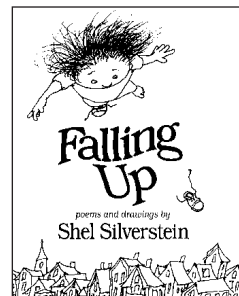


If you are a dreamer . . . come in. So begins the very first poem in Shel's first poetry collection, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. It's an invitation into the zany, wild, irreverent, and very creative world of Shel Silverstein. No poet has touched children more than Shel through his simplicity, clarity, and fun with language. His books and performances are timeless treasures that address the deep feelings, joys, and fears of everyday life with humor and compassion.

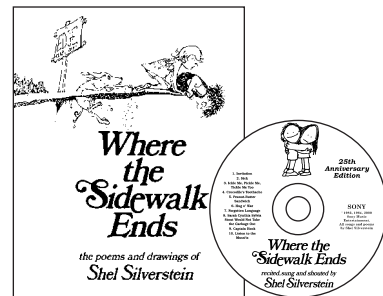
Shel Silverstein "is a magnificent poet of the spirit, and what he says in light verse and drawing to children is of such importance, such urgency, that we must be grateful that more than three million [sic] copies of his books are being read. In a world that needs a generation of imaginative thinkers, may there be millions and millions more."*

—Myra Cohn Livingston, *New York Times*, March 9, 1986

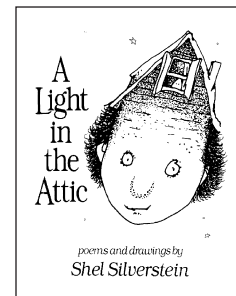
HarperCollinsChildren's Books hopes you will enjoy sharing his work with your classroom. The kit is based on the books below.



Falling Up
Booklist Editor's Choice
 ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant
 Young Adult Readers
 New York Public Library Book
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 Children's Books
 Children's Choices (IRA/CBC)



**Where the Sidewalk Ends
 25th Anniversary Edition
 Book with CD**
CD Performed by Shel Silverstein
 ALA Notable Children's Book
 1984 Grammy Award,
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 A *New York Times* Outstanding
 Children's Book
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 Booksellers for Children
 Notable Titles of 1974
 (*New York Times Book Review*)
 Michigan Young Readers' Award
 George C. Stone Center for Children's
 Books (Claremont, CA) "Recognition
 of Merit" Award



A Light in the Attic
 ALA Notable Children's Books
 A *School Library Journal* Best Book
 A Library of Congress Children's Book
 A New York Public Library
 Children's Book
 A USA Children's Book of
 International Interest
 Winner of the William Allen
 White Award (Kansas)
 George C. Stone Center for Children's
 Books (Claremont, CA) "Recognition
 of Merit" Award

See last page for ordering
 information.

*Sales of Shel Silverstein's book exceed
 20 million copies to date.

Celebrate National Poetry Month with the Works of

Shel Silverstein

A SPECIAL CLASSROOM
 POETRY KIT TO HELP
 CHILDREN OF ALL AGES
 READ, UNDERSTAND,
 AND LOVE POETRY

 HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

The kit includes:

- Audio CD of Shel Silverstein performing selected poems from *A Light in the Attic*
- *Eight Balloons* drawing booklet to photocopy for your students
- Classroom poetry booklet that will help you and your class explore the world of Shel Silverstein
- Reproducible activities to photocopy for your students
- Author highlight

You will also need:

- Photocopies of the activities
- Pencils
- Blank paper
- A copy of *Falling Up*
- A copy of *A Light in the Attic*
- A copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends* 25th Anniversary Edition Book with CD
- A CD player
- Optional: Overhead projector or enlargements of certain activities, crayons or other drawing materials

The kit will address some of the basics of poetry, including:

- Pre-Reading
- The Structure of Poetry
- Verbal Skills: Expression, Language Development, and Reading
- Meaning and Content
- Themes and Perspectives
- Numbers and Word Play
- Creative Writing Poetry Starters
- Extension Activities

