

## Cherry Moon by Zaro Weil, illustrated by Junli Song (ZaZaKids Books/ Troika)

In this meditative and nicely paced collection subtitled ‘Little Poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature’, the poet presents beautiful snapshots of the natural world and has thought carefully about the form for each. The poems, which are both contemplative and playful, are complemented by gently humorous illustrations that use an unusual and effective muted limited palette and are sometimes surreal in their personification of animals and insects.

### Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre
- To explore musicality, rhythm and rhyme in poetry
- To know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from a single poet collection
- To understand that poems are written for different reasons
- 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 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 a Year 2, 3 or 4 class**

### Overview of this Teaching Sequence:

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over 15 sessions, but teachers will want to use their own judgement about the length of time their class will need to spend on each of the sessions. The teaching sequence is split into four sections.

The first section looks at the purpose of poetry, introduces the focus poet, Zaro Weil, and explores the key themes of nature and taking time to engage with the natural world. Children will have the opportunity to listen to, respond to and perform a range of poems from the collection to make connections with the poems, their meanings and the overall theme of the collection.

The second session explores the evocative imagery created by both the poet and the illustrator throughout the collection. There is a focus on getting to the heart of a poem, understanding the events described and themes raised by exploration of how the poet has used language judiciously and for effect and how the layout of the poems also contribute to their meaning. The children will also focus on how to use illustration and art as a stimulus for language and writing. The children will use a

range of creative approaches such as response to Junli Song’s striking illustrations, visualisation and creating illustrations of their own, close observational drawings of natural objects and continued performances of key poems.

The third section focuses on giving children the opportunity to explore different themes and poetic forms used throughout the collection. They will explore key forms, such as free verse, haiku, list poems and epic poems and use poems read as a stimulus for their own ideas and work. They will also focus on how to bring words to life in dramatic performance.

In the final section, children will explore inspirations for their own poetry and work up poems for performance, publishing their work in a range of ways, considering how poems are presented on the page and how they work off the page for readings or performances. As part of this, you are encouraged to allow time for the children to visit outdoor spaces.

If the school engages in forest school activity, this will be an ideal companion to planned activities. If not, teachers should prepare to allocate time to visiting natural spaces in the local area where children have time and space to engage with and explore the natural environment outdoors including observing plants and animals in their natural habitat. This should be a space where they can take time to enjoy nature, so if your outdoor environment has a garden, or space for planting, this will work well, or, if you have access to a local park, woodland or green space, such as a school field or forest school area, this will be ideal.

In each section, children have the opportunity to read poetry, listen to poems being read, offer personal responses to the poems, to prepare them for performance and to come up with ideas for poems of their own. The whole sequence builds up towards the chance for the class to write their own poems focused on elements of the natural world.

The children will use the knowledge they have gained about creating evocative imagery through well-chosen language and poetic form and structure throughout the unit to support their own writing. The poems will be published in a class anthology to be shared with the school community in a variety of ways.

### Teaching Approaches

Reading Aloud  
 Hearing poems performed by poets  
 Looking at Language  
 Visualising  
 Observational drawing  
 Engaging in narrative poetry through drama  
 Modelled writing  
 Responding to writing

### Outcomes

Performance of the poet’s poetry  
 Identifying poetic language and devices  
 Rhythmic movement  
 Evaluation of performances  
 Poetry Journal with ideas and inspirations for writing  
 Own written poems  
 Performances of children’s own original poetry

Publication

### Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This collection gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices:

- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Rhythm
- Personification
- Enjambment
- Haiku
- Free verse
- List poems
- Epic poems

### Cross Curricular Links

#### Geography:

- The book focuses on the natural environment at different times of the year. This would make a perfect opportunity for conducting a comparative geographical study between the countryside and a contrasting area, e.g. an urban or coastal environment, recognising the similarities and differences in the physical and human geography as well as the wildlife that exists there, and the opportunities and threats to each environment.
- If possible, take the children out to see a similar environment to explore such natural features for themselves and to make first hand observations and reflections.
- Several poems in the collection reference rivers. You could link these to a geographical study of rivers. The Royal Geographical Society has some excellent supporting resources for a study of this kind: [https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/rivers-\(1\)/journey-of-a-river/](https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/rivers-(1)/journey-of-a-river/)
- You could also look at some of the other environments explored in the poems, such as the Arctic and Antarctic homes of the polar bears and penguins, and compare the human and physical geography of these areas with their own.
- Poems such as 'Elephant Tusks' and 'Polar Bear's Haiku' provide scope for children to investigate human impact on the environment.

#### Science:

- The collection offers scope to link to a number of natural processes, such as seasonal change, exploring ecosystems and habitats, exploring the characteristics of animals, growth of animals, trees and plants, the water cycle, exploring rocks and soils.

- The activities in the sequence promote close observation of natural objects, such as fruits and plants, children can label diagrams and look at features of these things as they observe, learning the function of different parts.
- There will also be ample opportunity for the children to use both the language and illustrations from the text to compare and contrast a variety of animals, naming their parts and features and categorising them into classes such as mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and minibeasts, linked to categories explored in the poems.
- Support the children in helping wildlife to grow in the setting. Prepare areas inside the classroom for planting, displaying and learning to look after indoor plants. If you have a class pet, talk about what is involved in its care, and empower children to become involved with care routines. In the outdoor area, support children to prepare ground or containers, plant seeds, bulbs and seedlings of various different flowering and edible plants and provide opportunities for learning how to care for these as they grow. This will include watering – and learning not to overwater! - weeding, learning the difference between plants that are edible and inedible, and harvesting food and seeds where appropriate.
- Think about how to care for birds and other small creatures in an outdoor area in or near the school. Support the children in erecting or building bird houses, bee houses, bug hotels or bird baths. Provide resources to encourage the children to observe nature in the direct locality such as magnifying glasses, binoculars, pooters, notebooks in which to draw, collect information, take notes and make observations of natural processes.
- If you have a larger space, with lots of room for planting and growing, involve parents and carers in supporting you to make this a garden for the class community, where you could also maintain a compost bin and use this to enrich your soil for growing. The RSPB has lots of child friendly ideas for looking after wildlife on its website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/families/family-wild-challenge/activities/>

### Art:

- Support the children in learning more about printmaking, experimenting with the medium that artist Junli Song uses in her accompanying artwork.
- You can see more of her art on her website at: <https://www.artsofsong.com/projects>
- The BBC Teach website hosts a really useful video exploring printmaking, which the children could watch and use as the stimulus for their own work: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/art-and-design-printmaking-different-materials/zhytscw>
- After watching the video, allow the children to make prints of natural objects using the techniques and materials explored in the video. Look at how to use a limited colour palette in the way that Junli Song does in her illustrations. About her work, she says: “I work with limited colour palettes in order to make each layer essential to the image. This includes the paper itself, as the addition of subsequent colours creates negative space.” Explore this notion with the children providing different types of paper and coloured inks with which to experiment.

### P.E.:

- The focus on mindfulness throughout the text can link to an exploration of self-care as part of P.E.
- Provide a range of activities that enable children to experience the difference between being very active and being calm in an outdoor environment. This might include sport and dancing or playing collaboratively, in sports and games like rounders, football, basketball, tennis, Stuck in the Mud, What's the Time Mr Wolf, Grandmother's Footsteps, 40-40, Spider, Cat and Mouse, compared to yoga, meditation or taking time to be alone. Take photos of the children engaged in the different activities. Encourage them to talk about how it feels to be active and how it feels to be calm.
- Talk about the importance of balancing fast paced and calming activities and the importance of being able to find time and an appropriate activity to calm ourselves if we are feeling worn out, anxious or angry. Talk about the importance of physical exercise in a variety of forms, from fast paced to calm, the importance of warming up before physical activity and cooling down appropriately afterwards, and the benefits physical activity brings to our bodies and minds to investigate why physical activity on a regular basis is important.

