did you notice that Michelle Dunne uses **alliteration** in some of her **kennings**?
- It's something you can do when you write your own poems.
- Try using **kennings** or **alliteration** the next time you write a poem. And remember, you don't have to rhyme!

In Katie Donovan's 'Snowdrops' the plants seem to be talking. We call this **personification**, which means giving something that isn't human qualities that make it seem like a person.

- If you were a plant, what would you be?
- Are you feeling prickly? Write as if you are a thistle!
- Or perhaps a rose? A rose could be quite complex, beautiful, smelling lovely but watch out for the thorns!
- Want to sting someone? Be a nettle!

- Maybe you are feeling more gentle, like a fern.
- Or are you like a mighty tree?

Nightboarder by Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan

Horse by Catherine Ann Cullen

Pages 6 & 7

I Like Being a Frog by Sian Quill

Page 102

By putting two words together in Nightboarder, Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan has made up some words of her own. 'Nightboarder' is one of them and that new word makes her description of someone on a skateboard at night wonderfully fresh and lively. Did you notice any other made-up words in the poem?

Catherine Ann Cullen used an Irish legend for inspiration in, 'Horse'. You don't need to know the story of Oisín and Tír na nÓg to enjoy the poem but it will mean so much more if you do. She focused on what Oisín's horse might have been thinking to give us a new point of view. It is the horse telling part of the story in Catherine Ann's poem.

Sian Quill tells us what she thinks the frog might have been thinking in the fairy tale called ;The Frog Prince;. If you don't know it, find the story to see how she has used it.

Be Inspired!

You might like to do what Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan did in her poem and make up words for a poem of your own!

Or you could do the same as Catherine Ann Cullen and Sian Quill in your own poem by using a well-known story:

- Read or listen to the story so you know it really well.
- What part of the story interests you most?
- Are there lots of different characters in the story?
- Now make a poem that tells part of the story from the point of view of a character who isn't the hero or heroine.

The Blackbird of Belfast Lough by Ciarán Carson

Int Én Bec, anonymous

The Blackbird of Belfast Lough by Frank O'Connor

Pages 8 & 9

These three poems are really three versions of the same poem. The oldest is the one written in Irish, 'Int Én Bec', and the other two are translations. The Old Irish is not the same as the Gaeilge we learn today and it may be hard to understand. But it does sound good. Just like a blackbird!

In fact this little ninth-century poem has been translated into English by so many Irish poets that it was hard for us to choose between them.

It could be a fun project to seek out as many versions as you can find.

Every time we notice a blackbird in a poem we are reminded of the lovely image in this poem. The blackbirds keep on singing to us!

Did you notice that Ciarán Carson used an unusual word for the blackbird's beak? In fact there are a few words he could have used. 'Nib' is one of them, so is 'bill' and 'neb' is another. What else has a 'nib'? And why would a poet choose that word? Do you think the blackbird singing could be like a poet writing or saying their poem out loud?

Frank O'Connor chose to make his poem rhyme. This gives it a song-like quality which is great for a poem about birdsong. Did you notice that the first half of his poem is two questions, and the second half gives the answer?

It is possible to see the singing blackbird as a **metaphor** for creating poetry and maybe this is why so many Irish poets have been drawn to it and have wanted to make their own version of 'Int Én Bec'.

You may not realise it, but you are using **metaphor** when you compare one thing to another without using the words 'like' or 'as'. We use **metaphor** all the time. For example, if we say someone is a 'star' we know they aren't really a star in the sky but we say it to describe how they seem to us.

Be Inspired!

You could write your own version of this blackbird poem. You could include:

- the blackbird singing – what words would you use for ‘singing’?
- its yellow beak – how would you describe the colour?
- the place beside a lake
- and the gorse it is sitting in

You might prefer to write about other things you have noticed about blackbirds to make a completely different poem. Or find out about a different species of bird and write about that.

On the Ning Nang Nong by Spike Milligan

Giraffe by Aislinn and Larry O'Loughlin

Pages 10 & 11

My Delicious Hat by Paul Tinoney

Page 103

Spike Milligan wrote lots of **nonsense poems**. They are funny and silly, and isn't it great to know you can be silly when you write your own poems? In fact, one of his books is called *Silly Verse for Kids*. He illustrated it himself and his drawings are funny too. Try reading *On the Ning Nang Nong* out loud. We find it impossible not to laugh! It's like a tongue twister and the rhymes make it like a crazy song. A lot of the words in this poem are made up. If you want to see another poem with made up words in it look at 'Nightboarder' by Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan on page 6 of *I Am the Wind*.

Aislinn and Larry O'Loughlin are a daughter and father who often write together. Can you imagine them having hilarious conversations as they made up 'Giraffe'? If you like this poem, you can find lots more like it in their book, *Worms Can't Fly*.

Paul Timoney seems to have had a lot of fun putting clothes and food together in *My Delicious Hat*. What two types of things would you put together to make your own **nonsense poem**?

Be Inspired!

- Nonsense poems are fun to write!
- One of the best ways to write them is not to write at all!
- Instead find someone to talk to and bounce ideas back and forth with each other.
- And you are allowed to be as giddy and silly as you like!

Hedgehog by Moya Cannon

Leaf-Eater by Thomas Kinsella

To a Squirrel at Kyle-Na-No by W.B. Yeats

The Song of the Whale by Leland Bardwell

The Great Blue Whale by Kerrie Hardie

Pages 12 to 15

All these poems are about Irish animals, some small, like the hedgehog and the red squirrel, one tiny (the caterpillar) and two are about the biggest mammals on earth. They all show something about how each poet feels about the animal and our relationship with them.

In each poem the poet writes about a wild animal and what they have written shows that they have observed the animal very closely! In their poems they tell us their thoughts about what the animal is like or what has happened to them.

Be Inspired!

You could make your own poem about a wild animal.

- You could choose your favourite wild animal and write about it.
- To make your poem really vivid, think of a time when you saw the animal so close to you that you noticed a lot about it .
- It could be an animal that you see every day in the place where you live.
- Or it could be something that is memorable because it was unusual to see it.
- Start by brainstorming for ideas and words for what you want to say about your animal and make notes. Don't worry about making a poem just yet.
- When you have a good collection of all the things you want to say about your animal have a look at what you have written. Are there any words that rhyme?
- If you have some rhyming words you can write a **rhyming** poem. ;To a Squirrel at Kyle-Na-No; by W. B. Yeats and ;The Great Blue Whale; by Kerry Hardie both rhyme.

- If you decide to make a rhyming poem you might need some more rhyming words. To find more try going through the alphabet. For example, you might have the word 'bat'. So, you could use 'at', 'cat', 'fat', 'hat', 'mat', 'pat', 'sat' and many more. Of course, most of them probably won't go with what you want to say and that is where the work starts!
- If you don't want to use rhyme you can make your poem simply by putting down your thoughts, line by line. This is called **free verse** and it is what Moya Cannon did in 'Hedgehog', what Thomas Kinsella did in 'Leaf-Eater' and Leland Bardwell did when she wrote 'The Song of the Whale'.

This Moment by Eavan Boland

Overconfident by Maria Quirke

Pages 16 & 17

'This Moment' by Eavan Boland is set in the suburbs at dusk, in the early evening. She has observed what is around her very closely and so she has been able to give us a wonderful sense of what she sees and hears in the twilight. Stars, moths and fruit seem really important to her feelings about the evening as she repeats these words in her poem. **Repetition** is a great way of emphasising something important in your poem and strengthening the word patterns in your poems.

If you would like to read another poem set at this time of day look at 'Summer Yearn' by Eithne Hand on page 34 of *I Am the Wind*.

In 'Overconfident', Maria Quirk uses the image of spinning, with herself at the centre of the spinning world. Is that overconfident? What does 'overconfident' mean? How does the image of a patchwork quilt make you feel?

