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Poetry Program
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How did you spend your Summer vacation?

dramatic reading with props/power point
Setting: classroom

[students chatting before class begins]

Jack

"I'm not ready for summer to be over. I wish we didn't have to go back to school. If I were in charge, summer vacation would last forever."

If I Were In Charge of the World by Judith Viorist

If I were in charge of the world
I'd cancel oatmeal,
Monday mornings,
Allergy shots, and also Sara Steinberg.

If I were in charge of the world
There'd be brighter night lights,
Healthier hamsters, and
Basketball baskets forty eight inches lower.

If I were in charge of the world
You wouldn't have lonely.
You wouldn't have clean.
You wouldn't have bedtimes.
Or "Don't punch your sister."
You wouldn't even have sisters.

If I were in charge of the world
A chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts would be a vegetable
All 007 movies would be G,
And a person who sometimes forgot to brush,
And sometimes forgot to flush,
Would still be allowed to be
In charge of the world.

Tommy

"I agree! I hate school. I always feel so silly trying to think of something to say. I haven't spent the whole summer thinking of anything, why would I want to now?"

What if by Shel Silverstein

Last night, while I lay thinking here,
Some What ifs crawled inside my ear
And pranced and partied all night long
And sang their same old What if song:
What if I'm dumb in school?
What if they've closed the swimming pool?
What if I get beat up?
What if there's poison in my cup?
What if I start to cry?
What if I get sick and die?
What if I flunk that test?
What if green hair grows on my chest?
What if nobody likes me?
What if a bolt of lightning strikes me?
What if I don't grow taller?
What if my head starts getting smaller?
What if the fish won't bite?
What if the wind tears up my kite?
What if they start a war?
What if my parents get divorced?
What if the bus is late?
What if my teeth don't grow in straight?
What if I tear my pants?
What if I never learn to dance?
Everything seems swell, and then
The nighttime What ifs strike again!

Sally

*"I don't mind coming back to school as much as I miss the warm weather and sunny days.
Summer is my favorite season."*

Summer's End by Judith Viorist

One by one the petals drop.
There's nothing that can make them stop.
You cannot beg a rose to stay.
Why does it have to be that way?

The butterflies I used to chase
Have gone off to some other place.
I don't know where. I only know

I wish they didn't have to go.

And all the shiny afternoons
So full of birds and big balloons
And ice cream melting in the sun
Are done. I do not want them done.

Tesha

"I know! It seems like summer just started."

Here Comes by Shel Silverstein

Here comes summer,
Here comes summer,
Chirping robin, budding rose.
Here comes summer,
Here comes summer,
Gentle showers, summer clothes.
Here comes summer,
Here comes summer --
Whoosh -- shiver -- there it goes.

[bell rings]

Mrs. Poetry

"Welcome back class! I hope everyone enjoyed their summer vacation. I know you probably wish summer wasn't over yet, but..."

Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

"Let's begin class by talking about how we spent our summer break. I'll go first."

From The Bellybutton of the Moon by Francisco X. Alarcon

Whenever
I say
"Mexico"

I feel
the same wind
on my face

I felt when
I would open
the window

on my first
trip south
by car

I see
Atoyac
again

the town
where my mother
was raised

and I spent
summer
vacations

I hear
familiar
voices

laughter
greetings
farewells

I smell
my grandma's
gardenias

From the Bellybutton of the Moon

Whenever
I say
"Mexico"

I hear
my grandma
telling me

about the Aztecs
and the city
they built

on an island
in the middle
of the lake

“Mexico”
says
my grandma

“means: from
the bellybutton
of the moon”

“don’t forget
your origin
my son”

maybe
that’s
why

whenever
I now say
“Mexico”

I feel
like touching
my bellybutton

“My trip to Mexico was the highlight of my summer break. Who would like share how they spent their summer vacation?”

Jack

“Oh yay! I am so excited to share my summer stories! I had the best summer!”

What I Love About Summer by Douglas Florian
Morning glories
Campfire stories
Picking cherries
And blueberries

Riding bikes
Mountain hikes
Bird calls
Curve balls
Short sleeves
Green leaves
Swimming holes
Fishing poles
Nature walks
Corn stalks
Skipping stones
Ice cream cones
Double days
And barefoot days.

"I went away to summer camp for most of my summer break. One of my favorite things to do there was sit around the campfire and tell scary stories."

Settin' Around by Shel Silverstein
Settin' 'round the campfire
With a Werewolf, a Ghoul, and a Vampire,
I told 'em the story of Murderin' Mack,
And the Ghoul ran off screamin'
And never came back.

