

**CELEBRATING JOYCE SIDMAN,
Winner of the 2013 NCTE Award for
Excellence in Poetry for Children**

INTRODUCTION

NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children

Website: <http://www.ncte.org/awards/poetry>

Mission:

- To recommend on a regular basis every two years a living American poet to the NCTE Executive Committee for the [NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children](#) in recognition of his or her aggregate work;
- to sustain the collection of poetry books of award winners, past and future, in the [University of Minnesota, Kerlan Collection](#);
- to recognize and foster excellence in children's poetry by encouraging its publication; and
- to explore ways to acquaint teachers and children with poetry through such means as publications, programs, and displays.

Criteria for award

- literary merit (art and craft of aggregate work--as poet or anthologist)
- poet's or anthologist's contributions
- evolution of the poet's or anthologist's work
- appeal to children

Spotlight on NCTE Award Poets

The Spotlight series, created by author Renee LaTulippe with Lee Bennett Hopkins, is a brief and personal look at the recipients of the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. <http://www.nowaterriver.com/poetry-friday-spotlight-on-ncte-poets-david-mccord-with-lee-bennett-hopkins/>

NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children Recipients

Joyce Sidman, 2013 website: http://www.joycesidman.com/	Valerie Worth, 1991
J. Patrick Lewis, 2011	Arnold Adoff, 1988
Lee Bennett Hopkins, 2009	Lilian Moore, 1985
Nikki Grimes, 2006	John Ciardi, 1982
Mary Ann Hoberman, 2003	Eve Merriam, 1981
X.J. Kennedy, 2000	Myra Cohn Livingston, 1980
Eloise Greenfield, 1997	Karla Kuskin, 1979
Barbara Juster Esbensen, 1994	Aileen Fisher, 1978
	David McCord, 1977

PART 1

Joyce Sidman Voice, Heart, Memory: Tapping the Power of Poetry

Books by Joyce Sidman
<i>What the Heart Knows: Chants, Charms & Blessings</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013
<i>Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011
<i>Dark Emperor and Other Poems of the Night</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010
<i>Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010
<i>Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors</i> , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010
<i>This Is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 2007
<i>Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 2006
<i>Meow Ruff: A Story in Concrete Poetry</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 2006
<i>Song of the Water Boatman & Other Pond Poems</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 2005
<i>The World According to Dog: Poems and Teen Voices</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 2003
<i>Eureka! Poems About Inventors</i> , Millbrook Press, 2002
<i>Just Us Two: Poems About Animal Dads</i> , Millbrook Press, 2000

PART 2

NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children Committee 2013-2015

- Darcy H. Bradley, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA
- Kathryn Button, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
- Lesley Colabucci, Millersville University, Millersville, PA
- Mary Lee Hahn, Daniel Wright Elementary School, Columbus, OH
- Nancy L. Hadaway, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX
- Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, Holland, NY
- Terrell A. Young, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

Integrating Poetry in the Classroom

A Few Poem Sharing Ideas

- Poetry Friday
- Include poetry in science, social studies, math
- Find a poem your book character would love
- Holiday poetry
- Write poetry all year long (not just in April)
- Pair poems with videos that build schema (poem about geese flying south with video of Vs of geese)
- Memorize poems
- Poem in Your Pocket Day

- Give poems as gifts
- Include poems as part of classroom rituals – birthdays, beginnings of days, starting seasons...
- Find poems to match content area subjects. Ask children to help do this too.
- Write a poem after writing in a different genre. For example, write a poem about Saturn after writing a report about Saturn. Or write a poem after writing a personal narrative. Notice how the form of poem adds to your thinking about the subject.
- Perform poetry for each other and for other classes.
- Celebrate poetry by practicing reading and then recording favorite poems.
- Make a class poem scrapbook of favorites, illustrated by students. Reread in those short snips of time.
- Read poems by a “Poet of the Month”, simply hanging a photo, a couple of quotes, and a few poems by this person. Talk about how the “Poets of the Month” are alike and different.

Choral reading formats

- Everyone reads the poem in unison
- Students join in on a repeated line or refrain
- Call and response with two student groups
- Multiple groups, multiple stanzas
- Individual solo lines or line-a-child
- Cumulative or crescendo/decrescendo
- Two voices

What the Heart Knows: Chants, Charms & Blessings

After listening to and reading poems from *What the Heart Knows*, review the way Sidman organized her poems into topics. Write and organize a set of class poems around topics the class agrees on.

A Few Ideas for Writing

Open Eyes and Hearts – Pay Attention to Beauty and Mystery

- Write in notebooks, listing where the magic lives in life...see if a poem will grow
- Sit quietly, listening to your own heart, writing about what your heart knows
- Read a poem from this collection aloud, then everyone quietly write. See what resonates differently with different writers. There is no right way. Just listen to what thoughts the poem invites in you.
- List some daily objects and encounters. Next to each, list if it might have its own chant, charm, or blessing.
- Jot about our own loves and longings before beginning a poem
- When an enchanted moment happens in class, stop and write a chant, a charm, a blessing. Allow inspiration in the window in this way, when it surprises us.