Have you ever been told off for thinking you are the centre of the universe? But aren't we all? As we look out on it, each one of us is at the centre of what we see!

What time of day do you think 'Overconfident' is set in?

Be Inspired!

Is there a particular time of day that you like best?

- How would you describe it?
- How does it make you feel?
- What things make it your favourite part of the day?
- As those things are important to you, try repeating them in a few places in your poem. This is what Eavan Boland did with the stars, moths and fruit in 'This Moment'.

At Shankill Beach by Moya Cannon

A Skimming Stone by David Wheatley

Metal Tide by Polina Cosgrave

Sallywaggin' by Rachael Hegarty

Pages 18 to 21

All four of these poems have a strong sense of the place they are set in and three of them mention Irish place names. Shankill Beach is a pebbly beach close to Dublin. Lough Bray is a lake in County Wicklow. The Tolka is a river in Finglas, a part of north Dublin. Do you think it matters whether people reading those poems know the place?

Did you notice that they all mention water?

If you like the idea of warrior queens, you will find more in Paula Meehan's poem 'The Standing Army' on page 113 of *I Am the Wind*.

Be Inspired!

You could make a poem about a place and bring the place alive for your readers.

- Choose a place you know well.
- It could be close to home or somewhere far away.
- It could even be an imaginary place!
- Brainstorm for ideas and words.
- When you write your poem will you say something about what you see happening as Moya Cannon does, starting with the wave on Shankill Beach?
- Or will you say something about what you hear like Polina Cosgrave does in her poem?
- Or will you say something about what you do in the place as David Wheatley and Rachael Hegarty do in their poems?
- Remember to say something about how you feel about the place you have chosen.

In Summer by Gabriel Fitzmaurice

Outside in Summer by Lucinda Jacob

Pages 22 & 23

Friends by Monika Nowakowska

An Dráma Scoile and School Play by Áine Ní Ghlinn

Pages 26 & 27

Extract from *The Deepest Breath* by Meg Grehan

When Your Baby Sister Asks You if She's Pretty

Pages 68 & 69

Bird by Lucinda Jacob

Musha Mammy by Chrissy Ward

Pages 70 & 71

All these poems are about friendship and family and our feelings about the people who are close to us. Hopefully most of the time we feel happy when we are with them but sometimes being a friend or a sister or brother can be a bit difficult. Poems can be great places to put your thoughts, whether you are happy or feeling confused or anxious. Remember that your poems about your feelings may be private. You don't have to show them to anyone if you don't want to.

Be Inspired!

As you can see from these nine poems, poems about friendship, family and feelings can be long or short.

You can choose to **rhyme** like Gabriel Fitzmaurice does in 'In Summer,' Áine Ní Ghlinn does in 'An Dráma Scoile' and 'School Play', and Chrissy Ward does in 'Musha Mammy'. Or you could choose not to rhyme at all like Monika Nowakowska in 'Friends' and Meg Grehan in the extract from *The Deepest Breath*.

You might use **repetition** as Nikita Gill does when she repeats the words 'Tell her instead' in her poem 'When Your Baby Sister Asks You if She's Pretty'.

Repetition is a great way of setting up a strong sound pattern and rhythm in your poems, especially when what you have to say doesn't seem to work in rhyme.

The titles tell you that 'In Summer' by Gabriel Fitzmaurice and 'Outside in Summer' by Lucinda Jacob are both set in summer! What season do you think Lucinda's poem 'Bird' is set in?

- You could choose another season for your poem about friendship.
- Ask yourself what do you and your friends do in winter?
- What do you do together in the autumn?
- What do you do in spring?
- Which season seems the best one for you to write about?
- Will your poem show you having a good time together?
- Or will you have a more difficult time?

Nearer Home by Vona Groarke

The Recipe for Happiness by Grace Wells. Pages 24 & 25

I Love These Hands by Queva Zheng

The Lion King by Joseph Woods

Pages 104 & 105

These four poems are about families. In 'Nearer Home' Vona Groarke compares stars in the sky to the pattern of freckles on the back of her father's hands, and it's lovely to think that she sees part of him as like the stars. Grace Wells uses the structure of a **recipe** in 'The Recipe for Happiness' to show a really comforting and fun part of family life. Queva Zheng uses her grandfather's hands to show all the things she appreciates about what he does for her and her brother in 'I Love These Hands', and in 'The Lion King' Joseph Woods says that watching 'the weather' in grandad's face as he sleeps is more interesting than watching a film.

Be Inspired!

You could take any of these poems as a starting point for making your own poem.

- Could you compare something about a family member to the stars?
- Maybe they are more like the sun or moon, or like a river or a storm or a rock or a tree?

Or

- Does someone in your family make something yummy to eat? Maybe that person is you!
- A **recipe** is a great structure for a poem. If you decide to write a **recipe poem** have a look at some recipes for your favourite food online or in a cookbook. The structure is usually to give the ingredients followed by the method for cooking them.
- Don't forget to put an emotion into the mix!
- Will the emotion be happiness? Anger? Contentment? Excitement?

Or

- Describe what you notice and love about a family or friend. Putting your thoughts down and taking a new line with each thought will make a great poem full of feeling.

Pangur Bán translated by Robin Flower

Ní gá ... and Without ... by Gabriel Rosenstock

Pages 28 & 29

On Finding a Dead Rat in the Living Room by Paul Ó Colmáin

Page 89

The original 'Pangur Bán' was written in an ancient Irish manuscript (like the Book of Kells) by the scribe who was working on it. Maybe he was taking a break and having some fun! It was written in Old Irish, probably in the ninth century, in or near Reichenau Abbey. It has inspired lots of Irish poets, including Seamus Heaney and Paula Meehan. And of course Robin Flower, who wrote this translation.

Here is the original Old Irish poem. It is in the Reichenau Primer, St. Paul Codex, folio 1 verso, and it is now in the monastery of St Paul in Carinthia. It is quite different to modern Irish!

Pangur Bán

*Messe ocus Pangur Bán,
cechtar nathar fria saindán;
bíth a menma-sam fri seilgg,
mu menma céin im saincheird*

*Caraim-se fos, ferr cach clú,
oc mu lebrán léir ingnu;
ní foirmtech frimm Pangur bán,
caraid cesin a maccdán.*

*Ó ru·biam — scél cen scís —
innar tegdais ar n-óendís,
táithiunn — díchríchide clius —
ní fris tarddam ar n-áthius.*

*Gnáth-húaraib ar gressaib gal
glenaid luch inna lín-sam;*

*os mé, du·fuit im lín chéin
dliged n-doraid cu n-dronchéill.*

*Fúachid-sem fri frega fál
a rosc angléise comlán;
fúachimm chéin fri fégi fis
mu rosc réil, cesu imdis,*

*Fáelid-sem cu n-déne dul
hi-n-glen luch inna gérchrub;
hi-tucu cheist n-doraid n-dil,
os mé chene am fáelid.*

*Cía beimmi amin nach ré,
ní·derban cách ar chéle.
Maith la cehtar nár a dán,
subaighthus a óenurán.*

*Hé fesin as choimsid dáu
in muid du·n-gní cach óenláu;
du thabairt doraid du glé
for mu mud céin am messe.*

In ‘Ní gá ...’ and ‘Without’ Gabriel Rosenstock tells us such a lot in two tiny poems (well, really the same poem in different languages) . They are **haiku**, which is a Japanese way of writing very short poems. All he says is that the cat doesn’t need to be told to wash, it just does it. It does something that is natural to it, and it doesn’t need to be told how or when to do it!

It looks like we could all learn a lot from the cats in these poems!

Be Inspired!

‘Pangur Bán’ is a long **rhyming** poem and ‘Ní gá ...’ and ‘Without...’ are both **haiku**.

