

Moonrise by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)

A moving verse novel for young adults, seen from the viewpoint of a young man whose brother is on death row in Texas. Moving back and forth between Joe's present moments and ten years ago when he last saw his brother Ed, events are revealed and inferred through Joe's thoughts and the dialogue between their family members. The poems that make up the narrative stand up as individual entities and use a range of poetic devices. This verse novel is engrossing and stays in the mind and will get young people reading.

Overall aims of this sequence:

- To develop the skills of reader response through the use of book talk, close reading and critical reflective study of a selection of poems.
- To interpret poems for performance
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To explore how poetry is presented on the page to enhance our understanding
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader

This teaching sequence is designed for an Upper KS3/KS4 class

Overview of this Teaching Sequence:

This extremely personal and emotional narrative allows us to explore the injustices faced in a family with a brother on death row in Texas in his final few months prior to execution waiting to find out if there is still a chance for him to be exonerated. We see the narrative through the eyes of Joe Moon, the younger brother of Ed, who has been convicted of murder.

This first person perspective allows us to be right inside the journey and emotions of the character during this time and during flashbacks of his childhood memories of the brother who was his primary carer in his younger years. The novel deals with a number of strong themes including the death of a loved one, difficult relationships with parents, drug addiction, alcoholism and abandonment. Teachers exploring this sequence will need to be aware of any pupils who may have faced similar issues in their own lives before exploring this text with a class.

This sequence provides the opportunity to critically reflect upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and group discussion prior to personal reflection on poems explored form an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading aloud
- Looking at Language
- Role on the Wall
- Re-reading
- Emotional mapping
- Book talk reflections
- Shared writing
- Free writing of poetry

Outcomes:

- Text Analysis
- Response to provocation questions
- Character study
- Own free verse poem in the style of the text
- Own poems related to themes of injustice or that present views and opinions on world issues.

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This verse novel gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices:

- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Rhyme
- Half rhyme
- Rhythm
- Enjambment

As well as being able to explore how poetry works on the page through word and line breaks and contrasting lengths of poems to carry and deepen the narrative.

Cross Curricular Links:

SMSC:

- As suggested in the author's note at the back of the text, pupils could watch the documentary *Fourteen Days in May* and reflect more widely on capital punishment and its place and relevance in today's society.
- You may choose to focus on comparing the position of the creators of both *Moonrise* and *Fourteen Days in May* and how we know their position from the way they have presented the narrative in the fictional and real life stories shared. You could look at specific devices used to create empathy and how information is presented to support their position.
- Amnesty International has lesson resources exploring the death penalty at: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/resource-pack-matter-life-and-death>
- You may open up to wider debate on whether the death penalty is ever justified, using relevant supporting information to present both sides of the debate for pupils to make informed decisions.

History:

- You could investigate the history of the death penalty in the US and the UK in more detail, focussing on why the penalty was abolished in Great Britain in 1965 and exploring the European Convention of Human Rights, in particular the right to life and the right to a fair trial. Amnesty International has extensive material and resources on this subject:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/death-penalty/>

Teaching Sessions:

Session 1: Introducing the verse novel as a genre

Without revealing the title, author or front cover of the text, give the pupils, individually or in pairs, a copy of the first poem in the book, *The First Call*. Allow time and space for them to read and respond to the text, text marking with their thoughts, feelings, questions and ideas about the piece in mixed pairs or small groups to share ideas and interpretations. At this point, allow the pupils to reflect as a reader, without telling them to specifically look for poetic techniques or devices, although it is fine if they do this naturally.

