

Literary Genre Bibliography: Poetry

Grades K-2

Vamos, Samantha R. **The Piñata That the Farm Maiden Hung**. Charlesbridge, 2019. ISBN: 9781580897969.

Summary: In a familiar poetic format, award-winning Vamos amusingly illustrates how piñatas are made, while deliberately introducing some Spanish vocabulary and Mexican culture. The story starts as a short rhythmic verse that gradually translates terms . . . Serra's lush, warm illustrations in a saturated palette depict the enthusiastic people and animals who help make the piñata, which also will help readers pick up on the definitions of the Spanish words. The lively text and colorful art are engaging on their own, and the additional lessons in language and culture make this particularly useful for a classroom or group storytime. Instructions for making a piñata, as well as a glossary and pronunciation guide, round out this cheery, welcoming offering. (Booklist)

Curricular use: Spanish language, Mexican culture, making a piñata, stories in verse.

Audience: K-2. My students overwhelmingly voted this as their favorite poetry book!

Brown, Skilar. **Clackety Track: Poems About Trains**. Candlewick Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780763690472.

Summary: Brown has created poems that mimic and complement many different kinds of trains including freight trains, bullet trains, zoo trains, steam engines, underground trains, and more. . . Not all of the poems rhyme, but each piece reflects the trains' characteristics with their words, use of space, and design. Illustrator Christoph has created a beautiful homage to the world of trains with bright colors and bold double-page images. The steam engine fills the page while the bullet train looks like it is speeding out of sight. A spread of train facts, cleverly written upon the train cars, completes this wild ride. (SLJ)

Curricular use: Trains, modes of travel, poetry

Audience: K-2.

Grades 3-4

Miller, Rhett. **No More Poems!: A Book in Verse that Just Gets Worse**. Little, Brown, and Company, 2019. ISBN: 9780316416528.

Summary: Acclaimed singer-songwriter Rhett Miller teams up with Caldecott Medalist and bestselling artist Dan Santat in a riotous collection of irreverent poems for modern families. In the tradition of Shel Silverstein, these poems bring a fresh new twist to the classic dilemmas of childhood as well as a perceptive eye to the foibles of modern family life. Full of clever wordplay and bright visual gags--and toilet humor to spare--these twenty-three rhyming poems make for an ideal read-aloud experience. Taking on the subjects of a bullying baseball coach and annoying little brothers with equally sly humor, renowned lyricist Rhett Miller's clever verses will have the whole family cackling. (From the publisher)

Curricular use: Read alouds, Family life, Humor, Poetry

Audience: K-5

Salas, Laura Purdie. **Lion of the Sky: Haiku for All Seasons.** Millbrook Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781512498097.

Summary: A sleek bird kite flown by a child in springtime kicks off this poetic collection of seasonal objects, animals, and activities. Six poems per season invite audience observation and enjoyment. First-time readers may not realize that each haiku is also a riddle with a list of answers found at the end of the book. Only in her concluding author's note does Salas describe the structure she calls "riddle-ku." Readers are meant to guess the identity of the non-human narrator in each poem. . . Simple instructions then encourage readers to compose their own riddle-ku. The expansive acrylic scenes featuring children, animals and/or objects offer visual cues about the narrators. . . (SLJ)

Curricular use: Haiku, Poetry, Seasons, Riddles

Audience: Grades 1-4

Grades 5-6

Alexander, Kwame. **The Undefeated.** Versify, 2019. ISBN: 9781328780966.

Summary: Past and present are quilted together in this innovative overview of black Americans' triumphs and challenges in the United States. Alexander's poetry possesses a straightforward, sophisticated, steady rhythm that, paired with Nelson's detail-oriented oil paintings, carries readers through generations chronicling "the unforgettable," "the undeniable," "the unflappable," and "the righteous marching ones," alongside "the unspeakable" events that shape the history of black Americans. The illustrator layers images of black creators, martyrs, athletes, and neighbors onto blank white pages, patterns pages with the bodies of slaves stolen and traded, and extends a memorial to victims of police brutality like Sandra Bland and Michael Brown past the very edges of a double-page spread. Each movement of Alexander's poem is a tribute to the ingenuity and resilience of black people in the U.S. . . . The book ends with a glossary of the figures acknowledged in the book . . . (Kirkus)

Curricular use: African Americans, US history, poetry, Bravery, Resilience

Audience: Grades 3-6 **A five-star book, plus the Caldecott winner and a Newbery Honor book**

Bulion, Leslie. **Superlative Birds.** Peachtree Publishers, 2019. ISBN: 9781561459513.