Sometimes, when you are in the right mood, rhyming poems can just pop into your head and once you start rhyming it’s hard to stop! But writing a long rhyming poem can be tricky as you can run out of rhymes. Here are some ideas

to help you. The rhyming pattern (sometimes called a **rhyme scheme**) in 'Pángur Bán' is called **rhyming couplets** and that means every couple of lines rhyme with each other. Paul Ó Colmáin's poem 'On Finding a Dead Rat in the Living Room' is just one rhyming couplet! You can find it on page 89 of *I Am the Wind*. You can see that great poems don't have to be long. It's your choice.

- Choose what you are going to write about. It could be a cat or another animal (in fact it could be anything!).
- Write one line about your animal.
- Notice what word your first line ends on.
- Now write a second line to rhyme with the first.
- You have your first **rhyming couplet**!
- That may be all you want to write. A two-line poem can be great!
- If you want to say more, for line three write a new line that doesn't rhyme with your first two lines.
- Now write line four to rhyme with line three.
- And so on!
- Some words have more rhymes than others. There are lots of words to rhyme with cat!
- If you find it hard to find a rhyme for the word at the end of your first or third lines try changing them about so they end on words that have lots of rhymes.
- Remember that rhyming words are precious so save them for where they are needed in your poem.
- If you put all your rhymes together in one line you will get a tongue-twister! Which is fine but maybe not what you want this time?

'Ní ga ...' and 'Without ...' are both short poems written by Gabriel Rosenstock to a particular pattern called a **haiku** and they don't rhyme at all. **Haiku** are traditionally about nature and they usually have room for only one thought. But that thought could be as tiny as a raindrop or as immense as the universe!

- **Haiku** have 17 **syllables** arranged in three lines.
- **Syllables** are the number of beats in words.
- How many beats or **syllables** are there in your full name? Check with a friend or classmate. There are 5 syllables in 'Lucinda Jacob' (Lu-cin-da-Jacob) and three in 'Sarah Webb' (Sa-rah-Webb).

- In a **haiku** there are five syllables in the first line.
- Seven syllables in the second
- and five in the third line

To write a **haiku** about a cat (or another animal) don't worry about the syllables at first.

- Write something about your animal for your first line.
- Say something more about it in the second line.
- Then finish with a third line.
- Now look back and check how many syllables you have in each line. You will probably have more than you need for a haiku.
- Can you adjust your poem so there are five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and five in the third?
- Remember, you don't have to use whole sentences in your poems.

Don't worry if your poem doesn't want to fit in the **haiku** pattern. It's your poem so you can make it how you want. You are finished when you are happy with it!

Did you notice that the plural of 'haiku' is 'haiku' (like 'sheep' and 'sheep')!

Three Wishes by Geraldine Mitchell

Smugairle Róin and Jellyfish (or Seal's Snot) by Réaltán Ní Leannáin

Earth Whispers by Julie O'Callaghan

Summer Yearn by Eithne Hand

Praise by Jane Clarke

Pages 30 to 35

All these poems feature animals and nature and the poets have used lots of different ways of writing that you could use yourself when you want to write a poem.

Be Inspired!

In 'Three Wishes' and 'Praise', Geraldine Mitchell and Jane Clarke have used **repetition** and repeated the words of the first lines in each of their verses and this sets up a strong rhythm and sound pattern in their poems. Julie O'Callaghan has done something similar in 'Earth Whispers'. They are all variations on **list** poems.

- Each verse in Three wishes starts with the repeated **phrase** 'I wish I was buzzing with', 'Earth Whispers' also uses repetition, each verse using a colour and the words, 'When (something) whispers it is ...'. And each **couplet** in 'Praise' starts with the word 'Praise'.
- A **phrase** is part of a sentence. 'I wish I was buzzing' is a good example of a phrase.
- A **couplet** is a verse with two lines
- Decide what you are going to write about and collect some ideas and words together in a **list**.
- Is there a word or phrase that you like a lot? Choose that one as the start of the verses in your poem.
- Keep going until you are happy with what you have written.

In 'Smugairle Róin' Réaltán Ní Leannáin is playing with the word *as Gaeilge* (in Irish) for 'jellyfish', which literally means 'seal's snot'! She imagines jellyfish not being happy with that name so no wonder they sting! The last words in

‘Smugairle Róin’ are ‘nimh san fheoil’ which she translates as ‘poison in the flesh’ in the English version of her poem. But there is a **pun** (a play on words where there is a double meaning) in the Irish phrase, as it also means to ‘have it in for someone’. The pun is lost in the English version and that shows how different languages use words differently. Perhaps that pun in Irish, the double meaning, gave her the idea of the jellyfish taking revenge on us for giving such a beautiful creature such a disgusting name!

There is another pun in ‘Pug’ by Nick Laird (see page 62 in *I Am the Wind*). Can you find it?

Be Inspired!

Do you know more than one language? Do you learn a language at school? Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- You could write a poem in a language other than English .
- When you have written it in one language, could you translate it into another?
- Do you think it will feel exactly the same in the two languages?
- Or will the different languages make the poems different?

In ‘Summer Yearn’, Eithne Hand takes us on a magical journey with animals who seem to be getting ready to party all night! Compare ‘Summer Yearn’ with ‘This Moment’ by Eavan Boland on page 16 of *I Am the Wind*. It is another poem set in the early evening.

Be Inspired!

Do you sometimes find yourself lying awake at night in the summer when it is still light?

In summer in Ireland it is light until very late! And in contrast it gets dark early here in the winter.

- When you are in bed, before you go to sleep, what can you hear?
- What could be happening outside where you live?
- Are there sounds of your neighbours?

- Or a road?
- Or trees in the wind?
- Or animals?
- What would you do if you could be outside?
- Use the answers to all these questions to make your own poem!

Blackberry-picking by Seamus Heaney

Blackberry Feast by Margot Bosonnet

Pages 36 & 37

Here are two poems about blackberries, which are juicy little fruits that ripen in the autumn. They can be delicious but if they are not ripe they can be gritty and hard and disappointing. They grow in abundance on briars (also called brambles) which are very prickly native Irish hedgerow plants. In Ireland we make lots of jam and some yummy desserts out of blackberries.

Seamus Heaney was and still is a much loved and world-renowned poet who won the Nobel Prize for Literature which is the top prize in the world for writers. One other well-loved Irish poet, W.B. Yeats, also won the Nobel Prize for Literature and you can read some of his poems in *I Am the Wind*

In 'Blackberry-picking', Seamus Heaney tells us what he remembers about picking blackberries and what happens to the blackberries. Did you expect that to happen?

How does what happens to the blackberries make you feel?

In Margot Bosonnet's 'Blackberry Feast' the blackberries seem to be colouring everything around them as the animals enjoy eating them!

Be Inspired!

In 'Blackberry-picking', Seamus Heaney tells a story which is a vivid memory for him. It has an unexpected ending. Margot Bosonnet's poem is more of a fantasy as she describes a landscape full of the colours of blackberries in her jaunty rhyming poem.

- You could tell a story in a poem.
- Does your story have a surprising ending?
- Will it be a happy or a sad ending?
- It could be about picking blackberries
- Or it could be about something completely different!

Rhyming poems usually work well if they have a regular **rhythm**. You could use the rhythm that Margot Bosonnet uses to make your own poem. Below you

can see where the strong beats are, as they are in **bold**. Notice how the rhyming words at the end of the lines are all strong beats. Say it out loud a few times and you will hear the rhythm with the rhymes working well together.

*By the **brambly hill** where the **blackberries cluster***

*The **pond** is an **indigo-pink**;*

*And the **animals sigh** at the **lavender sky***

*As they **lower** their **faces** to **drink**.*

*All the **frogs** pickle **purple** from **eating** their **fill**,*

*For they **guzzle** and **guzzle** the **berries** that **spill***

*In a **knurly cascade** to the **foot** of the **hill**,*

*Where they **colour** the **water** like **ink**.*

When you have the rhythm in your head you can start to make your own poem by putting your own words to the beat!