Come back together to reveal that this is the first poem in a verse novel. Ask the pupils if they have already read any verse novels before. What were they? Who wrote them? If they haven't, ask them what they think a verse novel might be and how it might be different from a novel. Explain that this verse novel is written by award winning author Sarah Crossan, who has previously written both verse novels such as *The Weight of Water*, *One, We Come Apart* (with Brian Conaghan) and novels such as *Apple and Rain* and *Breathe*. Listen to Sarah talk about her thoughts on writing verse novels in this interview: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poet-interviews/thinking-about-types-collection-verse-novels-0>

Consider what she says about verse novels in the clip. Explore the concept of the verse novels with the pupils. Do they like poetry? Why or why not? Which poets or poems do they know and like? Do they like reading poetry? Performing poetry? Do any of the pupils write their own poetry? If you have space in the classroom set up a display area with Sarah Crossan's verse novels, novels and any poems, collections and photographs of poets mentioned by the pupils. You can also provide a space here for pupils to share their own writing as the sequence progresses if they wish to.

Come back to the poem shared. Think of how Sarah describes the verse novel as a series of photographs. What did you see in this image she presents at the start of the book? What is seen and

what is left unseen for you to interpret? Look at the title – does this have any significance? Now think about how she has been able to ‘play with language’ – what makes this piece of writing poetic? Can you see any of the poetic devices she mentions in the clip being used in this first poem? Allow time now for a deeper analysis, marking up the text with examples of poetic devices such as the alliteration in *rang, Angela* and *jangle; asked, fast* and *hard*, the alliteration in *weeks, worried* and *wondered* and the rhyme and half rhyme of *wall, hall* and *cell* on the first page. You may also wish to explore where the line breaks occur and the impact of these on you as readers.

Come back to Sarah’s comment about the verse novel being a series of photographs. What photos do you think would come next in this collection? How do you think the story would progress? Collect initial ideas from the pupils to reflect on in the next session.

Session 2: Performing poetry

Provide the pupils with the poems from *Slum Landlord* on p.5 to *No Reply* on p.44 to read for themselves. As they read, ask them to pick out the poems that are the most memorable for them and to note what they find out and can infer about the characters of Joe, Angela, Ed, their mother and Aunt Karen from this section of the text. Which character(s) interest them most? Why? What do you find out about the family as a whole? How does this relate to the first poem?

Now look at the most memorable poems. Why did you choose these? If you were to perform one of your most memorable poems, how might you do this? Would it be best performed individually, in pairs or as a group? How will you pace the performance? How will you use your voice(s) to help tell the story of this moment? Will you use any movement or action? Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance. Before 6th June 2018, this could be filmed and submitted for the CLIPPA shadowing scheme competition to win the opportunity to perform this poem on stage as part of the award ceremony at the National Theatre, see: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/clippa/clippa-schools-shadowing-scheme>

Give time for the pupils to watch, reflect on and evaluate each other’s performances, this could be done in turn in the order the poems come up in the text. What did each interpretation add to your understanding of the narrative?

Finally, reflect on the reading you have done so far. Are you engaged with the story so far? Why or why not? Did you ‘turn the pages quickly’ as Sarah said, to find out what happened next? Do you agree with her comments that the verse novel was ‘an easier read’? How did you feel about the ‘space on the page’? Did you feel like you were ‘working harder’ as you were reading to gain a full understanding of what was going on?

Session 3: Exploring character

Begin the session by reading aloud the poem *Star Wars* (p.45-48). How does this poem make you feel as a reader? How does it make you feel about Ed specifically? What more do we find out about the relationships in the family from this poem? Give the pupils a copy of this poem to re-read and text mark with their thoughts, ideas and questions and then explore the language and poetic devices used to create an effect on the reader.

Now share the next poem, *When the Cop Got Shot*. Read this aloud and consider the placing of these two poems in succession. Why do you think the author has juxtaposed these two poems in this way? What feelings does this invoke? Look at the final line of the poem; why do you think Sarah Crossan has chosen to place the word *fatal* where she does? What does this last line mean? At this point, it would be good to share the Author's Note at the back of the book (p.385). After reading this note, do you have any further thoughts about the juxtaposition of these two poems? Do you feel empathy with Ed? Why or why not? You may wish to broaden the pupils' knowledge of how the death penalty is imposed in the USA by doing some further investigation of the states where the death penalty is statute and those where it is not. The map on the Death Penalty Information Center website <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/states-and-without-death-penalty> provides an easy reference for immediate discussion. You could also explore the material on the Equal Justice Initiative website (www.eji.org) as referenced by Sarah in her note. Its opening line 'The death penalty in America is a failed, expensive policy defined by bias and error.' may provide further scope to research and debate this issue as part of SMSC learning.

