



## **LOVE THAT DOG**

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*Applause Series Curriculum Guide*  
May 16-20, 2016



**DES MOINES  
PERFORMING ARTS**  
CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Love that Dog!* This uplifting piece of theater centers around a relatable young man named Jack and the personal journey he undertakes to find his voice. Although a reluctant writer at the beginning of the year, the guidance of his inspiring teacher Miss Stretchberry opens in Jack a new understanding that he has something to say and gives him the tools — poetry — to say it in a way that is evocative and powerful. We hope your students will see a bit of themselves in Jack and that his story will encourage them in their own journeys of self-discovery.



Jack and his dog Sky, who inspires much of Jack's writing.

As you prepare your students for this experience, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” materials and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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Alliant Energy, American Enterprise Group, Arts Midwest, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Bravo Greater Des Moines, Casey's General Stores, DuPont Pioneer, EMC Insurance Companies,, Hy-Vee, John Deere, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Polk County, Principal Financial Group, Sargent Family Foundation, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., West Bank, Willis Auto Campus and more than 200 individual donors.

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This study guide was written and compiled by Yvette Zaród Hermann; edited by Karoline Myers and Michelle McDonald. Based in part on the “Love that Dog Educational Materials” by Theatergroep Kwatta.

# ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

**Public education programs** allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 20th season of school performances.

# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- \* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- \* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- \* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- \* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- \* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the theater:

- \* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- \* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- \* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- \* Do not text during the performance.
- \* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- \* **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- \* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- \* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- \* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

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GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# TEMPLE THEATER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts.  
Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Temple Theater.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. (Full payment and cancellation policies may be viewed at [DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education](http://DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education).)
- DMPA reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Temple for the Performing Arts, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS

- The Temple Theater is located in the Temple for the Performing Arts located at Tenth and Locust Streets in downtown Des Moines.
- Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8A (downtown exits) and the ramp toward Third Street. Travel south on Third Street approximately six blocks to Grand Avenue. Turn west on Grand Avenue and travel to Thirteenth Street. Turn south on Thirteenth Street and then east on Locust Street.
- Buses will park on the south side of Locust Street in front of the Nationwide building. See next column for additional parking information.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at [education@DesMoinesPerformingArts.org](mailto:education@DesMoinesPerformingArts.org) or 515.246.2355.  
Thank you!

## PARKING

- Police officers stationed at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the theater. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the theater. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with DMPA Education staff.

## ARRIVAL

- When arriving at the theater, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. A staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- DMPA staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the theater.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seats or taking groups to the restroom.

## IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Temple Theater, please see an usher or call 515.246.2355.

# VOCABULARY

*Love that Dog* has some fun words in the script! We have included them in the order you hear them during the show.

See how many you can recognize while you attend the performance of *Love that Dog*.

**Inspire:**  
to influence,  
move and guide



tanveersnaseer.com



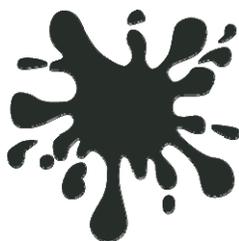
commons.wikipedia.org

**pasture:**  
a field  
covered with  
grass

**publisher:**  
a person or  
company  
who helps  
writers  
share their  
work with  
the public



josephkaminski.org



iconarchive.org

**splatter:**  
to hit a  
surface and  
spread out.  
Jack  
describes a  
blue car as  
“splattering  
mud”

**anonymous:**  
Jack tells his  
teacher she can  
put up his poems  
only if she  
doesn't put his  
name on them,  
so she types  
“Anonymous,” a  
word that comes  
from the Greek *an onoma*,  
meaning “without name.”  
What are reasons  
an author would  
choose to remain  
anonymous? Why  
did Jack?



freepick.com



lowadot.gov

**caution:**  
carefulness. Jack  
describes a blue  
car speeding  
“without caution”

**comet:**  
Jack uses  
“like a  
comet” to  
describe a  
speeding  
blue car. A  
comet is a  
ball of frozen  
dust and rock  
that orbits the  
sun and has a  
glowing tail.