Our Exercise for Today by Pat Ingoldsby

Finding My Space by Carol Boland

Pages 38 & 39

Both these poems are about being yourself, but the moods are very different.

In Pat Ingoldsby's poem, 'Our Exercise for Today', he challenges us to get out and push ourselves further than we think possible, and it feels upbeat and exciting as they tell us what to do. But they also say quiet times are important: 'Stand still / for so long / that all the voices / go away / and there is nothing left / to come between you / and the feel of who / you truly are'.

The speaker in Carol Boland's poem, 'Finding My Space', is just as ambitious as Pat Ingoldsby's speaker, as they want to fly higher and higher, and this person also wants to get away so that no one can clip their wings. So again this poem reminds us that having quiet time and 'space to breathe' is really important.

Be Inspired!

Carol Boland uses the image of a bird in her poem to describe how she feels.

- You could use an animal to describe how you feel.
- Think about the typical activities of various animals.
- For example birds fly high but also swoop low, fish swim deep and also live in shallow streams, rabbits live in cosy burrows and run at the sight of humans. Squirrels scamper about on the ground and climb tall trees.
- Choose an animal that could show how you feel.
- You could start your poem with the words ' I am like...' , and put the animal's name in. Then go on to say what the animal is doing.
- Here is an example:

*I am like a squirrel
Scampering about the park
But see me scramble up the tallest tree
When I hear the dogs bark!*

- When we use the word 'like' in this way it is called a **simile** (a bit like the word 'similar').
- Here is the same idea this time leaving out the word 'like'.

*I am a squirrel
Scampering about the park
But see me scramble up the tallest tree
When I hear the dogs bark!*

Which do you prefer? We call the way of describing something without using the words 'like' or 'as' **metaphor**. It can be very powerful!

Remember that when you are using the things the animal does, you could really be describing yourself!

Surnames by Polina Cosgrove

Leaving Gdansk Glówny, eExtract from *The Weight of Water* by Sarah Crossan

Pages 40 & 41

The Old Woman of the Roads by Padraic Colum

Page 48

These three poems all say something about living in and moving to different places and cultures in the hope of somewhere to call home.

In 'Surnames', Polina Cosgrave traces the way her family has moved across Europe to Ireland by telling us about her family names and how they reflect the places her family have lived. It's interesting, given that it is a poem about names, that the only one we actually know is 'Cosgrave', which is an Irish family name, and we only know that from the title and credit of the poem. So maybe the poem is not so much about names but is about something else?

Sarah Crossan's poem is an extract from a **verse novel**. It is about a girl called Kasienka who moves to England with her mother and misses her old home in Poland. It won the Eilís Dillon Award (for the best book by an Irish writer writing a book for children for the first time). Gdansk Glówny is the main train station in Gdansk in Poland.

'The Old Woman of the Roads' by Pádraic Colum was written quite a long time ago, but it will resonate with many families seeking somewhere to live in Ireland now. Originally the Old Woman would have been seen as representing Ireland and the wish for a home of her own can be seen as the wish for an Ireland independent of the British Empire. The word 'delph' means the cups and plates that the old woman imagines on the shelves she would like to have in her house. This word is based on the place name Delft, a city in the Netherlands where a lot of crockery used to be made. Crocker from Delft often had blue and white speckled patterns on it.

Be Inspired!

Have you ever moved to a new home?

- What was it like to move?

- Did you pack all your belongings?
- Or just some favourite things?
- What was the journey like? Was it a long journey or somewhere close by?
- What was it like to arrive in the new place?

If you imagine the perfect place to live, what would it be like?

- Would it be like your own home?
- Or would it be on earth at all?

When you have gathered some ideas decide what way to write your poem. Will it **rhyme**? Or would it work best as a **list poem**? Or maybe you could write a **recipe** poem for your home.

When your poem about home is how you like it, you could make a paper **trptych fold**. This kind of fold looks like a house and is great for displaying poems about home!

Extract from *Maude Enthralled* by Doireanne Ní Ghríofa

Page 42

Born in 1866, Maude Delap from Valentia Island in County Kerry grew up at a time when women were not allowed to go to university. She was fascinated by sea life, especially jellyfish, so she taught herself marine biology and became the first person in the world to rear jellyfish in captivity and observe their full life cycle.

Other jellyfish poems in *I Am the Wind* are 'Smugairle Róin' by Réaltán Ní Leannáin on page 31 of and 'The Jellyfish's Tongue Twister' by Gordon Snell on page 44.

Be Inspired!

Maude in *Maude Enthralled* was a real person. Is there someone from history that you would like to write about in a poem?

- Choose who you would like to write about
- Find out as much as you can about them
- Will you focus on their life as an adult?
- Or will you write about their childhood?
- What you find out about them may help you decide what way you will write your poem.
- If you can't decide, try writing an **acrostic**.
- For an acrostic about a person you could start by using the letters of their name as the first letters of each line in your poem. Here is an example about an imaginary footballer:

*So keen on football
Everyone can see
All the skill and practice makes her a
National hero
Nothing can stop her
At all!*

- Remember you don't have to rhyme!

The Jellyfish's Tongue Twister by Gordon Snell

Ar Iarraidh and Escaped by Gabriel Rosenstock

Worms Can't Fly by Aislinn and Larry O'Loughlin

Pages 44 & 45

Ar Strae sa Chloigeann and Astray in the Head by Máire Zepf

Little Jenny by Gerry Hanberry

Pages 58 & 59

Lá na bPeataí and Pets' Day by Áine Ní Ghlinn

Page 72

On Finding a Dead Rat in the Living Room by Paul Ó Colmáin

Page 89

These funny poems are really great for saying aloud and they are easy to learn off by heart.

'The Jellyfish's Tongue Twister' by Gordon Snell, like all **tongue-twisters**, is fun to say over and over, getting faster and faster until you can't say it clearly at all!

'Ar Iarraidh' and 'Escaped' by Gabriel Rosenstock and 'On Finding a Dead Rat in the Living Room' by Paul O'Colmáin are poems that consist of one funny, quirky thought in just two lines!

In 'Worms Can't Fly' Aislinn and Larry O'Loughlin turn a funny thought into a short rhyming poem. Gerry Hanberry does the same thing in 'Little Jenny'.

Like Gabriel Rosenstock, Máire Zepf and Áine Ní Ghlinn both write in Irish and English. Could you write a funny poem in two languages?

- The next time you see or hear something funny, odd or silly try and remember it.
- Then you can turn it into a funny rhyming poem like Gordon Snell, Paul O'Colmáin, Gerry Hanberry and Aislinn and Larry O'Loughlin did in their short poems.
- Or you could write a longer funny poem like Máire Zepf's 'Ar Strae sa Chloigeann' and 'Astray In the Head' and Áine Ní Ghlinn's 'Lá na bPeataí'

and 'Pets' Day'. If like them you know more than one language you could try and write it in both!

- Do you know any **tongue-twisters**? You could write one like Gordon Snell did by finding lots of rhyming words or you could use **alliteration** which is words close together that start with the same letter. Like this one:

She sells sea-shells by the sea shore

All the Dogs by Matthew Sweeney

Page 46

Pug by Nick Laird

WUFF by Gabriel Rosenstock

Pages 62 & 63

Puppy Love by Annette Reddy

Page 73

The Cat and the Moon by W. B. Yeats

Page 88

Cat's Eye by David Butler

Page 98

As you can see from these poems, there are lots of ways to write about cats and dogs. One of them isn't really about a cat but compares the arch of a bridge to the arch of a cat's back when it stretches. Did you notice the pun in one of the poems?

Be Inspired!

Do you have a pet? If you don't, if you had a pet what would it be? You could write a poem about your real or fantasy pet.