### Links to other texts and resources:

Provide texts that allow the children to experience a wide variety of poetry that focuses on the natural world. These could include:

- *I Am The Seed That Grew The Tree*, selected by Fiona Waters, illustrated by Frann Preston-Gannon (Nosy Crow)
- *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*, selected by Fiona Waters, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup (Nosy Crow)
- *Out and About*, Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *Thinker, My Puppy Poet and Me*, Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Ehsan Abdollahi (Tiny Owl)
- *Hopscotch in the Sky*, Lucinda Jacob, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill (Little Island)
- *Adder, Bluebell, Lobster*, Chrissie Gittins, illustrated by Paul Bonmer (Otter-Barry Books)
- *The Lost Words*, Robert Macfarlane, illustrated by Jackie Morris (Hamish Hamilton)
- *The Lost Spells*, Robert Macfarlane, illustrated by Jackie Morris (Hamish Hamilton)
- *Cosmic Disco*, Grace Nichols, illustrated by Alice Wright (Frances Lincoln)
- *Dancing in the Rain*, John Lyons (Peepal Tree Press)
- *A Year of Nature Poems*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Kelly Louise Judd (Wide Eyed Editions)
- *Hot Like Fire*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Debbie Lush (Bloomsbury)
- CLPE's Poetryline website contains a wealth of resources including videos of Zoro Weil and other poets performing their poems and talking about their writing process, which will inspire children in their own performances and writing. These can be found at:

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets>

and

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poet-interviews>

- The Poetryline website also contains resources to support subject knowledge around poetic forms and devices: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poetic-forms-and-devices>

## Teaching Sessions:

### Before beginning the sequence:

- Before this session, ensure that individual Poetry Journals (small notebooks, which could be handmade) are available for each child to use throughout the unit to note ideas and inspirations.
- Create a focus display or poetry corner, where you can display a copy of the front cover of the book, a photograph of the poet, a copy of the text and other poems or poetry collections that the children know or could be inspired by (see links to other texts).
- If the school engages in forest school activity, this will be an ideal companion to planned activities. If not, teachers should prepare to allocate time to visiting natural spaces in the local area where children have time and space to engage with and explore the natural environment outdoors including observing animals, such as mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and minibeasts in their natural habitat.
- This should be a space where they can enjoy nature, so if your outdoor environment has a garden, or space for planting, this will work well, or, if you have access to a local park, woodland or green space, such as a school field or forest school area, this will be ideal. You will want to bring some specific resources for the children to engage with and provoke investigation in the space, for example:
  - large magnifying glasses
  - pooters to collect minibeasts safely
  - digital cameras to capture images from the environment to inspire ideas for art and writing
  - notebooks, paper and drawing and writing equipment to record responses to their activities
  - a ground mat to sit on if the ground is damp

## Part 1 - Introducing the collection and engaging with poetry through performance

### Session 1: Introducing the poet and the collection

*The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of children's knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves. So it is important that it should be as rich, interesting and 'ear-catching' as it can be. It is important that voices other than the teacher's should be heard interpreting a poem. In this way, a range of accents, dialects and voices can be introduced into the reading. It can be particularly valuable for children to hear the poets themselves reading their own poems. This allows authentic voices to be heard.*

- Share the front cover and the title of the collection with the children, for now holding back the blurb. Gather the children's initial responses to the title and the illustration. Do they find them interesting, intriguing or amusing, for example? How do they work together?
- Reflect with the children their experiences of reading or hearing poetry and how they feel about it. What do they know about poetry? What do they like about it? What do they dislike? Do they have any favourite poems or poets? It is important to understand and value children's starting points, experiences and misconceptions about poetry, if we are to engage them in positive and exciting ways.
- Consider the title and subtitle more carefully, ***Cherry Moon: Little Poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature***. What kinds of things do they expect to hear and what kinds of poems would they expect to find inside?
- Read the name of the poet Zaro Weil and the illustrator, Junli Song. Have the children heard of either of these people before? Provide a picture of both of them for the children to see and then read the back page of the collection ***About the author and illustrator***. What do you learn about them from reading this? Does this add to or shift your perceptions of what you are about to read?
- Open the book to the first untitled poem, just before the contents page and read this aloud. You might want to enlarge this on the IWB or under a visualiser so that the children can look at this more closely. What are the children's initial responses to the words they have heard and the illustration they see? What does this make them think about? How does it make them feel? How does it relate to the front cover? What might it tell us about the themes of the poems they might be about to read?
- Think about the phrase *want to be where wild things are*. Where do you think this might be? What does the word wild mean to you? What sorts of wild things do you think they are referring to? Scribe children's ideas around a copy of the illustration.
- Now, read the poem '***Stop the World***' (p.156-157). Give some time for the poem to linger and for the children to discuss their initial responses. What did the poem make them think about? How did it make them feel? What was most memorable for them?
- Re-read the poem again and ask the children to listen out for anything in the poem that might encompass the *wild things* that the child in the introductory session might be looking for. How do you think the 'I' in the poem feels about these things? What tells you this?
- Split the poem up into the 11 stanzas, attaching the final 4 lines to the last stanza, and give each stanza to small groups of 2 or 3 children to work up into a performance. Encourage each group to re-read their part, thinking about what is happening and the feelings connected with this. How will they convey the delight and urgency of the first stanza, highlighted by the command to ***stop the world***, the verb choices ***leap and cartwheel*** and the vivid depiction of colour suggested by the ***rainbow*** and its ***carnival of colour***? How might this contrast with the slow wonder of watching buds unfurl ***slow blink by slow blink***?
- Allow the children to mark up their stanza with performance notes and ideas and to try things out, reflect and adapt ideas. Encourage the children to think about the pace of their reading, the tone and volume of their voices and how they might work together and separately to create different effects for the listener. They might think about how they will use facial expression, and what they

might do with their bodies as they perform, ensuring any actions add to the listener's experience and don't detract too much from the words.

- If there are any children who are reluctant to perform, they could work alongside others to support them in reflecting on what is effective about their performance ideas and what could be worked on to make the performance more effective.
- When each group has had time to rehearse, perform the poem around the room, with each verse in order. Record this while the children are performing, then play it back so the children can see the effect of their performance. Which parts were most effective? Why was this? Is there anything that could be done differently? How might you do this? Then give time for a final rehearsal before filming the performances.
- Share the final performance with a wider audience through class blogs, the school website or social media channels, with appropriate permissions.
- If you are completing this session before, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, this could be submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes, including the opportunity to perform this poem as part of the 2021 award ceremony, see:

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/clippa/clippa-schools-shadowing-scheme>

## Session 2: Developing response through performance

*If poetry is not given a voice, if it just stays on the page as a printed object, then it is not going to come alive for most children. Giving voice and sound to poetry is an important key to unlocking the meanings and music contained in each poem. It is through performing poetry that the quality of rhyme and verse form, and the power of language can be explored and realised. Presenting poetry to an audience in this way might also lead children to recognise more clearly the humour in a poem or reflect more thoughtfully on its meaning.*

- Explain that today they are going to explore some of the other poems in the collection and work up one of these to perform themselves.
- In preparation for this session, make copies of the following poems Pin the pre-copied poems up around the classroom or another space for the children to see as they enter the room:
  - **'Listen Earth'** (p.10-11)
  - **'Snoring Dog'** (p.12)
  - **'Giddy With Dawn'** (p.13)
  - **'After the Purple Rains'** (p.20-21)
  - **'Tip-Top of the World'** (p.26)
  - **'How Does the Flower Open'** (p.24-25)
  - **'Red Red Red'** (p.28-29)
  - **'Such Luck'** (p.34-35)
  - **'Daytime'** (p.50)
  - **'Be Quiet Sun'** (p.50)
  - **'Wild as the Wind'** (p78-79)

- **'When I Heard the Nightingale'** (p.92-93)
- **'Song of Summer'** (p.94-95)
- **'Between the Cracks'** (p.104)
- **'How Does the Stone Smell'** (p.105)
- **'This Way and That'** (p.126-127)
- **'Hide and Seek'** (p.134-135)
- **'If All Clouds Were Earth'** (p.142-143)
- **'Letter to the Moon'** (p.154-155)
- **'Such Luck Again'** (p.166)
- Begin the session by listening to poet Zaro Weil read **'Preposterous Penguins'**: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/weil-zaro>. Allow the children time to respond to this with their initial thoughts. What impact did hearing the poet have on you? What did it make you think about? How did it make you feel? What did you like or dislike about the poem?
- Play the video once more, this time focusing on what language or imagery was most memorable to the children and what they thought was most effective about her performance.
- Now watch Zaro read **'Hide and Seek'**: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/weil-zaro>, comparing this poem and the performance to the previous one. What was similar and different about the two poems? How did this affect the way she chose to use her voice, facial expression and body language?
- Share with the children that today, they are going to choose a poem to perform themselves.
- Share the walls of poems with the children and explain that they are going to be able to explore at their leisure. They can read, pass over, move on and then select one they'd like to talk about with someone else. This encourages the children to enjoy the experience of simply reading a poem, to relish the uncertainties of meanings and the nature of the knowledge and emotional responses that poems invoke in them as readers. Tell them to stand in front of the poem they most want to investigate more and allow groups to take the poem back to tables for further work. Provide extra copies of particularly popular poems.
- Let them discuss their initial responses, why they selected this poem, how it made them feel, what they were particularly drawn to, personal connections they have with the poem, what it made them think about or questions it raised.
- Now encourage the children to look more deeply at the poem, exploring the use of language. You can use this as an opportunity to introduce children to the names of specific forms or devices to look at what makes their chosen poem poetic. You might introduce this by way of what Michael Rosen calls 'secret strings' (*What is Poetry?* Walker 2016). He talks about the importance of discovering how the poet might have used assonance, alliteration, imagery, rhythm and sound. Can they identify any of these in their chosen poem?
- Next, give time for the children to work up their chosen poem for performance. 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 share a clear picture of this moment? Will you use any movement or action? Will you emphasise the rhythm in the words? 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 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 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? Could you see a clear picture of the moment?
- Come back to discuss the poems that you have heard performed and read, and discuss the similarities and differences within them. What connected them? How did they link back to the subtitle of the book: **Little Poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature**? What **big ideas** do you think were in these **little poems**? How do you think they were **mindful of nature**?