Settin' 'round the campfire
With the Werewolf and the Vampire,
I told 'em the tale of the Three-Headed Ed,
And the Werewolf ran home
And hid under the bed.

Settin' 'round the campfire,
Just me and that ol' Vampire,
I just read him the poem of the skeleton bone,
And now it's just me,
Settin' here all alone.

"The last night of summer camp we had a big picnic dance. Everyone got dressed up and there was even a live band!"

Turkey? by Shel Silverstein
I only ate one drumstick
At the picnic dance this summer,

Just one little drumstick --
They say I couldn't be dumber.
One tough and skinny drumstick,
Why was that such a bummer?
But everybody's mad at me,
Especially the drummer.

Mrs. Poetry

"Sounds like you had a fun, eventful summer, Jack. What about you, Tommy? What did you do over summer break?"

Tommy

"Umm, I don't have anything to share...I didn't do anything over break...I sat and did nothing"

I'm Sitting Doing Nothing by Jack Prelutsky

I'm sitting doing nothing,
which I do extremely well.
exactly how I do it
is impossible to tell.
I scarcely move a muscle,
but serenely stay in place,
not even slightly changing
the expression on my face.

I'm fond of doing nothing,
so I do it all day long.
Whenever I do nothing.
I don't ever do it wrong.
When I am doing nothing,
there is nothing that I do,
for if I started something,
it would mean that I was through.

When I am doing nothing,
I'm immobile as a wall.
When I am doing nothing,
I don't do a thing at all.
It's easy doing nothing
and I find it lots of fun,
though when I'm finally finished
I'm uncertain that I'm done.

Mrs. Poetry

"I'm sure you did something over summer break. You were on vacation for almost three months."

We'll come back to you. "

The Sum of Summer by Douglas Florian

The sum of summer
Is one billion bees
And six trillion leaves
On three billion trees
And four trillion flies
And five trillion fleas
And uncounted numbers
Of sweet memories.

"Sally, why don't you go next? What did you do over summer vacation?"

Sally

"I spent the summer at our family cottage on a lake. The best part about staying at the lakehouse is going sailing."

Needles and Pins by Shel Silverstein

Needles and pins,
Needles and pins,
Sew me a sail
To catch me the wind.

Sew me a sail
Strong as the gale,
Carpenter, bring out your
Hammers and nails.

Hammers and nails,
Hammers and nails,
Build me a boat
To go chasing the whales.

Chasing the whales,
Sailing the blue,
Find me a captain
And sign me a crew.

Captain and crew,
Captain and crew,
Take me, oh take me
To anywhere new.

“My cousins came to stay for a week and we played at the beach most of the time. We searched for old Morgan the Pirate’s buried treasure.”

Morgan’s Curse by Shel Silverstein

Followin’ the trail on the old treasure map,
I came to the spot that said “Dig right here.”
And four feet down my spade struck wood
Just where the map said a chest would appear.
“A curse upon he who disturbs this gold.”
Signed, Morgan the Pirate, Scourge of the Seas.
I read these words and my blood ran cold.
So here I sit upon untold wealth
Tryin’ to figure which is worse:
How much do I need this gold?
And how much do I need this curse?

“The nature walks we went on also were a lot of fun...but sometimes they turned out to be an adventure.”

My Brother Poked a Porcupine by Jack Prelutsky

My brother poked a porcupine,
which was a great mistake.
My mother had hysterics
when she stumbled on a snake.
My sister fell into a creek,
she’s cold and soaking wet.
My aunt upset a hornets’ nest,
an act we all regret.

I sat in poison ivy,
I’ll be itchy for a while.
A skunk sprayed both my uncles,
now they smell extremely vile.
My father stepped in something
he would rather not discuss --
we love our weekly nature walks,
they’re always fun for us.

Mrs. Poetry

“Tommy, have you thought of a story to share with us about your summer vacation? You can summarize what you did over break or just tell us about one thing you liked about the summer.”

Summerize by Douglas Florian

June’s a bright blue butterfly.

July is brighter yet.
August is a purple one.
September is the net.

Tommy
"Umm...well..."

Tryin' on Clothes by Shel Silverstein

I tried on a the farmer's hat,
Didn't fit.
A little too small -- just a bit
Too floppy.
Couldn't get used to it,
Took it off.

I tried on the dancer's shoes,
A little too loose.
Not the kind you could use
For walkin'.
Didn't feel right in 'em,
Kicked 'em off.

I tried on the summer sun,
Felt good.
Nice and warm -- knew it would.
Tried the grass beneath bare feet,
felt neat.
Finally, finally felt well dressed,
Nature's clothes just fit me best.

