



If This Bird Had Pockets: A Poem in Your Pocket Day Celebration

About the Book:

In honor of Poem in Your Pocket Day, a child imagines the poems animals might carry in their pockets, if they had pockets. What would a hummingbird write? A fox? A sea otter? These poems capture the essences of animals furry, feathery and finny, exploring what makes each unique. Ruby-Throated Hummingbird sings with its wings, Red Fox's poem is a fiery tail flashing in the dark, and Sea Otter's poem is its secret pocket. Which poem will capture the heart of the child narrator? A poem about loving animals, of course!

Age Range: 4-8 years

Grade Level: Grades PK-3

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Books for Young Readers

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About the Author - Amy Ludwig VanDerwater:

Amy Ludwig VanDerwater is a celebrated author of a number of books for children and teachers. She received her MA from Teachers College, Columbia University and has taught writing for over twenty years. Blogging at The Poem Farm and Sharing Our Notebooks, Amy lives in Holland, NY with her family, pets, and books. Find her at amyludwigvanderwater.com (website), poemfarm.amylv.com (blog), or sharingournotebooks.com (blog).



About the Illustrator - Emma J. Virjan:

Emma is the author-illustrator of the beloved *Pig in a Wig Book* series – *What This Story Needs is a Pig in a Wig*, *What This Story Needs is a Hush and a Shush*, *What This Story Needs is a Munch and a Crunch*, *What This Story Needs is a Bang and a Clang* and *What This Story Needs is a Vroom and a Zoom*, and the early-reader series *Captain Cat*. Emma makes her home in Austin, TX, where she spends her days writing and drawing. Find her at her website emmavirjan.com.



Pre-Reading Discussion - Consider the Front Cover of the Book :

- Describe the bird featured in the illustration. Why is the bird flying so high in the sky? Where is it going? Why?
- The title of the book asks a question exploring what might happen if the bird had pockets. What do you think? If it did have pockets, what might the bird hide inside them?
- Explain all that you know about poems. Have you ever written one? Read one? Explain your answer.
- Define the word *celebration*. Determine how having a poem in your pocket can be considered to be a celebration.
- Predict what this collection of poems is going to be about.



Common Core State Anchor Standards-Alignment:

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature - RL.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10

English Language Arts Standards » Writing - W.2, 3, 5

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening - SL.1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Next Generation Science Standards-Alignment: 1-LS1-2, 2-LS4-1

Post-Reading Discussion:

Tail Of Red, Tip of White, By Red Fox

In forest
ever brown and green
I am a splendid spark.

My poem is
my fiery tail
flashing in the dark. (pg. 17)

- The word *habitat* means the natural home or environment in which an animal lives. The red fox's home is in the forest. What do you know about the red fox's habitat? What types of plants exist in the forest? List other animals that survive in the forest with the red fox?
- Typically, a *poem* is a special piece of writing incorporating creative composition such as meter, rhyme, and symbols. Yet, the red fox claims that his tail is a poem. Explain the red fox's tail might serve as a symbol for something as original and imaginative as a poem.

Something To Appreciate, By Royal Starfish

When stars are wounded
we create.
This is our legendary trait.

Allow me to elaborate. (pg. 24)

- Within habitats there are *ecosystems*, which are communities of plants and animals that interconnect with one another for survival. Starfish are ocean animals, invertebrates that survive by eating algae, sponges, and mollusks. Determine how the ocean ecosystem in which the starfish lives in differs from the other featured animals's unique ecosystems.
- The starfish has the remarkable ability to regrow its arms they should become injured. Notice how this amazing trait inspired a poem. Does this mean that the starfish is a poem? Explain your answer.
- Identify the unique qualities each of the animals featured in the book possess. Examine how their special characteristics were explored in each poem.

My Poem, By Me

Each creature
lives a poem
without ever
writing a line. (pg. 30)

- What does it mean to live a poem?
- Where do poems come from? Habitats? Ecosystems? Unusual traits?
- Is life a poem?
- Are you a poem?
- Write a poem in response to one or all of these questions. Neatly fold it. Tuck it deep in a pocket to keep with you always.

Application - Make a Pocket for Your Own Poems:

Materials: Poem Pocket template (found on following page), two sheets of cardstock, pencil, yarn, hole punch, markers, and poems printed on slips of paper.

Procedure: Print Poem Pocket template on cardstock. Use scissors to trim around the borders of the pocket template. Use the pencil to trace around the template on the blank piece of cardstock. Cut around the traced lines. Use hole punch to create "grommets" around the side and base of the pocket. Use markers to decorate your Poem Pocket. Use yarn to form a pocket by lacing pieces of cardstock together. Create a shoulder strap with a longer piece of yarn, if desired. Tuck a poem in this pocket to celebrate Poem in Your Pocket Day in style!



Make a Pocket for Your Own Poems

*Tomorrow I will carry
a poem in my pocket.
Today I need to find or write
the perfect one for me.*

