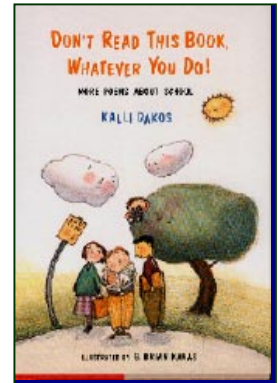


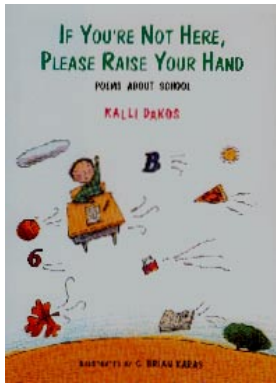
# Lesson Plans and Comments by Kalli Dakos

## Don't Read This Book, Whatever You Do!

Children's Choice Selection  
International Reading Association  
1994



## If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand



Children's Choice Selection  
International Reading Association  
1991

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### *If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand*

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### *Don't Read This Book, Whatever You Do!*

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## Oral Reading

Have fun reading the poems to the children.

## Chiming

*There are many poems in both books that have a refrain or a chorus. Read the poem to the children, and have them chime in on these sections.*

If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand  
But I Brought a Worm  
Go to the Bahamas  
A Lifetime in Third Grade  
\*The Tragic Night  
\*If My Hand Didn't Get So Tired  
\*The Bugs are Out



(Yawn!)

## Echoing

Read a line of the poem, and have the children chant the line after you. Many poems can be used in this category, but a few favorites are:

*\*From: Don't Read This Book, Whatever You Do!*

\*I Gotcha (have fun with the "cha" sound)  
\*Best Friends  
\*I Live for Gym  
\*A Fourth Graders Secret  
\*Don't Tell Me



## Dramatization

Children love to see teachers play, and this brings the poems to life for them. Team up with other teachers, and dramatize poems such as:

There's a Cobra in the Bathroom  
 Budging Line-ups  
 It's Inside My Sister's Lunch  
 \*You Were Hatched in a Witch's Brew  
 \*Eric is Allergic to Girls  
 \*There's a Cockroach Lurking Inside My Desk



Many poems have been written as mini-plays and others can be adapted to this form. Have children rewrite the poems into dramatic scripts and perform them. Have children write their own dramatic scripts about school experiences and perform them as well.

## Playing Poetry

*My greatest fear for children is that they are losing the capacity to play.*

**James Howe**

Poetry, play, toys, reading, and writing all fit together beautifully and academically when we allow children to "play poetry". Bring in a few toys and props, and get imaginations going.

Rubber snake for "There's a Cobra in the Bathroom"

Candy worms for "I Brought a Worm".

Leis for "I Left My Book in Hawaii"

Toy brain, toe, ears, heart, etc. for "Is Your Head on Nice and Tight?"

Rainbow Streamers for "Dancing on a Rainbow"

Trophy for "I Won the Prize"

\*A housecoat or nightgown for "The Day Mother Came to School in Her Nightgown."

\*Skipping ropes, balls, etc. for "I Live for Gym"

\*Picture of a toe for "Ode to a Toe"

\*Flowers for "The Tragic Night"

\*Extra large pencils for "If My Hand Didn't Get so Tired"

\*Plastic cockroaches for "There's a Cockroach Inside My Desk"

\*Plastic hands or colorful gloves for "Pick me Please"



## Performing Poetry

Divide children into small groups of three, four or five students and allow them to select a poem and dramatize it. Tell them they can bring in toys and props to bring the poems to life.

Then share the poems:

- in a small assembly
- performing troupes to other classrooms
- at a poetry tea, perhaps for parents
- at a special Friday afternoon poetry party



## Storytelling

Tell children about your own school experiences -- your friends, your teachers, your triumphs, your failures, and other special stories that only you can share.

Have children interview their parents, their grandparents, teachers, principals, secretaries, custodians, librarians and other students about their experiences in school, and share them in a classroom anthology.

Students in the upper grades can share poems and stories about elementary school life with those in the younger grades.

## Illustrating

*Allow students to work alone, or with friends on these activities.*

1. Select one poem and have students illustrate it. Compare and contrast the different interpretations.
2. Draw illustrations about their own classroom experiences.
3. Use other artistic media -- collages, paintings, photographs, computer graphics, murals, etc.
4. Have a poetry art gallery and hang poems and pictures all over the walls of your school. As children line up to go from classroom to classroom, they will read poetry.



