Combining Picture Books and Poetry

Why combine picture books and poetry? There are several reasons. First, after reading aloud a picture book there is often a natural lull. Sometimes children jump in with responses or questions, or sometimes there’s a call to “read it again.” Following up the reading with a carefully chosen poem is one way to extend the story experience. Pairing a poem with a picture book can deepen children’s understanding of the story’s theme or extend their knowledge of the topic. Conversely, the story can provide context for the poem. It can even lead to a “compare and contrast” discussion, as children ponder what they glean from each text. Practically speaking, it doesn’t take long to read a poem, but the impact can be very strong. Often, children will “pocket” a rousing refrain or rhythmic phrase from the poem to enjoy on their own. That’s the beauty of poetry it appeals to both the ear and the heart. When combined with a beautifully illustrated and powerfully written picture book, the eye and mind are engaged, too.

Book: **Papa’s Mark** by Battle-Lavert, Gwendolyn, Illus. by Colin Bootman.

Poem "**Love the Look of Words**” by Maya Angelou from *Soul Looks Back in Wonder*, by Tom Feelings.

Book: **Beautiful Blackbird** by Bryan, Ashley.


Book: **Uptown** by Collier, Bryan.


Book: **Rosa** by Giovanni, Nikki, Illus. by Bryan Collier.


Book: **I Have a Dream** King, Martin Luther, Jr. Illus. by Kathleen A. Wilson and others.

Poem: “**Martin’s Letter**” from *Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People* by Carole Boston Weatherford.

Book: **Let’s Talk about Race** by Lester, Julius, Illus. by Karen Barbour.


Book: **Goin’ Someplace Special** by McKissack, Patricia C; Illus. by Jerry Pinkney.

Poem: “**At the Library**” From *It’s Raining Laughter* by Nikki Grimes. Photos by Myles C. Pinkney.