Preparation: Go through the activities in advance. Familiarize yourself with the poems on the CDs and those cross-referenced in the rest of the activities. The following poems are on the enclosed *A Light in the Attic* CD:

1. "A Light in the Attic" (p. 7)
2. "Rock 'n' Roll Band" (p. 24)

3. "Eight Balloons" (p. 58)
4. "Homework Machine" (p. 56)
5. "Prehistoric" (p. 79)
6. "The Dragon of Grindly Grun" (p. 33)
7. "Picture Puzzle Piece" (p. 21)
8. "Clarence" (p. 154)
9. "Backward Bill" (p. 40)
10. "Ations" (p. 59)
11. "Twistable, Turnable Man" (p. 138)

The following poems are on the *Where the Sidewalk Ends* CD:

1. "Sick" (p. 58)
2. "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" (p. 16)
3. "The Silver Fish" (p. 148)
4. "With His Mouth Full of Food" (p. 128)
5. "Crocodile's Toothache" (p. 66)
6. "Listen to the Musn'ts" (p. 27)
7. "Smart" (p. 35)
8. "The Farmer and the Queen" (p. 32)
9. "Dreadful" (p. 141)
10. "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" (p. 70)

PRE-READING

Begin with the enclosed *A Light in the Attic* CD where Shel Silverstein performs selections from his original album. Using an overhead projector or an enlarged photocopy of the page from the book, read along with Shel as he recites "A Light in the Attic" (p. 7, CD Track 1). Ask students if they know who wrote the poem.

Introduction: Ask students what the attic represents. What does the light flickering mean? Explain that the comparisons made between the house and the boy's head, the attic to one's brain, and light to thinking, are *metaphors* (a comparison in which one object or idea stands for another). Read another of Shel's poems, such as "Hug o' War" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 19).

Author Highlight

After the students have become acquainted with some of the poems, share the author highlight with them. Ask if they have read any of the books mentioned. Explain that although Shel Silverstein is best known for his poetry, he was also a writer, composer, lyricist, playwright, and folksinger, who began his career as a cartoonist. Discuss with students how one's interests influence one's work. For example, the musical rhythm of Shel's poetry was influenced by his experience as a composer and musician.

Music as an Influence: Play Track 2 from the *A Light in the Attic* CD, "Rock 'n' Roll Band" and read along in *A Light in the Attic*, p. 24. Have students find other poems in the three poetry books that relate to music, for example:

- "Music Lesson" (*Falling Up*, p. 135)
- "Musical Career" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 60)
- "My Guitar" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 80)
- "Noise Day" (*Falling Up*, p. 26)
- "Ourchestra" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 23)
- "What a Day" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 118)

Demonstrate that a poem can also be a song by first reading the poems below, then playing the CD:

- "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 16, CD Track 2)
- "Ations," (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 59, CD Track 10)
- "Twistable, Turnable Man" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 138, CD Track 11)

Theater as an Influence: Shel Silverstein's work as a playwright also influenced his poems. Ask students to act out a poem, for example:

- "Mirror, Mirror" (*Falling Up*, p. 88)
- "The Nap Taker" (*Falling Up*, p. 140)
- "Little Abigail and the Beautiful Pony" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 120)

Ask students to find more poems that could be a play. Dramatic expression will be explored further with *Eight Balloons*. (See back of *Eight Balloons* booklet.)

THE STRUCTURE OF POETRY

The words below are used to describe and discuss some of the basic elements of poetry:

- poem: Writing that is imaginative and condensed by using words chosen for their sound and meaning, with phrases that have a certain pattern made with rhythm and rhyme.
- rhyme: Words that, at the end of a line of a poem, sound alike.
- rhythm: In poetry, a pattern created with long and short, soft and loud, weak and strong sounds.
- cadence: A balanced, rhythmic flow of words.
- meter: A rhythm that continuously repeats a single basic pattern.
- verse: A line of a poem, or a group of lines within a long poem.
- stanza: A part of a poem with similar rhythm and rhyme that will usually repeat later in the poem.
- rhyming couplet: Two lines of a poem together with the same rhythm and same rhyme at the end.

