



**EXPLORING
MOON JUICE BY
KATE WAKELING**

**These workshop ideas by poet
Kate Wakeling use poems from
her collection 'Moon Juice' to
spark ideas and get children
writing creatively.**

Little-Known Facts About...

This activity is based on my 'Little-Known Facts' poem (p.34) from my poetry collection Moon Juice (The Emma Press) which lists a series of unlikely super powers that children possess, such as...

In secret, children can turn lightbulbs on and off with just their eyebrows.

When a child sneezes, the nearest adult briefly loses all reception on their mobile phone.

Behind children's left ears grow tiny cacti which yield delicious juice every summer.

After reading out the poem (and assessing how 'true' we think it to be), invite the pupils to come up with a few 'Little-Known Facts' about themselves as individuals. Suggest the pupils start by thinking of things that are true (in the more conventional sense) about them – so perhaps a sport or activity they feel they're good at, or a hobby they enjoy etc. – and then invite them to explode this 'true fact' into a 'poem fact' by transforming it into something really fantastical and colourful.

Before they set to work, I'll suggest 3 'rules' for their list poem that might be helpful to keep in mind if they extend their writing later:

1. *Let your imagination roam wild.*
2. *Be as specific with details as you can.*

So instead of...

'I can walk on water'

you might say...

'I can stride across oceans at turbo speed without once getting damp socks (but only when the moon is full)'

3. *Explore the five senses to make your 'facts' come alive.*

Mood Creatures

The next workshop explores my 'Bad Moods' (p.4) poem from Moon Juice which personifies Bad Moods into strange sorts of creatures with various unruly characteristics like...

Bad Moods gobble grins for breakfast then spit them out as mangled toads.

Bad Moods smell like bat droppings, old eggs and damp, cross dogs.

In the session invite each child to pick a different sort of mood of their choice (happy, dreamy, anxious, bored...) and to think about what sort of characteristics this particular 'mood creature' might have.

Structure these ideas through a series of questions and make detailed notes in response to these questions – these notes could then be crafted into full poems later. The questions we'll explore will be:

What does this mood wear?

How does it move from place to place? What sorts of noises does it make?

What does it smell of?

What does it eat for breakfast? What is it frightened of?

What does it dream of at night?

These answers can be turned into fuller lines (so the contents of the question can be incorporated into the poem itself)

Happy Moods smell like summer afternoons and candy-floss

Happy Moods are frightened of teardrops, miserable faces and books with sad endings.

One other way to give the very start of these poems a bit more oomph, can be to add a little repetition/ extension in just the first two lines of the poem. So my 'Bad Moods' poem began:

Bad Moods wear weird shoes,

Bad Moods wear weird shoes covered in unexpected fleecy fluff that means

Bad Moods can creep up on you like spiders

or tigers

or a daddy longlegs with silent stilts.

So, a 'Happy Moods' poem could begin something like:

Happy Moods wear soft yellow hats,

Happy Moods wear soft yellow hats the colour of sunshine...

Happy writing!