## Part 2 - Painting pictures with words

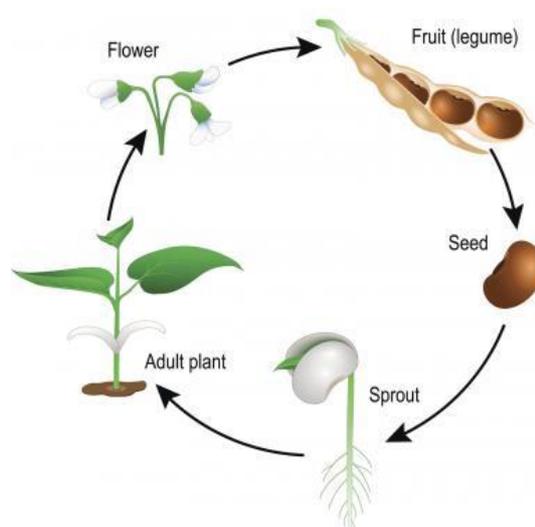
### Session 3: Deeper responses to poems read

*Discussion forms the foundations for working with books. The same is true of working with poems. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books and poems that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this the better they get at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them.*

- Begin this session by providing the children with some green beans for the children to look at and explore. Ideally, these should be ones that can be cut open to reveal the bean seeds inside, and that are not too large. French beans are ideal.
- First, place one single whole green bean in front of the children. You may need more than one bean so that each child can see an example clearly in front of them. As they first look at the beans, give each child a post-it note or word card and encourage them to come up with one word to describe the bean.
- Now, give each group a selection of the beans to look at, some whole and some cut open. If you can find some with stalks on, that would also be helpful. Provide the children with tools to explore the beans, these should include magnifying glasses and drawing materials and large sheets of paper to make collaborative notes and observations on.
- As you present the beans to the children, ask the children if they know what these are and what they already know about them. They might talk in a sensory way about what they look like or whether they like to eat them or they may contribute more scientific knowledge about where they come from or how they grow.
- Allow the children to spend time with the beans, writing down what they know or think about them as they see them immediately and allow them to make observational drawings of the beans, both whole, cut open and the new seeds inside, encourage the children to note down their thoughts, ideas and observations on the large sheets of paper as they work.

- Now, read aloud *'This Tiny Bean'* (p.68-69). Allow the children time to make their initial responses to the poem. What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel?
- To extend their knowledge around the subject matter of the poem, watch the following video, sharing a timelapse of bean growth:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG6RtcDI7II&list=PLUFSTmH0rAAfd2mlC8adk5sD5qUtADok2&index=23> Take some time to talk about what the children have seen. What have they learnt from watching this video that they didn't know before?
- Think about what stages happen in the cycle of growth. What would have happened before this video started? Where did the shoot come from? Summarise the stages of growth together and talk about what happens at each stage. Look at the cyclical nature of the process and summarise this in an organisational diagram to show this clearly, e.g.

### LIFE CYCLE OF A BEAN PLANT



(Image from: <https://garden.lovetoknow.com/garden-basics/life-cycle-bean-plant>)

- Now, re-read the poem to the children, giving pairs or groups of children a copy of the poem to read along with. This time, ask the children to focus on the following questions:
- When reading the poem, how do you feel about the bean?
- What has the poet done to make you feel that way?
- What words or phrases stood out to you or made you feel a certain way? Why was this?
- Encourage the children to discuss their thoughts and ideas together, marking up the texts in pairs or groups, highlighting words or phrases of note and recording their thoughts and ideas about the poem and the language used.
- Come back together to discuss the children's responses, supporting them to justify and expand on their responses to get to the heart of the poem and to look more deeply at the Zoro Weil's intent

in the choices she has made in the language, structure and layout of the poem. The children might have noticed and commented on:

- The power of opposition in the poem, e.g. the contrast between the words **tiny** and **sprung** – we could infer this means the bean is small but mighty. This is reinforced by the phrase **fed by the sun** – this might make us think the bean is solar powered, something small fed by the largest energy source
- The strength of the verb choice in the phrase **birds sought it out**. Why do you think they did this? Might this suggest that the flowers have the brightest colours or the sweetest nectar?
- They may be intrigued by the lines **weightless butterflies rested on its quivering petals**. What does this mean? Might it suggest the delicateness or fragility of the flower? Even something weightless can make it quiver.
- The strength of the noun phrase ‘generations of insects’ and what this might imply about the time taken for the plant to grow or the cyclical nature of the bean growth – each bean having the possibility of another cycle of growth within it.
- The adverb choice in **perfectly formed pod** and how this shows reverence to the beauty of the bean.
- The adjective used in the line **rainbow water splashed its roots** – does this suggest an air of magic, wonder or specialness?
- The power of starting the last stanza with **clearly**, suggesting a definitive agreement for the reader to believe the final words **this tiny bean was never in a million years just any old bean**, and the scale of the choice of **never in a million years**.
- The way the poem begins and ends with the focus on the tiny bean, linking to the cyclical nature of its growth.
- They may also note the poet’s decision to use all lower case lettering, and no punctuation – why do you think she made this choice?
- Come back together to encourage the children to think about one word they would use to describe the bean now they have read the poem. Collect these on post-it notes and display them around the photo of the bean, comparing these to the words they used to describe the bean at the start of the session. Have their opinions changed? How? What do you think affected this?
- Now, think about how what you have noticed could impact on a performance of this poem:
  - Do they think this should be performed by an individual, in pairs, or in small groups? Why?
  - What will they bring to the performance that helps to show how the poet feels about the bean and the process of its growth?
  - How do you think they should use their voices?
  - Should they dramatise any aspects of the performance? How will this add to and not distract from the meaning and feeling behind the poem?
- Give time for children to organise themselves ready to work on a performance of the poem. If there are any children who are reluctant to perform, they could work alongside others to support them in reflecting on what is effective about their performance ideas and what could be worked on to make the performance more effective.

- Give time and space for children to talk about and mark up copies of the poem with their ideas, to learn and rehearse the poem and then to share their performances with the rest of the group. Compare and contrast the different performances reflecting on what different groups did that was particularly effective, then give time for a final rehearsal before filming the performances.
- Share these with a wider audience through class blogs, the school website or social media channels, with appropriate permissions.
- If you are completing this session before 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, this could be submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes, including the opportunity to perform this poem as part of the 2021 award ceremony, see: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/clippa/clippa-schools-shadowing-scheme>
- After the sessions, link the learning with Science, giving the children the opportunity to plant and care for beans and observe their growth in real time. This could be in a dedicated area in school or you could give children individual pots to take home and grow on a windowsill or balcony.

#### Session 4: Observing and describing natural objects

*Art is a natural aspect of the curriculum to combine with poetry. After all, poetry deals with image and imagery, and many poems are based on the sort of close observation of real life subjects which can also be the basis of work in art. The most obvious combination of poetry and art is an illustration project.*

- Before this session, it would be ideal if you could provide some real life examples of strawberries and bluebells for the children to observe, along with examples of other fruits and flowers. If these are not available, provide a range of large scale photographs of these objects for the children to use as references, or tablets or laptops for children to use to find reference photos of their own.
- You'll also need a range of art materials such as soft sketching pencils (2B-6B) colouring pencils, pastels, oil pastels, brush pens, watercolour paints, brushes and water and cartridge paper.
- You will also need copies of the poems '**Strawberry**' and '**Bluebells**' (p.33) for the children to look at in pairs or groups. Copy the page with the two poems as they appear in the text, including the white space that surrounds them.
- Begin the session by reading aloud the poem '**Strawberry**' (p.33). Let the poem linger with the children and allow them time and space to discuss their initial responses to the poem. What picture does it put in their mind? How does it make them feel?
- Now, read aloud the poem '**Bluebells**' (p.33) and, once again allow the children to discuss what they have heard. What picture does it put in their mind? How does it make them feel? How does it compare with the first poem?
- Come back together to discuss these responses and look at the poems on the page as part of the double page spread where it sits alongside 2 other poems. None of these poems are illustrated as you've seen with some of the other poems. Ask the children why they think this might be.