hubpages.com

**flattered:**  
to feel honored.  
Jack writes to  
his favorite  
author, Walter  
Dean Meyers:  
we thank you  
for saying  
that you would  
be flattered  
if someone  
used some of  
your words

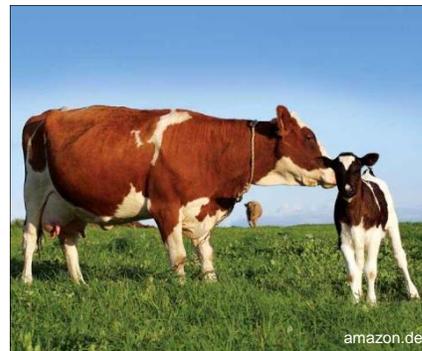
**straggly:**  
spreading out  
carelessly in all  
directions.  
Jack's dog Sky  
has a straggly  
coat.



lancasterpuppies.com

**tottery:**  
to sway as if  
about to fall.  
Jack writes  
about a “tottery  
calf” after he  
hears Robert  
Frost's poem  
“The Pasture”  
in class:

“I'm going out  
to fetch the  
little calf  
That's standing  
by the mother.  
It's so young  
It totters when  
she licks it  
with her tongue.”



amazon.de

**Poets use descriptive  
words to help their  
readers to imagine  
pictures in their  
mind. This is called  
“imagery”.**

**Are there examples  
of imagery in the  
vocabulary list?  
Listen for other  
examples of  
imagery in  
*Love that Dog*!**

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



*Love that Dog* is a poetic and visual play about a boy named Jack.

*Love that Dog* is also the moving, poetic and inspiring diary of a boy who learns that words can be miraculous.

**Run Time:** Approximately 1 hour

## THE STORY

Jack doesn't care much for poetry, writing it or reading it. With the prodding of his teacher, though, he begins to write poems of his own — about a mysterious blue car, about a lovable dog.

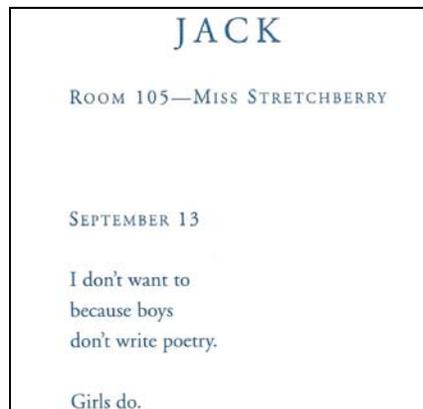
Slowly, he realizes that his brain isn't "empty" and that he can write poems. After meeting one of his favorite writers, Walter Dean Meyers, Jack writes a special poem about a painful experience in his life. By the end of the book, Jack realizes that writing and reading poetry is not only fun, but that writing can be a way of dealing with painful memories. Instead of trying to forget those difficult experiences, he can make something creative out of them.

## THE BOOK

*Love that Dog* is based on a book by author Sharon Creech. It isn't just a "regular" book... it is looking through Jack's school notebook — with notes to his teacher, writing assignments, rough drafts of poems, poems that inspire him and even some artwork.



From page one, the reader knows that they will see inside the narrator's head:



What is Jack's attitude about poetry at the beginning of the school year?

## THE PLAY

The play takes place in the classroom and home of Jack. It follows Jack and his teacher, Miss Stretchberry through one school year.

Jack's world comes to life with visual effects, live music and puppetry. Miniature models projected onto a large screen help recreate Jack's memories. Projected on the screen, we even see Jack's poems, straight from the pages of *Love that Dog*, larger than life.

There are four actors on stage. They sing and dance, as well as operate puppets and video cameras.

## THINK ABOUT IT...

The format of the book puts the reader directly in Jack's head. What techniques does the play use to give the audience this same feeling?

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## Sharon Creech

image: kes.recs.k12.tn.us

Learn more about author Sharon Creech before seeing the stage adaptation of her book *Love that Dog*.