- Try New Approaches to Writing – Notice and Think about Structure and Stance
 - Write TO Something or Someone
 - “Invitation to Lost Things”
 - “Chant Against the Dark”
 - “Chant to Repair a Friendship”
 - Write a Mask Poem AS Something, Imagining the Kindnesses in Nature
 - “Blessing from the Stars”
 - “Lake’s Promise”
 - Try a LIST poem with a repeated stem
 - “I Find Peace”
 - “Illness: A Conversation”
 - Ask Questions and Keep Asking
 - “Where is My Body?”
 - “Lament for Teddy”
 - Write a Back and Forth Poem
 - “Silly Love Song”
 - “Blessing on the Downtrodden”
 - Build a poem from DESCRIPTION
 - “Blessing on the Curl of Cat”
- Listen to Joyce’s Language – Stop and Admire
 - You can study everything from unusual verbs to rhyme to repetition to glorious metaphor by reading and rereading the poems in *Chants, Charms, and Blessings*. Not only will this book lift your spirits, if read carefully and as a writer, it will lift your craft.

This Is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness

- Exploring cause and effect relationships
- Vocabulary: assaulting, transgressions, boisterous
- Writing similes
- Letter writing
- Comprehension strategies such as questioning, inferring and visualizing while reading

Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow

- Read, read, read, poetry aloud
- Read each poem, at least twice...listening for the rhyme & rhythm, and then listening to Sidman’s choice words.
- Feature a poem a week – try a “Poetry Friday” – introduce “Heavenly” (Sidman, 2006) using either a Smart Board or chart with the words printed (revisit chart often for shared reading). On Monday distribute copies of the Friday poem for the students to reread and add to a personal *poetry folder*.

- Illustrate your poems. Use scratchboard paper and either paperclips or a pen with nibs to create illustrations like those of Beth Krommes.
- Discuss and share – have students meet in small groups to share and discuss their favorite lines or favorite words from the poems, or their answers to Sidman’s poetry riddles.
- Favorite words – reread a poem, have students listen and record their favorite words, phrases on index cards. Discuss the words. Post the words on “our favorite words” chart. From “In the Almost—Light” students selected to post, “leaf-crisp air” and “jewels of the dawn.”

Song of the Water Boatman & Other Pond Poems

- Good times to use *Song of the Water Boatman* -- before a field trip to a river or pond, during a life sciences unit, as a mentor text for writing poetry to go along with research writing.

Readers Theatre: A Different Way to Experience and Appreciate Poetry

As the students enter the classroom the soft sound of spring peepers can be heard (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shl4COz5_FU Spring Peepers Sing at Night). What is making that shrill sound? What does it mean? The students have lots of questions and are eager to learn more! They gather together and are introduced to Joyce Sidman’s poem, “Listen for Me,” from her collection, *Song of the Water Boatman*. With the soft sound of the spring peepers still playing in the background, the poem is read aloud for the first time. The students want to know more about this spring amphibian. Sidman provides a short paragraph of scientific information on the book’s side bar, perfect for answering some of the questions the students ask. From the paragraph we learn that spring peepers are tiny, only one inch long, and that the high-pitched peeps heard on the video come from the male’s balloon-like throat sac.

The viewing of a second video, allows the students to see the actual size and movement of a spring peeper ((<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oSNzxN3kfo> Spring Peeper – Information Piece with video footage of peepers). Our poetry experience continues. Students receive a typed version of the poem organized in a Readers Theatre-like format, with lines and stanzas marked for reading by different groups of students. After a few practice rounds, the student groups position themselves around the room and the performance begins. After two readings, the students agree, Sidman’s poem, presented as a Readers Theatre, filled our classroom with the sound of spring peepers!

The World According to Dog: Poems and Teen Voices

Compare and contrast two or more poems on the same topic (e.g., dogs, love, seasons) using a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram. Compare the various ways poets can write about a similar topic yet use rhyme, rhythm, voice, point of view, word choices, and poetry style/format to unique effect.

REFERENCES

- *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School* by Georgia Heard
- *Knock at a Star* by X.J. Kennedy and Dorothy Kennedy
- *Pass the Poetry Please* by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- *Poems Please: Sharing Poetry with Children* by Bill Moore, David Booth
- *The Poetry Friday Anthology* (K-5 and 6-8 editions) compiled by Sylvia Vardell and Janet Wong

Notable Poetry List articles:

- Vardell, S.M., Oxley, P., Heard, G., Kristo, J., Spivey, G.W., Wong, J., and Woolsey, D. (2007). Best poetry books for children 2003-2006. *Language Arts*, 84, (6), 552-557.
- Ward, B. A., Young, T. A., Napoli, M. P., Magliaro, E., & Dotlich, R. K. (2011). Tasting seasoned words of joy: Notable poetry published in 2010. *Language Arts*, 88(6), 459-467.
- Ward, B. A., Dotlich, R. K., McNair, J. C., Magliaro, E., Napoli, M. P., & Young, T. A. (2012). Poetry for all times, seasons, and reasons: 2012 Notable Poetry titles. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 48(1), 22-31.
- Ward, B. A., Dotlich, R. K., McNair, J. C., Magliaro, E., Napoli, M., & Young, T. A. (2013). Notable Poetry titles to ease into the curriculum: The 2013 Notable Poetry List. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 49(1), 46-57.

Webliography

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=10274&a=1>, site for using *This Is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness*

Links to Notable Poetry Lists:

- 2007:** <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0846-july07/LA0846Childrens.pdf>
- 2008:** <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0856-july08/LA0856Childrens.pdf>
- 2009:** <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0866-july09/LA0866Childrens.pdf>
- 2010:** <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0876-jul2010/LA0876Childrens.pdf>
- 2011:** <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0886-jul2011/LA0886Childrens.pdf>