- Re-read the poem again. What language stands out for them that helps them create the picture they have in their minds?
- Now, allow time for the children to consider how they would use the spaces on the page to provide accompanying illustrations for these two poems.
- Provide the children with real strawberries and bluebells if possible, so that they can observe these closely. Provide a range of reference photos or allow the children to use tablets to find reference photos of their own.
- If you have a visualiser, use this to share your own ideas for illustration for one of the poems. Share with the children how to work with a reference photos, using it for ideas, rather than trying to make a direct copy. Take the time to share your thought process for your composition with the children. You might re-read **'Strawberry'**, for example, and talk about whether you want to really focus in on drawing one strawberry, as the poet addresses the poem to a single strawberry, or whether you might focus on the imagery you are left with at the end, of a strawberry or many strawberries in a basket. You might want to focus on the sensory language of the strawberry being sweet and decide to pick up on this by showing one being eaten, or having a bite taken out of it. You might think about where the 'I' in the poem is observing the strawberry – is it growing on a plant with others?
- You might then think about how these two poems interact on the page together – would they each have a separate illustration, or would the two illustrations connect in some way? Would there be a place where you might find both of these things?
- Model how to sketch out a rough idea on the page with the poems using soft pencils and then think about how you might work these up to finished illustrations using a range of media.
- Then give plenty of time for the children to explore and work up their own ideas, first by sketching roughly, then working these up to finished illustrations.
- When these are complete, pin the children's individual pages up around the room, creating a gallery of their artwork. Allow time and space for the children to look at each other's artwork, looking at the similarities and differences in their interpretations. The wonderful thing about this is that there is no right or wrong. Everyone's interpretations are valid. Allow children to comment on what they find most effective in each other's work and display these prominently for others to appreciate.
- Go on to look at a range of other fruits and flowers, and encourage the children to pick one to write their own poem about. Look at what was effective about the two poems you read by Zoro Weil; how in a few short lines she leaves the reader with a both a picture and a feeling about the thing she chooses to write about and how she manages to do this with the language she chooses. Look particularly at the adjective choices in **'Strawberry' – red, sweet, round**, and how she chooses to write the poem directly to the fruit, in celebration. In **'Bluebells'**, look at how the picture is painted by her use of verbs – **sprung, fed, pushing**. The children may also want to come back to recap also on what was effective about **'This tiny bean'**, in painting a picture of a natural object in words there, and write a longer poem.
- You might wish to show the children this video of poet Kate Wakeling talking about why poetry is important. In it she talks about poems being 'often short', and an 'intense expression of the poet',

with ‘space around a poem for a conversation with the reader’ <https://vimeo.com/218271790> - do they think this is true of the two poems they have read?

- Show the children this video of Kate Wakeling talking about how she goes about writing her poems: <https://vimeo.com/218278922>. In it, she talks about the two stages to her writing process, how she first ‘splurges’ her ideas into a notebook, writing ‘freely’ and seeing ‘what comes out’ and then how she comes back to these to organise, shape and craft the poem.
- Through modelled writing, share with the children how to draft and work up ideas. They might find Kate’s process of splurging ideas freely first useful. Model how to do this by taking a fruit or flower of your own and showing how to just write any words thoughts or ideas about it on a page. Then look at how to come back to these and work out the essence of what you want to write about and start to share how to tentatively draft a poem of your own. Use the children as response partners, bouncing ideas off them and asking for their responses and opinions.
- Then give the children to go off and do the same with a fruit or a flower of their own. If they want, they can do a series of poems about different fruits or flowers as Zoro Weil has done in this double page spread.
- When the children have a draft they are happy with, show them how to come back to this and work it up for publication. Listen to poet Sue Hardy-Dawson talk about working up a poem here: [www.vimeo.com/268516363](http://www.vimeo.com/268516363). Think about her advice: ‘You can’t tell how a poem works until you’ve read it out loud.’
- Read your own draft aloud to the children, listening out for things that don’t quite work for you and testing out alternatives, asking the children to respond to which ideas work best. Show how to make edits on the page, demonstrating that the creation process is a messy one, and that this is absolutely ok – they can type or write up in presentation handwriting when they have a final piece they are happy with.
- Now, ask the children to follow the same process, practising their draft out loud to see if it works off the page and discussing it with a response partner. Then allow them to make any edits that are needed, working up their ideas until they feel they are ready for publication.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at other poems that focus in on aspects of nature in the same way, such as **‘Shiny Sun’** (p.50), **‘Little Jellybean Toe Shoes’** (p.36), **‘A Confetti Sky’** (p.162), **‘Afternoon Showers’** (p.162), **‘Fat Moon’** (p.133) and the title poem, **‘Cherry Moon’** (p.59).

## Session 5: Stepping inside a moment

*Imagery, in a literary or poetic sense, is the author's use of description and vivid language, deepening the reader's understanding of the work, by appealing to the senses.*

*There are different types of imagery. These include:*

- *Visual imagery which refers to sights and allows the reader to visualise the subject, objects or events in the poem.*
- *Auditory imagery refers to sounds and reminds the reader of common or specific sounds as a point of reference to deepen understanding.*

- *Kinaesthetic imagery is related to movement and reminds the reader of body movement or positions that are familiar or imagined – such as the feeling of flying.*
- *Smells and tastes can be referred to as olfactory or gustatory imagery respectively.*
- *Tactile imagery refers to texture and feeling.*

*All imagery is aided through the use of other poetic devices, such as simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, etc.*

- Begin by reading aloud **'Flash'** (p.96-97). Allow time for the poem to linger and for the children to discuss their initial responses to it. What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel?
- Re-read the poem again. Ask the children to summarise the story behind the poem after they have heard it again. What is happening? Explore how the poet has taken a relatively small, everyday moment in time - spotting the bird, looking deeply at it, looking away and it flying off - and made it engaging for us as readers.
- Share the poem on the page, and read it aloud again. Draw the children's attention to the fact that one line runs over to the next without any terminal punctuation. This is known as enjambment. Encourage the children to re-read the poem to themselves, discussing what the poet does to help us to feel part of this moment. How do her words help us to visualise the bird? Allow time for the children to discuss this together, highlighting and text marking the poem with their thoughts and ideas.
- Come back together to discuss the children's responses, supporting them to justify and expand on their responses to get to the heart of the poem and to look more deeply at the Zoro Weil's intent in the choices she has made in the language, structure and layout of the poem and the visual imagery she has created. The children might have noticed and commented on:
  - The use of the superlative adjectives: *brightest, glowingest, hottest* – what do these suggest to us about the colours of the bird?
  - The reference to the universe, the cosmos and a galaxy, suggesting an other-worldly brilliance.
  - The choice to leave *all* in a line on its own – why might the poet have made this choice?
  - The use of *so* as an adjective in the phrase: *it was so bright I had to look away* – what does this tell us about the power of the small bird?
  - The choice to make the bird 'smile' at the 'I' in the poem – can birds really smile? Why might Zoro Weil have made this choice?
  - The space given around the line *and took off* – why do you think the poet has chosen to do this?
  - The choice of the verb *soaring* in the final stanza. How does this compare to flying, gliding, hovering or flapping?
- Now, read aloud **'Tiny Tiny Bird'** (p.112-113) and, once again, allow the children to discuss what they have heard. What is the story in this poem? How does it make them feel? How does it compare and contrast with the first poem?

- Once again, encourage the children to mark up a copy of the poem, looking at what supports the reader to feel part of this moment, highlighting effective language and annotating the text with their thoughts and ideas. The children might have noticed and commented on:
  - The choice of verbs that describe the bird's movements: **perches, watches, follows, flies** – what do these suggest to us about the bird?
  - The contrast between the flight and movement of the bird, and the stillness of the watcher and their shadow.
  - The drama and movement in the bird's exit *through a shake and shimmy of dusk green needles*.
  - The imagery created by the author's choice of adjectives: **tiny tiny bird, fading shadow, sky blush, dusk green needles, deep night** and the repetition of this adjective in **deep way**.
  - The choice to start the poem with the word **sundown** and to end it with **sun-up** – what sense does this create?
- As you reflect on both poems and think about the similarities and differences, you might look at:
  - How, in both poems, the poet draws us in immediately with one word – *flash* to describe the initial event in the first poem and *sundown* to set the scene in the second poem.
  - The mood or atmosphere created in each poem – do they feel the same, or different? Why might this be?
  - How the birds are equally captivating to their respective watchers – what has made them stop and look?
- Next, provide the children with a copy of Junli Song's illustration from pages 40-41. As well as being an illustrator, Junli Song is a storyteller and describes her work as 'visual narratives'. Give time for the children to look closely at the image. They may start by looking at the image as a whole, they might then use a viewfinder – a piece of black paper or card with a viewing square cut from the middle – to hone in on smaller details in the spread, talking together about what they see.
- As they spot things of interest, encourage them to talk about what story or stories they can see in the illustration. Do they want to tell the story of the whole image or do they see a smaller story within part of the image; for example the small child playfully tickling the child reading under the tree with a grass stalk, or the older couple walking down the path.
- Map out the big shapes of the story in no more than 5 parts, e.g. the boy finds a grass stalk, he picks it, he wonders what to do with it, he spots his sister reading, he decides to creep up and tickle her
- Share with the children how to begin to embellish these moments with strong visual imagery to draw the reader in, describing what is happening in an evocative way to make the reader feel as if they are there, watching.

there

pluming out of the blades of grass  
delicate, feathery tip

dancing it the wind

I can't resist

plucking it

waving it

writing in the sky

but wait!

slowly

silently

she can't see me

mischievous me!

- Allow the children to pick out ideas from the illustrations to map out the big shapes of the story they want to tell and then to embellish this to create imagery for their own readers.
- Once they have a draft they are happy with, give time for them to read these aloud, reflect on what works well with a response partner and what may need reworking and to make edits to their draft.
- When they are happy with their poem, allow them to type these up, or copy out in presentation handwriting and display these around a copy of the illustration. Share examples with the class, reflecting on the different stories they saw in Junli Song's illustration, how they chose to interpret these and what was effective about the poems they created.
- You could then read the two poems that precede this illustration in the text, *'River's Haiku'* and *'River's Song'* (p.38 and 39). What do you think Junli Song might have seen in these two poems that inspired her illustration? How do these poems compare and contrast with the ones you wrote? Are there any similarities?
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at other poems that tell a vivid story, such as: *'A Parade of Beast-Doodles'* (p.52-53), *'Flicker and Flash'* (p.60), *'I Spot Them'* (p.48), *'The Leaves Were A-Shake'* (p.122-123) *'Duskingtide'* (p.148-149) *'Story Time Orchestra'* (p.161).

