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Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

You might think that a new book of poetry for children from the former children's laureate might come with a little more publication fanfare. His name is prominent on the cover but otherwise the production is indistinguishable from the work of less distinctive (not to say distinguished) children's poets. Still, this unpretentious and cheerful presentation gives you over 200 pages and 100 poems. Most aspects of Rosen's poetry for children are represented here. The family and friends poems now embrace the sibling and parental idiosyncrasies of his early work; his own children; and, affectingly, his memories of his grandparents. My favourite of these is about eating a bagel with his grandfather, a teasing piece of folk wisdom which perfectly conveys the love between them and a sense of the transience of time (or the impossibility of sharing the hole in the bagel). Apart from that, there are poems of wordplay, poems that go off drunk on sound and rhythm, others that take crazy notions to the craziest lengths ? ?Satnav? (Trousers) is good ? and some that remind me of the work of the Czech poet, Miroslav Holub: simple, gnomic, haunting and life affirming. ?Take the Thing in Your Hands? explores books and the imagination; and ?The Messenger? is a disturbing warning about a kind of self-protective attitude that is ultimately deeply destructive. This is a brilliant collection that confirms, where confirmation isn't really needed, the range, fun and seriousness of a poet who is both accessible and challenging; and that, once again, provides a mine of great poems to share. Also suitable for older readers.

Running Order:

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