



Key Stage 1-2

A DINOSAUR UNDER A BED



This activity was produced for
National Poetry Day by Kate
Wakeling and The Emma Press

www.theemmapress.com



I Found a Dinosaur Under the Shed

I found a dinosaur under the shed.
A tiny one, no taller than my shin.

He had yellow blinking eyes
and leathery wings.

He crouched in the dark, trembling.

I fed him popcorn and caterpillars,
built him a nest from twigs and an old jumper.

As the weeks passed, he began to hop at my ankles,
squawking his dinosaur cry
when I scratched his head.

I liked his scaly skin
that was as old as it was new.
I liked that he hissed at the spiders but not at me.

I saw he was getting bigger,
that the space under the shed was too small,
his nest too narrow.

When I sat beside him I found
he was now as tall as my shoulder.

His teeth shone.

At night I heard him stride around the garden,
beating his wings and trying to fly.

Soon he could only just fit in his nest,
his dinosaur tail curled round him,
his nose poked up against the wood of the shed.

I found him more popcorn,
more caterpillars,
but we both heard his stomach growl.

I asked him not to leave.

The last time I saw him
he tried to keep his wide mouth closed,
to keep his jaw from glinting.

I watched his long claws twitch.

The next day I found his footprints in the mud: a
mark,
a mark,
then nothing.

by Kate Wakeling

Read through the poem together.

Then, as a whole group or in groups of three, create a mini staged performance of the poem. This could feature a live reading plus a series of frozen 'scenes' or tableaux – perhaps where two performers explore the different stages in the relationship between human and dinosaur.

Discuss the poem together, thinking about ideas of captivity and freedom.

What clues are there in the poem that the dinosaur wants to leave?

What might hold him back?

What clues lurk in the poem about will happen if the dinosaur doesn't leave?

How does the narrator feel about the dinosaur?

And, most importantly, how does the poem make you feel?

Discuss the idea of the dinosaur being both a pet who needs looking after and a wild creature who needs to be free. Take two differently-coloured pens – one for the 'pet' dinosaur and one for 'wild' dinosaur. In pairs, circle words and phrases linked to these two different ideas, using the two different colours. Together talk about which of these two forces seems the stronger by the close of the poem. Try writing a response to the poem.

Try an alternative ending: imagine what happens if the dinosaur doesn't fly away?

Or explore this same set of events in a poem, but from the perspective of the dinosaur. Imagine how he felt like before he was found, what he feels about the narrator and how he decided to leave the nest.

Or try writing a poem about a human who wakes up to find themselves part of a family of dinosaurs. How might this story unfold? What sorts of freedoms might a human miss when enclosed in a dinosaur nest?