## Session 6: Using poetry to share a voice or opinion

*As children grow with poetry, they learn that it can be a vehicle for communicating a message or opinion. Children may choose to write about issues and topics of personal interest or about bigger, wider world issues. Sharing examples of poems where a poet expresses an opinion or gives voice to a subject is a good way to explore how to do this effectively to engage a reader.*

- Before the session, prepare an A3 copy of the outline of an elephant, including tusks and a set of printed photos of elephants with tusks for each group. You will also need to provide pairs or

groups of children with access to tablets, laptops or computers to conduct research prior to writing.

- First, present the set of photos to the children and give them time and to look at the photos of the elephants, discussing what they already know about them.
- Now, give each group the A3 outline of the elephant and ask the children to write words and phrases to describe the appearance of the elephant on the outside of the outline, e.g.: long trunk, ivory tusks, and words to describe the characteristics of the elephant on the inside of the outline, e.g. powerful, sociable.
- Now, share just the headline banner from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) website: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/wildlife/african-elephants> Look at the words chosen to describe these animals here: **Strong, smart, but vulnerable**. How do these words compare to the ones you chose? Think about the impact of the word choices here. What has the most impact on you? What do you understand by the word vulnerable? Why do you think the WWF chose to use the co-ordinating conjunction **but** before this word? How does it sound different if we just say **strong, smart, vulnerable**? Now read the next line: **Help us protect these incredible, intelligent giants**. what else do you notice about the words chosen in each line? Discuss the use of alliteration in **strong** and **smart**, and **incredible** and **intelligent**. What impact does this device have? Why do you think alliteration is often used in advertising campaigns and for popular culture, e.g. Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Teen Titans? Now look at the verb choice of **protect**. What other word does this connect with? Why do you think the elephants are vulnerable; why do they need protecting?
- Ask each child to note their ideas about this final question on a post-it note to stick around the elephant outline. Compare the suggestions from each member of the group. What are the similarities and differences in your thoughts?
- Now, listen to the poet, Zaro Weil read aloud the poem **'Elephant Tusks'** (p.88-89): <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/weil-zaro>. Let the poem sit with the children and give them time to discuss their initial thoughts and ideas. How does the poem make you feel? What does it add to your understanding of why the elephants are vulnerable and why we might need to protect them? Why do you think the WWF are directing us to help protect the elephants? Who do you think is responsible for making them vulnerable? What, in the poem, suggests this?
- You may wish to deepen the children's understanding about this issue by watching the following video from the WWF webpage visited earlier in the session. **Be aware that the video depicts the killing of elephants for their tusks, as outlined in the poem and may cause distress to some viewers.** Watch the video yourself first to ascertain its suitability for the age and background experiences of your pupils: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb6sYToyQh8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb6sYToyQh8&feature=emb_logo)
- If you choose to watch this, discuss what you have seen with the children. How does the filmmaker paint a picture of the situation using words and images? You may choose to explore with the children:
  - Why they think the filmmaker chose to show so much of the action reflected in the eye of the elephant.
  - Why they think the line **Like you, Elephants feel complex emotions**, was chosen as the opening cation for the film.

- Why they think the filmmaker chose to repeat the sentence starter **Like you...** again in the second caption.
- The impact of the adverb **now** in the final caption **We need your help now.**
- Why they think the filmmaker chose to print all the captions in capital letters.
- Re-read the poem and give a copy to pairs or groups of children to follow. In the same way they have just done with the film, focus the children on looking at how the poet and illustrator paint a picture of the situation. You may choose to extend the children's thinking, if necessary, with the following questions:
  - What clues do the determiners **my** and **your** and the pronouns **me** and **you** give us to who is speaking in this poem and who they are speaking to?
  - What effect does the repetition of these words throughout the poem have on you as a reader?
  - What emotion do you think lies at the heart of this poem? What creates this feeling in you?
  - What impact do the adjectives **long**, **smooth** and **ancient** and the comparative adjective **older than** have? Why do you think the poet chose these words specifically?
  - What do you think the line, **it would be very bad luck for you humans to take my tusks** might mean? Do you think this is a threat?
  - Why do you think the illustrator chose to dress the elephant in human clothing, and have it standing on two legs? Why do you think she chose to frame the scene through a window?
  - Consider why the poet might have chosen to write this poem? What is she using her art for here?
- Split the children into pairs or small groups and give them access to a tablet, laptop or computer, where they can access the WWF endangered species list: [https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/directory?page=2&sort=extinction\\_status](https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/directory?page=2&sort=extinction_status)
- Show the children the list and how to use this to conduct research about another endangered animal. Look at how the list is categorised into **least concern**, **near threatened**, **vulnerable** (like the elephant), **endangered** and **critically endangered**. Clarify children's understanding of these terms and where they sit on the scale of severity.
- Pick an animal that you think people may want to support because of its extinction status. Show the children how to open and navigate the information on the page, looking at how the page layout helps them to do this. Look at the section headers, **Facts**, **Why they matter**, **Threats** and **What WWF is doing**. Model with the children how to read and take note of information that they think might be useful in presenting the plight of the animal and to persuade a reader that this is important and to help.
- You can model how to collect this information in a range of ways, for example, using headings and bullet point notes, in a mind map or on a concept map. Illustrate how to select, summarise and record only the most important information or to collect examples of evocative language, not copying out the text on the site word for word.
- When you have done this, allow time for the children to research and collect information on their own animals.

- When children have an understanding of why their animal is endangered, and have taken notes of important information and effective language, come back to your own notes and model the process of using these to create and shape a poem of your own, using what you found effective in Zoro Weil's original poem to inspire your own ideas or choices. You may wish, like her, to choose to write in role as the animal, addressing a human reader directly. Think about how you will show the anger and resentment towards what the humans are doing to put you in danger.
- Before you start to write, listen to poet Sue Hardy-Dawson talk about how she writes: [www.vimeo.com/268514582](http://www.vimeo.com/268514582). Think about what she says in the video; 'All I need is that line.' Can they think of one line that could provide the springboard to their poem? It doesn't have to be the first line. Show how to use a line like this to springboard the rest of your draft poem, sharing how to shape and re-work the poem as you craft. Be sure to demonstrate that drafting is a messy process, they don't have to worry here about handwriting and presentation in the same way as a finished piece, and can cross out, re-work and re-write ideas as they go. Use the children as your response partners as you work, testing out ideas with them and asking them questions to unlock your ideas.
- When you have a draft that you are happy with, allow time and space for the children to go away and draft their own poems, using their notes to support them.
- When they have a draft they are happy with, come back to your own draft and share how to read it aloud to check it works as well off the page as on. Ask the children to support you by highlighting what they think is effective or asking questions or making suggestions about any parts that could be improved. When you have made final edits, allow the children time and space to do this themselves with their own response partners.
- When they are happy with their final versions, give time for them to type these up, or write them up in presentation handwriting and to illustrate their poems.
- Display these publicly around a copy of the original poem or publish them in a class anthology centred around endangered animals.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at other poems that share the poet's voice or opinion on a topic, such as **'Wonderfulness'** (p.46-47) and **'Poor Snail'** (p.152-153).

## Session 7: Observing over Time

*Throughout the collection, Zoro Weil intersperses her Plum Tree series, coming back to observe the same tree in each of the four seasons. Looking at these together helps children to see the longer narrative that can be created in a series of poems, much like in a verse novel.*

- Before the session, you will need to print out copies of the Plum Tree Series of poems throughout the book, including the double spread illustrations by Junli Song that follow each poem in the text:
  - **'Plum tree (spring)'** (p.14-15 and p.16-17)
  - **'Plum tree (summer)'** (p.74-75 and p.76-77)
  - **'Plum tree (autumn)'** (p.106-107 and p.108-109)
  - **'Plum tree (winter)'** (p.136-137 and p.138-139)

- Stick these around the room in four different places, so that the children can follow these in the cycle of the seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter. One on each of 4 walls would work well.
- Begin the session by watching this video about the changing seasons from BBC Teach: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks1-ks2-wonders-of-nature-the-changing-seasons/zh4rkmn>
- Take some time to explore what you have watched and to talk about how this clip relates to the poems they have read so far and the themes of the book. What connections do they make with specific poems? What do they already know about seasonal change? What happens during specific seasons in the natural world?
- Now, as the class watch, stand by each of the 4 poems in turn and read these aloud. You can start with any of the poems but then read the next ones aloud in the correct order, e.g. winter, spring, summer, autumn. Allow time for the poems to linger and then for the children to discuss their initial responses to the series of poems. What did these make them think about? How did the poems make them feel? How do they connect with the video?
- Now, split the class into 4 groups and send each group to one of the 4 poems. Allow time for them to re-read these for themselves. You may wish to provide extra copies if the group sizes are large and not all of the children can see one copy at the same time. When they have re-read the poem, allow time for them to discuss the poem more deeply in their groups. What picture has the poet painted of the tree in the season you are looking at? How has she done this? How do Junli Song's illustrations support or extend your understanding?
- Now, encourage the groups to following the cycle in order, discussing each new poem in the same way as they approach it.
- When they have read all four poems, come back to consider them as a series. Was there a poem that they liked best? Which one, and why? Was there any particular language or were there concepts that made them feel a certain way or consider certain things? What were these and why?
- Next, allow the children to choose which poem they would like to perform by going to the copy of that poem. Hopefully, at least one child will have picked each of the four poems, but if there is a poem that no-one has chosen, read it aloud again and ask the children if any of them would like to choose this poem now. If there are large numbers of children who have chosen the same poem, they may want to split off into smaller groups to work on their performance. Provide extra copies for each group as necessary, allowing the children to consider what number of children in a group would make for the best performance. Some children may even want to perform individually.
- Share with the children this video, from 2019 CLiPPA winner, poet Steven Camden: <https://vimeo.com/336043270>. Consider what he says about connecting with the words and fitting your emotional connection to the words into your performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this in their performance. Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Encouraging them to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes and rehearse their performances to share with the class.

