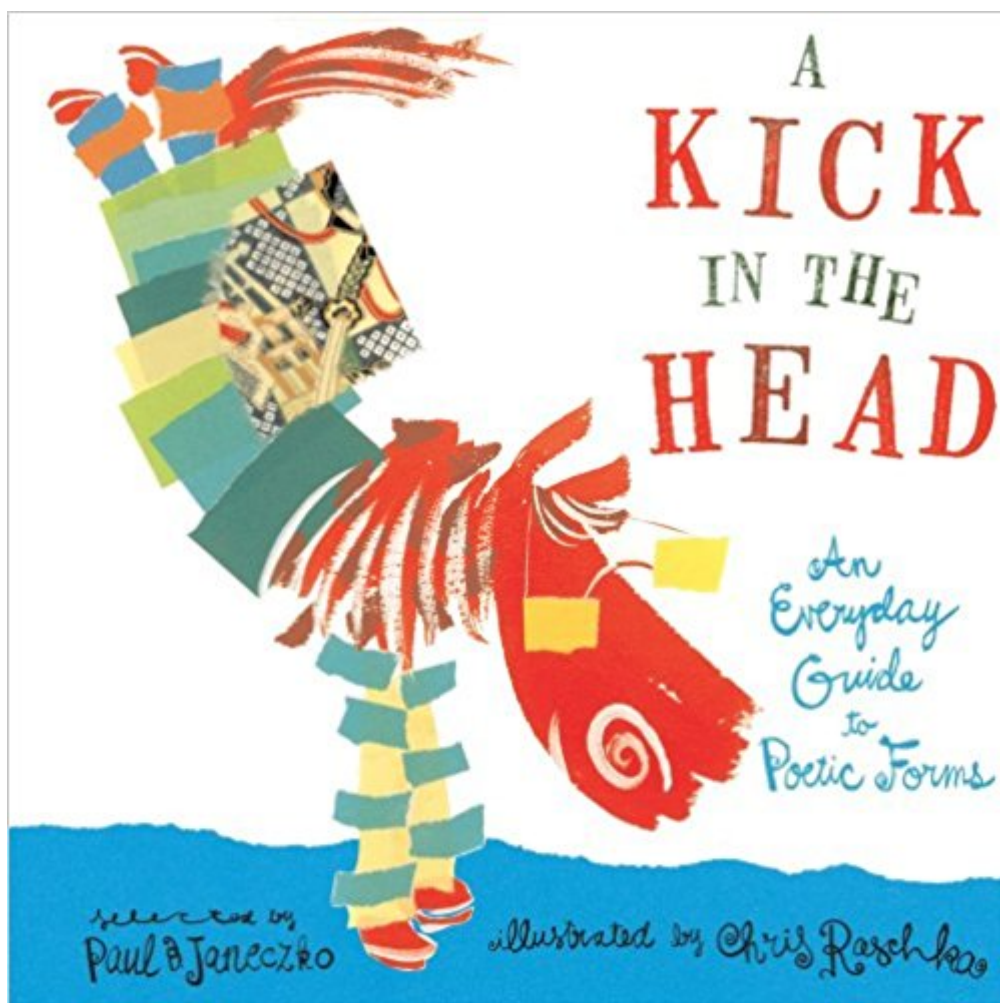


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# A Kick In The Head: An Everyday Guide To Poetic Forms



## Synopsis

From the simplest couplet to the mind-boggling pantoum, the award-winning team behind *A POKE IN THE HEAD* shows us the many fascinating ways poetic forms take shape. In this splendid and playful volume, the second of a trilogy, an acclaimed creative team presents examples of twenty-nine poetic forms, demonstrating not only the (sometimes bendable) rules of poetry, but also the spirit that brings these forms to life. Featuring poems from the likes of Eleanor Farjeon (aubade), X. J. Kennedy (elegy), Ogden Nash (couplet), Liz Rosenberg (pantoum), and William Shakespeare, the sonnet king himself, *A Kick in the Head* perfectly illustrates Robert Frost's maxim that poetry without rules is like a tennis match without a net.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-9—Following on the heels of their delightful introduction to concrete poetry, *A Poke in the Head* (Candlewick, 2001), Janeczko and Raschka now join forces to explore poetic forms. An introduction presents an easy-to-swallow rationale for the many rules to follow, likening the restrictions to those found in sports: in both cases, rules challenge the players to excel in spite of limits. The repertoire then unfolds to showcase 29 forms, one to two poems per spread, building from a couplet, tercet, and quatrain to the less familiar and more complex persona poem, ballad, and pantoum. The selections are accessible without being simplistic; they span an emotional range