Allow the students to read on, up to and including *Parent-Teacher Conference* (p81-83). Ask the pupils to explore which characters invoke the most sympathy for them and why? Allow time for the pupils to read closely and text mark the poems exploring what the author has done to make us feel sympathy towards some characters and not with others. Do you think these characters are viewed in the same way by the 'viewing public'? Which of the characters do you think would be looked on favourably by the public and media watching this play out? Allow time for the children to respond in writing, exploring these ideas with reference to the text.

Session 4: Exploring setting

Read aloud *Section A* (p.84-88), allowing the pupils to respond initially with their thoughts, feelings ideas and questions in relation to the setting. Allow the pupils time to explore and discuss how it compares and contrasts with the other settings we have seen in the narrative so far (the family apartment, Joe's motel, the diner?).

Then read on to *The Visiting Room* (p.89) and *Not a Hospital* (p.90). Allow the pupils time to look at these three poems together. How do they look on the page? What happened to the language as we move through the poems? What is the effect of the poems getting shorter and shorter as Joe progresses on his journey through the prison? What is left for the reader to do in the space on the

page? How does the sparseness of the words on the page and the amount of white space impact? What do we feel about the setting and Joe's feelings about being there by the time we get to the end of this trio of poems? Allow time for the children to work in groups to present this trio of poems as a performance. How will they capture Joe's feelings about the setting as well as effectively portray the narrative developing across the poems? Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance, which could again be filmed.

Read on up to *Everyone Walked*, allowing the pupils to discuss the narrative and characters. Give pupils three talking points to explore and allow them to choose to write about one of these, referring to the text they have just read and reflecting back on the narrative as a whole. The pupils might explore the effect of flashing back to Joe's earlier memories of Ed in between his current reality in the sequence of *It's Ed*, *Coco*, *The Prisoner*, *Mariners Marshes*, *The First Visit* or how Joe's relationship with his brother is different from the relationship he has with his mother in *Up Against a Cookie Jar* or explore who they feel the narrative is most centred on, Ed or Joe, as they read *Everyone Walked*.

Come back to this final poem as a group, exploring the language choices and the way it is placed on the page. How does this give us a wider insight to the character of Joe; his motivations, his hopes, fears and dreams?

Session 5: Deepening understanding of characters

Start the session by reading aloud *The Gas Station* (p112-116). Give the pupils chance to offer their initial reactions to the piece – what questions do they have, what does it add to their perceptions of Joe? Now give time for them to read the poem back for themselves, text marking with thoughts, feelings and opinions.

Come back to the poem and look at how it is presented on the page; why do you think the verse starting; *'I push her hand away...'* is indented in the way it is? How do you think Joe's external persona is different from how he actually is inside? Why might he be putting on a front? Have the pupils had any personal experiences of having to do this? Encourage the pupils to investigate this question in writing; you could start by building a role on the wall for the character of Joe to prepare for this. Start by drawing an outline of a man, either as a whole group or the pupils can do this individually. On the outside of the outline, using what you know from the text so far, write notes to share how you think Joe shows his character to others or how others might perceive him, with reference to specific poems or lines that evidence opinions. On the inside of the man, write notes about what you think Joe is really like on the inside, again evidencing specific poems or lines.

Build on this by reading up to *Public Relations* (p.145-146). You might focus the pupils' attention on why the relationship with Nell is so important for Joe, knowing what you know about him on the inside; how he presents himself to Ed and whether this is different to his internal feelings about Ed's situation – here you could compare the use of indentation explored in *The Gas Station*; how he reacts

and presents himself to authority figures such as Philip Miller and Father Matthew and/or the importance of running for Joe.

