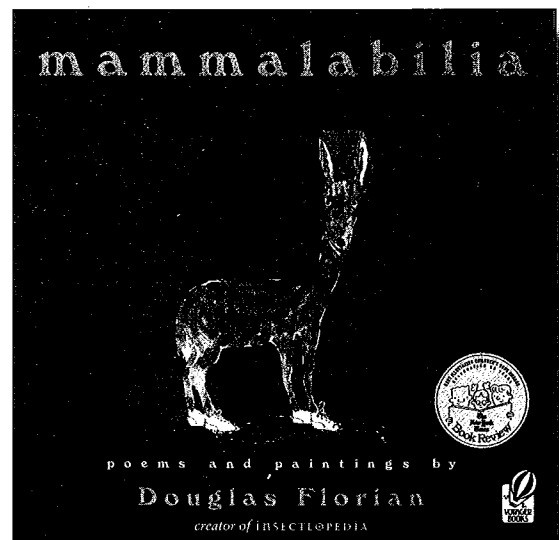
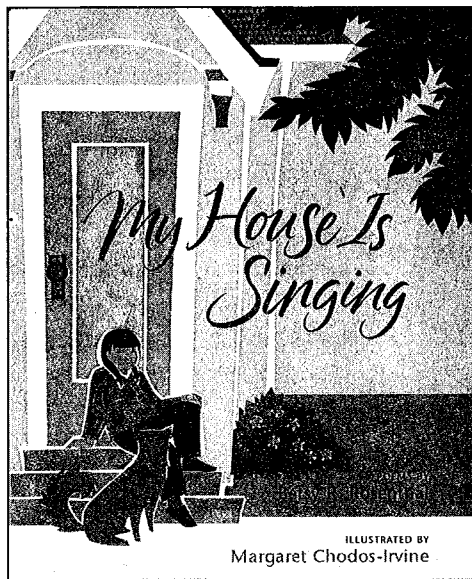


A Teacher's Guide to Poetry



IDEALLY, POETRY SHOULD BE an ongoing part of the language arts curriculum, not just a one- or two-week unit. Many teachers routinely read a poem aloud every day, as part of their opening activities. After this exposure to poetry, many children spontaneously begin to write poems in their journals, with no instruction or direction to do so. Favorite poems can be shared repeatedly. Try for a variety of humorous, narrative, and descriptive poems, in different styles.

Ideas for working with
*My House Is
Singing*

by
Betsy R. Rosenthal,
illustrated by
Caldecott Honor winner
Margaret Chodos-Irvine

1. Ask the children to think about the title of this book. What could it mean? Have them make a list of the sounds that a house might make—not the people or animals in it but the house itself. Ask if the sounds are pleasant or unpleasant.
2. Have the children look at the book's jacket. Ask how this house is alike or different from their own houses, or have them draw pictures of their homes. Talk about the many kinds of places where people live—farm-houses, apartment buildings, mobile homes, boats, etc. Point out that most of these poems describe things that could be found in any of those homes, too.
3. Read the poems aloud to the children, one or two each day. Be sure that all the children can see the printed words and the pictures. Show each spread as you read and then leave the book in an accessible spot in the classroom, or pass the book around for all the children to look at.
4. Make a chart with these column headings: rhymed, unrhymed, shape. Reread the book aloud. Have the children discuss each poem and list it in the appropriate column.
5. Ask the children which poem most reminds them of something in their own homes. Then ask them which is their favorite poem—and why.
6. Read the short biographies of the author and illustrator on the back flap of the jacket. Have the children discuss any previous homes they remember. Have the children list four or five favorite items from their present home or from a previous home. Have each choose one of those items, then draw a picture and write a poem about it.