- The dogs all love the boy in 'All the Dogs' by Matthew Sweeney and they show it in different ways.
- How would your pet show how it feels about you?
- You could find all sorts of things to compare your pet to, like Nick Laird does in 'Pug'.
- In 'Pug' there is a **pun** on the word 'bore' as it means 'carried' as well as being boring! A pun is a word that has a double meaning and they can sometimes be very funny. Pug dogs are small and were bred in China as 'lap' dogs. They could sit on their owners' laps or be carried about like hot-water bottles to keep their owners warm. How boring for the pugs!
- Will your pet poem rhyme like Annette Reddy's 'Puppy Love', Gabriel Rosenstock's 'WUFF' and W. B. Yeats's 'The Cat and the Moon'?

- Why do you think Gabriel Rosenstock put 'WUFF' in capitals in the title and in one place in the poem?
- If you don't want to write about real pets you could make up a totally fantasy pet!

Girl in a Rope by Brendan Kennelly

I'll Tell I My Ma Traditional

Molly Malone Traditional

Pages 50 & 51

Two of these poems are traditional songs, one from the streets of Belfast and one from Dublin. You can easily find the tunes that go with them on the internet. 'Girl in a Rope' by Brendan Kennelly is about skipping in a rope, something children do outside all over the world. There are lots of skipping rhymes that go with skipping games. Do you know any? Our suggestion for an activity to go with these poems is not to write (unless you want to!).

- If you don't know them already, you could research the tunes for the two traditional songs.
- When you find them you can sing them!
- You could find out about as many skipping songs as you can.
- Then go out with a rope and some friends or classmates and play!

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven by W. B. Yeats

March by Freda Laughton

Pages 52 & 53

W. B. Yeats was, and still is, one of Ireland's best-loved poets. Like Seamus Heaney, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, which is the top prize in the world for writers. 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven' is often chosen as their favourite poem in English by people all over the world. Why do you think that is? And why do you think we put it beside 'March' by Freda Laughton?

Be Inspired!

These two poems use the crafts of embroidery, sewing and weaving as images to make their poems vivid. You could do the same in your own poem. W. B. Yeats wants to put 'heaven's embroidered cloths' under someone's feet. If you were to give someone something made from a traditional craft what would it be? You could say it in a poem.

- Choose what your handmade gift will be.
- What craft would make it? Painting? Pottery? Woodwork? Metalwork? Knitting?
- Find all the words you can about that craft.
- For example if you chose painting, gather all the words for the things you would need to make a painting along with the colours of the paints
- Then use them to write your gift poem. Here is an example:

*For your birthday I would give you
A great sweep of blue from the biggest brush
With the gold and umber of an autumn birch tree
Painted with the finest squirrel-hair.*

As your poem is a gift, you could write it out on a card and put it in an envelope or make a little box and put it inside. Then give it to someone!

Pumpkinhead by Julie O'Callaghan Hallowe'en by Michael Longley

Pages 54 & 55

Halloween is a great night full of fun in Ireland. It is celebrated on 31 October every year, which traditionally was called 'All Hallows' Eve'. In other words it is the 'evening' before 'All Hallows' on 1 November, which is now called 'All Saints' Day'. It's a bit like 'Christmas Eve', which is the evening before Christmas Day. In fact the traditions around Halloween go way back before Christian times. As the nights get longer and colder at this time of year it is easy to imagine people long ago wanting to mark the change in the season by partying!

It gets dark early at Halloween and people decorate their houses with all sorts of ghastly, ghostly scenes which look great in the dark. Families celebrate with parties and children have the best fun going out to Trick or Treat in fancy dress. They show off their costumes to their neighbours who give them treats of fruit and nuts and sweets!

The tradition went with Irish people to America where pumpkins replaced the turnips that were traditional in Ireland. That's why Michael Longley mentions a turnip rather than a pumpkin in his poem. Nowadays we have pumpkins here in Ireland too. They are easier to cut than turnips and we turn them into grim faces and light them from the inside with candles.

Julie Callaghan focuses on the costume her brother wore one year in 'Pumpkinhead'. You could describe a halloween costume in a poem. What did it look like? How did it make you feel?

Be Inspired!

What do you like best about Halloween?

- Talk to someone and gather ideas and words about Halloween.
- Decide what sort of poem to write.
- A **cinquain** could be good as it can be shaped like a face and represent a pumpkin head. The five lines start short, get longer and then end on a short line.
- For the simplest type of cinquain you count words like this:

*Cutting
pumpkin eyes
gaping toothy mouth
ready for the candle
inside*

- Of course you don't have to write about Halloween.
- What other things do you celebrate each year?
- You could write about that celebration instead

Visitor by Nessa O'Mahony

Symphony in Yellow by Oscar Wilde

Pages 56 & 57

The Wind that Shakes the Barley by Katharine Tynan

Page 60

Merrion Square and When You Walk by James Stephens

Pages 98 & 99

Winter in Inis Meáin by Louise C. Callaghan

The Lake Isle of Innisfree by W. B. Yeats

Pages 108 & 109

These poems are all about outdoor places. The garden in Nessa O'Mahony's poem, 'Visitor', seems like a small private place whereas all the other five poems feature public places. The only one not set in Ireland is Oscar Wilde's 'Symphony in Yellow'. Can you tell where it is set? It was written in 1889. Are there any things in the poem that show it was written a long time ago?

James Stephens's 'Merrion Square' describes an evening in that Dublin park and Louise C. Callaghan's 'Winter In Inis Meáin' gives a vivid description of the landscape of one of the Aran Islands. In 'When You Walk', James Stephens encourages us to be observant and enjoy the places we find ourselves in. Katharine Tynan's poem 'The Wind that Shakes the Barley' is like a song full of longing and W. B. Yeats's much-loved poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' is full of longing for that island on Lough Gill in County Sligo.

Be Inspired!

All these places seem very special to the poets that wrote them. You could write a poem about a place that is special to you.

- The place you choose to write about could be outdoors like all these poems.
- Or it could be indoors.
- It could be a private place like a room in your home.

- Or a public space like a park, a shopping centre, sports centre, cinema or library.
- Or it could be a wild place like a mountain or somewhere by the sea.
- One of the best ways to write about a place is to go there and really look and listen closely to what is going on while you are there.
- How does it make you feel to be there?
- Perhaps you will notice things that hardly anyone else does?
- Maybe you can't go to the place you want to write about or have such strong memories of it that you don't need to go back there to write your poem.
- Are you inspired by the poems that **rhyme**?
- Or will you write your poem in **free verse**?
- You can write your poem any way you like!
- When you are pleased with what you have written you could make a post card! Draw a picture of your place on one side and write your poem on the other and send or give it to someone.

A Vole Poem by Linda McGrory

Page 61

A Very Short Writing Course by Pat Ingoldsby

Taking My Pen for a Walk by Julie O'Callaghan

Pages 64 & 65

All three of these poems focus on words and writing poems. Linda McGrory's poem is about a vole, which is a little animal a bit like a mouse. She realised 'vole' is an **anagram** of 'love' and that inspired her poem.

Pat Ingoldsby tells us just how simple writing can be in his poem, 'A Very Short Writing Course'. And then he says how difficult it can be! What do you think makes writing seem difficult to him?

The title of Julie O'Callaghan's poem, 'Taking My Pen for a Walk', is very like the titles children used to be given when their teachers wanted them to write. She turns it into a funny fantasy story!

Be Inspired!

Can you find an anagram that you could use to make a poem like Linda McGrory did? Here are some suggestions:

- 'art' and 'rat'
- 'dog' and 'god'
- 'eat' and 'tea'
- 'stable' and 'tables'
- 'table' and 'bleat'
- Have fun playing with the words!

Writing about writing can be fun!

- You could give writing tips like Pat Ingoldsby did in 'A Very Short Writing Course'
- How would you do it?