Known for writing with a classic voice and unique style, Sharon Creech is the bestselling author of the Newbery Medal winner *Walk Two Moons* and the Newbery Honor Book *The Wanderer*. She is also the first American in history to be awarded the CILIP Carnegie Medal for *Ruby Holler*.

Her stories are centered around life, love, and relationships, especially family relationships.

Growing up in a big family in Cleveland, Ohio helped Ms. Creech learn to tell stories that wouldn't be forgotten in all of the commotion: "I learned to exaggerate and embellish, because if you didn't, your story was drowned out by someone else's more exciting one."

Ms. Creech was not always sure she was meant to be a writer.

"When I was young, I wanted to be many things when I grew up: a painter, an ice skater, a singer, a teacher, and a reporter.

"It soon became apparent that I had little drawing talent, very limited tolerance for falling on ice, and absolutely no ability to stay on key while singing. I also soon learned that I would make a terrible reporter because when I didn't like the facts, I changed them.

"It was in college, when I took literature and writing courses, that I became intrigued by story-telling.

"Later, I was a teacher (high school English and writing) in England and in Switzerland. While teaching great literature, I learned so much about writing: about what makes a story interesting and about techniques of plot and characterization and point of view...

"When I read good stories, I want to write good stories too. Here are some of my favorites: Virginia Wolff, Karen Hesse, Christopher Paul Curtis, Walter Dean Myers, Karen Cushman."

### TALK ABOUT IT...

1. How did growing up in a big family help Sharon Creech learn to tell stories?
2. What were some of the things that Sharon Creech wanted to be when she grew up? What were some of the reasons she didn't pursue those careers?
3. What did teaching literature to high school students help Sharon Creech learn about writing?
4. Sharon Creech is inspired by other writers. Who are some of the writers that inspire her? Have you ever read any of their books? What writers inspire you?

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



*Love that Dog* is based on a book by an American author, but the stage adaptation comes to us from a theater company from the Netherlands, located in Europe, called Theatergroep Kwatta. Kwatta is a professional youth theater that tours their plays around the world.

Kwatta's mission is to create room for amazement and admiration...by asking simple questions about difficult issues and difficult questions about things that appear to be simple.

Do you see this idea in *Love that Dog*?

- As Kwatta creates their plays, these are some of their goals:
- ◇ Be Accessible: audiences better be on their toes, but they strive to never go over your head.
  - ◇ Be Quirky: Kwatta never finds anything childish and takes nothing for granted.
  - ◇ Create connections: Kwatta seeks to connect disciplines, people, places and ideas.
- Kwatta means 'chocolate' in Dutch. Can you guess why a theater company for young people would name itself after a sweet treat?

**THE PEOPLE BEHIND LOVE THAT DOG**

The actors are just a few of the people that it takes to bring a play to life. Check out the list of the many roles and the people who worked on *Love that Dog* to get a sense of how theater is a collaborative art form.

**Text:**  
Sharon Creech

**Direction:**  
Josee Husaarts

**Actors:**  
Agnes Bergmeijer, Rogier van Erkel, Siem van Leeuwen, Servaes Nelissen, Steven Stavast and Hans Thissen

**Lighting Design:**  
Henk van der Geest

**Animation:**  
Bart van Eeden

**Scenery & Costumes:**  
Barbara Kroon

**Technicians:**  
Hanno Siegers, Jesse Knoop and Martijn Ceulemans



Theatergroep Kwatta is a Dutch theater company from the Netherlands. The Netherlands is bordered by Germany to the east, Belgium to the south, and the North Sea to the northwest. Map: CNN.com.

# WHAT IS POETRY?



*Love that Dog* is about and is told through poetry — Jack's poems. What is poetry? Where do we find it? What does it mean?

## FORMS OF POETRY

Poetry is a kind of writing that is hard to define, because it takes many forms.

**SONG LYRICS** are poetry

so is **RAP**

and **HAIKU**

Poetry even shows up on **BIRTHDAY CARDS**

and **TV COMMERCIALS**

Poetry does not always have to rhyme. The kind of poetry that Jack writes in *Love that Dog* is called "free verse," and it doesn't rhyme.

