

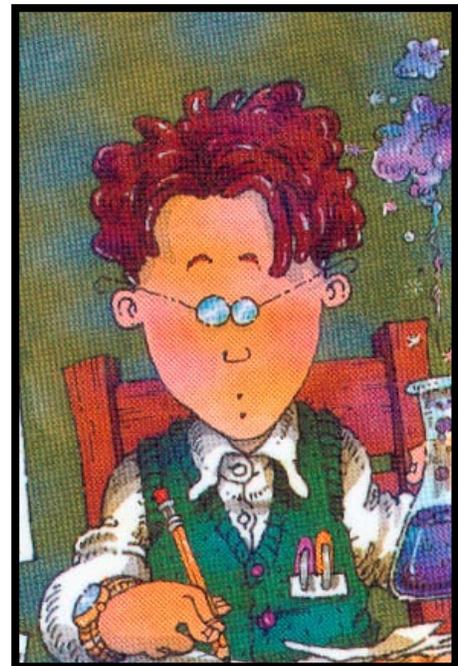
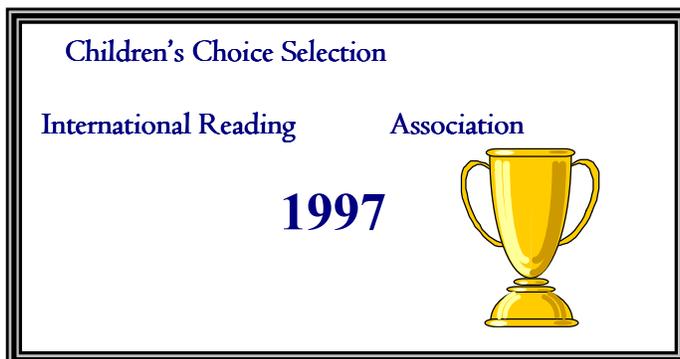
# The Goof Who Invented Homework

and Other School Poems

*by Kalli Dakos*

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## Comments by the Author



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# The Goof Who Invented Homework

## *and Other School Poems*

by Kalli Dakos

illustrated by Denise Brunkus



Children's Choice Selection  
1997

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## Comments by the Author

### Have a Great School Year!

*-imaginative poem*

-I love to make objects talk -- to give them a voice

-this poem is in *free verse* -- I did not follow any set pattern like a limerick or a haiku -- the poem does not rhyme

### Ms. Smackaroo

-there are so many teachers and bus drivers who KISS naughty children - I know this is true because I have met them

-this poem has rhyming couplets -- two lines in a row rhyme

### Announcements

-one morning I was visiting a school near my home, and I couldn't believe the announcements

-that night I wrote this poem

-it seemed to work best with rhyming couplets -- two lines in a row that rhyme

-I REALLY did visit a school once where the children all had umbrellas at their desks because the roof leaked

### There's Nothing Special In My Bag, Except

-students bring INCREDIBLE things to school in their book bags

-you might want to discuss the strangest things your students have brought to school in *their* book bags

-this is a poetic play -- students and teachers can act out the parts

-lines two and four rhyme in the beginning stanzas

-notice the change in the form of the writing when Jim speaks for the first time

-this is to be read very quickly, therefore I left out the line breaks

-students might want to write their own poetic plays or book bag poem

## A Few Words from Your Test

- this poem is in free verse
- imagery is a way of painting pictures with words
- students might want to create their own images for tests
- example: a test is like a torture chamber
- a test is like a sunny day



## Four Wishes

- every summer I visit Aspen, Colorado, and the memory of the beautiful Rocky Mountains, lakes, trees, and wildflowers sustains me through another winter in the big city where I live
- I wrote the part of this poem about the squirrel at the top of Aspen Mountain
- do you and your students have a special place in nature to go and rest -- a tree, garden, lake or small plot of earth somewhere?
- students might want to write their own *nature poems*

## The Teacher's Head

- this is a crazy, imaginative mini-play
- as you can tell, I love to write *imaginative poems*
- this poem has rhyming couplets
- I really believe this poem would be fun to act out with giant cardboard heads, but whenever students and I have tried to do so, we get the heads all mixed up
- maybe *your* class will be able to figure this out

## Countdown to Recess

- I'm sure that you and your students have all counted down the minutes and seconds until FREEDOM!
- the short sentences give this poem a sense of urgency

## Twenty Years

- this poem is fun to act out with cheer leading pom poms
- I love the illustration
- there REALLY have been teachers who have spent twenty or thirty years in kindergarten or other grade levels
- they DO deserve a cheer

## The Secret

- every second line in this poem rhymes
- we always love poems about keeping (and not keeping) secrets
- this is a true story a student told me after a poetry presentation

## Murder in the Fourth Grade

- I didn't think my editor would let me keep this title, but she did
- I am the real murderer and Sunny is the little goldfish I had at home when I was in fourth grade