- You could model your poem about writing on a list of rules, like the rules of a game or the rules of the classroom that you may have contributed to at school.
- A **recipe** could work too. Look at 'The Recipe for Happiness' by Grace Wells on page 25 of *I Am the Wind* if you need inspiration for a recipe poem about how to write!
- What would happen if you took your pen or pencil for a walk?
- Would you set it free like Julie O'Callaghan did in 'Taking My Pen for a Walk'?
- If you are going to set your pencil free, you could write in **free verse** or you could show how the walk goes around your page in a **shape poem!**

Dolphin by Catherine Ann Cullen

Page 66

Irish Elk by Catherine Phil MacCarthy

What the Deer Said by Mark Roper

Pages 74 & 75

Goat III by Eva Bourke

Fox by Leanne O'Sullivan

Pages 100 & 101

Do you ever find when you are thinking about something or having a chat with someone, that one thing leads to another, and you end up wondering how you started because you are now thinking or talking about something completely different?

These three poems about Irish wild animals all lead the poets to tell us what the animal brings to mind.

The dolphin in Catherine Ann Cullen's poem reminds her of her father, and it makes her think of how we might have communicated with each other before we humans started to speak the languages we know now.

Tree branches in 'Irish Elk' make Catherine Phil MacCarthy think of huge antlers and she imagines the extinct Giant Irish Elk rising out of the bog with something to say to us.

In 'What the Deer Said' by Mark Roper the deer make him think about shyness and how it can be a good thing to be shy.

Perhaps the fact that goats eat almost anything made Eva Bourke imagine that the moon disappears once a month because a goat has eaten it! She put that wacky thought into 'Goat III', which is our favourite of her three goat poems.

Do you ever wonder what the animals you see are thinking? In Leanne O'Sullivan's poem, 'Fox', the fox tells the man in the poem what it is thinking about him.

Be Inspired!

Do you have a favourite wild animal? What does it remind you of? If you can, have a chat with someone about it. When you have a good few ideas you could write your own poem about an animal and what it reminds you of.

- Decide how you are going to write your 'animal thoughts' poem.
- Your decision could depend on the mood of your thoughts
- Or you could just write your poem the way you like best.
- If it is going to be a quiet sort of poem you could write a **haiku**.
- Or use **free verse** to write your thoughts as you might say them.
- If your ideas are wacky, upbeat and full of excitement you could write a poem with a jaunty **rhythm** and lots of **rhyme**.
- Will the animal in your poem be able to talk?

Stuff by Derek Mahon

from Stuck Indoors by Enda Wiley

Pages 76 & 77

These two poems are set indoors and while they are both full of 'stuff' they seem to be about creativity.

In 'Stuff', Derek Mahon focuses at first on the things that make paper, glass and artifacts (other things!) like drawings, paintings and sculpture. He says our 'interior life' (what do you think that is?) which is 'keen to create' is what makes these beautiful things and all the stuff we have around us. He quotes Shakespeare (probably the most famous and creative writer in the English language) when he mentions 'the stuff dreams are made on'. So perhaps he is really writing about writing. There is a lot about creativity in this poem!

In 'Stuck Indoors' rain and 'winter's temper' keeps everyone indoors. Although the dog is unhappy, the poem itself is full of creativity and imaginative descriptions. Enda Wiley uses some vivid **metaphors**, saying that the sofa is a ship, and when an oak tree falls she says 'history crashes', instead of 'the tree crashes'. She uses imaginative **similes**, for example, when she says the time passes slowly, 'like crumbs, itchy on our skin.' She also uses **personification** when she says winter's temper 'bullies the oak'.

Be Inspired!

You could write a poem set indoors. Or a poem about creativity. Or both!

- What do you like to do on a rainy day?
- Brainstorm about all the things you could do indoors.
- If you have a list of things you could write about them all in a **list poem**.
- Or you could choose your favourite thing and write about that.
- Don't forget to try using some **similes** and **metaphors** when you are describing things.

The Sloth by Anne McDonnell

The Sloth's Snooze by Gordon Snell

Tree Sloth by Mark Granier

Pages 78 & 79

All three of these poems are about sloths! If you read them in *I Am the Wind* did you notice that they all say something a bit different about sloths? And did you notice that they all rhyme?

Be Inspired!

You could write about a sloth too! You and friends or classmates could all write **rhyming poems** about sloths and they would all be different!

- Read the sloth poems in *I Am the Wind* again.
- Find out all you can about sloths.
- Where do they live?
- What do they eat?
- Why are they so slow?
- Have you ever seen one?
- Where was it?
- Make notes as you find out all you can.
- Are there any words or **phrases** that rhyme in your notes?
- You can use them in your **rhyming poem**.

You could use 'The Sloth' by Anne McDonnell as a model. In her short poem, line two rhymes with line four.

- Start by saying something that you find interesting about a sloth on your first line.
- Then continue on the second line.
- Now write a third line.
- Then write the fourth line. It should rhyme with the second line.
- If it doesn't, adjust lines two and four until they do rhyme.
- You have your rhyming sloth poem!

It can be tricky to rhyme, but it can be fun too, and it's very satisfying when it works!

The Coal Jetty by Sinéad Morrissey

My Ship by Christy Brown

A Boy by Matthew Sweeney

Exploring by Margot Bosonnet

Pages 80 to 85

These four poems all have something about the sea in them.

Sinéad Morrissey tells us in 'The Coal Jetty' what she sees when the tide goes out, which it does twice every twenty four hours. Did you notice that she wrote it so that it looks like waves on the pages in *I Am the Wind*? It is almost like a **shape poem**. Can you tell that she set her poem near the city of Belfast? How can you tell?

Christy Brown and Matthew Sweeney both use images of the sea and ships in their poems, 'My Ship' and 'A Boy', to help describe memories of when they were boys. But in fact their memories can seem more about their bedrooms and reading and dreaming than about the sea! They both use **rhyme**. Christy Brown's **rhyme scheme** is very regular and Matthew Sweeney rhymes at the beginning and end of his poem and occasionally in between.

Like Sinéad Morrissey, Margot Bosonnet sets her poem when the tide is out but what she sees is very different. In 'Exploring', she goes walking on a beach or strand with her dog. It's a jaunty **rhythmical** poem with a regular **rhyme scheme** which makes her day out with her dog seem very happy.

Be Inspired!

Have you ever been by the sea when the tide is out? If you have, you could write a poem about it. If you haven't, choose a different place. You could write about things you remember from when you were younger, like Christy Brown and Matthew Sweeney.

- What do you remember?
- What did you see?
- What did you do?
- How did you feel? Thoughtful? Excited?
- Decide how you are going to write your poem

- Will it be a **shape poem**?
- Will it **rhyme**?

Umbrella by Ruth Ennis

A Bit of Free Verse by Alan Murphy

Pages 86 & 87

These two poems are **shape poems** which are also called **concrete poems**.

These kinds of poems need to be set in the page the way things can be set in concrete. Because they don't work if they are not set out the way the poet wants.

Be Inspired!

Writing **shape poems** can be fun, especially if you are a person who likes drawing.

There are a few different ways to make a **shape poem**:

- Decide what your poem is going to be about.
- Use a pencil to draw the outline of what your poem is going to be about.
- Next collect ideas and words for your poem.
- Then take a pen or marker and fill the outline drawing with your poem, as Ruth Ennis did in 'Umbrella'.
- Or you can follow the outline with your words in pen, leaving the middle empty.
- Or you can show movement (again using a pen) in your poem by making your words move around the page, as Alan Murphy did in 'A Bit of Free Verse'.
- When you have finished writing your poem with the pen or marker you can rub out the pencil drawing and it's done!

All Day I Hear the Noise of Waters by James Joyce

from A Calm and from Moon-Light by Adelaide O’Keeffe

The Four Honesties by Dave Lordan

Ocean Song by E.R. Murray

Pages 90 to 93

These five poems, like the poems on pages 80 to 85 in *I Am the Wind*, all feature the sea. Perhaps it is not surprising that we Irish write a lot about the sea, as Ireland is surrounded by water.