So what is poetry? Well,  
it has stuff like  
verses  
line breaks  
and  
Imagery

## CREATING IMAGERY

In order to create images with words, we can use:

### **simile**

Her smile was like a sunrise...



Image courtesy of designzzz.com.

### **metaphor**

The eagle is freedom as he swoops though the sky...



Image courtesy of tobinphoto.com.

### **allusion**

Des Moines is the Paris of America!



ABOVE: Poetry is about finding just the right words and putting them in just the right order to express a thought or feeling. Image courtesy of urbanmuseumwriter.com.

## CHECK IT OUT

What images does the poet create with words in the following poem? How does the poet use similes and metaphors to make her point about a flint, the subject of her poem?

### FLINT

An emerald is as green as grass,

A ruby red as blood;

A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;

A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,

To catch the world's desire;

An opal holds a fiery spark;

But a flint holds a fire.

*Christina Rossetti*  
1830-1894

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 1

## 1) SO MUCH DEPENDS ON...

**Appropriate for:** Grades 3-8

**Goal:** Students will experiment with themes and poetry using a mentor text.

**Explanation:** In *Love that Dog*, Jack, who is not interested in poetry, writes his first poem based on the composition of William Carlos Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow".

**Activity:**

1. Read students "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams below.
2. Next, show students poems inspired by the form and content of "The Red Wheelbarrow" such as "The Orange Sun" and "The Green Hose".
3. Discuss: What is different? What is the same? Which poem do you like best? Why?
4. Ask students to think of an object that has a color and to write a poem about that thing, following the form of the three poems they have just read.
5. Share student poems as appropriate.

6. If you'd like to do this as a class poetry slam, coach readers to use their voice to show emotion or emphasize words. Coach listeners to snap when they hear something they like or agree with. (Snapping is better than clapping because then you won't drown out the reader's voice." MC the performance or designate a student MC to announce each poet.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. What poems did you like the best? Why did you like them?
2. How did you choose what to write about?
3. If you could write another poem like this, what would you write about?
4. What did you like best about his activity: the writing, the listening, or the performing?

The Red Wheelbarrow by William Carlos Williams	The Orange Sun by Ben F.	The Green Hose by Hannah P.
so much depends upon	so much depends upon	so much depends upon
a red wheel barrow	a pure orange sun	a green hose
glazed with rain water	giving off great heat	spraying out cold water
beside the white chickens.	never stops to rest	putting out the fire.
Student poems from: <a href="http://mendellstudentwikis.wikispaces.com/Love+That+Dog+Student+Page">http://mendellstudentwikis.wikispaces.com/Love+That+Dog+Student+Page</a>		

## 'SO MUCH DEPENDS ON', pg. 2

### 2) POETRY IS TRANSFORMATIVE

**Goal:** Students will experiment with transforming “ordinary” thoughts into poetry and sharing their work in a supportive environment.

**Explanation:** Jack realizes that thoughts become poems by the way you shape them on the paper:

“I guess it does  
look like a poem  
when you see it  
typed up  
like that.”

**Activity:**

1. Remind students: any thought you have can become a poem. What are you thinking right now? Write it down.
2. Now ask students to rewrite their thoughts as poems. For example “I am hungry and I hope there’s pizza for lunch” can become:

I am  
hungry  
for lunch  
and I hope  
there’s  
PIZZA  
for lunch.

3. Ask students to add new words that help the reader understand the writer’s feelings. Hints: use colors, shapes, and words with flavor to match the mood of the poem.

I am  
HUNGRY  
for lunch  
and I hope  
Olivia the lunch lady  
puts  
HOT SLICE  
on my tray.  
White and red  
and toasty brown  
isosceles triangle  
Ooey-gooley.