Come back together to share pupils' thoughts and opinions so they can build a full picture across the points. Collate the ideas somewhere where the pupils can reference these in the next session, perhaps as part of the wall display.

Session 6: Developing empathy

Read aloud *The Wall* (p.147). What insights does this poem give about how incarceration is affecting Ed? Unpick the language used to describe the prisoners in the poem, *the toughest guys, lunatics locked up for burying people alive, monsters who are nothing like him*. Look at why his frustration got the better of him – missing a shower, and the fact he punched a wall rather than a person. Does Ed fit the description of the other prisoners? What more does it tell us about this character, and how the author wants us to feel about him? Look back at the verse:

'Why'd you fight?'
I want to hear how he defended himself
against the toughest guys,
lunatics locked up for burying people alive,
monsters who are nothing like him.

How does this highlight Joe's conflicting emotions? How do you think Joe feels about Ed at the end of the poem? Is he disappointed that he didn't actually fight? How do you know?

Read up to *Did you do it?* (p.176). Explore the power of this being one line on an empty page. Investigate the build up to this crucial question: Joe's anger at the way the story is portrayed in the mainstream media and the calm with which he deals with the woman in *People Here*; the injustice he faces in the comparisons with his father's murder and the sentence of his murderer compared to Ed's; the similar short length of *The Cost* and *Innocent* and what effect the length of the poem has on us as readers; how it is that Nell makes him realise he needs to ask Ed and why it is he might listen to her; the flashback to Ed's confession; the length of the poem *Pointless* right before this poem, showing how Joe is struggling to ask the question. How do these poems build up our knowledge of both Ed and Joe and the relationship they have?

Knowing what we know about the differences in Joe's internal and external personas, how do you think he would deliver *Did you do it?* Give the pupils the opportunity to consider this then perform around the room in role as Joe, exploring the different performance choices they made and why they made these.

Based on their knowledge so far, with reference to the text, go through Joe's thought process as to whether he believes his brother is innocent or guilty. Draft ideas into their own first person poem in

role as Joe, using the techniques and devices they have seen in the poems so far to portray this moment most effectively for the reader. They might look at poetic devices such as assonance, alliteration, repetition, rhyme and half rhyme or how the poem is placed on the page, for example, separating words to emphasise division, indenting verses to show Joe's internal thoughts or opinions as they have seen in the text. Allow children to draft, work up and redraft the poem to a finished piece which could be displayed on the wall, performed for the group or printed as a collection to compare and contrast.

Session 7: Exploring authorial technique

Read on, up to *The Third Day* (p191). What do the pupils make of Ed's silence and refusal to see Joe after his question? Why do they think he has reacted in this way? Do they think it's a sign of guilt? Why or why not? How do they think Joe is feeling now? Why do you think he reacts in the way he does at the end of *The Third Day*?

Now read *Halloween* (p192), why do you think this flashback memory has placed here? What do you think will happen next? Continue on to read *Charity* (p193) and *Another Letter* (p194-203). Provide pupils with a copy of this extensive poem so that they can mark up with feelings, ideas and questions. Look at how the text is punctuated with words like *Anyway. Thing is, So, Well, Now, cos, But, You know, Thing was, There it is, Joe, Joe, But still, Like last year, Weird thing is*; what effect does this give? Allow time for the pupils to consider the content of Ed's letter. Do they believe him? Do they think Joe believes him? Why or why not? Allow time for the pupils to come together to discuss their thoughts and opinions, referencing the text to support their ideas.