## Topics for Writing Poetry

*If we write about our lives, we will have a record of our own stories.*

- \*Sports Poems: Do you play soccer, basketball, baseball, etc.?  
Did anything happen that you want to remember?
- \*Love Poems: Do you have a best friend, a favorite teacher,  
a special pet?
- \*Good-bye Poems How did you feel when a best friend moved away?  
Has a pet or a family member died? Sometimes  
writing helps us with the grieving process.
- \*Musical Poems: Language is like a musical instrument. Some  
poems are written just for the fun of playing  
with language.
- \*Imaginative Poems: Use your imagination to create school stories that  
didn't really happen, like the day your teacher  
turned into a gorilla, or the afternoon you ate some  
magic potion and flew right out of the classroom in  
the middle of a math test.
- \*Moments Your happiest moment in school  
Your most tragic moment in school.
- \*Secrets Do you have anything hidden in your desk, your  
backpack, your lunch?
- \*Memories Do you have stories from nursery school or  
kindergarten you'd like to write about?



## Writing Poetry

Give students every opportunity to write for the sake of remembering and celebrating, and above all, model the process for them.

\*I'm going to write about the beautiful snowfall. Why, those snowflakes are the biggest I have ever seen and I never want to forget them.

\*Writing helps me to say good-bye. I'm going to write a poem about my little dog's accident. I might cry as I write this poem because I miss Rusty so much.

\*Gerry says he needs a "jump start" to get going this morning. I love the picture "jump start" puts in my mind. I'm going to write a poem!

*Don't worry about the quality of the poems you write. If they are about your classroom and your experiences, the children will love them. They will also admire you for sharing your rough drafts, revisions, and failures.*

***Use an overhead projector and a large variety of poems to share poetic features such as:***

### **Poetic Shape:**

**Poems come in all different shapes.**

Columns:	*I Live for Gym
Run-on Sentences:	Call the Periods Call the Commas
Scrambled Words:	*Dreams Brewing
Changes in Sizes of Letters:	*A Fourth Grader's Secret

### **Free Verse**

\*It is often easier to express feelings and ideas when you are not trying to make poems rhyme or use set forms like couplets or limericks.

\*You arrange the words on the page the way you want them to be read.

\*You do not have to follow any rules and you can make patterns of your own.

You Can Do Better  
 J.T. Never Will Be Ten  
 A Lifetime in Third Grade  
 If We Had Lunch at the White House  
 \*The Star  
 \*Something Splendid  
 \*I'd Mark with the Sunshine  
 \*I Never Had an A Before

### **Repetition**

\*A poet often repeats a word, a line or even an entire stanza. This gives special meaning to an idea or feeling that the poet wants the reader to look at carefully. It is fun to read these lines because they give the poem a nice rhythm.

I Brought a Worm	I Won the Prize
Happy Hiccup to You	*If My Hand Didn't Get So Tired

## Rhyme Schemes

Allow children to identify and experiment with different rhyme schemes. They might even create some of their own. You might want to make overhead transparencies of the poems and underline the rhyming words. Have children chime in on these words as you read the poems.

*Rhyming Couplets:*    *If You're Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand*  
                                   *Budging Line-ups*  
                                   *I'm in Another Dimension*  
                                   *Is Your Head on Nice and Tight*  
                                   \**Best Friends*

*Lines 2 & 4:*                    *Hiding in the Bathroom*  
                                   *A Teacher's Lament*  
                                   \**My Writing is an Awful Mess*  
                                   \**If Kids Were Put in Charge of Schools*

*All Lines Rhyme:*            \**You Were Hatched in a Witch's Brew*  
                                   \**Dreams Brewing*

*Lines 1 & 3 and 2 & 4:*    *Take My Head for the Guillotine*

## Discussion

Poems from the books and from your students' original writings can be discussed under a variety of headings:

Friendship:                    \**Best Friends*  
                                   *J.T. Never Will Be Ten (death of a friend)*

Getting in Trouble:        *9Go to the Bahamas*  
                                   *Don't You Remember How Sick You Are?*  
                                   \**Squirt! Squirt! On the Teacher's Skirt*

Good-bye Poems:         *The Cry Guy*  
                                   *J.T. Never Will Be Ten*  
                                   *They Don't Do Math in Texas*  
                                   \**Where Dreams Don't Cry*

Feelings:                    *I Won the Prize*  
                                   *Hiding in the Bathroom*  
                                   \**The Star*  
                                   \**I Never Had an A Before*

Love Poems:                *Dancing on a Rainbow*  
                                   *I'm in Another Dimension*





\*I Live for Gym  
"But I Have Mr. Cratzbarg

Topics, brought up in specific poems, can also be discussed.

### I'd Mark With the Sunshine

Why do you think teachers usually mark in red?  
What color would you mark in if you were a teacher?

### If Kids Were Put in Charge of Schools

How would you change the schools if you were put in charge?  
The class could create a group book and have each child contribute one suggestion and one illustration.

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Answering questions and sharing opinions based on the following titles

- ◆ Why Can't a Girl be the Leader of the Boys?
  - ◆ Don't You Remember How Sick You Are? (Was it all Andrew's fault?)
  - ◆ Teacher, Could You?
  - ◆ Were You Ever Fat Like Me?
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