

Poetry Now

“Sorry” or Apology Poem

I Got Carried Away

(to Kyle)

Kyle, I'm sorry
for hitting you so hard in Dodge Ball.
I just really get carried away
in situations like that.
Kids screaming and ducking,
Coach bellowing,
all those red rubber balls
thumping like heartbeats
against the walls and ceiling,
blinking back and forth
like stop lights
(that really mean
go,
 Go,
 GO!)

See,
I even got
carried away
in this poem.

--from Reuben

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*This is a “sorry” poem from my book **This Is Just To Say: Poems of Apology And Forgiveness**. The point of this poem is, of course, to apologize, but also to explain as convincingly as possibly WHY you did what you did—so that you will be forgiven.*

1. Look back into your past. What do you feel bad about? What do you feel, gleefully, that you got away with? What do you do that really irritates people? Choose one of these things—it can be from yesterday or when you were three years old. (You can also write from someone else's point of view—your dog's, or your screaming baby brother's. There's a poem in my book from a hamster's point of view, apologizing for biting someone.)

2. Begin with a simple apology: *"I am so sorry, Sis, / for stealing your Halloween candy."*

3. Now you've got to make your reader understand the temptation involved—and the key to this is sensory detail. What were you seeing, smelling, feeling? *"My candy was long gone. / Yours was lying hidden in your closet, / like a treasure chest waiting to be plundered. / I could taste the smooth chocolate / melting in my mouth."*

4. Explain exactly what happened, and how you felt afterwards. *"I crept toward your room, my heart pounding . . . / and there it was, behind your socks! / Crinkling yellow, red, and blue wrappers! / I gorged, and then stopped, appalled / at what I had done."*

5. End with a plea for forgiveness. *"Please forgive me for being your greedy big sister."* And if you're really brave, give your poem to the person you wronged. Maybe she'll write back!

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