

Poems Across the Curriculum

Rain

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

R. L. Stevenson

Children can observe the natural world through their own eyes and through the talent of the poet. For example, many poets are fascinated by the changes in nature and communicate those feelings in their poems. Teachers can use poetry in science by gathering together a collection of poems and broaden and deepen the child's aesthetic appreciation of the world of science. For example, Aileen Fisher understands both children and nature. She writes of the woods and the meadows, of creatures feathered and furry, of weather and night, and helps the child in the simplest and freshest of language and image to see the world, through artful poetry.

Weather Is Full of the Nicest Sounds

Weather is full
of the nicest sounds:
it sings
and rustles
and pings
and pounds
and hums
and tinkles
and strums
and twangs
and wishes
and sprinkles
and splishes
and bangs
and mumbles
and grumbles
and rumbles
and flashes
and crashes.

Aileen Fisher

The North Wind Doth Blow

The North wind shall blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will poor Robin do
then, poor thing?
He'll sit in the barn,
To keep himself warm,
And hide his head under his
wing, poor thing!

Anon

Lilian Moore, another poet who writes about nature, uses her close and acute observations of her surroundings to heighten the children's senses of the world around them:

Winter Cardinal

Fat
and elegantly
crested,
clinging to the branch
of the stripped tree
like
one bright leaf that
bested
every wind and lived
to show
its red
against
the astonished snow

If

If all the world were apple pie,
And all the sea were ink,
And all the trees were bread and
cheese,
what should we have to drink?

Anon

Poems can give us entry points into every field of learning. They form complete educational packages of their own, and touch on all areas of curriculum. They point us in new directions; they help us reflect on what we have seen; they bring us new perceptions and viewpoints of all life, all subjects, all interests. We need no special hour for poetry; we need poetry for every hour.

In the writings of aboriginal peoples we find the roots of all poetry — the perception, the form, and the feeling. These writings hold promise of the belief and values of poetry, and can lead to sensitive understanding and modelling.

Sometimes

Sometimes I feel like a motherless
child
Sometimes I feel like a motherless
child
A long way from home.

Anon

I arise from rest with movements swift
as the beat of the raven's wings.
I arise
To meet the day.
My face is turned from the dark of night
To gaze at the dawn of day,
Now whitening in the sky.

Inuit (Arctic)

What is this I promise you?
The skies shall be bright and clear for you
This is what I promise you.

Chippewa (North America)

I the singer stand on high on the yellow rushes;
Let me go forth with noble songs and laden with flowers.

Aztec (Central America)