



FREEDOM

When I Swing

When I swing
I seem
to forget
everything

I wash
my mind
in the sky.

Feet first
I burst
this blur
of world

and

fly

fly

fly.

by Matt Goodfellow



Poetryline

A CLPE RESOURCE

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from *Carry Me Away* by Matt Goodfellow,
illustrated by Sue Hardy-Dawson
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Available from: <http://www.mattgoodfellow.yolasite.com/buy-a-book.php>

Read the poem aloud and ask pupils: How does the poem make you feel? Jot down the children's responses around a big display copy of the poem, maybe on post-it notes. Have you ever been on a swing? What was it like?

How do you think the person swinging feels? Encourage the children to think about words and phrases, like 'burst/this blur/of world'. What do these phrases mean? How do you think they might have been feeling before this? Why?

Look at copies of the poem in pairs or groups. How does the way it is arranged on the page add meaning to the words? Investigate the succinct use of words, the line breaks, spacing between stanzas, the way the final words of the poem are repeated and placed on the page. How do these elements feed your ideas about the poem? The poet, Matt Goodfellow, wrote the poem after watching his daughter on a swing; How does the way he has arranged the words on the page reflect the rhythmic swinging of the swing? Does it give you any ideas about how you might perform it?

Let the pupils read it aloud in different ways. They might replicate the rhythm of the swing by working in pairs and reading each line in turn whilst throwing a ball.

What other activities make you feel this free? Show some examples of people engaged in activities like running, dancing, listening to music, drawing. What lets them 'wash their mind' and 'forget everything'?

Give time for the children to build their feelings about their chosen activity into a first draft poem. What words best describe the freedom they gain that they associate with the activity? What is the natural rhythm of the activity they have chosen? Is it slow? Fast? Steady? How could this be reflected in the choice of words and what ideas might this give you about how the poem might look on the page?

Ask them to read their first drafts aloud and see if the words they have used give the same sense of freedom of the original poem. Give time to revise and edit.

Finally, look back at the original. How did the effect it had on them as readers influence their own writing?

Publish the poems, either by hand or using ICT, and invite the children to perform their work to an audience.