James Joyce is world-famous for his novel *Ulysses*, but he loved to sing and he wrote **lyrical poems**, which means they are like songs. Can you imagine singing ‘All Day I Hear the Noise of Waters’?

Adelaide O’Keeffe lived more than a hundred and fifty years ago and wrote lots of poems for children. A lot of her poems tell children how to behave but some, like these extracts from ‘A Calm’ and ‘Moon-Light’, are not bossy but seem to show that she wanted readers to enjoy the sights and sounds of the sea.

Dave Lordan writes about the wind, sun and earth as well as the sea in ‘The Four Honesties’. Did you notice that he uses **repetition** as well as **rhyme** to give his poem a strong and satisfying structure?

E. R. Murray’s ‘Ocean Song’ is written in **free verse** but she uses some **repetition**, where she repeats part of the first verse in the last verse. She also uses **rhyme** (‘ear’ and ‘hear’) and there is also a **half rhyme** (‘tide’ and ‘dive’) which means the two words almost rhyme.

Be Inspired!

All these poems about the sea are **lyrical** and song-like.

- You could write a poem that is like the words of a song.
- Like these poems, songs usually **rhyme**.
- You could make up a tune and sing your poem!
- To display your poem, you could fold paper to make a paper boat.
- Write your poem on the paper boat.
- Or write it on another piece of paper and put it in the boat.

- Set it afloat!

My Best Friend's a Monster by Nigel Quinlan

on o'connell bridge by Rafael Mendes

Beans on Toast by Zainab Boladale

Pages 94 & 95

These funny poems are all about eating! But maybe a monster friend and a seagull snatching your food aren't all that funny!

Nigel Quinlan uses lots of **repetition** and a strong **rhythm** and lots of **rhyme** (like 'phone' and 'bone') and even some **half rhyme** (like 'teeth' and 'meat', and 'us' and 'guts'). It's all great for a zany **nonsense poem**!

Zainab does the same in her poem, 'Beans on Toast', using **repetition** and great **rhythm** and **rhyme** for her bouncy poem which really is full of beans!

In his poem 'on o'connell bridge', Rafael Mendes emphasises two important words, 'pounces' and 'wings', by giving them whole lines to themselves. Why do you think he doesn't use capital letters at all?

PS: There are possibly lots of reasons and probably no right answer!

Be Inspired!

You could write a funny, **nonsense poem** about food and eating.

- Start by thinking about all the funny, silly things that can happen with food and drink.
- If you can, chat to a friend or classmate and tell each other all the funniest things that have happened to you about food.
- You can be as wacky as you like!
- You can make stuff up!
- See if you can **rhyme** with each other in a bouncy **rhythm**.
- Then write it down!

You could make a lunch box out of a small cardboard box and display your food poem in it!

Out and Back by Lucinda Jacob

Everything is Going to be All Right by Derek Mahon

Pages 96 & 97

These two poems are set in and around home. Lucinda Jacob's poem 'Out and Back' was written during one of the Covid lockdowns and Derek Mahon mentions dying in 'Everything is Going to be All Right', but they are both comforting poems that remind us that there are lots of good things in our lives. Derek Mahon was one of Ireland's best-loved twentieth-century poets.

Be Inspired!

Lucinda Jacob's poem is a **mirror poem**, where the first half of the poem is reversed in the second half.

- **Mirror poems** work well for poems that tell stories or are about thoughts.
- Especially when your story or thought ends where it started.
- Write the first half.
- Then start reversing the lines.
- Stop when you have got back to the first line.
- It is now your last line too!
- You will probably have to make a few adjustments to make it work.

Poems are good places to put sad thoughts as well as happy thoughts. If you know someone is sad you could write a poem to comfort them. Just like Derek Mahon did in 'Everything is Going to be All Right'.

from You Don't Know What War Is by Yeva Skalietska

Wake by Ciarán Carson

Pages 106 & 107

Yeva was twelve when her country, Ukraine, was invaded by Russia in 2022. She fled with Inna (her Granny) and now lives in Dublin.

Ciarán Carson was a poet and writer from Belfast. He loved writing about his city. From the late 1960s to 1998 there was conflict in Northern Ireland called 'The Troubles'. There were bombings in Belfast at that time, so he could easily have thought it was a bomb when he heard a 'boom' at his window. Instead it was a blackbird.

Can you find another poem by Ciarán Carson about a blackbird and Belfast in *I Am the Wind*?

Be Inspired!

Like Yeva Skalietska, we can sometimes find ourselves in very frightening situations. It is very important to find good people who can make us safe.

When you are safe enough to write, a poem can be a very good place to put your thoughts.

Hopefully, like Ciarán Carson, you find the thing that frightened you isn't what you thought it was, and all is well.

Changin Hosses by Dave Lordan

The Pony's Eyes by Tony Curtis

Pages 110 & 111

Dave Lordan and Tony Curtis use horses in their poems to say quite different things. What do you think Dave Lordan is saying in 'Changin Hosses'? Is it advice for living? And why do you think Tony Curtis wanted to tell us about ponies seeing things in different colours to us? Is it that there are lots of different ways of looking at the world?

Be Inspired!

What could your favourite animal tell us about the way we could live? You could use their characteristics the way Dave Lordan and Tony Curtis did in your own poem. Here are some ideas to get you going:

- Cats can be affectionate and they are known for being independent. They are also good at seeking out the most comfortable places.
- Dogs are usually loyal and protective and want to please their owners.
- Birds hop about on the ground and fly high in the sky. Some migrate thousands of miles across the earth each year.
- Fish swim!

There are so many more animals you could use to inspire your poem. And they all make amazing noises. You could think about that when you are writing your poem, especially as poems are all about sound and language.

In a Dublin Museum by Sheila Wingfield

The Standing Army by Paula Meehan

Pages 112 & 113

from Ode by Arthur O'Shaughnessy

93 Percent Stardust by Nikita Gill

Pages 114 & 115

In these four poems the poets tell us something about what we were like and what we are like now. They also say something about writing and poets!

In her poem, 'In a Dublin Museum', Sheila Wingfield tells how no one knew what a gold ring was until someone found out what it could be in an old story. In 'Standing Army' Paula Meehan sees herself as a warrior in an army of poets, ready to create chants and songs.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy seems to be saying we are all poets in 'Ode', and Nikita Gill says, in '93 Percent Stardust', that we are all stars!

Be Inspired!

Have you ever found something old and wondered what it was used for? What things that we use now could confuse people in the future? You could write a poem about something like that. Just like the gold ring in Sheila Wingfield's poem that was too big for anyone's finger and for ages no one could say what it was. For example,

- In the future, mobile phones will probably no longer be used .
- If a phone was found 500 years from now ... what would people think it was for?

By now, hopefully, you have been inspired to write lots of poems. Now you can write a poem about being a poet and being a star, just like Paula Meehan, Arthur O'Shaughnessy and Nikita Gill have done!

Happy writing!

Meaning of Words in Bold

Acrostic

An acrostic is a poem where the first letter of each line makes a word (or words) when you read downwards instead of across. These vertical letters start the first word on each line of the poem.

Alliteration

This is the repetition of the sound at the beginning of words that are close to each other. Alliteration can create pleasing sound patterns in your writing.

Tongue-twisters are the ultimate in alliteration. Try saying this one over and over again!

Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascals ran!

Anagram

An anagram is a word game where you mix up all the letters of one word to make another. For example, 'act' is an anagram of 'cat'.

Cinquain

A cinquain is a poem of five lines with no rhyme. The simplest version has one word in the first line, two in the second, three in the third and four in the fourth. It then goes back to one word in the fifth line. Another version puts two words in the first line, four in the second, six in the third, eight in the fourth and then two in the fifth line. Yet another way to write a cinquain is to count two, four, six, eight and two **syllables**.