Now finish by reading *No Lies* (p205-206) and *Responsible* (p.207). Do you think Ed has been treated fairly up to this point? Why or why not? Do they think the justice system always rules fairly? Read the statement on the Equal Justice Initiative website about the Death Penalty, under the section 'Innocence' (<https://eji.org/death-penalty/innocence>): *Since 1973, 158 people have been released from death row after evidence of their innocence was uncovered. A shocking rate of error has emerged: for every nine people executed in this country, one innocent person has been exonerated.* Using evidence in the narrative up to this point, pupils should write about whether they feel Ed's trial has been fair and whether there could be evidence for the Governor to exonerate him. They can make reference to why Ed might have been picked up for the crime and why he may be looked on in a negative light, but they should try to look at this from a neutral perspective, not referencing Joe's feelings, but relying on the course of events they have heard about in relation to the case and Ed's character.

Allow time for the pupils to share their thoughts and ideas before the next session. Are they all agreed in their opinions or are there differences? Compare this with a jury in a case. Beyond a Reasonable Doubt is the standard that must be met by the prosecution's evidence in a criminal prosecution: that no other logical explanation can be derived from the facts except that the defendant committed the

crime, thereby overcoming the presumption that a person is innocent until proven guilty. Do they think this applies to Ed's case? Take a vote to define the number of pupils thinking there is evidence from the facts that Ed committed the crime without any other logical explanation. This could be an anonymous ballot, or a raising of hands. How would Ed fare if these pupils were his jury?

Session 8:

Read on up to *If* (p.216-217). Pay particular attention to this poem and the poem preceding it, *USA* (p.215). These are the people who literally have Ed's life in their hands. Which of these people do they think will carry the most power? Which do you think is the most credible? What has the author done to invoke this opinion in you?

Now read on to *Delivery Boy* (p.250). Come back to reflecting on the character of Joe. Look particularly at the verse in *Tom Hanks* (p.227-232):

He looks at me
like he can really see me.
But he doesn't know me at all.
If he did, he'd see how much I hate this,
how little more I can take,
how much I need Angela here
or even Aunt Karen.
The only thing I've got is Nell.
And I haven't got her like I want her.
'The soda was a pay-off,' I say.

What more do we learn about the important relationships in Joe's life? Have our opinions of any of the characters changed in reading this section? Compare the three poems in succession *Thirty Minutes* (p.218-219), *Aunt Karen Calls* (p.220) and *Strict* (p.221) and the flashback to *Monmouth Beach* (p.247); what do we learn about the two matriarchal figures in the family's life from these poems and from Joe's voice in *Tom Hanks*? Think about the titles used for these poems and how they relate to our perceptions of these characters. Which are the most powerful lines for you as a reader?

What else do we learn about the other female characters in Joe's life, Nell and Sue, from this part of the narrative? Why might these characters have particularly connected with Joe? Map the relationships Joe has with the female characters in the text, which he values most and why, with evidence from the text so far.

Session 9: Exploring events

Read the next four poems, *Botched* (p.251-252), *Day Trip* (p.253), *Monkey Babies* (p.254-255) and *Nightmares* (p.256). Think back to Nell's line in *Monkey Babies*: 'Apparently. We can survive without anything except love.' How do you think this statement applies to both Ed and Joe in relation to what they have experienced throughout their lives?

Read on to *Eva* (p.291) considering this quote further in relation to Angela's arrival, Joe's meeting with Father Matthew and on finding out that Nell has kept the fact that her father is Philip Miller from him. Pupils could pick one or more characters to explore the motivations, actions and reactions of related to the quote.

Come back together to share opinions on the different characters explored. Finish by revisiting the last two poems, *Now* (p.290) and *Eva* (p.291). Think back to the line from *In Me* (p.180), 'I had more Ed in me than I've ever admitted.' Do the pupils agree with this in relation to what they have read? Explore the significance of the conversation between Joe and Angela in *Eva*; what do you think lies ahead in the remainder of the text? What makes you think this?

Session 10: Developing understanding of narrative

Read *A Holding Bay* (p.292), *Angela's First Visit* (p.293-294), *Real* (p.295) and *The Lavender Room*. Explore the sequence of events that happens in this section of the narrative and what it might mean in the context of the narrative as a whole, exploring Joe's description of the prison, the process they have to go through on entry to the prison set against actually being able to see and be in the same room as Ed in *Real* and *The Lavender Room*. Chart the different emotions and feelings each character might go through in each poem, even when they do not directly appear, e.g. how does Ed feel as he awaits Angela and Joe's arrival in *A Holding Bay*? Does he know what they have to go through to be allowed the contact visit? How might he feel about this?