Begin by discussing why a poem is different from any other kind of writing. A poem can be long or short. (For example: Long: "Clarence," *A Light in the Attic*, p. 154. Short: "Stone Airplane" *Falling Up*, p. 49). It can tell a story or convey a single thought.

Rhyme and Rhythm

Rhyme. Explain that poems don't have to rhyme, but many do. Rhymes can occur every two lines, every four, etc. Have students identify the lines that rhyme in the following poem.

Explain that this is a *rhyme pattern*. For example, the underlined words below rhyme every two lines.

PUT SOMETHING IN (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 22)

Draw a crazy picture,
 Write a nutty poem,
 Sing a mumble-gumble song,
 Whistle through your comb.
 Do a looney-goony dance
 'Cross the kitchen floor,
 Put something silly in the world
 That ain't been there before.

Rhythm. Cadence and rhythm are integral to Shel Silverstein's poetry. To demonstrate this, have students clap out the poems together, one clap per syllable. Then ask them to make marks on paper and count out the syllables per line. Working with the same poem, "Put Something In," you can demonstrate how the rhyme pattern and rhythm patterns correspond as shown below. The lines that rhyme have the same rhythm pattern. Explain that words such as poem and before count as one-syllable words in this poem.

PUT SOMETHING IN (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 22)

| | <i>Number of Syllables</i> | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Draw a crazy picture, | | 6 |
| Write a nutty <u>poem</u> , | | 5 |
| Sing a mumble-gumble song, | | 7 |
| Whistle through your <u>comb</u> . | | 5 |
| Do a looney-goony dance | | 7 |
| 'Cross the kitchen <u>floor</u> , | | 5 |
| Put something silly in the world | | 8 |
| That ain't been there <u>before</u> . | | 5 |

(be in before is "soft")

Other examples of corresponding rhyme and rhythm patterns are:

"Boa Constrictor" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 45)
 "How Not to Have to Dry the Dishes" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 12)
 "Needles and Pins" (*Falling Up*, p. 23)

Rhyming Couplet: See "What Did?" *A Light in the Attic*, p. 16. Write the poem on the blackboard or use an overhead projector, leaving off the last word of each line as below. Ask students to fill in the blanks with words that rhyme with the underlined words.

WHAT DID?

What did the carrot say to the wheat?

"'Lettuce' rest, I'm feeling ___ ___ ___ ___ ." (4 letters)

What did the paper say to the pen?

"I feel quite all 'write,' my ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ." (6 letters)

What did the teapot say to the chalk?

Nothing, you silly . . . teapots can't ___ ___ ___ ___ ! (4 letters)

Explain that each group of two lines is a rhyming couplet. Point out that the rhyme occurs in each of two successive lines.

Non-Rhyming Poems: Find a poem in one of the books that doesn't rhyme (for example: "Little Abigail and the Beautiful Pony," *A Light in the Attic*, p. 120). Ask students if it is a poem even though it doesn't rhyme. Explain that it is still a poem because it contains many of the other elements of a poem—writing that is imaginative and condensed, words that have been chosen for their sound and meaning, with phrases that have a certain pattern and rhythm.

Meter: See "Screamin' Millie" (*Falling Up*, p. 44). Explain to students that meter is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem. Write out the poem on the blackboard or

use an enlarged photocopy or overhead projector. The bold-face syllables indicate the stressed syllables. Ask students to read the poem first stressing the bold-faced syllables. Then ask them to read it again stressing the syllables that are not bold. Ask which they prefer. Discuss how different the poem sounds. Ask students if they think changing the meter of the poem affects the meaning of the poem.

