



Grade 3-4

February 8, 2008

Dear 3rd and 4th Grade Parents,

Students have been working enthusiastically on their poetry anthologies. As well as favorite published poems, they are selecting, revising, and editing some of their own best poems.

Students have been writing color poems, shape poems, narrative poems, superlative poems (slowest, biggest, etc.) and poems based on crazy titles. Some students also enjoyed creating poems using long lists of colorful adjectives selected from the dictionary. I've started to display some of their work on the bulletin board outside the room, and several students have asked if they can just stand out there for a while to read everyone else's poems. One student even asked if she could put someone else's poem into her anthology, because she liked it so much. The other student was delighted to be 'published' thus.

As the anthologies become so beloved, students recognize that they really need to do their best work. They are willingly revising, and carefully editing. Some want to type their poems; others are enjoying using gel pens and line guides hidden under plain paper to keep their writing in order. Yesterday Vadim hovered beside the paper cutter instructing me exactly how much to slice off each side because he knew, "Exactly how I want it to look in my anthology."

Yesterday, within one reading workshop each group had a choice of which poem to study. The first group worked on 'Sea Fever'. "I must down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky, and all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by." I had thought to focus on rhythm and solving some of the difficult vocabulary. The students, unimpeded by such challenging terms as *whetted* and *vagrant*, wanted only to talk about the story hidden behind the poem. Brendan became convinced that the "I" in the poem was a young boy, longing to run away to sea. As we worked our way through the poem he kept pointing to the evidence of his inferences. (He still assures me that he does not understand poetry at all, though!)

The other group chose a humorous poem – working in pairs, and performing it for the group. Several wanted to add it into their anthology, and got excited about the idea of choosing their own poem to practice and perform for the rest of the class.

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These students are seeing the potential for poetry everywhere – the yucky taste of Kid’s Airborn starts sounding like a poem, or someone’s frustration with the Haiku form becomes a poem entitled ‘I am bad at writing Haiku’. Come check out some of their work on the board outside the room.

Sincerely,
Liza Butler

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