Read on, up to *A Chance* (p.319). From Joe's perspective, explore the emotions he goes through throughout this section of the text, referring to specific poems. You could chart this journey on a graph of emotion to visually represent this. Is it an upward lift or a mixture of highs and lows?

Come back to discuss what this section of the narrative serves to do. Why do you think it does this and what do you think will happen after this point? Now read *Hope* (p. 320) and *The Writ* (p.322). Were you expecting this? Look again at the impact of the length of these poems and the amount of white space on the page. Why is this particularly effective at this point?

Read on to *When You Know Better* (p.335-336). Focus here on one of the supporting characters, Philip Miller or Aunt Karen. With reference to specific poems in this section and the narrative as a whole, what are your feelings about these characters at this point compared to the start of the narrative? How have they both dealt with a difficult job in their own ways - Philip Miller in his role as the warden and Aunt Karen in her role of becoming a surrogate parent as the children's mother left? Do you think

they are actually the people they have been portrayed as up to this point? Create a rounded picture of one or both of these characters with reference to the text as a whole up to this point.

Session 11: Exploring the emotional impact of a text

Read *I Dream* (p.337), exploring Ed's dream in connection with the story marking up and making notes around a copy of the poem. Why do you think the author has included this particular poem at this point in the narrative?

Now read on up to *It is Done* (p.363). Give time for the pupils to explore and share their initial reactions to this part of the text. This is a highly emotional part of the narrative and pupils are likely to have strong reactions to the text. Reflecting on the whole narrative so far, did they think Ed would be saved? Why do they think the author made the decision to carry the narrative in this way? What would the difference have been if Ed had been exonerated at the last minute? How would it have changed your reactions to the text? Do they think it would be true to life? Should narrative fiction always end in a 'happy ever after' moment?

Go back through the poems in this section of the text and explore the ways in which the author builds emotion and tension in this part of the text. Focus on the structure and length of poems, how poems follow each other in the narrative, how line breaks are used and the language used in particular poems.

Come back together to discuss which poem(s) in this section made most impact on them as readers and why.

Session 12: Evaluating texts

Read *Time Travel Me* (p.364) and *Driving Home* (p.365). These are particularly emotional and poetic. Give time for the children to reflect on these emotionally before looking at the devices used to make an impact, such as the repetition, showing the replay in Joe's mind.

Read to the end of the text exploring the family's last days in Texas. Here you could explore whether you agree with Joe's statement in *The News Reports* (p.370) '*But the autopsy won't tell the truth – which is that my brother was murdered.*' Or compare *The Last Letter* (p.373-376) with *Another Letter* (p.194-203), or look at whether Joe is right to take Sue's advice '*...to leave as soon as this was over.*' knowing what this will mean for his relationship with Nell.

Allow time and space for the pupils to reflect on the narrative as a whole, their likes, dislikes, questions they are left with or connections they made with the text, personally or in other stories, films or real life events. What were their most memorable poems or parts of the narrative? Why?

What have you learnt about verse novels or poetry that you didn't know before? Would you be encouraged to read more verse novels or poetry after studying this text? Why? Why not? A fuller list of verse novels that the pupils may wish to read following on from this can be found at:

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/resources/booklists/power-poetry-booklists/booklist-sarah-crossan-lyrical-language>

You could introduce pupils to the criteria used to judge the CILIP Carnegie Medal, one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious book awards, awarded by children's librarians for an outstanding book written in English for children and young people.

