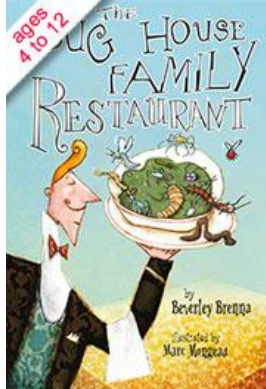


**Teachers' Guide for  
Bev Brenna's poetry collection  
*The Bug House Family Restaurant***



A hilarious book of poetry, reminiscent of *Alligator Pie*...Montreal artist Mongeau adds to the fun of the book with humorous black-and white illustrations”

— Helen Norrie, *Winnipeg Free Press*

There is no set formula for the poems, with each being different than the last. Brenna's language is appropriate for young readers and includes techniques like rhyming and alliteration. The author writes about insects and bugs that any young child would be familiar with—mosquitoes, spiders and lady bugs, but bug species that may be new to them, such as gnats, are also included. Words like “caterwaul” and “entomology” help to build vocabulary and engage with the poems on a deeper level. I think this book would be excellent to use in a classroom as the content is engaging and offers a variety of examples of what a poem can look like.

**Highly Recommended**

— Gillian Green *CM Magazine*

**Bibliography:** Brenna, B. (2014). *The Bug House Family Restaurant*. Ill. by Marc Mongeau. Vancouver, BC: Tradewind books.

**Recommended Age Levels: 4-12**

**Summary of Book:** Ever thought about eating bugs? “Instead of being bugged by bugs, do not be too suspicious. With one good chef and half a chance...they might be quite delicious.” This light hearted look at bug cuisine, in poetry form, offers fare from mosquito steaks to bug surprise. Served up in an illustrated book by Tradewind Books.

**Questions to Ask Before Reading:**

- What bugs can you think of? Brainstorm a Master List of Bugs.
- What are your favorite bugs? Why?
- Have you ever eaten any of these bugs at a restaurant? Why not?
- What is the difference between fact and fiction? Here are some poems about a new restaurant that will serve bugs to its customers. Do you think these poems will be fact or fiction? Why?

**Suggestions for Reading Poems Aloud:**

- Direct students in choral reading of a poem by asking particular groups to practice and then contribute various lines, with variations in volume and pitch (introducing the term *dynamics*, here); “Bug House Commercial” is a good one to try.
- Give 7 groups of students a different stanza from “Daily Specials” and have them practice and then present them chorally in sequence.
- After students become familiar with the poems, ask small groups to select their favourite to present chorally in class, using lots of interesting dynamics (loud/soft; fast/slow; high/low; visualize meanings of words to color speech).
- Teach the chorus to “Provincial Ingredients” and some corresponding actions (cross crawls with the arms left, right, left, PAUSE, then right, left, right, PAUSE, & repeat) and have the students recite this chorus between the stanzas read by the teacher.
- Read the poems to younger children and ask them to chime in by predicting the rhyming words; this is a good activity to support phonemic awareness. “Hervis and Eddy”, “When Michael Eats Ladybug Soup”, and “Just Dessert” are especially good for this type of activity.
- Read a title (“The Gift” would be a good choice) and ask students to predict what the poem will be about; conversely, read the poem aloud to the students and ask them to suggest a good title.

- Separate the stanzas from “Uncle Partridge’s Collection” and ask groups of students to put them in an order that makes sense, and then read them aloud as rehearsed oral reading.

### **Response Activities:**

#### ***Writing:***

- Have students add to the master list of “bugs”. Select particular bugs on which to write and illustrate original poems. Focus on three or four styles, and then invite the children to explore each of them and choose one for their poem: acrostic, diamante, rhyming couplet, shape poem.
- What is the definition of a poem? If you were teaching someone to write a poem, what would you say?
- Provide a pattern from one of the poems, such as “Kate Eats Bugs” or “Daily Specials”. Ask students to fill in original words (see next pages for templates).
- Ask students to select a poem that tells a story and write it as a story, adding whatever they wish.
- Create recipes for the pies submitted to “The Bug House Pie Contest.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Eats \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ eats \_\_\_\_\_.

She/he told us so.

She/he said,

“There’s something you should know...

I like them \_\_\_\_\_

I like them \_\_\_\_\_

I like them \_\_\_\_\_

I like them \_\_\_\_\_.

I can't seem to get enough.

‘Cause catching \_\_\_\_\_ is really tough!