SCREAMIN' MILLIE

Millie McDeevitt **screamed** a **scream**
So **loud** it **made** her **eyebrows steam**.
She **screamed** so **loud** her **jawbone broke**,
Her **tongue** caught **fire**, her **nostrils smoked**,
Her **eyeballs boiled** and **then** popped **out**,
Her **ears** flew **north**, her **nose** went **south**,
Her **teeth** flew **out**, her **voice** was **wrecked**,
Her **head** went **sailing off** her **neck**—
Over the **hillside**, **'cross** the **stream**,
Into the **skies** it **chased** the **scream**.
And **that's** what **happened** to **Millie McDeevit**
(At **least** I **hope** you **screamers** believe it).

VERBAL SKILLS: EXPRESSION, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, AND READING

Read one of the poems listed below aloud without feeling or inflection. Then play the selection from the CD. Discuss announcement, how words sound, what words are emphasized, the repetition of vowel sounds, the repetition of consonants (*consonance*) and the pacing of the lines. Ask students how this affects their understanding and enjoyment of the poem.

- “Sick” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 58, CD Track 1)
- “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 70, CD Track 10)

- “Picture Puzzle Piece” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 21, CD Track 7)
- “Clarence” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 154, CD Track 8)
- “Backward Bill” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 40, CD Track 9)

“Long Mobile”

Read “Long Mobile” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 39) and ask three students to read the first line separately, each emphasizing a different word. Discuss how this changes our perception of the poem.

“Hard to Please”

Have students read aloud “Hard to Please” (*Falling Up*, p. 74) and see how far they get through the poem in one breath. Ask students why they think Silverstein suggests reading the poem in one breath. Ask students how it might be different if you did not read it in one breath.

MEANING AND CONTENT

The imaginative content of Silverstein’s poems most often employs the collaboration of words and images. Illustrations are especially helpful to emergent readers as they provide meaning and content to the words. In many cases, the drawing completes the thought which is not in the text of the poem. Without the drawing, we would not fully understand the poem. This technique is used in poems such as:

- “Mister Moody” (*Falling Up*, p. 95)
- “The Planet of Mars” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 93)
- “The Sack Race” (*Falling Up*, p. 147)

“James”

Read “James” (*Falling Up*, p. 115). Ask students if they can guess why James has a G instead of a J on his shirt? Hint to students that getting the answer right requires close reading of the poem and looking at the illustration on the page.

“Deaf Donald” Picture Poem

Read “Deaf Donald” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 143). This poem is in the form of a *rebus*, a representation of words with pictures. Ask students to write their own poems either entirely with pictures or in combination with words.

Themes and Perspectives

Shel Silverstein often set up a dynamic relationship between opposites in a poem so the reader will explore both points of view. The insight gained by students is important in helping them to experience empathy and to develop social skills.

“People Zoo”

Read “People Zoo” (*Falling Up*, p. 80). Discuss the point of view of the animals. Discuss the point of view of the person in the cage. Ask students to identify some of the things they think Shel Silverstein expresses in the poem about changing points of view.

“One Inch Tall”

Read “One Inch Tall” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 55). Ask students to write a poem from a different point of view, for example “one mile long.”

Reproducible: “The Oak and the Rose”

(*A Light in the Attic*, p. 165. *See the next page.*) Photocopy the page and ask students to write an extension of the poem from the rose’s point of view. The oak tree talks about things it can see from up high. What are the things a rose would see that a tall tree could not?

NUMBERS AND WORD PLAY

“The Monkey”

Write the poem “The Monkey” (*Falling Up*, p. 40) on the blackboard, large chart paper, or photocopy onto a transparency for an overhead projector. Discuss the numbers and the word-sounds they represent. Read the poem to the class. Ask students to call out the number/word as you come to it.

Discuss why the numbers are a good substitution for words. Challenge students to create a short poem or riddle using numbers as words. Note that not only are numbers substituted for words, but they appear in numerical sequence, a very difficult thing to achieve.

