

Handsprings

by Douglas Florian

A collection of poems and paintings that capture the freshness and promise of spring. Companion books include: *Winter Eyes*, *Summersaults*, and *Autumnblings*.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *This is a book of poems. What do the words in a poem usually do?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder if a handspring is easy to do?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations and ask questions. Point out the rhyming words as well as the "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Handsprings*

- bend: a curved part of a road or path
- frigid: very cold
- plentiful: a large quantity of something
- centigrade: a temperature scale
- zing: lively and exciting
- sass: to talk back to someone
- spry: active
- sprout: to develop buds or shoots
- swarms: a large group of insects in flight
- pollen spores: a powdery substance produced by flowers
- presume: to believe
- larches: pine tree
- tilled: dug up the land
- riled: irritated
- scurry: to move quickly
- leeks: a plant with green leaves
- musty: old, damp-smelling and stale
- polliwog: same as a tadpole – a baby frog, toad or salamander that has a round body, gills

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What do you like about hearing poems?
- Can a poem make you feel happy? Sad? Silly? Excited?
- Most everything about spring is good. Some things aren't, though. Who can remember some of the things in the poem called "What I Hate About Spring?"
- Baseball is a game that starts in the spring. Who can tell me how to play baseball?
- Berries are a fun fruit to eat and they grow in the spring. Who can remember some of the berries listed in the Spring Berries poem?

Do

Memorize a Poem

Choose and memorize a poem from *Handsprings*. You can help the children memorize the entire poem or assign one line of the poem to each child to memorize. Invite another class and make it a performance!

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