



I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices

Paul Fleischman , Ken Nutt (Illustrations)

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At first light the finches
are flitting about the trees

Flittering
fluttering
flit
purple finches
flit
Fluttering
fluttering
fly
painted finches
fly.

In this companion volume to *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*, the winner of the 1989 Newbery Medal, Paul Fleischman celebrates the sound, the sense, the essence of birds. Written to be spoken aloud by two voices, sometimes alternating, sometimes simultaneous, these poems perfectly capture the beauty of birds in their singing, soaring, and rejoicing.

I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices Details

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Author : Paul Fleischman , Ken Nutt (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices for online ebook

Nielson says

Poem: "Dawn" pg.3. These poems are meant to be read together with a child side by side so sometimes you will both be reading the same or different words at the same time. I think this gives a more of a flighty, birdy feel which is neat. However, it has the potential to be confusing.

Mohsin Maqbool says

PAUL Fleischman's I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices is a collection of poems designed for reading aloud by two voices. It comprises 15 poems. Each poem is about a different species of birds.

Even though the book is meant for children, especially school-going ones, adults are bound to enjoy it as much – like I did. Ken Nutt's full-page black and white drawings facing each poem combine the poems aura, enjoyment and loving observation.

The first poem titled Dawn is about finches and is full of alliteration:

"At first light the finches are flittering about the trees

Flittering

Fluttering."

The facing page shows a solitary finch sitting on a window sill.

On reading The Wandering Albatross, I was immediately reminded of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. As to why you have got to read both the poems. If I tell you, then it would be like letting the cat out of the bag.

The first sketch on the following page shows a high-flying albatross. The second shows a ship sailing on a serene sea on a sunny day with an albatross flying right above it high up in the sky. The last sketch shows the ship being tossed and turned in stormy waters.

The Passenger Pigeon has a melancholic tale to tell. I am reproducing it in full for you to enjoy and also to raise your interest in picking up a copy of the book.

The Passenger Pigeon

We were counted not in thousands nor millions

But in billions.

We were numerous as the stars in the heavens

As grains of sand at the sea

As the buffalo on the plains.

When we burst into flight

We so filled the sky

That the sun was darkened

And day became dusk.

Humblers of the sun we were!

The world inconceivable without us.

Yet it's 1914,

And here I am alone

Caged in the Cincinnati Zoo,

The last of the Passenger Pigeons.

The Actor has an ironic story to narrate.

The Actor

I seem
A shrike
I ape
The gull
I sing just like the cardinal.
I mimic coots
I mirror crows.
I imitate the orioles
I copy wrens.
I echo owls
I know by heart
The catbird's calls.
But all of that is simply sham
For a mockingbird is
What I am.

There are ironic poems; there are ones that tell you stories – both fact and fiction, and then there are some melancholic ones which are bound to move you to tears.

The book has a beautiful cover of a flying albatross rising from the ashes. The background is orange. Again the stupendous sketch has been drawn by Mr Nutt. The cover sketch is also reproduced inside with the poem on the phoenix.

Do read the book. You can also gift it to a younger sibling or to anybody who loves reading poems about birds, and, of course, to anyone who loves drama and is into drawing.

Marya says

Well I guess you have to have a beta. Thank heavens he went on to write Joyful Noise.

Dawn says

Read Aloud - 10 yrs +
Independent Reader - 14 yrs +

Worldview - Universally Acceptable

Review

This delightful poetry book follows in the footsteps of Paul Fleishman's earlier book Joyful Noise. The

poems are written to be read by two people at times in unison, at others times taking turns.

Each poem is a brief and manageable length so that children should have no problem polishing the poem and being able to read it fluidly within one week. The vocabulary included is simple and easy to read, but the skill and reading level required to read in unison and follow both ones own part as well as their fellow reader creates a unique reading challenge for students. The need for proper rhythm, meter and both effective elocution and enunciation in order to preform these poems make the books a ready made educator's dream poetry and elocution curriculum. Together the two books have almost the perfect number of entries to use one each week of the school year, with a few weeks to spare.

In this book each poem is about a bird, either real or fantastical. When well read they are incredibly beautiful and fun. The black and white art work, which depicts the birds from each poem pairs perfectly enhancing the text and adding another level of enjoyment.

Teacher Application

14 years may seem extreme as an age to choose to use this book as an independent reader, however with only one reader one must use their imagination to create the interesting theatricality of this resource. There is nothing inappropriate, but this book is not meant to be read independently. If one wished to introduce their child to this style of poetry and was unable to read it with them, or find them a partner it would be far better to have them listen to the audio version, than attempt to read it alone unless the reader has had an extensive background in poetry and possibly music too.

It is also important to note it is not ideal for an adult alone to read it aloud to a child, so it would be best if the child is of an age that they can read one portion of the poem.

There is an audio book in which both books are performed. It takes very little time to listen to, but will make it easier to read these together with your students if you have heard correctly preformed prior to attempting it on your own. It works well to sign the audio book out of the library to listen to in advance. It would not be advised however to use the audio book with your students unless there is no other choice as the great benefit of this style of poetry is the skill level required and challenge presented in reading in unison/rhythm aloud together.

Ideally each reader could independently familiarize themselves with the new poem early in the week and read it aloud together several times later in the week until it can be said fluently. If you had two students each could take one part of the poem.

Contents:

Dawn

Morning

The Wandering Albatross

The Actor

The Watchers

The Passenger Pigeon

The Common Egret

The Phoenix

Warblers
The Cormorant's Tale
Sparrows
Doves of Dodona
Dusk
Whip-poor-will
Owls

Parental Warning
N/A

Maria says

It was interesting to listen to this book instead of read it. Definitely a good choice, though some of the readings seemed overly theatrical to me.

Diana Pettis says

I read this with Xavier tonight and he told me it was hard to follow because the author has two voices reading each poem. It was hard to keep his focus on what the message of the poems were. Then I went online to get the guided reading level which their is not one. All it said that the grade level equivalent was 5.5. I think to read this with groups of kids they would need lots of exposure to poetry.

Margie Alsbrook says

This beautiful and silly lyrical tribute to birds is the perfect anecdote to times when life seems way too serious. Highly recommended for knocking you out of a dark place.

Rachel Remer says

Same as the other two voices book except I liked this book even better. A couple of the poems really stood out to me as stellar.

Angela says

Poetry is not really my thing, but I listened to these instead of reading them, which was much better with synchronized poetry reading.

Alyssa says

How much fun this book is! Not only does it promote poetry, but it promotes sharing poetry and the spoken word.

Lisa Rathbun says

I liked this better than "Joyful Noise" because I like birds better than bugs! I remember reading this together with my sister years ago; sometimes the lines are in unison, sometimes they alternate, sometimes they conflict, but all together each poem captures the feel of the different birds. Wonderful!!!

Betsy says

Not as good as Joyful Noise, but still a lot of fun.

Harrison says

this book is amazing and you truely have to have two people to read it, you also have to read it several times before you fully understand it. collin and i are going to read the poem phoenix for our grade:)

Lynn says

From my Honors Children's Literature class. So much fun with two readers! Hope my grandchildren and/or their parents will give it a try!

Andrew says

This book, by Paul Fleishman was about very different poems based on nature. what was very creative about his poems was that it was ment for two people to read. most of his poems were very descriptive and good.