Encourage the pupils to explore the elements of the narrative against the same criteria used by the judges of this award:

Style

- Is the style or styles appropriate to the subject and theme and conducive to the establishment of voice?
- Do dialogue and narrative work effectively together?
- How effective is the use of literary techniques and conventions?
- How effective is the use of language in conveying setting, atmosphere, characters, action etc.? How appropriate is that to the theme?
- Where rhyme or rhythm are used, is their use accomplished and imaginative?
- Where factual information is presented, is this accurate and clear?

The plot

- Is it well-constructed?
- Do events happen, not necessarily logically, but acceptably within the limits set by the theme?
- Is the final resolution of the plot credible in relation to the rest of the book?

Characterisation

- Are the characters believable and convincing?
- Are they well-rounded, and do they develop during the course of the book?
- Do they interact with each other convincingly?
- Are the characters' behaviour and patterns of speech consistent with their known background and environment?
- Do they act consistently in character throughout the book?
- How effectively are the characters revealed through narration, dialogue, action, inner dialogue and through the thoughts, reactions and responses of others?

Do they think it is a text worthy of this award? If the writer asked you what could be improved in the book, how would you have made it better? Would they recommend it to another reader? What would

you tell them about it or what wouldn't you tell them because it might spoil the book for them? Or might mislead them about what it is like?

After completing the sequence:

Pupils could think about their own themes or topics to explore through poetry. Perhaps they have faced a sense of injustice in their own lives in some way that they could explore through poetry or could present a view on a theme or topic of interest or concern to them as Sarah Crossan has with the death penalty. They could work this up into a series of poems that follow the narrative of a situation in the way that Sarah Crossan does in *Moonrise*. If they do this, reflect back on how she creates and shapes characters, builds empathy in the reader and creates emotion and tension.

You could also focus on single poems that reflect different injustices and world views explored by some of the poets in another CLiPPA shortlisted collection, *Rising Stars: New Young Voices in Poetry* or by poets such as Michael Rosen in *Listening to a Pogrom on the Radio* or *Don't Mention the Children*; Benjamin Zephaniah in *Too Black, Too Strong*; Linton Kwesi-Johnson in *Selected Poems*, George the Poet in *Search Party*; Anthony Anaxagorou in *Heterogeneous*, Dean Atta in *I am Nobody's Nigger* or Hollie McNish in *Cherry Pie* or *Nobody Told Me*.

Select poems suitable for the age and experience of the pupils and provide opportunities for these to be shared and reflected upon. This could be done through a poetry papering exercise. Here, you select a number of different poems, sharing different poets, styles and forms. Photocopy the poems and pin them up around the classroom or another space for the pupils to find and explore at their leisure. They don't have to read all of them, they can read, pass over, move on and then select one they'd like to talk about with someone else. This encourages pupils to enjoy the experience of simply reading a poem and to relish the uncertainties of meanings and the nature of the knowledge and emotional responses that poems invoke in them as readers. Let them look for connections, ask questions, explore what they like about poems and the language contained within and use this as an opportunity to look at specific forms or devices used within the poem.

You could model writing a poem based on one of the topics discussed during a shared writing session, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to bring the experience alive for the reader before allowing time for the pupils to draft their own poems around the themes and subjects of their choice, then allow them to read aloud to a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed.

Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working or make suggestions to improve the writing. Think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding linked to their explorations in *Moonrise*.

When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes that they are happy to present to a wider audience, start to think about how that poem could be best presented. How will it look on the page? What form will it take? How will you use line breaks, spacing on the page to enhance the meaning or emotions behind your poem? Will they hand write it? Will they publish using ICT? What script or font will they choose? Will they make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will they illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustration sit and work together? Allow plenty of time and space for pupils to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly.

When they are happy with the way their poem looks on the page, think about how this could lift off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each pupil a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. Will they perform on your own? Do they need others to support them? How will they use voice, body movements and facial expression to enhance the listener's engagement and understanding?

Ensure time is given to try out ideas and rehearse performances of children's own poems. You may wish to provide examples of some of the poets they have studied performing their poetry so that they can see examples of this before performing themselves.

You could also present the finished poems into an anthology to print and make available to other students, parents/carers and the wider school community.