- When the children have had time to practise, allow groups to perform their poems in turn, starting with one season, and then bringing in other groups to perform the next seasons in turn, one after the other.
- When you have seen a complete set of four seasons, talk about the effectiveness of the piece as a whole. What unique sense did each season have? How was this created? What was most effective about each performance? Can you suggest any points to work on?
- Then give time for groups to make any changes to their individual piece. Finally, put 4 groups together, to represent each of four seasons, to do a final rehearsal together, looking at how to transition effectively between each season before filming the performances as a whole piece. They may wish to use the printed double page illustrations to introduce or incorporate into their performance.
- Share these with a wider audience through class blogs, the school website or social media channels, with appropriate permissions.
- If you are completing this session before 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, this could be submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes, including the opportunity to perform this poem as part of the 2021 award ceremony, see: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/clippa/clippa-schools-shadowing-scheme>
- After filming, watch and evaluate the performances together, looking at how these impacted on you as an audience. Did you feel like each whole piece gave you a walk through the four seasons, as in the video we started with? What was it that exemplified the feeling of each season in the individual groups? What have you learnt about making a performance effective for an audience?

## Part 3 – Exploring specific forms and devices

### Session 8: Giving Nature a Voice through Poetry – Exploring song

*Personification is a poetic device where animals, plants or even inanimate objects, are given human qualities – resulting in a poem full of imagery and description.*

*In the series of song poems in the collection, the poet takes on the personae of different natural phenomena, such as the wind, a mountain and even time, giving voice and action to them to develop our understanding.*

- Before the session, you will need to prepare copies of **‘Ladybird’s Song’** (p.67) for small groups to share, along with a pack containing copies of the following poems:
  - **‘River’s Song’** (p.39)
  - **‘Mountain’s Song’** (p.114)
  - **‘Wind’s Song’** (p.114)
  - **‘Time’s Song’** (p.115)
  - **‘Every Little Pebble’s Song’** (p.115)

- *'Snow's Song'* (p.165)
- Begin the session by listening to poet Zaro Weil reading *'Ladybird's Song'*: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/weil-zaro>. Give time for the children to take in what they have heard and to talk about what it made them think about and how it made them feel.
- Now give out the poem for the children to look at on the page as you play the video once more. This time, after reading ask the children to look back over the poem and discuss what they know about the character of the ladybird from the poem. How would you describe them to someone else and what makes you think this way about them? Discuss how, in this poem, we're not directly told what the ladybird is like, we have to infer this through what they tell us about themselves. Authors use this 'show not tell' effect often to create intrigue and depth in their characters.
- Now, split the class into small groups of 4 or 6 and give them a set of the other 'songs' in the book. Give time and space for the children to share these amongst the group, reading each poem, looking at the characters that Zaro Weil has created in these natural elements and how she has shown, not told, us what they are like by the way in which they present themselves to us in the poem. The children may choose to look at each poem all together or may choose to share these out and feed back to each other after reading. There is no right or wrong way to do this, as long as all the children are involved in reading and talking about the poems.
- Encourage the children to be ready to feed back on any particular favourite poems or on any language or techniques they found particularly effective.
- Now, encourage the children to use what they have learnt from this exercise to devise a natural 'character' of their own. Model the thinking and ideation process alongside the children with ideas for your own character. First think of the natural element you will choose, it could be an element of physical geography like a river, mountain, forest or jungle, it could be a type of weather, a season or a specific animal, plant, fruit, vegetable or flower. When you have chosen your subject, talk with the children about them as characters, it might help to try and visualise them with human traits, for example, ask yourself questions like:
  - What are they wearing?
  - How are they standing?
  - What are they doing?
  - How do they talk, walk and move?
  - How do they behave?
- You may even want to draw a sketch of your character to support your thinking. You could use the sketch to help you come up with questions to ask your character to find out more about them.
- When you have a good picture in your head, think about how they would present themselves if they were talking to an outside audience. Come back to examples of Zaro Weil's original poems, looking at their conversational tone, and how the poems give a picture of the character without directly describing them.
- You might come up with the introductory line first, or you might think of a specific thing they do. Work through how to draft up your initial ideas and how to work with the children as your response partners, testing out ideas, looking at what works and what doesn't and how to build up ideas to a complete draft. Share throughout that writing is a tentative process and also a messy process on the page at the drafting stage.

- When you have a first draft you are confident with, give time and space for the children to have a go at coming up with their own characters and drafts in the same way, working with a response partner to tentatively explore ideas, ask questions and use as a springboard for ideas. When they have a finished draft, come back together to read aloud your own draft, listening to how this sounds off the page as well as looking at how it sits on the page. Make any final responses or edits and then allow the children to do the same with their response partner.
- When they are happy with their final versions, give time for them to type these up, or write them up in presentation handwriting and to illustrate their poems if they wish.
- Display these publicly, interspersed with copies of the original poems or publish them in a class anthology of nature songs.

### Session 9: Exploring Poetic Form - List Poems

*It is important for children to be introduced to a range of forms, particularly those that are less technically demanding in rhyme and regular metre, but that can be used to shape experience of language and provide an extra stimulus for writing. A list poem does exactly as described and collects content in a list form. It can be purely a list without transitional phrases. List poems don't have any fixed rhyme or rhythmic pattern and the order of the list can either serve to provide additional detail or to show the author's state of mind.*

- Before the session, prepare a set of sentence strips and sheets of plain paper, at least one for each child and spares for if mistakes happen.
- Begin by reading aloud the poem **'How to Get Lost'** (p.118-119). Give the poem time to linger and for the children to discuss their initial responses to the poem. What did they like or dislike about it? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What language or imagery was the most memorable?
- Now share the poem on the page with the children. It would be good to do this with an enlarged image on the IWB, or, if this is not possible, give groups or pairs of children a copy of the poem to look at more closely. Re-read the poem and then ask the children to comment on the way the poem looks on the page and the way it is laid out. Look at how each line is a separate idea and that the word **or** is used as a repeated transitional phrase between each line. Introduce this as an example of a list poem, if the children have not encountered these previously.
- Look at how the poem ends, with this word repeated on a loop: **or, or.or.or.or...** and ending with an ellipsis. What effect does this ending have on you? Why do you think the poet has chosen to end the poem in this way?
- Look at how this could be seen as an invitation to contribute additional lines for the poem. Give each child a blank piece of paper and get them to write the title of the poem **How to get lost** at the top or in the centre of the page. Talk about some of the ideas that they've heard already, and how these are all imaginary or fantastical ideas – you couldn't really fly off with a balloon or trade places with a time traveller, but these are all highly engaging and entertaining forays into an imaginary world.

- Allow the time and space for the children to come up with alternative ideas for getting lost, writing as many options as possible on their blank sheet of paper. No ideas are too fantastical, the children can be as imaginative as they wish.
- When each child has a number of ideas on their paper, give them each a sentence strip and ask them to pick the idea they think is their most effective to copy out onto the sentence strip. This doesn't mean the most fantastical idea, but the one that evokes the most engagement for the reader. Give the children time to re-read through their ideas and to select the one they wish to transfer to the strip. Encourage them to use a thick, dark pen, so this can be easily read.
- Now, get each child to prepare to read their line out loud, following it with the transitional **or**. Decide on an order round the room for reading and remind the last child to repeat their **or** five times at the end.
- When you have heard the lines, comment on how this worked as a whole – did the lines work in the order they were first presented? Does it matter which order they go in? Would certain lines be better or apart?
- Encourage the children to stand in a circle in a large space, such as the hall or outside in the playground. Ask them to hold their line up in front of them so everyone can see it and have a group discussion about which lines work best where, looking at which order provides the most cohesive reading.
- When the children have made their decisions, record a whole group performance of the poem, with each child learning and saying their own individual line and the transitional **or** and the last child fading out with this five times at the end.
- Watch the poem back together and comment on what was particularly effective and what might have been improved.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at other poems, such as **'Ten Ways to Catch the Moon'** (p.84-85), **'Song of Being Together'** (p.86-87) and **'Dappling Sun'** (p.72-73).