4. Ask students to share their poems one at a time. Remind students how to be a good audience and to show “nothing but love” and appreciation for each others’ work.
5. Begin your “Ordinary Thoughts” poetry slam! Coach readers to use their voice to show emotion or

emphasize words. Coach listeners to snap when they hear something they like or agree with. (Snapping is better than clapping because then you won’t drown out the reader’s voice.” MC the performance or designate a student MC to announce each poet.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. What was your favorite poem? Why?
2. Did you hear any rhyme? Do poems have to rhyme?
3. What did you like the most about this activity? Least? If you did it again, would you change anything? What would you change?

### 3) THINGS CHANGE MONOLOGUE (Suggested for Grades 6-8)

**Goal:** Students will reflect upon meaningful events in their own lives through writing.

**Explanation:** In *Love that Dog*, Jack’s life is forever changed by a blue car. In this activity, students will write a first draft about a change in their lives. They will then perform their drafts as monologues.

**Activity:**

1. Write on the board: “Things change.” Ask students to interpret this statement. Is change good or bad? When and why? Give examples of good changes and bad changes.
2. Ask the students to focus on personal change. Everyone goes through it. It can be good, bad, or bittersweet. Big changes could be getting glasses or braces, starting at a new school, moving, or the birth of a sibling. Brainstorm other ideas on the board.
3. Ask students to write about a change in their lives. Describe what it was, how they felt before, and what they felt that was different afterwards. Remind them to write in first person, using pronouns “I” and “me”.
4. Dim the classroom lights if possible, and “set the stage” for students to perform. Create a spotlight with a flashlight and allow each student to decide if they would like to use the spotlight or not.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. Did you learn anything valuable about your classmates?
2. Did you learn anything valuable about yourself?
3. What was most challenging for you about this assignment? What was easiest for you?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. "Room 105. Miss Stretchberry. September 13." are the first words in this play. Can you recall a "first day" of school? What was it like?
2. What makes Miss Stretchberry a good teacher? How does she teach? What kinds of things do you imagine that she writes in Jack's journal? What does she do to build Jack's confidence?
3. Have you had a favorite teacher? Why did you like him or her?
4. In the play, Jack keeps trying not to think about Walter Dean Meyers' reply to his letter. Have you ever tried not to think about something? What was it? How do you get negative thoughts out of your head?
5. Jack's beliefs about poetry change throughout the year. What do you believe about poems? What makes something a poem? How are poems different than stories and other kinds of writing?
6. When he's first learning to write poetry, Jack borrows a lot of ideas from other poets' works. Why? Does borrowing from others help him to develop his own style? Where do you draw the line between being inspired by someone else and copying his or her work?
7. Jack feels nervous about having his work displayed in the classroom. Why does he want his early poems to be anonymous? How does he expect his classmates to react? Do you ever have a hard time sharing your work? Why?
8. Jack is enchanted with how Walter Dean Myers's voice sounds when he reads aloud. What makes someone good at reading out loud? Try reading aloud your favorite poem from *Love that Dog*. How does it sound different from when you read it in your head?
9. Which of Jack's poems is your favorite? How does it make you feel? Describe Jack's writing style and compare it with your own.
10. Are you at all similar to Jack? Which one of his statements about poetry most echoes your own feelings?

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

### 1) WRITE A LETTER

Once you have seen the performance and you and your students have had a chance to discuss what you saw and read, write to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors who support the Applause Series. Artists and donors love to hear what teachers and students thought of the performance.

Letters may be sent to: Education Department  
Des Moines Performing Arts  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

### 2) THANK YOU, MISS STRETCHBERRY

Pretend that it's the end of the school year and Jack wants to thank Miss Stretchberry for being such a great teacher. Have students compose a letter or write a poem from Jack that shows his appreciation for Miss Stretchberry. With students, write a list on the board of things Jack might say or write, then have each student write his or her own poem or letter.

### 3) IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Choose your favorite poem Jack's class read in *Love that Dog* (see handout pages 14-16), and tell what the writer was trying to say in your own words. After you read the poems, have student copy their favorite into their own handwriting for better comprehension and familiarity. Ask them then to choose words that "leap off" the page, that seem surprising or especially interesting to them. Let those words help them arrive at some kind of meaning about what the poem is about.