Summary: This combination poetry/science book successfully blends language arts and science into an informative and fun collection of poems about the fastest, smallest, biggest, and most interesting birds. Each page includes a short poem about one of the most notable birds in the world, commenting on what makes them miraculous and a standout, followed by a few paragraphs of additional background information. Each poem is structurally catered to the particular bird it highlights, such as a poem in the shape of a penguin, or a loud free verse poem for the loudest birds . . . beautiful illustrations combine cartoonish and anatomically correct representations with bright colors that pop to make this a treat anyone can enjoy. The notes section explains the structures and rhyming patterns of each poem and helps readers better understand the poems' forms and styles. Also included is a short glossary of terms and reference guide for resources on birding and bird watching. (SLJ)

Curricular use: Birds, Bird Watching, Animals, Poetry, Science

Audience: Grades 3-7

Additional Great Poetry Books

Heard, Georgia. **Boom! Bellow! Bleat! Animal Poems for Two or More Voices.** Wordsong, 2019. ISBN: 9781620915202.

Summary: Animals of many kinds describe the sounds that they make in poems intended to be read aloud by two or more readers. Frogs and toads set the record straight about the sounds they make: "I am a frog./ I am a toad./ We don't say ribbit!/ We say.../quonk / waaa/ jug-o-rum/ beeeee/ peep." Other animal subjects include fish, a rattlesnake ("Stay/ away;/ I'm/ warning/ you"). DeWitt's digital collages show fine detail in the animals' features, depicting how their physical characteristics range as widely as their sounds. The use of onomatopoeia all but guarantees a lively group reading experience, while Heard's back matter includes engaging facts about the biodiverse subjects. (Publisher's Weekly Annex)

Curricular use: Animal sounds, Poetry

Audience: Grades 1-4

Duncan, Alice Faye. **A Song for Gwendolyn Brooks.** Sterling Children's Books, 2019. ISBN: 9781454930884.

Summary: Poet laureate Gwendolyn Brooks's talent with words was evident from a very early age, as this lyrical biography reveals. Against the thrumming backdrop of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, with its pulse of trains and blues, Brooks's story is that of a child whose parents believed in her. It is also the story of a gifted girl who learned to believe in herself despite the teasing of neighborhood bullies and despite the doubts of her teachers. . . Brooks went on to become the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize. Duncan presents the facts of Brooks's life through concise, powerful biographical poems arranged under Roman numeral headings, distinguishing her own poetry from interspersed poetry by Brooks. Gordon's spare but affecting illustrations flush the pages with warm rose gold tones, plums, browns, and lavender. Strength and exultation come through with each expressive scene. An author's note, timeline, suggested readings and bibliography all add to the informative nature and usefulness of this text. (SLJ)

Curricular use: Biographies, African American Poets, Women Poets, Pulitzer Prize, Ethnic and Regional Culture

Audience: Grades 1-4

Wolf, Allan. **The Day the Universe Exploded my Head.** Candlewick Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780763680251.

Summary: Hang on tight for a raucous bounce through the solar system and back -- propelled by funny, fanciful, factually sound poems and exuberant illustrations. . . Ever wonder what the sun has to say about being the closest star to Earth? Or what Pluto has gotten up to since being demoted to a dwarf planet? Or where rocket ships go when they retire? Listen closely, because maybe, just maybe, your head will explode, too. With poetry that is equal parts accurate and entertaining -- and illustrations that are positively out of this world -- this book will enthrall amateur stargazers and budding astrophysicists as it reveals many of the wonders our universe holds. Space travelers in search of more information will find notes about the poems, a glossary, and a list of resources at the end. (Publisher)

Curricular use: Astronomy, Planets
Audience: Grades 3-6