"I didn't do much over summer break. I read a lot and participated in the library's summer reading program."

The Bookstall by Linda Pastan

Just looking at them
I grow greedy, as if they were
freshly baked loaves
waiting on their shelves
to be broken open -- that one
and that -- and I make my choice
in a mood of exalted luck,
browsing among them
like a cow in sweetest pasture.

For life continuous
as long as they wait
to be read -- these inked paths
opening into the future, page
after page, every book
its own receding horizon.
And I hold them, one in each hand,
a curious ballast weighting me
here to the earth.

"I also spent a lot of time at the pool learning how to dive when I wanted to take a break from reading. It took me ALL summer to get up the nerve to actually dive off the diving board."

Diving Board by Shel Silverstein
You've been up on that diving board
Making sure that it's nice and straight.
You've made sure that it's not too slick.
You've made sure it can stand the weight.
You've made sure that the spring is tight.
You've made sure that the cloth won't slip.
You've made sure that it bounces right,
And that your toes can get a grip --
And you're been up there since half past five
Doin' everything...but DIVE.

"Once I did make it off the diving board, I realized how great I was at it. I even won a prize for being the best diver in my age group!"

What Price Glory? by Judith Viorist
I stood on a stage
And they gave me a medal
For being the
Best of the Bunch.
Then Ricky Gesumaria came by
And ate it up for lunch,
With mustard, a pickle, two slices of rye,
And a very nasty crr-rr-unch.

I stood on a stage
And they gave me a trophy
For being the
Top of the Heap.
I waited for the cheers but the audience
Had fallen fast asleep,

Except for Joshua, who yelled,
“No trophies for that creep!”

I stood on a stage
And they gave me a plaque that
Said I was the show.
It weighed a hundred pounds. Max Goldfarb
Dropped it on my toe.
And the next time someone calls my name
And wants me to stand on the stage
And get some prizes...
I’ll still go.

Tesha

“Mrs. Poetry, can I go next, please?”

Mrs. Poetry

“Yes, of course Tesha. I love your enthusiasm. We can’t wait to hear about your adventures and experiences this summer.”

Tesha

“Well, I have written about all of my favorite things of summer. From morning until night, and Sunday until Saturday. It is a fabulous story if I must say so myself. I would love to share it with the class. And...”

Talking by Judith Viorist

They tell me that I talk too much.
I’m trying not to talk too much.
But, oh, it’s hard to take time out
When there’s so much to talk about:
How long it took to pull my tooth.
How hard it is to tell the truth.
Why steel is not as nice as trees.
Why Brian has such scabby knees.
Twelve sights I saw in Williamsburg.
The definition of an *erg*.
Why roller skates are not my style.
Six reasons goldfish never smile.
How come I’d rather freeze than roast.
And ten things that I love the most:
The mustache on my father’s face.
Fires in the fireplace.
Any book by Judy Blume.
Never cleaning up my room.

Every single valentine
Sent to me by Chris Romine.
Drummers in a marching band.
Ferry rides,
The Redskins,
Poems, and
Talking.

Mrs. Poetry

"Very well, Tesha. Would you please begin your story now?"

Tesha

"Oh, yes of course!"

Summer Dance, Water Dance by Jonathan London

We play in the sun
like a dance
dally in the brilliance
of heat
radiating
off our shining bodies
till the sweat
pours
from our pores and we laugh
at the heat
like a sun burning
inside us
till we can't
take it anymore
and dash down
the narrow path
to the fast green river.
to plunge the heat
away
feel
the chill ripple
down our spines
feel
the snowmelt water
from the high mountains
in our blood
our bones turn
to icicles
and we giggle

with the tickle
of our skin tightened
into goose bumps
and splash and wiggle
then climb out to skip flat stones across a glass pool
aim and fire
round stones at a rock
target
and watch it topple
with a perfect
blow
“Yes!”
hop
on an old inner tube
bob down the bubbly current
kick and hand-paddle
to the side and out
walk back barefoot tenderly
over smooth
sun-warmed river stones
and toss the tube
in again
hop on
and away
ride that little rapid
in a wide arc
out and around
and back to shore
careful for snakes
and the sharp bite
of rocks
like arrowheads
picnic on chips and fruit
laugh in the sunlight
under trees shaking leaves
in the bright wind
the willows with their feet
in the water
the alder angling out of sheer
rock
and higher up
pine and fir against the sky
dragging the eye
up