## Session 10: Exploring Poetic Form - Haiku

*Haiku are seventeen syllable poems with the following structure:*

*Line 1: 5 syllables*

*Line 2: 7 syllables*

*Line 3: 5 syllables*

*The lines are separate, each contains a new thought - a haiku describes one moment of time and its natural subject matter is the natural world. Haiku are generally visual, and leave the reader with a picture. Famous Japanese poets who wrote Haiku are Basho, Issa and Buson.*

*As the form has evolved, many of its regular traits—including its famous syllabic pattern—have been routinely broken. However, the philosophy of haiku has been preserved: the focus on a brief moment in time; a focus on the subject of the natural world, a use of provocative, colourful images; an ability to be read in one breath; and a sense of sudden enlightenment.*

- Begin the session by listening to poet Zaro Weil read the poem **'Small Green Frog's Haiku'** (p.66). Give time and space for the children to take the poem in and to give their initial responses to it. What pictures does it put into their mind? How did it make them feel? What language or imagery was particularly memorable? What was it like to hear the poet read this poem?
- Share the haiku philosophy with the children. If you have looked at haiku before, you may have introduced the strict syllabic structure. Explain to the children that over time, as the form has been used and taken on in other languages that follow different syllabic patterns in their language structures, many of the strict rules and traits of traditional haiku have been broken. However, all haiku should still conform to the philosophy of haiku and should:
  - focus on a brief moment in time
  - focus on the subject of the natural world
  - use provocative, colourful images
  - be able read in one breath
  - give a sense of sudden enlightenment
- Give the children a copy of the poem to read along with as you replay the video of Zaro reading it aloud. When she has finished, allow the children time to discuss and evaluate whether it fits the haiku philosophy. They may well need to and should be encouraged to re-read the poem to see if it can, indeed, be read in one breath. Encourage them to mark up and annotate to show where the provocative colourful imagery is and how to identify the sense of sudden enlightenment. How did Zaro Weil suggest this in the way she read the poem?
- Split the children into small groups of 4-6 and give each group 4 or 5 of the following haiku to read, mix these up around the groups so that no groups have the same entire set:
  - **'Snapping Turtles Haiku'** (p.19)
  - **'Gosling's Haiku'** (p.37)
  - **'Hippo's Haiku'** (p.37)
  - **'River's Haiku'** (p.38)
  - **'Worm's Haiku'** (p.57)
  - **'Polar Bear's Haiku'** (p.145)
  - **'Flea's Haiku'** (p.158)
  - **'Whale's Haiku'** (p.158)
  - **'Rain's Haiku'** (p.159)
  - **'Noisy Toe's Haiku'** (p.159)
  - **'Morning's Haiku'** (p.163)
  - **'Twilight's Haiku'** (p.163)
  - **'Perfect Crystal's Haiku'** (p.164)
  - **'Snowy Owl's Haiku'** (p.164)
  - **'Winter Sun's Haiku'** (p.167)
- Give time and space for the children to read their set of haiku together and to evaluate, one by one, whether they meet the criteria of the haiku philosophy, marking up each poem with the evidence for this.

- Then, encourage the groups to discuss and select two of the haiku to talk about with the rest of the class. They must share why they have chosen these two examples. It might be because they are the poems they liked best, the poems they felt best fitted the haiku philosophy, or they may wish to discuss a poem if they feel it doesn't meet the philosophy.
- When sharing the poems they will need to read each aloud in turn and discuss their reasons for sharing the poem and their evidence for why it shares the haiku philosophy.
- When you have heard all the feedback, look at whether any of the haiku were chosen by more than one group. Why do you think this was? You will then want to discuss what the haiku had in common. This might be in relation to themes, language, evocative imagery or back to elements of the haiku philosophy.
- When they are confident with identifying the elements of haiku and have heard many examples through the feedback, ask the children to take a piece of blank paper and write down ideas of elements in the natural world that they could have a go at writing their own haiku about. This can literally be an emptying of their heads where they think of elements of nature they may be interested in or fascinated by. Make sure you do this for yourself, alongside the children, as they write.
- When you have a piece of paper full of ideas, encourage the children to look at each one again and think about which of these they might have the strongest ideas for to work up into a haiku of their own.
- Come back to the elements of the haiku philosophy and think about how you could incorporate these into a haiku on your chosen topic. Model the thought and composition process for the children to hear and see. You might start by closing your eyes, working up a visual image of a moment in time including this element. You may then choose to sketch this down on paper to support your language and thinking. Then you might think about the language that you might use to create the provocative, colourful imagery, and how you might suggest the sense of sudden enlightenment, drawing from effective examples across the poems read to provide inspiration.
- Share how to roughly draft this, as you have before, working messily, re-working and changing ideas as you work. When you have a draft you are happy with, read it aloud to the children, engaging them as your response partners to help you work out what is most effective or work on any parts that need improving.
- Give time and space for the children to work up their own haiku in this way and then to perform these on a video as they saw Zoro Weil do.
- Share these publicly on a school blog, social media account or website to give audience to the children's work.

### Session 11: Nature is epic!

*An epic is a long, often book-length, narrative in verse form that retells the heroic journey of a single person or a group of persons. Elements that typically distinguish epics include superhuman deeds, fabulous adventures, highly stylised language, and a blending of lyrical and dramatic traditions.*

*Although not epic poems in their true form, this collection contains a number of longer poems that retell the heroic journeys of elements of nature over time, recalling and retelling the heroic adventures and deeds of these things over a long period of history.*

- Before the session make copies of the following poems, enough for a group of 4-6 to share one between them:
- **'Waterfall's Song'** (p.64-65)
- **'This Great Old Tree'** (p.100-101)
- **'Don't Be Bored Rock'** (p.124-125)
- Begin the session by listening to the poet, Zaro Weil read aloud the poem **'Don't be Bored Rock'** (p.124-125): <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/weil-zaro>. Give the children time to take in the poem and the performance and to give their initial responses to the poem. What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What language or imagery was the most effective?
- Split the class into small groups of 4-6 and give them a copy of the poem to look at on the page. Play the video again and encourage the children to follow along with the text. This time, encourage the children to come together to summarise what happened in the poem. What do you know about the rock? How long has it been around for? What journey has it taken, before it has reached this place? What happened to it on its journey? What does this make us think about the rock?
- Talk to the children about epic poetry. An epic is a long, often book-length, narrative in verse form that retells the heroic journey of a single person or a group of persons. Elements that typically distinguish epics include superhuman deeds, fabulous adventures, highly stylised language, and a blending of lyrical and dramatic traditions. Examples the children may have heard of are The Odyssey, Beowulf and the Ramayana. Although it is not book length, what does this poem have in common with epic poems? Look at the examples of stylised language – words that create an artistic effect; think about whether they have heard about a heroic journey, was it dramatic? Could you class this poem as a mini-epic, retelling a feat of nature?
- Now give the children copies of both **'Waterfall's Song'** (p.64-65) **'This Great Old Tree'** (p.100-101). Allow time for the children to read these as a group, comparing and contrasting them with the first poem and discussing which features they share with an epic poem. Whose heroic journey is described within each poem? What was the drama in the journey described? What examples of stylised language can you see in each poem?
- Now allow each group to select one of these three poems to work up into a dramatic performance.
- Visit Zaro Weil's website and read more about her background in music, dance and drama, before she became a poet: <http://zaroweil.com/about/> How do you think this has helped her in her writing?
- Think about how you can work together to use your voices, bodies and facial expressions to bring out the drama in these poems. Be careful not to overdo it, and take away the beauty of the language. Try things out, marking up the script as you go with your ideas. How will you work together to bring out the storytelling and to emphasise the imagery created in the language. If the

children wish, they can make and add simple props, but again, make sure these enrich and don't distract from the performance.

- When the children have had plenty of time and space to work up their ideas, give them space to share their performance with the rest of the group. Allow time for the audience to reflect on what was effective in each performance and what could be improved and how.
- Then allow for a final dress rehearsal before filming the final performances.
- If you are completing this session before 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, these could be submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes, including the opportunity to perform this poem as part of the 2021 award ceremony, see: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/clippa/clippa-schools-shadowing-scheme>
- After filming, watch and evaluate the performances together, looking at how these impacted on you as an audience. Did you feel the drama of the journey in each performance? Were you rooting for nature's hero as they made their journey? What have you learnt about making a performance effective for an audience?
- Outside of the session, you may wish to introduce the children to *Pebble in My Pocket: A History of our Earth* by Meredith Hooper, illustrated by Chris Coady (Frances Lincoln), *River Story* by Meredith Hooper, illustrated by Bee Willey (Walker) and *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt Brace International), to expand children's experience of key language and concepts introduced in these poems.

## Part 4 – Writing Poetry

### Session 12: Ideation

*Following an authentic model for writing in the classroom allows students to feel what it is like to be a writer. It is so much more than simply 'doing' writing tasks.*

*Following an authentic process results in well-developed pieces of writing; pupils follow a truly creative process and have the impetus to write for themselves.*

*The core focus of an authentic writing process is on giving pupils a credible opportunity to develop their own voice, have a choice about what they want to say and how they say it and the chance to write with freedom.*

**Ideation** is the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring where and how we get ideas from in the real world of writing and giving pupils time, space and stimulus to begin to form and shape ideas for their own writing for real life purposes and audiences.

