



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

for gifted and creative Year 1 and 2 children

with a love of language, art and writing

'Punny Poets and Preposterous Painters'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions.

Did you hear about the word they said was so absurd, it's a little like a bird but only when it's slurred? How about that picture, it was quite a feature, a legendary creature causing screaming from the teacher! Do you love playing with words? Do you have a keen eye for detail? Curious and observant people make terrific writers and in this program you'll learn skills for paying attention and helping other people pay attention too! We're going to polish our observational skills by looking at lots of different paintings and our explanation skills by trying lots of different types of poetry. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll cut up lots of bits of paper as we try out different strategies of rhythm, rhyme and repetition. A different painting and poetry style and a fresh topic each week will have us thinking about and describing the world around us in new ways.

Session One: With Up So Floating Many Bells Down

We're going to start with a couple of pretty tricky questions. What is a poem and why do we paint pictures? We might not agree on what the answers are – but that's the fun of it! It's all about something called *interpretation*. Where one of you sees a fluffy sheep, someone else sees a pile of mashed potato. And neither of you are wrong! The poems and pictures in today's session will not be of the 'usual' kind at all. We'll explore poems by ee cummings that wriggle down the page and paintings by Matisse and Kandinsky that you can look at from any direction. These abstract and impressionist works will have us scratching our heads as we think about meaning and what the writer or artist is trying say. You'll have your own say today as you combine some surprising words with a little shape and colour. But what will it mean?!

Session Two: One End is Moo, the Other Milk

Tyger Tyger, burning bright / In the forests of the night

Did you ever see a tiger catch on fire? Why would the poet choose that word? (Also, why can't Willam Blake spell the word tiger?!) Today is all about animals – real ones like tigers and cows and not-so-real ones like the leetle and the triantiwontigongolope. The artworks of John Burningham (perhaps you've read some of his picture books?) are full of animals. We'll pick and choose some to examine and we'll use a wide range of vocabulary to describe their appearance and behaviours. The rhythm, or *metre*, of our poems will have the horses galloping steadily around the ring, while a few rhymes will keep the birds in neat rows along the powerlines.

Session Three: Filled with Tomatoes

Mmmm delicious poetry. Have you ever read anything that made your mouth water? Or seen a painting so tempting you just want to dive right into it? Pack a good snack today, our tummies will grumble as we write *odes* to our favourite foods. An ode is a type of poem that expresses enthusiasm and admiration. Pablo Neruda wrote quite a few about vegetables and even An Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market! We'll look at some different ways to tempt our readers with words to describe colour, taste and texture. How do you evoke the crispy edges of a fried egg? Or the squashy centre of a cream cake? Paintings by artists such as Cezanne and the *megarealist* Tjalf Sparnaay will help inspire us.

Session Four: If I Were in Charge of the World

For our final session we will write our way into some wondrous worlds – both real and unreal. To ensure we don't get lost we will learn the rules of two or three of the stricter forms of poetry. You might have heard of a *haiku*, but have you tried a *tanka*? Why do poems need rules anyway? They're pretty hard to stick to, but we should be able to come up with a line or two to describe the witchy worlds created by Ida Rentoul Outhwaite or the street scenes of Melbourne artist John Brack. If we join our short pieces together we might be able to create a *renga*! We'll finish off with a good laugh at real life as described by Robin Klein (she doesn't clean under her bed) and Judith Viorst (who has fifteen, maybe sixteen things to worry about).

Homework and assessment:

There may be some homework between sessions. Following the program, parents will be sent a report on their child's progress in the Journey. A copy should be made and given to the school G.A.T.E.WAYS Co-ordinator.

What to bring:

Bring your favourite writing tools and an A4 writing book. The first thing to write in it is a list of words that rhyme with your name. (If you can think of any!) Also bring a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for your report and a small, labelled photograph of yourself to Session 1. Each week bring a snack (no nut products please)

About the presenter:

Rachel Holkner writes poems all the time as a way to relax, which works very well even when they don't turn out quite right. Drawing on her passions for writing and children's literature Rachel has designed many workshops which engage the critical and creative thinking skills of students. By use of a wild imagination, she is keen to encourage others to look at the world in new ways. Annoyingly, nothing rhymes with Rachel.