Daily Special

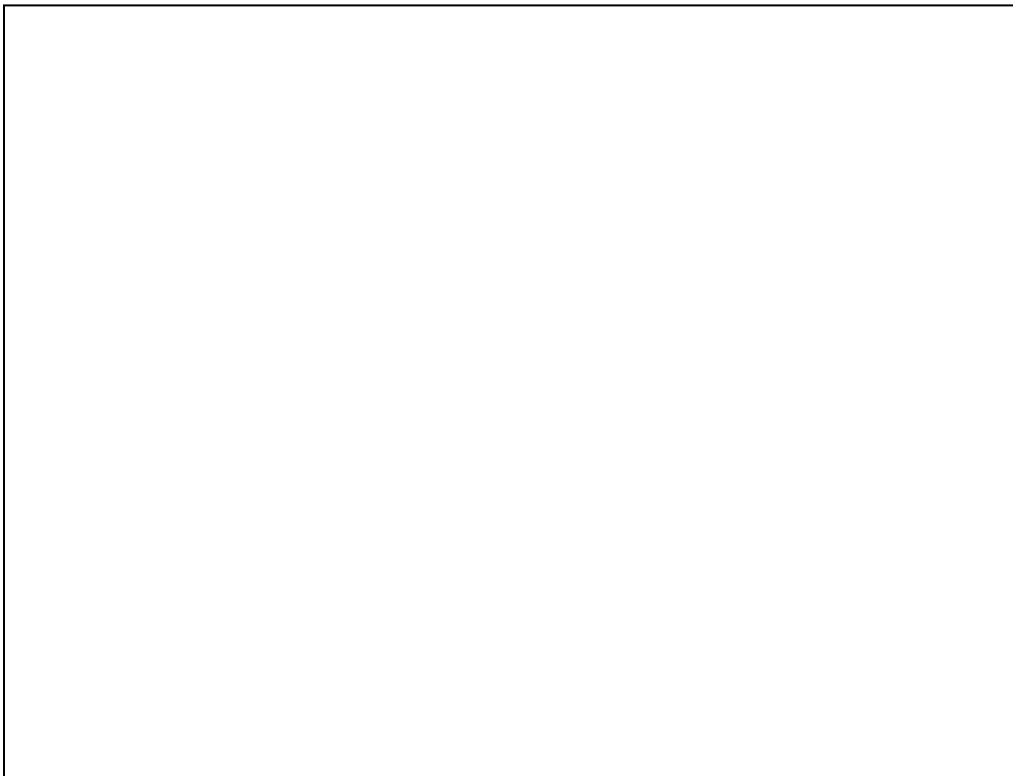
by \_\_\_\_\_

On \_\_\_\_\_ night, *The Bug House* makes

hundreds of \_\_\_\_\_ steaks.

Each \_\_\_\_\_ is sliced and fried

and served with \_\_\_\_\_ on the side!



**Art:**

- Create a magazine/internet photo bug collage in an unbreakable soup bowl.
- In partners, have the students interview each other about an experience they have had with bugs. Then... create pieces of art to represent their partner's experience.
- Make a mobile such as might decorate *The Bug House Family Restaurant*.
- Divide the poems among the students and assign each the job of creating a new color illustration on a sticky note. Attach into a class copy of the book.

**Drama:**

- Develop improvised scenes between partners A and B where:
  - A is a parent or caregiver receiving the chocolate covered ants, and B is the giver (based on "The Gift"). Then reverse roles.
  - A is an interviewer and B is Michael, whose favourite food is "Ladybug Soup".
  - A is an entomologist interviewing B, the "Millipede of the New Millenium"
  - A is one of the bugs from "The Bug House" menu, and has escaped to tell B, a journalist, of the adventures.
- Hotseat the tarantula in "Bug in Hiding"—how is it feeling? How is it planning for the future? What is its message for people?

**Health:**

- Research the nutrients in particular bugs. Create add campaigns to market new "buggy" food.
- Research "cochineal dye." Identify which North American foods use color products made from bugs, and sample them. What are your favorite things

to eat? Do we all like the same foods? Why/not? In Canada, people don't generally eat bugs; in what other countries are some bugs considered food? Do you think we'll ever eat more bugs in Canada? Why/not?

- What would be some problems with harvesting Canadian bugs (pesticides...)? Develop a series of steps to solve one of these problems and illustrate them on a poster.

### ***Social Studies:***

- Explore information about countries where people do eat bugs, and how these bugs are served.

### ***Science:***

- Select your favorite local bug and create a factual pamphlet about it.

### **Related Websites:**

Bev Brenna's website:

<http://www.beverleybrenna.com>

Other poetry-related websites:

<http://canpoetry.library.utoronto.ca/lee/>

<http://janeyolen.com/poetry/>

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

<http://kariwinters.com/math>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/michael-rosen>

<http://lionandunicornpoetryaward.blogspot.ca/2012/02/2011-honor-book-city-kids.html>

### **Related Books:**

#### ***Children's Poetry:***

Barner, Bob (1999). *Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!* San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books (Distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books).

Dahl, Roald (2005). *Vile Verses*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Fleischman, Paul (2002). *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*.

- HarperCollins.
- Heidbreder, Robert (2003). *See Saw Saskatchewan: More Playful Poems from Coast to Coast*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.
- Heidbreder, Robert (2014). *Black and Bittern Was Night*. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press.
- Hamilton, Jen (2005). *Canadian Poems for Canadian Kids*. Vancouver, BC: Subway Books.
- Lesynski, Loris (1999). *Dirty Dog Boogie*. Willowdale, ON: Annick Press.
- Kanedo, Misuzu (2016). *Are You an Echo? The Lost Poetry of Misuzu Kaneko*. Seattle, WA: Chin Music Press (Distributed in Canada by Consortium).
- Little, Jean (2003). *I Gave My Mom a Castle*. Victoria, BC: Orca Books.
- Merriam, Eve. (2001). *Low Song*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.
- Sherrard, Valerie (2008). *There's a Cow Under My Bed*. St. John's NL: Tuckamore Books.

***Non Fiction Books about Bugs:***

- Arnold, Nick (2009). *Ugly Bugs* (Horrible Science). Toronto, ON: Scholastic Canada.
- Bergeron, Alain, Quintin, Michel, & Sampar (2013). *Do You Know Spiders?* Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- Kalman, Bobbie & Sjonger, R. (2006). *Everyday Insects*. St. Catharines, ON: Crabtree.
- Kneidel, Sally (2015). *Creepy Crawlies and the Scientific Method: More Than 100 Hands-On Science Experiments for Children* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Golden, CO: Fulcrum (Distributed in Canada by Codasat, Canada).
- Winters, Kari-Lyn (2012). *Buzz About Bees*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.