- I did not take care of him, and one day I found him floating on the top of his fishbowl and I was heartbroken
- my sisters and I had a funeral for Sunny
- I never forgot him, and when a goldfish died in a classroom in my school, I had to write a poem
- sometimes when I write long, serious poems, I don't even try to make them rhyme
- I just start writing in *free verse*

## Our Custodian's a Poet

- there is a wonderful custodian in a school in Pennsylvania who writes poetry about school, just like I do
- he sends his poems to me all the time, and sometimes when I visit schools, I share them
- I wrote this poem in his honor

## Ooooooooooooooooooooo

- I love ghost poems
- this one is fun to read with a microphone that makes a spooky voice
- I had a lot of fun with the letter, "o" in this poem
- my editor and I had to count them all up to keep them consistent throughout the lines

## I'm the Ghosty

- this poem uses poetic license-- as a poet you can make up words, as long as they fit the context of what you are saying, and as long as you don't do it too often
- I made up the word "mosty" to rhyme with the word "ghosty"

## There's a Bee on My Spelling

- I had fun playing with:  
B (the mark)  
bee (the insect)
- my editor added the last line, and I love it

## Cries from the Lunch Box

- it is so much fun to make things talk
- use your wildest imaginations for these poems



## My Lunch is Buzzing

- students and teachers have told me stories of lunches that disappear, move, explode and buzz
- I can just see a student attacking his lunch with insecticide

## Back Away! Back Away!

- this poem was inspired by two people:  
*My friend, Carol, who always did her school work even though she was dying of kidney failure. I always wondered why and I discovered the answer by writing this poem.*

*Ryan White, a child who died of aids. When he went back to school, after he had been diagnosed with aids, some of the students yelled "Back away! Back away!"*  
**-I usually write my saddest poems in free verse**

## **Lucky**

-I feel this way about some of the teachers I had when I was going to school  
-repetition of "Out of all" gives this poem a nice beat

## **Imaginary Friends**

-this is another poem written in *free verse*  
-imaginative poems are my favorites to write

## **Thanksgiving**

-my editor asked me to write a Thanksgiving poem, and this one popped into my mind  
-so much of it is based on things that have happened in my schools  
- a rooster really did escape from a classroom one day  
-my daughter has a band aid collection

## **Thank You for the Nots**

-poets try to look at things differently  
-we never thank people for the things they *didn't do*, so I thought I would in this poem  
-I have a coffin bank  
-I put the names of my friends in this poem

## **Bonkers**

-Jason represents all students who have driven me bonkers in my life as a teacher  
- I wanted to end the poem at the part where the teacher leaves the room, but my editor thought we should have the teacher come back  
-it is fun to chime in on the "Bonk Bonk **Bonkers!**" part of this poem

## **Mr. C's Bad Day**

-Mr. C is a friend of mine who teaches in Canada, and this is a TRUE story  
-sometimes he gets tired of being called, "Mr. C", and he asks his second graders to call him "Mr. D"

## **The Most Important Day**

-sometimes students know the answers when adults don't  
-Matthew *knows* the answer in this poem

## **Sunbeams for a Student**

-rhyming poem -- lines 2 & 4 rhyme

-this poem *contrasts* the stormy weather outside the classroom, with the sunshine in the student's heart because he passed his spelling test

## Some Valentine's Day

-I read a poem by Judith Viorst many years ago about two students who were sending notes back and forth

-ever since then, I have wanted to write one of my own

-I *love* the idea of the notes that tell a story

## The Book that Made Danny Cry

-books can be so powerful

-what book do you think Danny was reading?

## Mix-ups

-my daughter had short hair when she was in elementary school, and some teachers thought she was a boy

-sometimes when I visit schools, I think girls are boys and boys are girls, and I *had* to write a poem about this

-*every line* in this poem rhymes

## The Goof Who Invented Homework

-this poem is fun to dramatize

-it was also a lot of fun to write

-my editor picked it as the title poem of the book

-do you know all the *correct* answers

## I Should Have Studied for this Test

-lines 2 & 4 rhyme

-sometimes short poems just pop into my head

-I always try and write them down quickly so that I do not forget them



## Tanya's Test

-the more I write poetry, the more I like to try writing them in different shapes

-it might be fun to try writing a poem with other letters of the alphabet

-I took *poetic license* at the end with "T away"

-poets can change words around, as long as there is a reason for it, and they don't do it too often

## Yahoo, Team Blue!

-I love poems that "cheer"

-my editor and I decided to surprise everyone and cheer for a game of chess

## **I Lost the Work I Found**

- students are always losing, finding and losing things again
- unfortunately, I do too
- poets love to play with words and I had fun in this poem

## **Homework**

- this poem uses *imagery* to paint pictures with words
- what is homework like?
- can you describe it so that I FEEL it
- this is homework as my daughter sees it

## **A Good-bye Poem from a Retiring Teacher**

- this poem is dedicated to teachers who retire after twenty or thirty years of teaching
- it uses both rhyme and repetition
- some poems are eventually put to music and become songs -- I hope someone SINGS this poem one day

*For Thirty Years.....*

