

## Sarah Mook Poetry Contest 2017, Grades K-2, Second place, "Dinner Winner"

I was happy to read "Dinner Winner." This delightful poem uses exaggeration (hyperbole) rhyme, rhythm, and repetition to craft an amusing look at what the speaker ate. In ten lines, the speaker moves from eating a carrot to eating a road—implausible, but oh so amusing.

The first line, "I ate a carrot, I ate a cake" has no surprises for the reader, but the second, "I ate my sister by mistake" launches the poem on its preposterous, yet totally enjoyable, journey. The poem's food choices become more fanciful as it progresses. Other outlandish things eaten by the speaker include:

I ate the table, I ate a chair,  
I ate my brother's teddy bear.  
I ate a rat, a bug, a mouse.  
I ate my room, I ate the house.

While this all can be labeled outlandish, it is so much fun to read and imagine, that the exaggeration (hyperbole) works.

The poem's rhyme scheme is couplets of AA, BB, CC, and so on, making for an easy read. Rhyming words used in the poem are rarely predictable, alluding to this writer's talent. "cake / mistake," "chair / bear," and "road / explode" are some of the most entertaining rhyming pairs.

The rhythm of the poem varies between seven, eight, and nine syllables per line, all iambic. The line, "I **ate** a **shop**, I **ate** the **road**," demonstrates unstressed and stressed syllables, with the words "ate," "shop," "ate," and "road" stressed a bit more than the other words. (An example of an iamb would be the word 'trapeze' with its accent on the second syllable—"tra—**PEZE**", rather than "**TRA**—peze"). William Shakespeare uses iambic pentameter in his plays and sonnets, and poets such as Robert Frost use the rhythmic iamb frequently, as from "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening": "Who's **woods** these **are** I **think** I **know**." This rhythm most closely resembles ordinary speech and is quite agreeable in this poem.

Repetition also works well in this poem. One might expect the poet to use synonyms for the verb "ate" such as 'devoured,' 'consumed,' 'gobbled up,' 'ravished,' etc. (As his or her teacher, I might have suggested it.) However, the repeated use of the verb "ate" works well as a piling on of the action. Also, the poet modifies this action with the words in bold in the following lines: "I ate ten cents, **maybe** more," I **think** I ate my neighbors door," and "I **really** hope I don't explode." These qualifiers serve to humanize the speaker and lend a welcome air of uncertainty to the poem.

Congratulations to this talented writer!

*Thank you for the pleasure of reading your work!*

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