

Right Way Down and Other Poems

CHOSEN BY

REBECCA M. NEWMAN AND SALLY MURPHY

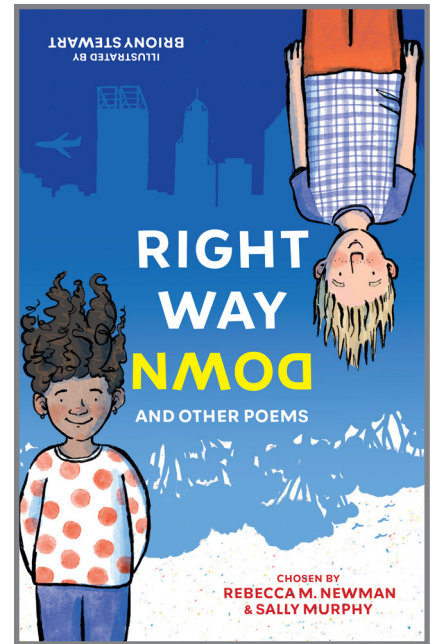
ILLUSTRATOR

BRIONY STEWART

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Stand on your head with Sally Murphy, explode some dynamite with Cristy Burne or shoot some hoops with Cheryl Kickett-Tucker. Grow a poet-tree with Meg McKinlay or curl up next to your cat with Amber Moffat and watch a bit of Stink-o-Vision with James Foley. These and loads more poems by Australian poets are there to discover in *Right Way Down*.

With striking illustrations by Briony Stewart, these poems will have you laughing, thinking, and playing with words—whichever way up you read them.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Rebecca M. Newman is an award-winning children's poet and a short-story writer for grown-ups. Her poetry has been published in Australia and internationally in magazines and anthologies, and even set to music for a Christmas carol performed in St Mary's Cathedral in Perth city. When she's not writing, she judges children's poetry competitions, and runs a blog showcasing book reviews written by children. Rebecca is an editor and the publisher at Alphabet Soup Books, and she read an enormous number of poems when putting this anthology together.

Sally Murphy is an award-winning author and poet with over fifty books to her name, as well as poems in numerous anthologies, journals and more. Her love of poetry started with her mother reading and sharing poetry with her, and grew and grew until Sally decided she loved poetry so much, she chose it as a topic for her Doctoral studies many years later. As well as writing and reading, Sally shares her love of words with as many readers and audiences as she can—including as a speaker, educator and academic at Curtin University.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Briony Stewart is an award-winning author and illustrator, including the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and an Honour Book Award in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. When she is not working on children's books, you'll most likely find her programming art activities and events, speaking at festivals and libraries across Australia, or doing something weird, like planting paper gardens, building life-sized dragons, or marshalling your local egg-rolling championships. Briony currently resides in Fremantle, Western Australia, and works alongside two delightfully cheeky children, a highly strung dog and a plant-mad biologist.

THEMES

- Nature
- Seasons/Noongar Seasons
- Home
- Relationships
- Emotions
- Pets
- Sport
- The writing process

STUDY NOTES

- Ask students if they have a pet at home. Encourage students to share information about their pet using all their senses, minus taste!
- Read 'Greedy' (p 57). Discuss responses and use of rhyming words.
- In pairs, ask students to share the ways in which animals they know might be similar or different to Fletch.
- Read 'Sunday, 3pm' (p 101). How is this poem different? (eg. shorter, no rhyme or action).
 - Ask students to nominate an animal they like, then ask students to vote from their peers' choices as to which animal they would like to write about.
- In groups of three, ask students to finish the following sentence starters for their chosen animal (one sentence per student). Encourage students to use 'smell' to describe the animal's habitat (eg. ocean, swamp, home) so poems avoid becoming too comical:
 - I hear
 - I smell
 - I see
 - I feel

Then, combine the sentences to make a group poem. Some students may be able to complete their own poems.

- Introduce students to the Noongar six seasons. Where possible, employ a local Elder to come and share their knowledge and experiences directly with the students.
- Read 'Birak' (pp 96–97). Ask students to share responses to the poem in groups, then complete a shared Y chart based on the current season. Ask one student from each group to share their answer for one of the senses.
 - Each student can then devise a poem about the current season, drawing from their group discussion. If students are finding it hard to get started, teachers could scaffold the activity by getting students to write 'Birak is . . .' five times and getting students to complete it. For example: Birak is the feel of dry leaves under my feet; Birak is the smell of sausages rising over the fence, etc. Try to get the students to be as specific as possible (e.g. 'Where is the smell of sausages coming from?') as this gives real 'hooks' to bring the reader in.
 - Students could also write a colour poem about the season. For example: Yellow is the small faces of flowers on the bush track; Blue is the sky brilliant over my head, etc.
- Read 'The View from Here' (p 87). Identify similes (' . . . like/Books in a well-used library') and metaphors ('Roots reach between books'). Discuss the poem's layout and the importance of the last line. What is it saying?
- Using the placemat template, direct students in groups of four to record places with some of their favourite rock formations. Ask students to write their answers in one section of the placemat.
 - Do they know the type of rock that forms these formations? If so, record this too. Students then share their answers in their groups and record any places or rock types in common (for example, Elephant Rocks and Wave Rock are both granite formations). Each group shares common answers (the middle section) with the class. Ask if any students included a range made from ironstone.
- Ask students to research the Helena and Aurora Range (Bungalbin). Then, come back to their group of four and share what they have learned. Students can then use their research to write 'A Day in the Life of' someone visiting the range. These could be poems or pieces of fiction. *Please note, this activity is used in order to build students' empathic imaginations. Explicit permission from an appropriate Elder must be gained for the publication of any work

written from the perspective of an Indigenous person by a non-Indigenous person.

- Read some of the poems relating to nature in the collection. Ask students to write a sense poem (I hear . . . / I see . . . etc.) about their favourite place in nature. When complete, remove the scaffolds and see what happens! (For example, 'I feel the brisk wind harsh on my face' becomes, 'The brisk wind harsh on my face.'
- Research a poet, eg. Meg McKinlay, James Foley. Give a three-minute presentation on what you learned about their life and work.
- Read 'How to Be a Dragon Egg' (p 53) Whose point of view is it told from? Write a poem using second-person narrative point of view.
- Read 'Cockatoos' (p 68). Write a poem from the point of view of a white-tailed black cockatoo.