- Often, when people talk to writers about their work, one of the most commonly asked questions is where they get their ideas from. Ask children to talk in pairs or small groups to list as many places as they can think of where a person can get ideas to help their writing. After a couple of minutes,

get children to report back and create a class list. *Where can we get ideas from?* Children might mention: things that we see/notice, something heard, memories, other books that we've read, a song that we heard, dreams, imagination, daydreaming, playing, films, toys, family events, arguments, etc.

- Listen to other poets talk about how they go about writing their poetry:  
<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poet-interviews/how-do-you-go-about-writing-your-poetry-0>  
What ideas can they pick up from this? 2015 CLiPPA winner Joseph Coelho, 2018 CLiPPA Highly Commended poet Ruth Awolola, 2015 shortlistee John Lyons and 2019 shortlistee Philip Gross all talk about the importance of keeping a note of ideas in a notebook or on a phone.
- Give each child a notebook of their own that can be theirs for ideas, inspirations, sketches and drafts of poems. Let the children know that these books are only for them – there's not a particular amount of writing you expect them to do they can write in any way they wish, and they can also sketch and draw. It's also important to make clear that you won't be marking them.
- It is important that this session is conducted in an outdoor learning space, where children have time and space to engage with and explore the natural environment outdoors. This should be a space where they can enjoy nature, so if your outdoor environment has a garden, or space for planting, this will work well, or, if you have access to a local park, woodland or green space, such as a school field or forest school area, this will be ideal. You may want to bring some specific items for the children to engage with in the space, for example:
  - large magnifying glasses
  - pooters to collect minibeasts safely
  - digital cameras to capture images from the environment to inspire ideas for art and writing
  - notebooks, paper and drawing and writing equipment to record responses to their activities
  - a ground mat to sit on if the ground is damp
- As you enter the space, ask the children to sit quietly, close their eyes, breathe in and out and be still; listening to any sounds they can hear around them. Give them time to simply relax and sit quietly in the space, modelling this yourself with the other adults. Then, ask them to open their eyes and reflect on being in the space. How do they feel being out here? How is it different from being indoors? What could they hear when they were being still and quiet? What can they see around them?
- Spend as much time as possible in the space and give plenty of freedom for the children to explore the space, engaging with each other and the nature all around them.
- Allow the children time and space to create and note down their own ideas for writing around natural elements that they are observing, experiencing or interacting in. Be clear that they are not writing the poem, but they are gathering language, vocabulary and ideas through notes and drawing.
- To help them explore their ideas prior to writing, share with the children different strategies that support them in sharing and noting ideas. This might take the form of a brainstorm, where you just write down words, phrases, lines or questions that immediately come to mind or a concept map, with a word like trees, or autumn, or a phrase like Little Robin With a Red Chest at the

centre, and then offshoots that focus on different elements like the sensory experiences of seeing these things, being in this space and the actions of feelings of the people in the setting, You might also encourage the children to visualise what they want to write about and draw a picture that shares what they see in their mind's eye, that could be the starting point for writing.

- Now give time for the children to reflect back on the ideas they've collected and think about which they feel might be most successful to take forward to a draft piece of writing in the next session.
- It is important for you as a teacher of writing to reflect on your own feelings about writing alongside the children and review ideas you have collected in your own journal. Our recent research highlights the importance of teachers as writers of poetry. Give them some time to either begin to write down ideas or to sit and think about what they might write later.
- Some children may choose to start by drawing, doodling or sketching ideas initially. Refer back to Junli Song's illustrations in the text. Her drawings have been inspired by the poetry, but as she says, she aims to create images which can tell multiple stories.
- They might start by jotting down favourite words or phrases, they may want to splurge their ideas like Kate Wakeling, they may have a line that is their starting point, like Sue Hardy-Dawson, they might make a mind map around the theme or title, like Ruth Awolola.
- Remind them that they don't have to start writing a poem straight away, they might just begin by collecting words, phrases, ideas and images that can be used later. However, if they have an idea that they want to start exploring immediately in a poetic form that is also fine.

### Session 13: Writing Own Poems, Gaining a Response

*Creation is the act of writing down and shaping ideas with a purpose, audience and form in mind. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring different ways to capture, work up and develop ideas in the journey to publication. Sharing the processes of real writers, for example their thoughts and advice and images of their journals, notebooks and sketchbooks can be a valuable part of this process, sharing how the work will often begin rough, in note form and tentative before being worked up more fully for an audience.*

*It is important to develop children as reflective writers by giving ample opportunity throughout the writing process to talk about themselves as writers, enable them to voice their views, listen to others and develop new knowledge and understanding.*

*Children's writing can be improved if they, a partner or their teacher reads it aloud at an early stage, giving it life and breath and helping the young poet see the patterns and tunes they have created. Just as an author would work with an editor, children should be given opportunities to help each other by reading their writing aloud and responding as readers. This allows them to support each other as they compose and structure their ideas. Writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them. Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then re-draft parts of their work, based on these conversations.*

- Once you have all gathered together some initial ideas, come back together to talk about how you might start to use some of these to start to shape some poetry. With younger, more inexperienced writers, you could lean on the safety of a simply structured form, like a list poem, where the children work in groups and each child contributes a line that can be used in a group poem. The lines can be written down on sentence strips, then explored and discussed together to decide what order they work best in as a whole poem.
- After the previous poetry reading exercise, however, and with more experienced and confident writers, children may be inspired to work on their own group, paired or individual poem, using ideas and techniques from poems read. Go back to reflect on the poems read with the children. Look at how each poem took the reader into a different moment linked to nature and then discuss what some of the different poems said to them, what they managed to do and how they did this. Recap on the different poetic forms the poems took, and why these were effective for the poems they were chosen for.
- Model how to start to create a poem of your own that provides a picture of a moment from your experience with nature. You might start with one single line, and look at where this takes you, then whether this line leads you to the beginning, middle or end of the poem, and how you shape the rest from there, drawing on all of the experiences you have had so far. You may want to talk through the journey of the moment you want to capture and take your reader on, starting at the beginning and working through to the end. You may want to decide if you want to create your poem as a song, a list poems, a haiku or a version of an epic poem, if any of these suit the subject you have chosen, in particular.
- When you have drafted a poem of your own, model how to read this to the children, focusing on how it sounds off the page. As you do this, talk through ideas of where to best place line and verse breaks and work through how to improve any language, vocabulary or sections that aren't working as well as they could. Ask the children to work with you as response partners, helping you to shape your thinking and explore new ideas.
- When you have modelled this with your own writing, encourage the children to go off and create some poems of their own, coming up with a first draft, then reading and exploring with an adult or response partner to read this aloud and edit and shape a finished piece.

## Session 14: Editing and Publishing Own Poems

*Publication is the means to present writing in a way that is most appropriate for the purpose, audience and form. This may be through the spoken as well as the written form and may also involve visual communication, if appropriate.*

*Prior to publication, writers should work with a supportive partner to polish the work ready for publication, proof-reading work and checking for spelling and punctuation accuracy. Materials that facilitate the most appropriate forms of publication, reflecting those used by a practising writer working in this way should be provided to give writers the full sense of the satisfaction publishing and presenting writing can bring.*

- Give further time for children to redraft any parts of their poems that they discussed with their response partner in the previous session, or to work on their poems further if they need time to do this.
- When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes so 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 you hand write it? Will you publish using ICT? What script or font will you choose? Will you make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will you illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustration sit and work together?*
- Allow plenty of time and space for the children to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly. They may wish to explore some of the printmaking techniques used by Junli Song to create accompanying images for their work. Supportive advice and resources can be found at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/art-and-design-printmaking-different-materials/zhytscw>
- When they are happy with the way their poems look on the page, think about how this could be lifted off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each child a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. *Will you perform on your own? Do you need others to support you? How will you 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.

### Session 15: Reflecting on the Collection

- Revisit the poems that have been explored throughout the sequence. Ask children what their favourite poems have been, re-read some that the class suggest or invite them to read them to the class.
- To draw together all the work done in this unit, hold a discussion about the collection as a whole. What are your most memorable poems? Why? How did the illustrations work with the poems? What have you learnt about poetry that you didn't know before? Would you be encouraged to read more poetry after studying this collection? Why? Why not?
- Compare their current thoughts around the book with their first impressions. What were you expecting? Was the poetry included in the collection what you expected it to be? Why/why not? Was there anything in the collection that surprised you?
- Come back to discuss the poems that you have heard performed by the poet, heard read aloud or read and performed yourselves and discuss the similarities and differences within them. What connected them? How did they link back to the subtitle of the book: ***Little Poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature***? What ***big ideas*** do you think were in these ***little poems***? How do you think they were ***mindful of nature***?
- Spend some time now reflecting on the poems that the children have written. What kinds of poems were your favourite to write? What did you find it easiest to write about?

- Following this, you might hold a poetry festival for children to do readings from their collections to parents or other classes in the school or display their work as part of an exhibition, including the published poems and accompanying illustrations. For the children performing at the event, ask them to consider what they learnt from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed by other poets as well as trying out ideas in their performances of poems from this collection that they will need to remember when reading their own poems.
- Display the children's own poems and artwork prominently in the library or a shared area so they can be read by a wider audience.