



EXPLORING 'WHAT SPRING SAYS' BY CARYS SHANNON

Key topics: Seasons · Personification · Class poem · Individual writing

Resource written by Rachel Piercey

Getting to know the poem

Ask your pupils to sit with their eyes closed and read the poem out loud to them. Ask them which parts stuck in their minds and why. There are no wrong answers!

Display the poem (see below) or hand out individual copies and read it again. What does the word "YES" suggest about Spring as a season? What other words or phrases might nature call out in Springtime?

Do they agree that Spring is "the best place to be" or do they prefer another season?

There is movement in the poem, as well as speech. Pick out the movement words together.

Personification

Carys gives nature a human voice in her poem. Recap personification as a poetic technique, where non-human objects are given human characteristics. Why do they think Carys chose the word "shouting"? We don't normally think of flowers, blossom, grass and bees as shouting! But poets like to surprise their readers.

Can they find another example of personification in the poem, where something in nature is given a human emotion?

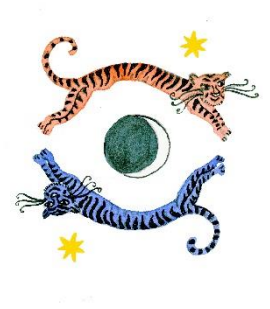
The Four Seasons

Gather ideas on the board for what nature would say in the other three seasons. It could be a single word or a short phrase e.g. 'Play', 'Green', 'Relax', 'Slow Down', 'Crackle and Squelch'...

How would the plants and animals say these words?

Would they shout?

Would they whisper, sing, laugh, sigh, hiss...?



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Class poem

Choose one of the seasons all together, then ask the class for ideas of plants, animals, objects and events particularly associated with it. They don't have to be natural objects – you could include a bucket and spade in summer, for instance.

Together, choose one of the seasonal alternatives to “YES!” which you noted down earlier, then choose *how* this will be said, i.e. one of the alternatives to “shouting”.

Now use these words, and the most appropriate seasonal items from the list on the board, to create your poem, following Carys's pattern. Don't worry about rhyming (or rhyming all the way throughout) – focus instead on interesting images and word choice.

You could follow Carys's pattern in the last four lines or choose your own way to finish the poem. Carys's speaker makes it personal, bringing “me” into the last stanza. Perhaps you'd like to bring in the whole class?

Will you describe your season as “the best place to be” or is there another phrase, or another adjective, that seems fitting for your new poem?

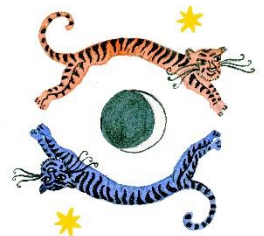
Individual writing

Invite the children to write their own poems, inspired by 'What Spring Says'. Decide if you will offer them a choice of seasons, or if you'd like them to focus on the season you are currently in.

Encourage them to redraft, scribble out and change things – poets almost never get their poem right first time and their notebooks tend to be very messy! When they're ready to write it up neatly, you may like to use the print-out template below. What will they choose as their title?

Explain that if you have written a poem inspired by someone else, it's important to acknowledge them – and the easiest way to do this is with a short line underneath the title (see below).

We would love to see what your pupils come up with! Tag us on Twitter @tygertygermag with a picture or email us on tygertygermagazine@gmail.com for some personalised feedback.



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after 'What Spring Says' by Carys Shannon

by





What Spring Says

by Carys Shannon

Spring is everything
shouting YES!

the flowers to the sun
turning up their heads

the blossom to the wind
so happy to be spread

the grass to the rain
as it shoots up tall

the bees to the pollen
most important of all

and me to the world
and the world to me
saying yes to spring
the best place to be

