



Wet Cement: A Mix of Concrete Poems by Bob Raczka

Reviewed by Kaitlin Beck

Summary

This wonderful collection of concrete poems features themes ranging from clocks to constellations to music (there's a one on xylophones ☺). While the themes alone are interesting and childlike, the illustrations that accompany the text make it extra special. Because concrete poems take on the shape of what the poem is about, we have the opportunity as Orff educators to get creative, specifically when it comes to movement and creation.

In the classroom, this book would be appropriate for all grade levels, as you can simplify any of the ideas below to meet the needs of your students. This text would work well for movement and experimenting with space, as a starting point for writing a piece or ostinato, or as inspiration for small group composition. There are truly so many possibilities!

Classroom Applications

- **Kindergarten** – choose poems that have movement oriented subjects (hopscotch, takeoff, lightning) then use these to explore opposites or add a song and make it into an exploration game
- **1st grade** – using the poem 'corners' and others you enjoy, introduce different pathways, from mazes to zig zags to swirly twirly lines
- **2nd grade** – if you introduce half note with this grade level, find poems that play with stretching and length to reinforce and practice that concept
- **3rd grade** – using the poem 'dominoes', have students experiment with partnered movement, playing with speed, sharing weight, and time
- **4th grade** – choose a poem with dark and light components and explore movement connected with the poem theme; then have students create an elemental melody in do-pentatonic to go with it (scaffold as needed), then transfer it to la-pentatonic; perform altogether
- **5th and/or 6th grade** – invite students to create their own concrete poems with a specific theme or whatever they would like, utilizing the text for an in-class performance or small group composition activity using the modes