

Poetry Prompts: Week 71

Painting

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 71 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week Joseph Coelho was at the Tate Britain, finding inspiration for poems in paintings. Here's another poem by Joe about a painting. This time, it tells the story of someone who is creating a painting.

Look at the poem:

Read the poem aloud. You might do this yourself, with a friend or someone else could read it to you:

Eddie's Painting

**Eddie's first painting
was no good.**

**The people were all splodges
and the sky had run.**

**Eddie's second painting
was no good.**

**The trees looked odd
and the buildings were wonky
but the sky looked marble!**

**Eddie's third painting
was no good**

**He had tried to paint his dog -
it looked more like a cat.
But the trees looked alive.**

**Eddie's fourth, fifth,
sixth and seventh paintings
were no good.**

**The colours were all wrong,
the brushstrokes were messy,
but when he looked at it,
he looked through it.**

**Eddie's eighth painting
won a prize!**

**It had marble skies,
and living trees
and splodges of people
that spoke of life and living and art.**



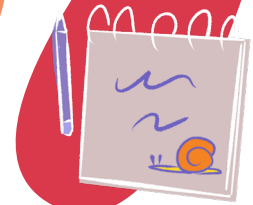
From *Courage Out Loud* by Joseph Coelho
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2023)

Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read. What was the poem about? What do you know about the paintings Eddie made? What tells you this?

Now, think more about Eddie, the person creating the painting. What impressions do you gain of Eddie? What makes you think this? What do we learn about him by the end of the poem? How would you describe him to someone else?

Think of a time when you've tried something and it didn't work out how you'd planned the first time. How did this make you feel? Did you see any positives in your first attempt? Did you give up or did you persevere until you reached your goal?

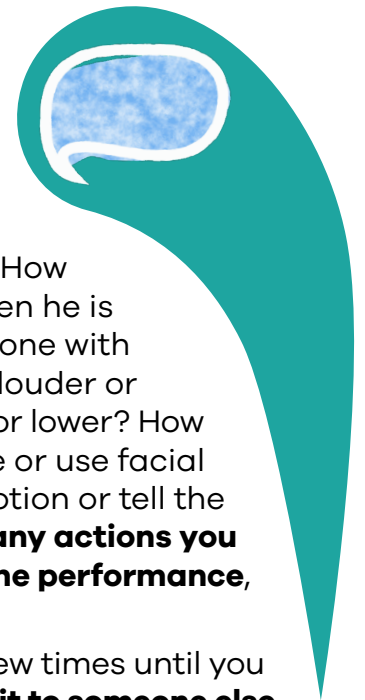


Look at the language:

- Read the poem again. Circle or underline words or phrases that describe **what featured in any of Eddie's paintings, or what the paintings looked like.**
- Take the description of one of the paintings and, using the words and phrases you've identified, **try to recreate the painting for yourself.** If you don't have paints to hand, you could draw it with pencil, coloured pencils or felt tips instead.
- Now, **think about the story of perseverance** that runs throughout the poem. In each of the first four verses, Eddie creates something he thinks isn't good enough, but keeps trying and feels happier with different parts of the painting with each new attempt. What is the effect of the word **'but'** in the second, third and fourth verses? How do the lines which start with **'but'** contrast with the lines that come before? How does the last verse contrast with the first verse? How have Eddie's feelings changed?

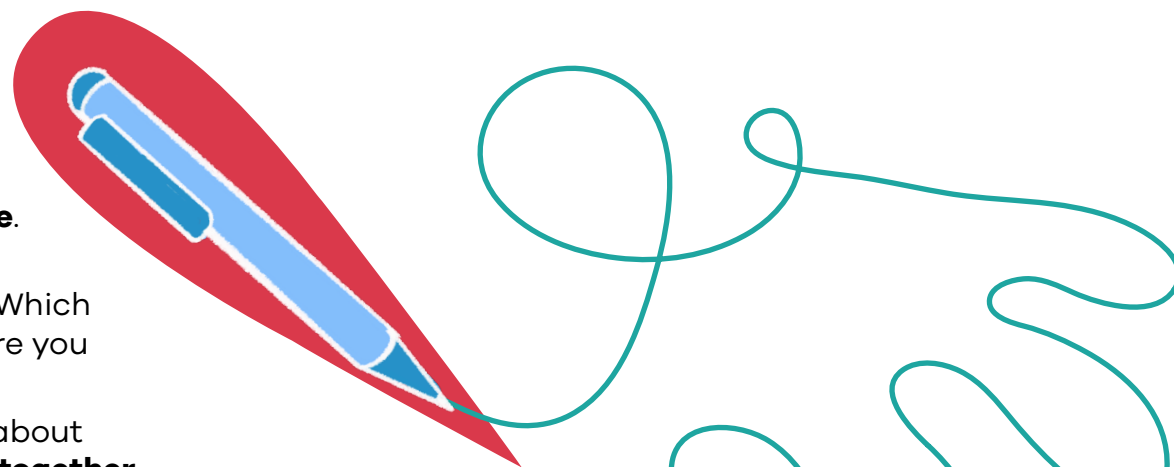
Perform the poem:

- Now, think about how you might **bring this to life in a performance of the poem.** How will you show how Eddie feels about each painting in the way you perform the lines? How will you show the difference when he is not pleased with what he has done with when he is? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you pace your performance or use facial expression to bring out the emotion or tell the story? How will you **make sure any actions you choose to incorporate add to the performance,** rather than detract from it?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, **then perform it to someone else.** What sense did your audience get about Eddie and his artwork from the way you performed the poem? What did they think you did that was most effective?



Write your own!

- Come back to the moment that came to mind when you had to **think about something that didn't work out how you'd planned it the first time**.
- Think about the **actions and feelings associated with this moment**. What exactly were you doing? Which bits went wrong? Did anything go right? What were you thinking and how were you feeling?
- Begin to note down a few words, phrases or lines about the moment, and then **look at how to bring these together in a draft of your own poem** to describe this moment for someone else. You could look at what Joseph Coelho did in the original poem to support you with your own writing, for example, you might use ***My first...***, ***My second...***, ***My third...*** to start each verse, or you might choose to use the word **'but'** to highlight what went right, in amongst the things that went wrong.
- Think about **how you might end the poem**. Did you persevere until you reached your goal or did you give up? How might this affect your final verse? Will your poem end with a sense of triumph, like Eddie's story, or a sense of frustration if you couldn't do what you intended?
- When you're happy with what you have drafted, **write it out in your best handwriting or type it up to share with someone else**. When you've finished, you may also want to **illustrate your poem**.



Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate

Find and explore more poems on CLPE's website.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK-based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: clpe.org.uk.