**POETRYCLASS: FRESH IDEAS FOR POETRY LEARNING FROM THE POETRY SOCIETY**

**CAT IN THE WINDOW**

BY BRIAN MORSE

This activity works just as well with children from Reception and Y1 to Y6, although written responses in the older classes are usually much more varied. Older children may write with deliberate simplicity, elaborate on the original idea or subvert it entirely!

**Viewpoint**

The ear and the eye of the model poems are a cat’s, but the point of the poems is the variety of sounds the cat hears and the sights it sees, rather than the cat itself. I’ve found that other animals usually work less well because the writer concentrates on the animal rather than what it hears or sees: a series of jungle or zoo sights and sounds can be really monotonous! On the other hand, a poem about a pet rabbit and its experience of the night garden might make a vivid frightening poem. Before starting to write, read aloud the examples overleaf as inspiration.

**Be specific and imaginative**

Look at the poet’s tip and encourage the children to locate their poems in a particular place and time. Tell them that the cat can hear loud and quiet sounds. It can see and hear things that are far away or close by, inside or outside, high up in the sky or underground. It may hear the sun shout ‘I’ve got my hat on today!’ or a frog croak ‘Give me a kiss!’ It can hear people think.

**Developing ideas**

Ask them to think about who or what makes the sounds, rather than the sound itself – something human, something to do with the weather, another animal, something mechanical. Talk about imagery and making word pictures, and encourage the children to add detail to flesh out their descriptions.

**Revise and structure**

Now ask the children to look at the poem as a whole and make any revisions, encouraging them to be exact with their imagery. Some children like to shape the poem with a narrative progression through the day, but many also like to stay with ‘perfecting’ the individual images, in an almost haiku-like way.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**Y4**

- To write poems based on personal or imagined experience, linked to poems read; to experiment with powerful and expressive verbs
- To develop use of settings in own writing, making use of work on adjectives and figurative language; to write own examples of descriptive, expressive language based on those read

**Y6**

- To write own poems experimenting with active verbs and personification; to produce revised poems for reading aloud individually
CAT IN THE WINDOW

Cat In The Window
What do you hear?

Rain pouring from the gutters,
The wind tossing clouds across the sky,
Water gurgling down a drain,
The TV aerial creaking above the roof.

Next door’s dog shaking itself,
A crow fighting to cross from field to field,
Car windscreen wipers working hard,
A little stream tumbling over stones,
A patch of mud giving a glug of pleasure

Cat In The Window
What do you see?

Cloud, wind, birds,
a bird in a tree.
The daffodils shivering
in the February breeze,
A puddle in the road
beginning to freeze.

Snow on the wind
Dusk in a cloud.
Leaves in a frenzy,
The bird’s head cowed.
Winter – though the sun shines.
Blizzard, and the north wind’s whine.

YEAR 5 CLASS

BRIAN MORSE
CAT IN THE WINDOW

Imagine there’s a cat sitting in a window looking out.
Or it might be outside on a wall or high in a tree.
What can it see? What can it hear?

POET’S TIP
Think about whether it’s day or night and what
the weather’s like so that you can set your poem
in a particular place and time.

NAME:
CAT IN THE WINDOW

Shape your ideas into a poem in the cat below, and complete the title.

CAT IN THE WINDOW
WHAT DO YOU ...................?