



National Poetry Day in Scotland

Thursday 3 October 2013

'Water' Poem

'What Is the Pond Doing?' by Diana Hendry



Teaching
Resources:
Primary
Schools

The Poet and Her Work

Diana Hendry is a poet, short story writer and the author of many children's books. She grew up by the sea and has worked as a journalist, English teacher and tutor in Creative Writing at the University of Bristol. Her poetry has won a number of awards including first prize in the 1996 Housman Society Competition. From 1997-1998 she was Writer in Residence at Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary. She lives in Edinburgh.

She has published more than thirty books for children, including *Harvey Angell* which won a Whitbread Award in 1991 and *You Can't Kiss It Better*, set in Edinburgh (2003). She has also published a collection of poems for children, *No Homework Tomorrow* (Glowworm, 2003).

A number of her short stories for adults have been published in anthologies and read on Radio 4. Her collections of poetry for adults, *Making Blue* (1995) and *Borderers* (2001) are published by Peterloo, and *Twelve Lilts: Psalms & Responses* (2003) by Mariscat Press. With Tow Pow, in a series of poetic 'challenges' she has published *Sparks!* (2005, also Mariscat Press). A third full collection, *Late love and other whodunnits*, was published in 2008.

She edited, with Hamish Whyte, *Poems United: A Commonwealth Anthology* (2007).

The Poem

'What Is the Pond Doing?' is included in Michael Rosen's *A to Z: The Best Children's Poetry from Agard to Zephaniah* (Puffin, 2009), edited by Michael Rosen.

Reading The Poem – Notes And Questions >



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Which line or lines in the poem

- describes the sounds the pond makes?
- describe the pond at night?
- describes trees that grow by the pond?
- refer to weather?
- refer to food?

What are 'stinky skunk cabbages'?

Which is your favourite line in the poem? Why?

What does the last word of the poem, 'responding' mean?
Why do you think the poet has ended the poem with this word?

Discussion

Think about a pond you have visited – near your school, or your home.

What is the pond's name? (If it doesn't have a name, once you have answered the questions below, maybe you will be able to give it one!)

- What kind of birds do you see there?
- What kind of plants do you see there?
- What kind of sounds do you hear there?
- What do you see in the water?
- What do you do there?

Think about the pond in different weathers.

- What do you notice most when it is sunny?
- What do you notice most when it is cloudy or rainy?

Think about the pond in different seasons.

- What do you notice most in spring and summer?
- What do you notice most in autumn and winter?

If you have been pond-dipping, what kind of creatures have you discovered?

Research >

2.

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY
PRIMARY SCHOOLS TEACHING RESOURCES



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The poem mentions the sun and the rain.

Find out about the Water Cycle, using the Scottish Water education resource on The Water Cycle at www.scottishwater.co.uk

Find out what these words mean:

- evaporation
- condensation
- precipitation

In Scotland, it is unusual for ponds to dry up completely, or to fill up so much they cause a flood. Why is this?

Creative Activity

1. Seasons

If there is a pond near your school which is easy to get to, write a poem about the pond at different times of year.

You could start by writing a summer verse in August, and then write an autumn verse in November, a winter verse in February, and a spring verse in May.

Try to write about the same sorts of things in each verse, but notice how they change through the year.

You could think about

- sounds
- colours
- light and shade
- trees
- shrubs and bushes
- flowers
- birds
- insects
- the sky
- the weather
- people

After you have written each verse, make a note in your diary or on a calendar, so you know when it's time to write the next one!

Continued >



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2. Many Waters

Rather than writing about a pond, write a poem about a different kind of water. For example, you could write a poem with one of these titles:

- What is the Rain Doing?
- What is the Burn Doing?
- What is the Loch Doing?
- What is the Puddle Doing?
- What is the River Doing?
- What is the Waterfall Doing?
- What is the Canal Doing?
- What is the Sea Doing?

Think about the different ways the pond is described in Diana Hendry's poem, and use them to find answers to the question your title asks:

- movement
- colour
- light and dark
- birds
- plants
- food
- drawings
- sound
- dreams
- sun, moon and stars

If you choose to write about, say, a waterfall, you could write a series of lines about it beginning like this:

If you listen you can hear the waterfall...
 If you look at the waterfall you can see...
 If you reach out your hand you can feel the waterfall...

The waterfall falls like...
 The waterfall is as white as a...
 The waterfall dreams of...

The waterfall looks at the sun, and thinks...
 The waterfall looks at the moon, and thinks...
 The waterfall looks at the stars, and thinks...

The birds like / don't like the waterfall because...
 The trees like / don't like the waterfall because...
 The fishes like / don't like the waterfall because...

The waterfall is pretending to...
 The waterfall is drawing...
 The waterfall is hiding...

Don't worry if you can't complete all of the lines. Once you have written what you can, think about which lines are the best, and just keep those. Then think about the best order for your lines.

Further Reading and Links >



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Further Reading and Links

Books

Hendry, Diana: *No Homework Tomorrow*
(Broxburn: Glowworm, 2003)

*Michael Rosen's A to Z: The Best Children's Poetry
from Agard to Zephaniah* (London: Puffin, 2009)

Websites

www.spl.org.uk/poetry/poets/diana-hendry
Biography, Poems (including 'What Is the Pond Doing?'),
In the Library, Links

www.dianahendry.co.uk

[http://fileservers.booktrust.org.uk/usr/resources/
251/a-z-of-poetry-teaching-sequence.pdf](http://fileservers.booktrust.org.uk/usr/resources/251/a-z-of-poetry-teaching-sequence.pdf)
Booktrust Teaching Sequence for Michael Rosen's
A to Z: The Best Children's Poetry from Agard to Zephaniah

NPD poem posters, teaching resources & films:

www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk

Explore Scottish Water's education materials:

www.scottishwater.co.uk

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