

Poetry Emotion

50 original poems to spark an
imaginative approach to topical values

Stewart Henderson

Stewart Henderson is a poet, songwriter and broadcaster. *The Sunday Times* has described his children's poetry as 'essential reading'. Widely anthologised through Macmillan, Oxford University Press, Scholastic, Bloomsbury, A&C Black and others, Stewart's verse is set for both GCSE and Key Stage 2 in primary schools in the UK, and their equivalent on the Republic of Ireland curriculum. His bestselling *Who Left Grandad at the Chip Shop?* was shortlisted for the Scottish Children's Book Awards, and *All Things Weird and Wonderful*, alongside his various collections for adults, has seen him become a festival favourite at such premier literary events as the Edinburgh Book Festival, Birmingham's Young Readers UK, The Northern Children's Book Festival and the Wigtown Book Festival.

As a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 4, Stewart has presented *Questions, Questions* for the last nine years. His programme 'The Holy Fire', made on location in Israel, won the Jerusalem Radio Award for Best Feature in 2006. Stewart has also presented and contributed to some of Radio 4's 'crown jewels' such as *From Our Own Correspondent*, *Pick of the Week*, *Broadcasting House*, *Something Understood*, *Saturday Live* and *PM*.



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Foreword

Poetry speaks in as many voices as there are people to read it, conveying everything from complex ideas to simple truths. The wonderful thing about Stewart Henderson's kind of writing is that he always manages to cover both at once.

The first time I heard him perform his own poetry, in 1996, was unforgettable. I was so bowled over, I immediately asked him to write regularly for the television worship programme on which I was, at that time, Series Producer for BBC1. I had been looking for a long time for someone who could speak to a general audience, of all faiths and none, about beliefs, spiritual expression and the joys and sorrows of some of life's most profound experiences, in a way that had the capacity to engage naturally and touch deeply.

Stewart knew exactly where to start and, with consummate skill and the unmistakable voice of authenticity, he took the audience on a very special journey. This collection of poems has, I believe, the same quality of travel. I read them, delighted but not surprised by their range and honesty. I could picture him in my mind's eye at one of his regular visits to the Greenbelt festival, holding a roomful of children spellbound, making them gasp with anticipation or having them squeal and laugh in a magical connection with young hearts and minds. He makes it look effortless. Don't be fooled. Writing and communicating as beautifully and naturally as this is a rare and wonderful thing.

Christine Morgan
Head of Radio, BBC Religion & Ethics



Introduction

Poetry Emotion is a multi-purpose collection of 50 original poems incorporating specific contents to cover three major areas addressing social and emotional values: the Barnabas RE Day themes, general themes encouraging social and emotional development, and related emotional skills. The resource is ideal for RE and Collective Worship at KS2/P4–7. Within the three major sections, the poems are organised under 15 topic-based chapters, and each values-based chapter offers a choice of up to four poems exploring different aspects of the theme.

The prime purpose of the material is to feature poems that address the complex issue of being a child in a 21st-century multicultural society. Within the mix there is material for special seasons of the year, such as Christmas and Easter, as well as material dealing with hard situations that children have to face at times, such as violence, death and bereavement.

The resource is designed for use at KS2/P4–7 (7–11s) in Collective Worship and RE. Each of the 15 chapters offers an introductory paragraph setting up the topic, to guide teachers and pupils alike as to how to use the poems. The poems then speak for themselves. The idea is to provide a springboard into open discussion, or a thought-provoking insert (or pause point) in an act of Collective Worship. Simple suggestions for follow-on classroom activities are included, aiming to stimulate creative writing and thinking. The suggestions are offered with an open and accessible approach, making them equally beneficial for independent readers and wider markets beyond the classroom door.

Although each section concentrates on a specific theme, it is hoped that the teacher will feel free to pick any chapter at random, without feeling bound to approach the chapters sequentially.

Please use the book as best suits the mood and requirements of the class.

*

Emotional skills

The poems in this section are designed to help teachers to promote positive behaviour for learning and enhance the quality of relationships between staff, children and other members of the community. The programme aims to support teachers to transform their school or build on its strengths.



Self-awareness

Teacher's notes

The following four poems give the inner voice its say, from the fantastical 'Thought patterns' to the functioning desolation of 'I miss you, Miss'.

The eagle-eyed reader will have noticed how the female teacher crops up throughout the poems in this book. During my formative years in primary school, my teachers were female, ranging from the terrifyingly stern (we are in the late 1950s here) to the encouraging and comforting. Other than parents (if they're present and active in the child's life), it goes without saying that the teacher is the main role model, confessional and counsellor in many children's lives, on hand to guide the child through the often painful stages of self-awareness.

Again, this chapter may not lend itself to an obvious exercise. Rather, it's a case of reading some or all of the poems and seeing what response, if any, is sparked. You know your charges best. They are on their 'Automatic journey', and will not need, in this case, to be cluttered up too much with a 'must-do exercise'.

Thought patterns

Clip clop slip slop
marmite macaroon
marzipan chapati
school-free afternoon

Sand dune odd tune
kangaroos that sing
Frisbee played with cowpats
now there's a messy thing

Snug mug cream jug
unexpected fleas
dogs with tail extensions
mice refusing cheese

Tock tick up hic
trousers inside out
butterflies that whistle...
what's all that about?

Tap tip flap flip
killer whales that shrink
you can call this nonsense...
but this is what I think

• • • * • • •

Automatic journey

My head is very busy
it stops and starts all day
a traffic jam of feelings
a clogged-up motorway

But then the gridlock eases
through a juggernaut of thoughts
with wheel-spins of emotion
a top gear of all sorts

that revs a clutch of worries
on a lonely road of fears
that's shortly overtaken
by a zoom of big ideas...

And even when I'm sleeping
my head is fast alight
a complicated satnav
in the outside lane of night

• • • * • • •

centre of attention

I love to be the centre of attention,
it's something that comes naturally to me.
I can act and dance and even play the bagpipes,
do great impressions, even water-ski.

My chosen place is centre of attention,
a Facebook hero to my many fans.
In my own world, I'm the centre of attention,
a celebrity-in-waiting making plans.

It's only right I'm centre of attention,
I never get on anybody's nerves.
My magic tricks are brilliant, so's my cooking,
likewise, my haircut, jokes and tennis serves.

There's a time though when I'm centre of attention
my star potential falls a little flat...
in my house it seems everyone's a critic
because today I'm being shouted at.

• • • * • • •

I miss you, Miss

I miss you, Miss,
I'm all amiss
it's awful that you're ill.
I miss you more than missing most,
I miss you, so until
your health gets hot-soup better
with the best recovery
I'll miss you, Miss, and one thing more,
I hope you're missing me.

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