“Smart”

Read the poem “Smart” and play the track from the CD (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 35, CD Track 7). As a hilarious lesson in math and logic, ask students to calculate the son’s losses each time he makes a trade. Students can do their calculations in writing, or, as the poem is reread a second time, give their answers verbally.

“Importnt?”

Read the poem “Importnt?” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 54). Ask students to write a poem with one vowel and one consonant missing.

Homophones are words that sound alike but are different in meaning and spelling. Here are some examples:

“Poet’s Tree” (folder cover) poet tree poetry
“Anteater” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 61) anteater aunt eater
“Little Hoarse” (*Falling Up*, p. 29) hoarse horse

After reading the poems, ask students to make a list of more homophones and use them in a sentence.

Homonyms are words that are usually spelled the same but have different meanings. In these cases, the homonyms are integral to the meaning of the poems. Here are some examples:

“Turkey?” (*Falling Up*, p. 34) drumstick (turkey leg)
drumstick (music)
“Safe?” (*Falling Up*, p. 25) safe (to cross the street)
safe (falling from building)

After reading the poems, ask students to make a list of more homonyms and use them in a sentence.

CREATIVE WRITING POETRY STARTERS

Below are the first lines from various Shel Silverstein poems. Write these first lines on the blackboard or overhead projector. Ask students to choose one and write a poem. After completing the poem, read Shel Silverstein's poems to see how he treated the subject.

There was a boy in our town with long hair . . .

"The Long-Haired Boy" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 137)

I have a hot dog for a pet . . .

"Hot Dog" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 59)

Once I spoke the language of the flowers . . .

"Forgotten Language" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 149)

I've been working so hard you just wouldn't believe . . .

"Tired" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 78)

Reproducible: "Love"

Read and show "Love" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 95).

Photocopy the next page of this booklet. Ask students to write a poem using any word that describes a feeling, for example: happy, sad, scared, or bored. Ask them to write just one letter of the word in the sign, then to write what happened to all the other letters.

Reproducible: "Poem on the Neck of a Giraffe"

Read and show "Poem on the Neck of a Giraffe" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 107). Ask students to try to write a title for this poem. Is a title necessary? Ask students to explain how the shape of a giraffe and the way the words are written are intertwined.

Photocopy the camel and elephant on pages 10 and 11 of this booklet. Ask students to select one and write a poem within the shape of the animal. Suggest that they might write about where the animal lives, what it eats, or any special

characteristics it has. You can also suggest that students create their own drawings to write their poems in.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Eight Balloons Booklet

Drawing Activity: Photocopy the pages from the booklet. In a large class, several students would have the same page to draw. Read the poem and have them show their drawings in the sequence of the poem.

Play Activity: Explain to students that a poem can be the beginning of many other ways to express oneself. A poem could become a song, a drawing, or even a play. Play the poem "Eight Balloons" from the CD (*A Light in the Attic*, Track 3). Make eight photocopies of the back of the *Eight Balloons* booklet, one for each actor. Then choose eight people from your class to create a short play. With the teacher as narrator, each student says and acts out what happens to each of the eight balloons. All join together to *pop!* at the end.

Shel Silverstein Journal

Have students keep a Shel Silverstein journal in which to record their reactions to his poetry. Their journals could include emotions and feelings that his poetry evokes in them, which poems are their favorites and why, poems that they might not have understood, etc. Invite students to share some of their reactions and journal entries with the class.