Concrete poem see **Shape poem**

Couplet

A couplet is two lines of poetry. Like a couple!

Free vers

Free verse really does give you lots of freedom! Free verse typically uses language that is close to the way we talk, so it can be used to say what you want to say without being forced into a formal structure or particular pattern. It follows the **rhythms** of speech, so you can use the pauses you naturally take when you are speaking to decide where to start a new line. You can start a new verse when you start a new thought, rather like starting a new paragraph when you are writing a story. Free verse does not have a regular **rhyme scheme** (although the occasional rhyme may creep in). **Repetition** and **alliteration** are often used to strengthen the sound patterns in free verse.

Haiku

A haiku is a traditional Japanese poem of three lines that do not rhyme. Haiku follow a particular pattern. The first line has five **syllables**, the second line has seven, and the third line has five syllables. Such a short poem (just seventeen syllables) has space for only one thought or image, though that thought could be as tiny as a raindrop or as vast as the universe. A haiku often captures the moment when something changes or moves (like the frog that jumps into a pond in the famous haiku by the Japanese poet Basho). Did you notice that the plural of 'haiku' is 'haiku'? Like 'sheep'!

Half rhyme see Rhyme

Kenning

A kenning is a two-part word with a hyphen joining it and it usually describes something by saying what it does. Using kennings, you could describe someone playing outside as a 'puddle-jumper' a 'tree-swinger' and a 'leaf-kicker'. Kennings are a very ancient way of writing. Poets who wrote in Old English and Old Norse almost a thousand years ago used kennings a lot because their poems relied on **alliteration**. So if they wanted a word for the sea that would alliterate with 'wave' they would make up a kenning like 'whale-home' and that would work as the sea is the home of whales.

List poem

We make all sorts of lists, like shopping lists, 'to do' lists, holiday lists, homework lists, lists of rules, contents lists, menus, days of the week, months of the year, number sequences and the alphabet. All of them can be good ways to structure a poem.

Lyrical poem

The word 'lyrical' comes from 'lyre', which is an old-fashioned musical instrument. So when we say a poem is lyrical we mean it is musical or a like a song.

Metaphor

If you make a comparison without the words 'like' or 'as', you are using a metaphor, for example 'I am a tortoise crawling out of bed' or 'I am a racing cheetah'. We are using metaphor when we say someone is 'a couch potato', 'the black sheep of the family' or that it's 'raining cats and dogs', or something is 'the icing on the cake'. Metaphors can create powerful images in your writing.

Mirror poem

In a mirror poem the lines of the first half are reversed in the second half, so your last line is the same as the first line. Writing them can be like doing a puzzle, as you often have to adjust what you wrote in the first half to make the second half work!

Nonsense poem

Nonsense poems are usually funny and full of daft and crazy characters, thoughts and actions. They often **rhyme** and have bouncy **rhythms**, which make funny poems feel even funnier.

Personification

If you give human qualities to creatures, things or ideas in a poem, then you are 'personifying' that thing or idea. For example, 'The trees sighed in the wind' is treating the trees as if they were human and could sigh.

Phrase

A phrase is part of a sentence. You don't always have to have full sentences in poems. For example, a **haiku** could be made up of three phrases – a whole poem without a sentence!

Pun

A pun is a joke which uses the way some words have two meanings. Puns can be great when you are writing funny poems. There is a pun on the word 'bore' in Nick Laird's 'Pug' which is on page 62 of *I Am the Wind*, and there is a pun on 'nimh san fheoil' in 'Smugairle Róin' by Réaltán Ní Leannáin on page 31. 'Nimh san fheoil' is Irish for 'poison in the flesh' and it also means 'to have it in for someone'.

Recipe poem

A recipe poem is one that uses the structure of a recipe or the rules for making something. They are often modelled on the recipe for baking a cake or the rules for a game.

Repetition

This is the way we make patterns, and it is used in various ways in poetry. For example, **rhyme** is the repetition of sounds at the ends of lines, **alliteration** is repetition of the sound at the beginning of words that are close to each other, and **rhythm** is the repetition of beat. Repetition of words, **phrases** or whole lines can create strong **rhythms** and emphasise meaning in poems.

Rhyme, Rhyming poem, Rhyme scheme, Rhyming couplet, Half rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of sound at the ends of words: and, band, land, stand all rhyme with each other. In **rhyming poems**, words that rhyme with each other are usually placed at the ends of the lines. Rhyme is so important to poetry that sometimes people call poems 'rhymes'. Rhyme helps us to remember a poem, and it makes poetry very enjoyable to say out loud. A good way to write rhyming poems is to use rhyme occasionally rather than throughout a poem so that you can enjoy the sound patterns while keeping the sense of what you have to say.

A **rhyme scheme** is a pattern of rhyming words in a poem. It is described with letters of the alphabet, using **a** for the sound at the end of the first line and for any lines that rhyme with it in the rest of the poem. The second rhymed sound is called **b**, the third is called **c**, and so on.

So, for example, if you had a very simple poem, consisting of just two lines that rhyme, which is called a **rhyming couplet**, the rhyme scheme would be described as **aa**. In 'Pangur Bán' the first two lines are a rhyming couplet:

*I and Pangur bán, my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at;*

It goes on to make a four-line verse (called a 'quatrain') made up of two rhyming couplets like this:

*I and Pangur bán, my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at;
Hunting mice is his delight,
Hunting words I sit all night*

Now the rhyme scheme is written as **aabb**. The poem continues in rhyming couplets to the last verse where all four lines rhyme!

Another very common rhyme scheme is **abab**, where the third line rhymes with the first line and the fourth line rhymes with the second. Gabriel Fitzmaurice uses **abab** rhymes in his poem 'In Summer' which you can find on page 22 of *I Am the Wind*.

Poems are often made up of more than just a few lines, of course, and the more rhyming lines you have in a poem, the more letters you will need to describe the rhyming pattern. For example, a poem with twelve lines might have a rhyme scheme like this: **abab cbc b adad**.

A **half rhyme** is when words almost rhyme, like 'can' and 'hand' in Vona Groarke's poem, 'Nearer Home', which is on page 24 of *I Am the Wind*. There is more about how **rhyme** and **rhythm** work together in the **Be Inspired!** for Margot Bosonnet's poem, 'Blackberry Feast' in this Poetry Kit.

Rhythm, Rhythmical

Rhythm is a basic element in language, whether we are speaking or writing. Rhythm is **repetition** of a beat, as in music and dance, and we can feel a rhythm when we are walking or breathing in and out. Some poems have a strong, regular beat and others follow the natural rhythms of ordinary speech, using the pauses we take and the changes of pace we make when we talk. When something has rhythm, we can say it is rhythmical.

Shape poem

A shape poem shows what it is about by the way it is layed out on paper. 'Umbrella' by Ruth Ennis and 'A Bit of Free Verse' on pages 86 and 87 of *I Am the Wind* are examples of shape poems. They are also called concrete poems. That's because one of the meanings of the word 'concrete' is something you can hold. And it's as if they need to be set in concrete to work!

Simile

When you say that one thing is 'like' (or 'as ... as') another thing, you are using a simile. For example, 'I am **like** a tortoise crawling out of bed' or 'I am racing **as fast as** a cheetah'.

Syllable

A syllable is a single unit of speech, so words are made up of one or more syllables. 'Sarah' has two syllables (Sa-rah) and Lucinda has three (Lu-cin-da). For some poems, like **haiku** you count syllables.

Tongue-twister see **Alliteration**

Triptych fold

This is a way of folding paper to make three sections. Like the words 'triangle' and 'tricycle', the word 'triptych' has the meaning 'three' in it.

Verse Novel

A verse novel is a story told in a series of poems.