and into blue and too-bright
sun
race
back to the cabin
up the winding
rocky path
in through wood door
grab a drink from the cooler
crack it open
ice cold down gullet
Ahhhhh!
and back out
into the hot sun
to chase lizards
under boulders
till the sweat pours
again
and again foot-slap down to the
cold river
diving into green worlds
of icy light
twist and roll like a river otter
soaking in the full
like of the whole Earth
when the light
fades
and the first star
comes out
make a wish
and hug a boulder
holding
the last heat
lie in the grass
and watch the moon float
like a great boat
and Orion march across the sky
and the stars
shoot
"There's one!"
"There's one!"
til the air
chills
then back at the cabin
to dream of hot sun

cold water
bright days
and flickering nights

Mrs. Poetry

“Um, well, wow, thank you...Tessa. That was quite a story, as you said. Filled with detail, minute detail, intense detail. You must have really journaled and taken notes on your most memorable moments this summer. Don’t pay attention to those that say you talk too much. As long as you are considerate of your classmates, you can share as much as you like in class.”

The Voice by Shel Silverstein

There is a voice inside of you
That whispers all day long,
“I feel that this is right for me,
I know that *this* is wrong.”
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
Or wise man can decide
What’s right for you -- just listen to
The voice that speaks inside.

“Class, we should all feel so lucky and take from Tessa’s enthusiasm. Who would like to go next? Anyone? Alright then, how about you Landon?”

Landon

“Fine.”

What I Hate About Summer by Douglas Florian

Skinned knees
Ninety degrees
Long droughts
Blackouts
Dog days
Summer haze
Bee swarms
Thunderstorms
Humid nights
Mosquito bites
Clothes that stick-
I hate that summer goes so quick.

“Summer is not that great.”

The Unchosen by Edward E. Wilson

Yesterday’s hard play still clinging

to the smell of T-shirt
brings back the fall of fourth grade when friends turned into strangers,
and differences became like hairlines on old men.

I remember standing at the edge
of the park near the cedar bush
that had been summer's hideout
and watching as friends double crossed
into the center span of grass
we had avoided all summer long.

There were no trees in that part of the park
-- the magic long removed --
the benches moved along the bushes,
silent centennials to organized games.
But the bushes had held Nazis and Nippons,
we strafed them from June to July.

They had needed my clumsiness
to excite what might be in the clumps of bushes
there to the right of swings.
But, this fall game was one I would not be chosen for
-- straightforward and agile,
they could play without my imagination.

I stood there long enough for sweat
to begin to shuck their shirts.
Bare chested these summer friends
changed into strangers
who could not, would not ever choose me.

Mrs. Poetry

"Thank you, Landon. Anyway, on to our next student. How about, Rosa?"

Rosa

"I like to eat sushi, drink lemonade and my favorite color is violet."

Susie's Juicy Sushi by J. Patrick Lewis

Sue saw sushi
On her shoe, see?
She set sushi
In a stew. She
Called it "Susie's
Juicy Stewshi"

Lemonade by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

We pour
its liquid sweetness
from a tall
glass pitcher,
splashing
sunshine
on frosty squares
of ice,
lemon light
and slightly tart,
we gulp its gold-
licking our lips
with summer

My Lemonade Stand by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Cookies for sale!

And cake! One dime!

That's what it says
on my cardboard sign.
I pile cookie on a plate.
I eat just one
and then, I wait...
I taste the cake
(one tiny slice)
I squeeze the lemons
and stir the ice;
I count and stack
the paper cups...
**fresh lemonade
is coming up!**
I count the bruises
on my knee
won't somebody buy something,
please?

Violet Is... by J. Patrick Lewis

my cat's tongue
lavender out on a holiday
blush pears
bruised peaches
pain gone away
Earth from six miles high

the color of my dreams after midnight
the afternoon glancing off a grackle's back
the flower that bears her name

Mrs. Poetry

"Quite lovely, Rosa. Thank you for sharing...do you want to tell us about your summer?"

Rosa

"Not really...my best friend Hanna moved away this summer so I didn't really get out much"

Since Hanna Moved Away by Judith Viorist

The tires on my bike are flat.
The sky is grouchy gray.
At least it sure feels like that
Since Hanna moved away.

Chocolate ice cream tastes like prunes.
December's come to stay.
They've taken back the Mays and Junes
Since Hanna moved away.

Flowers smell like halibut.
Velvet feels like hay.
Every handsome dog's a mutt
Since Hanna moved away.

Nothing's fun to laugh about.
Nothing's fun to play.
They call me, but I won't come out
Since Hanna moved away.

Mrs. Poetry

"I am so sorry to hear that, Rosa. I'm sure that Hanna would want you to try to have fun without her. Janet, it is your turn."

Janet

"Well, if you can't tell, I spent my summer jump roping away!"

