

PERSONIFICATION



Tall and blue
true and open

So open my arms have room
for all the world
for sun and moon
for birds and stars

Yet how I wish I had the chance
to come drifting down to earth—
a simple bed sheet
covering some little girl or boy
just for a night

but I am Sky
that's why

—Grace Nichols





PERSONIFICATION

Sky

ABOUT THIS POEM

This poem offers a chance to explore personification (attributing human qualities to something nonhuman). Ask students to try to guess what the poem is about while you are reading it aloud. (Don't tell them the title and don't read the last two lines until they have had a chance to guess the subject.) Point out that the author is pretending that she is the sky and imagining that she possesses the sky's best qualities. See if children can find the describing words the poet chose for her sky (*tall, blue, true, open*). Invite children to close their eyes and picture themselves as the sky as you read the poem to them again.

SIMPLE WRITING STEPS

- 1 Ask students to choose something large from nature: the sun, the moon, the ocean, a blue whale, a sunset, a bolt of lightning, a redwood tree, and so on.
- 2 Next, ask children to close their eyes and imagine that they are the thing they chose. Then have them think of four words that best describe themselves as this thing.
- 3 Ask children to begin their poems with the four describing words. For example, they might begin a poem about the moon with this opening:

Silver and round
smiling and bright

- 4 Invite students to think of what they do best as that thing from nature. For example, the moon might smile down at people or send silver light shining through a child's window. Once children have decided on their special ability, ask them to write about it. Remind them not to say what they are until the very end of the poem.

- 5 The ending might be a simple statement revealing their identity:

I am _____.

Option: Play a guessing game! Have children take turns reading their poems aloud without reading the endings. Then other students can guess the subjects of the poems.