For further information about Shel Silverstein and his books, please visit:

www.harperchildrens.com

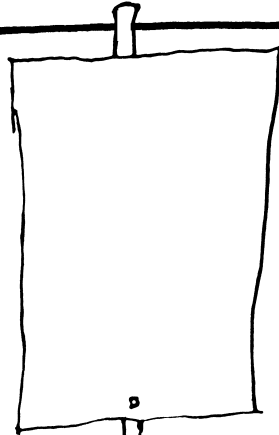
www.ShelSilverstein.com official web site for children

For more information about the National Poetry Month celebration with Shel Silverstein, you can also visit the following web sites:

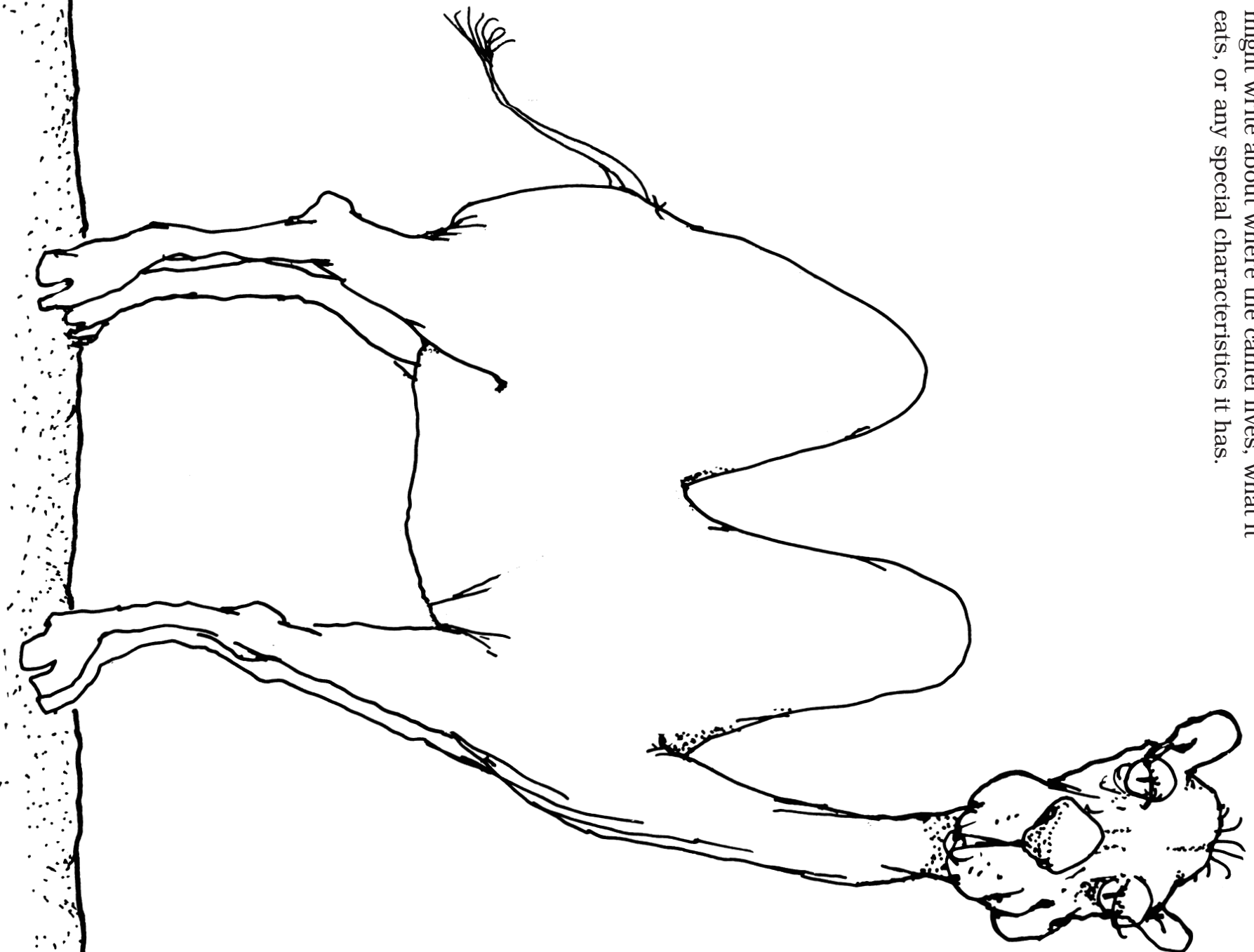
www.kidsreads.com

www.poets.org

Choose a word that describes a feeling,
for example, happy, sad, scared, or bored.
Then write one of its letters in the sign.
Write a poem about what happened to the
other missing letters. My word is:



Write a poem within the shape of the camel. You might write about where the camel lives, what it eats, or any special characteristics it has.