### 4) SHAPE POEMS

In "The Apple," by S.C. Rigg, and "My Yellow Dog," by Jack, the words form the shape of the poem's subject. Invite students to write their own "shape" poem. Possible shapes: tree, fish, car/school bus, hands/feet, snake, pizza, hot dog, anything!

Example of a shape poem:

*Wanna be a Fish*  
*by Eighty Six*

Wanna be a fish.  
Have a slick fish head. Spread  
Fish jam on my fish bread. All's good 'round  
My bowl today. Don't like it? I'll swim away. Bubbles  
For my friends. Swim loops without end. Shiny treasure  
Chest. A castle of my own. Plastic kelp fully grown.  
If I was a fish, I'd be the best, not copper, not  
Bronze, not silver. I'd be a  
Gold Fish.

## **POEMS FROM *LOVE THAT DOG*, pg. 1**

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### **RED WHEELBARROW**

by William Carlos Williams

so much depends  
upon

a red wheel  
barrow

glazed with rain  
water

beside the white  
chickens.

### **STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING**

by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

## **POEMS FROM *LOVE THAT DOG*, pg. 2**

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### **THE TIGER\***

by William Blake

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

\*first stanza

### **DOG**

by Valerie Worth

Under a maple tree  
The dog lies down,  
Lolls his limp  
Tongue, yawns,  
Rests his chin  
Carefully between  
Front paws;  
Looks up, alert;  
Chops, with heavy  
Jaws, at a slow fly,  
Blinks, rolls  
On his side,  
Sighs, closes  
His eyes: sleeps  
All afternoon  
In his loose skin.

## **POEMS FROM *LOVE THAT DOG*, pg. 3**

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### **THE PASTURE**

by Robert Frost

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;  
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away  
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):  
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf  
That's standing by the mother. It's so young  
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.  
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

### **STREET MUSIC**

by Arnold Adoff

This city:  
the  
always  
noise  
grinding  
up from the  
subways  
under  
ground:  
slamming from bus tires  
and taxi horns and engines  
of cars and trucks in all

vocabularies  
of  
clash  
flash  
screeching  
hot metal language  
combinations:

as planes  
overhead  
roar

an  
orchestra  
of rolling drums  
and battle blasts  
assaulting  
my ears

with  
the  
always  
noise of  
this city:

street music.

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## BOOKS

### By Sharon Creech:

- ◇ *Absolutely Normal Chaos*
- ◇ *Bloomability*
- ◇ *The Castle Corona*  
(Illustrated by David Diaz)
- ◇ *Chasing Redbird*
- ◇ *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*
- ◇ *The Great Unexpected*
- ◇ *Hate that Cat*
- ◇ *Heartbeat*
- ◇ *Love that Dog*
- ◇ *Pleasing the Ghost*
- ◇ *Replay*
- ◇ *Ruby Holler*
- ◇ *The Unfinished Angel*
- ◇ *Walk Two Moons*
- ◇ *The Wanderer*

### More Verse Novels for Young Readers:

- ◇ *Planet Middle School*  
by Nikki Grimes
- ◇ *Out of the Dust*  
by Karen Hesse
- ◇ *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*  
by Ron Koertge
- ◇ *The Crazy Man*  
by Pamela Porter
- ◇ *Locomotion*  
by Jacqueline Woodson

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

### Books about Poetry and Writing Poetry:

*A Note Slipped Under the Door* by Nick Flynn

*Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem* by Jack Prelutsky

*Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out* by Ralph Fletcher

### Online Resources:

Official Website of Sharon Creech.

<http://www.sharoncreech.com/>

Contains a student-friendly section "Meet Sharon" devoted to answering the questions of readers.

Teen Ink: A Teen Literary Magazine and Website.

[www.teenink.com/](http://www.teenink.com/)

Devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos, and forums. Students ages 13-19 may submit their work for publication.

## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Creech, Sharon. *Love that Dog*. New York: HarperTrophy, 2001. Print.

*Love that Dog* Educational Material by Theatergroep Kwatta.

<http://www.kwatta.info/>

Official Website of Sharon Creech.

<http://www.sharoncreech.com/>