from the tongue-in-cheek humor of J. Patrick Lewis's "Epitaph for Pinocchio" to Rebecca Kai Dotlich's moving "Whispers to the [Vietnam] Wall." Each page is a tour de force of design, the pace and placement of art and text perfectly synchronized. Raschka's characters and abstractions emerge from torn layers of fuzzy rice paper, intricately patterned Japanese designs, and solids, decorated and defined by quirky ink-and-watercolor lines. The expansive white background provides continuity and contrast to the colorful parade. The name of each form resides in the upper corner of the page, accompanied by a wry visual. A definition (in an unobtrusive smaller font) borders the bottom; more detail on each form is provided in endnotes. Readers will have the good fortune to experience poetry as art, game, joke, list, song, story, statement, question, memory. A primer like no other. --Wendy Lukehart, Washington DC Public Library --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 4-6. The creators of *A Poke in the I* (2001) offer another winning, picture-book poetry collaboration. Here, each poem represents a different poetic form, from the familiar to the more obscure. The excellent selection easily mixes works by Shakespeare and William Blake with entries from contemporary poets for youth, including Janeczko. Once again, Raschka's high-spirited, spare torn-paper-and-paint collages ingeniously broaden the poems' wide-ranging emotional tones. A playful, animal-shaped quilt of patterned paper illustrates Ogden Nash's silly couplet "The Mule," while an elegant flurry of torn paper pieces makes a powerful accompaniment to Georgia Heard's heartbreaking poem, "The Paper Trail," about lives lost on 9/11. Clear, very brief explanations of poetic forms (in puzzlingly tiny print) accompany each entry; a fine introduction and appended notes offer further information, as do Raschka's whimsical visual clues, such as the rows of tulips representing the syllables in a haiku. Look elsewhere for lengthy explanations of meter and rhyme. This is the introduction that will ignite enthusiasm. The airy spaces between the words and images will invite readers to find their own responses to the poems and encourage their interest in the underlying rules, which, Janeczko says, "make poetry--like sports--more fun." Gillian EngbergCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I am madly in love with this book! Such a great selection of poems, mostly unfamiliar, and such fun, modern illustrations. It introduces you to a wide variety of poetic forms, half of which I'd never heard of before. It would be best for older kids because it assumes you know some basic things, like what a stanza is. And although it does explain what a rhyme scheme is, it uses them so much that if that

was your whole introduction to it, I think you'd be lost. But it would still work for younger kids just as a great anthology. I do wish it had pronunciation information for more of the terms and that the information part of each entry was not in such teensy print.

This is a winner. Gives a description of the poetry type, explains the rules, and gives one or two samples of each. GREAT illustrations. This book has a good sense of humor. This is great for reading out loud -- we also go searching through Shel Silverstein and Adam Rex books for examples of the types of poems presented here. It is non-threatening for my son who loathes language arts -- great illustrations are a nice bonus. The whole family likes this. Pair this up with "How to Write Poetry" by the same author or "Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry" by Jack Prelutsky. How To Write Poetry Scholastic Guides Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem

I think this book is best used with older kids, very bright ones in grades 5-7. The illustrations are gorgeous and fun, but the book is about poetic forms, and some are pretty sophisticated -- many high schoolers are not even taught them. I will use it with my high school students.

A great book for teachers who want to introduce poetry in the life of students. It briefly explains some different forms of poetry ABS illustrate them with a poem that is always suggestive. A great tool and a pleasure to read and see: the illustrations are also a great work.

When I first saw this, I loved it. I bought it for a friend, but I wanted to keep it, so she is getting it too. I especially loved the art, good ideas for my quilting friends. My review just disappeared. But again, I was intrigued with the text and lessons in kinds of poetry with great examples. And I loved the illustrations. So, I am giving it and keeping it both.

The author in this book is careful to illuminate readers on the structures of the poems without letting the descriptions take away from the poetry itself. The beautiful pictures celebrate the poetry, and the overall work highlights the fact that structured poetry can be expressive and poignant. While there's nothing wrong with free and blank verse poetry (free verse is included in the book, too), many young writers seem to find structured poetry inhibiting. The author and illustrator of this book show that it can be a moving way to express yourself. The levels of poetry differ greatly, making it appropriate for almost any grade. Teachers can choose particular poems to read from or teach, or they can offer the book to students during reading workshops.

Funny and educational but not pedantic. Any kid (or, ahem, adult) can learn a lot about interesting and challenging verse forms from this book, and the selection of poems to include is excellent: varied and with an interesting illustration style that fits.

I was a little disappointed in this book. I had planned on using it in my classroom during a poetry study, but the subject matter of many of the poems was over the students' heads. I would not recommend this book to primary teachers. Intermediate teachers might have more success with it.

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