

POETRY NOW!

Riddle poem

Here is a poem from my book, *Butterfly Eyes and Other Poems of the Meadow* (the poems in this book are all riddles). It is about a plant that grows in the meadow. Can you guess what it is? If you can't, scroll down to the bottom of this page.

Heavenly

My pods are famous, of course:
soft green purses
on slim racks.

And my leaves: monarchs
adore them.
They plant their babies
and just fly away!

But have you ever
seen me *bloom*?
At high noon
on a midsummer's day
when the pavement is steeped in heat
and the cicadas are screaming,
follow my heady perfume
and you will track me down:
see my
heavenly
 lavender
 muffins
baking in the sun.

What am I?

JOYCE SIDMAN

Poetry Idea

This is called a Riddle Poem. The poet tries to give just enough clues for the reader to guess the subject of the poem—but not too many, or it's too easy. Here's how to do it:

1. Think of an object. It can be something in your house or classroom. It can be an interesting plant or animal (let's say, a snake).
2. Study your object carefully (library books with pictures can help). Brainstorm words associated with that object—the way it looks, moves, what it eats, where it grows (slither, thin, wavy, no legs, feels with forked tongue, venom, scales, patterns, smooth, sleek, silent, beady eyes, eats mice & frogs).
3. Brainstorm metaphors that describe your object (rope, hose, string, wavy stick, whip).
4. Then, begin writing your poem, taking the voice of your object, and using all the good ideas & words you've just brainstormed: (*I am the rope that comes alive, / whipping through the autumn grass. / Scaly yet smooth. / Legless yet quick. / I swallow frogs whole . . .*)
5. Read it to someone else and see if they can guess your riddle!

("Heavenly" is about milkweed)

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