

Poetry

reviewed by Jenny Blanch



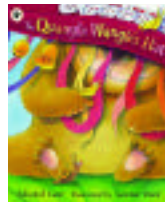
These two padded board books *Hickory, Dickory, Dock* and *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, both illustrated by Sanja Rescek – costing £4.99 each • Little Tiger Press •



ISBN: 1 84506 349 X & ISBN: 1 84506 348 1 – are perfect for introducing verse to very young children. Rhyme-wise there is nothing new but the old favourites are pleasingly and humorously

presented in soft, sunny pastels. Thoughtfully, there are rounded corners on the covers

Lucky the child who has access to this classic nonsense rhyme in a format that will become well-loved in both schools and homes.



The Quangle Wangle's Hat by Edward Lear and illustrated by Louise Voce – £4.99 • Walker Books • ISBN: 1 4063 0042 X –

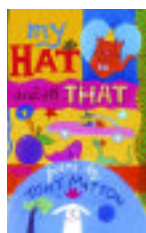
The page-filling landscapes provide a perfect setting for the clearly presented italic text. The zinging colours of the hat, together with the magnificent Crumpetty Tree, prove irresistible to the sprightly and self-satisfied looking animals who are more than ready to party. The rhymes and suggestive names roll off children's tongues like cream and the whole book is a wonderfully lyrical, visual triumph.



The partnership between Benjamin Zephaniah and Prodeepta Das goes from strength to strength. From Ackee to Verandahs, and from

Cricket to Zinc roofs, each four-line verse for a letter of the alphabet will bring a reflective smile to the face of the young reader of *J is for Jamaica* by Benjamin Zephaniah and Prodeepta Das – £10.99 • Frances Lincoln • ISBN: 1 84507 401 7 – The funky voice provides an insight into the land and customs of the small island '..... smiling in the Caribbean', and works well for both adult and child. The striking coloured photographs on each page breathe meaning into the diversity of Jamaican life and contrast vividly the sometimes drab existence we have in the UK. Not only in the bright colours but in the attitudes to life, which is for living, and love, which is for everyone.

My Hat and all That by Tony Mitton and illustrated by Sue Heap – £3.99 • Corgi Yearling • ISBN: 0 440 86725 8 – is divided into four sections 'Under My Hat', 'In My Garden', 'In My Pocket' and 'At My Fingertips'



with a final 'Poem to Rap It Up'. Tony Mitton remembers his own childhood experiences and fashions these poems to speak directly to children. There is a lightness of touch in his use of natural language, and the lilt and simplicity of his rhythms demand to be read out aloud.

Another picture poetry book *Star Seeker* by Theresa Heine and Victor Tavares – £10.99 • Barefoot Books • ISBN: 1 905236 35 2 – but one which helps to make complicated scientific facts easier to remember. Subtitled 'A Journey to Outer Space' it is an engaging voyage through the solar system. Many children are fascinated by stars and the night sky and this quirky, imaginative presentation will intrigue and involve them. The writing is pared down but the essence of each planet is abundantly clear.



*Like a comet I'll zoom
Over Mars's red crust,
And spy on his mountains
And valleys of dust.*

Included is a sturdy chart of the solar system which will reinforce learning absorbed from this poetic blend of adventure, science and mythology.

The Tail of the Trinosaur by Charles Causley and illustrated by Jill Gardiner – £6.99 • Jane Nissen Books • ISBN: 1 903252 23 7 – Charles Causley's



poems are for everyone. He did not believe in age distinction and never wrote poetry with a specific audience in mind – but *The Tail of the Trinosaur* bewitches young children. This edition brings back the rollicking epic poem with an introduction by Michael

Rosen. He pleads for the hilarious story in rhyme to be read aloud as it is 'full of delights, originalities and surprises'. Gentle line drawings support the text – particularly delightful is the moment the Trinosaurus is uncovered

*Its eye seemed to follow you
Everywhere
With expression strange
That seemed to change
With the shifting
Drifting
Light of day.
And it looked at them all
As if to say,
'Good afternoon -
I'm yesterday.'*

Inspired by her childhood in Guyana and her present life in Britain readers travel between the two worlds in this collection of Grace Nichol's poems. *Everybody Got a Gift* by Grace Nichols and illustrated by Rosemary Woods – £6.99 • A & C Black • ISBN: 07136 7251 X. – We meet Mama-Wata and Moon-



Gazer Man, Cat Rapper and Dilberta – Biggest of the Elephants at London Zoo. There are strong rhythms and cadences of Anglo/Caribbean speech in poems that paint pictures in the mind.

Accurately writing in a young person's voice Judy O'Callaghan has created a book to charm both teenagers and adults. Well worth investigating the ordinary illuminated – to cry during 'Whispering in Church' and to shiver at 'Stitches' in *The Book of Whispers* by Julie O'Callaghan – £5.99 • Faber & Faber •



ISBN: 0 571 22768 6 – There is a mixture of moods in this lively collection which is great fun to read.

Waiting for the Future – £5.00 (+ £1.75 postage) • Shelter & End Child Poverty • ISBN: 1 903595 56 8 – This anthology has contributions from children of all ages across England and is warmly supported by



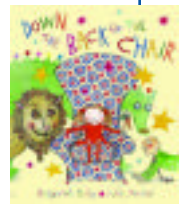
Andrew Motion, Poet Laureate. It is an extraordinary book in children's own words, highlighting the terrible damage wrought by bad housing and poverty. Well presented with appropriate images the poems are reproduced with the original spelling, phrasing and punctuation intact – all moving,

all humbling, but there is hope. An eight year old writes...

*I know I will go home hungry
I will go to bed cold
I know the next day I will miss the school trip
We don't have enough money for the uniform
Every day is the same
Every day I get picked on
Sometimes I wish I were a leaf
So I could fly away.*

To make sure you get a copy call credit card hotline 020 7505 2036 or www.shelter.org.uk/publications

Down the Back of the Chair by Margaret Mahy and illustrated by Polly Dunbar – £10.99 • Frances Lincoln • ISBN: 1 84507 440 8 – Margaret Mahy will be presented with the 2006 Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Writing, at the opening ceremony of IBBY's Congress later this year. It is a very well deserved honour as her work is known and loved by young people and adults all over the world. This, her latest book, cries



out to be shared with all ages. Rollicking fun for everyone to gasp at the treasures emerging from the back of the chair - but will it be enough to save the family? Stylishly illustrated by Polly Dunbar, who obviously shares a similar sense of humour with the writer, there are wonderfully expressive animals, including a most decorative, curly lion and two tea-drinking elephants, who all party in a riotous double spread finale. Words and pictures blend into a real fun experience.