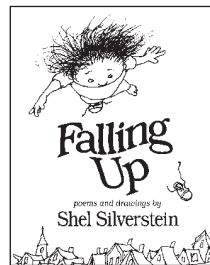
— Celebrate National Poetry Month with Shel Silverstein —

Write a poem within the shape of the elephant. You might write about where the elephant lives, what it eats, or any special characteristics it has.

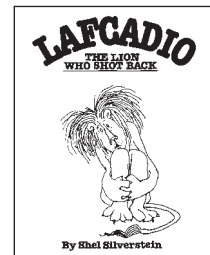


Celebrate National Poetry Month with Shel Silverstein

Favorite Books by Shel Silverstein



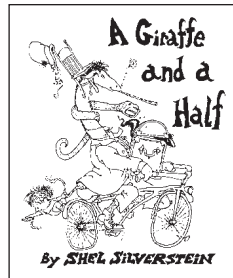
Falling Up
Tr 0-06-024802-5
\$17.95 (\$26.50)
Lb 0-06-024803-3
\$17.89 (\$27.89)



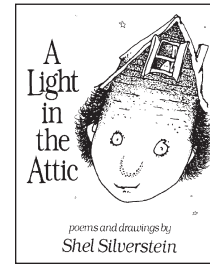
Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back
Tr 0-06-025675-3
\$15.95 (\$23.95)
Lb 0-06-025676-1
\$15.89 (\$24.89)



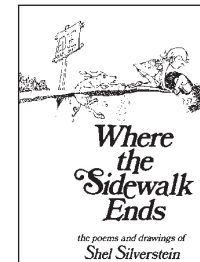
The Missing Piece Meets the Big O
Tr 0-06-025657-5
\$15.95 (\$23.95)
Lb 0-06-025658-3
\$15.89 (\$24.89)



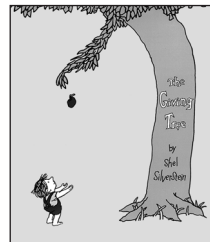
A Giraffe and a Half
Tr 0-06-025655-9
\$15.95 (\$23.95)
Lb 0-06-025656-7
\$15.89 (\$24.89)



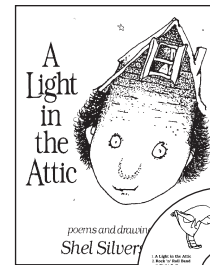
A Light in the Attic
Tr 0-06-025673-7
\$17.95 (\$26.95)
Lb 0-06-025674-5
\$17.89 (\$27.89)



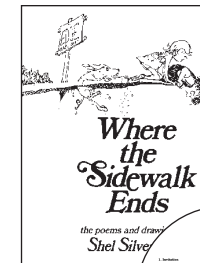
Where the Sidewalk Ends
Tr 0-06-025667-2
\$17.95 (\$26.95)
Lb 0-06-025668-0
\$17.89 (\$27.89)



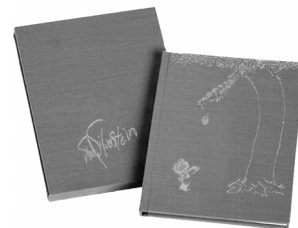
The Giving Tree
Tr 0-06-025665-6
\$15.95 (\$23.95)
Lb 0-06-025666-4
\$15.89 (\$24.89)



A Light in the Attic 20th Anniversary Edition Book with CD
Performed by Shel Silverstein
Tr 0-06-623617-7
\$22.95



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\$17.95 (\$26.95)



The Missing Piece
Tr 0-06-025671-0
\$15.95 (\$23.95)
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\$15.89 (\$24.89)

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