Jump Rope Rhyme by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Skip, skip!
Fast and slow,
all the way to Idaho.
Skip to Texas.
Skip to Maine-
skipping all the way

to Spain.
Jump, Jump!
Up and down
all the way to
Chinatown.
Skip to Denmark.
Skip to Rome-
around the world,
then go back home!

"I especially like double dutch!"

Jump Rope Talk by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Jumping, jumping
Double Dutch
on cement sidewalks
cooled by dusk.
*Down in the meadow
where the green grass grows
there sits Sophie sniffin' at a rose-*
Our voices echo in the air,
*Turn around, turn around,
teddy bear-*
The street and porch
lights stagger on;
we jump, jump, jump,
and chat these songs;
*Peppers are red
and berries are blue,
pick a name to follow you-*
Our voices ring
beneath the stars,
*Skip to Venus,
jump to Mars-*
Jumping, jumping,
Double Dutch,
*Mama's got her silver
in the hutch-*
we're singing songs
on cracked sidewalks,
*Papa keeps his money
in his sock-*
to the slap, slap, slap
of jump rope talk!

Double Dutch Song by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Climb the mountain,
cross the sea.
Who do I love?
Who loves me?
Over, under,
pick a name;
Johnny, Jacob,
Joseph, James...
climb the mountain,
cross the sea.
How many wishes
can there be?
One, two, three, four-
over, under,
out the door!

Mrs. Poetry

"I am glad you were so active and had a good time this summer, Janet. Is there anything else you would like to add?"

Janet

"Well, I guess I did more than jump rope. Let me think...Oh yeah, I think I've got something! I did a little travelling this summer"

Old Names, New Names by J. Patrick Lewis

Alice Springs was once called Sturt,
Australia. New names never hurt.

Peking, China, then Beiping,
Changed one letter now-Beijing!

Paris (born Lutetia, France)
Could go back? *Non*, not a chance.

Delhi, India, rightly claims
Half a dozen previous names.

In Turkey, Istanbul, I hope I'll
Not be called Constantinople

Like before, or else become
Once again Byzantium.

Tokyo, Japan, was Edo,
Which they took a veto to veto.

Used to call Regina (Sask.)
Pile o' Bones (you had to ask?).

Names are like new pairs of shoes-
They wear out and then we choose

Another pair we think might fit
Once we get the hang of it.

Mrs. Poetry

"Thank you, Janet. Quite the worldly traveler you were this summer. Thank you for sharing your, um, adventures. We have time for one more student this morning. Who would like to go?"

Damien

"May I please tell my story Mrs. Poetry?"

Mrs. Poetry

"Damien, I am delighted that you are being brave and sharing your story. We can't wait to hear it. Please, begin when you are ready."

Damien

"Ok, ok..."

Green Grass by Francisco X. Alarcon
We love
to go shoeless
on green grass
Mother Earth
loves to tickle
our bare feet

Hierba verde by Francisco X. Alarcon
nos gusta
andar descalzos
entre la hierba verde
a la Madre Tierra
le encanta hacernos
cosquillas en los pies

Sunflower by Francisco X. Alarcon

Somewhat
a flower
somehow
a sun

Girasol by Francisco X. Alarcon
algo
de flor
algo
de sol

Summer Sun by Francisco X. Alarcon
luminous
orange
hanging
from the tree
of noontime

Sol de Verano by Francisco X. Alarcon
luminosa
naranja
colgada
del arbol
del mediodia

Mariposa by Francisco X. Alarcon
Mariposa
is the name
of my favorite
cow

because she has
the mark
of a butterfly
on her face

how wonderful
the butterfly
on my cow
Mariposa!

her big
round eyes
come through

the wings

how she loves
to smell the flowers
she finds along
her path!

the butterflies
of the fields
fluttering
follow her

perhaps
more than a cow
she really is
a butterfly!

Mariposa by Francisco X. Alarcon

Mariposa
se llama
mi vaca
consentida

porque tiene
una mariposa
marcada
en la cara

que maravillosa
la mariposa
de mi vaca
Mariposa!

sus grandes
ojos redondos
le salen
de las alas

come le gusta
oler las flores
que encuentra
en su camino!

las mariposas

del campo
revolteando
le siguen

quizas
mas que vaca
de veras es
una mariposa!

Mrs. Poetry

“Thank you, thank you, thank you Damien! I loved that translated your poems for everyone. That was a wonderful ending to our morning of summer stories. I am proud of all of you that shared today. We will have more this afternoon until everyone has shared. Don’t forget to paste a copy of your story and any pictures you want into our classroom summer stories book. Okay, class, now it is time for Math!”

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