

ONE

The bell rang to end the school day and a very windy, late October school day it was.

Teachers guided students to their busses, parents or bicycles past the Poet who sat on a bench with his backpack, pencil and notebook. He quietly spoke the words he's wrote:

“Autumn’s leaves
drop from trees
a swirl-like breeze
circling the ground
around and 'round.”

“I love those rhyming words!” the Painter exclaimed as she set her multi-colored bicycle on

its kickstand.

“Thanks, Painter!” the Poet replied. He watched the Painter stuff her folded easel into her backpack that rested in her bike’s basket. “I don’t really want to write rhyming poems anymore,” continued the Poet.

“How can you have a poem that doesn’t rhyme? Sounds boring to me,” the Painter replied.

The Poet placed his feet on his skateboard and rolled it back and forth.

“Maybe,” the Poet replied. “I just hear so much rhyme in songs, rap, poems. I like it all but I spend a lot of time looking for words that rhyme AND make sense. I think I need to learn more words.”

He pulled out a piece of paper from his jacket pocket and unfolded it. “My teacher read this poem to us today. She said it was written in blank verse.”

“Blank verse? That’s like a blank canvas with invisible paint!” exclaimed the Painter.

“Well, I liked it because it didn’t rhyme. That means I won’t be limited with what words I choose to use. It also had short lines with a rhythm called iambic pentameter.”

“I am what?” asked the Painter.

The Poet, The Painter and The Entomologist

“Iambic pentameter. It’s really cool. Each line has five da Dums and the Dums are always stressed like this: da Dum, da Dum, da Dum, da Dum, da Dum,” the Poet explained as he clapped to each da Dum.

“Sounds like a drum beat,” said the Painter.

“Yeah, it does! My teacher said that blank verse is used in poetry and plays,” continued the Poet. He held up his paper. “This is blank verse from a play called ‘Romeo and Juliet’ by William Shakespeare. It describes a lady’s covered wagon and its driver. You wanna hear it?”

“Okay,” replied the Painter as she zipped up her jacket and sat next to him on the bench.

The Poet cleared his throat then began:

“...Her wagon spokes made of long spinners’
legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
Her traces of the smallest spider’s web,
Her collars of the moonshine’s watery beams,
Her whip of cricket’s bone, the lash of film,
Her wagoner a small gray-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm...”

The Poet looked at the Painter. “I want to write that way. I want to be different,” the Poet

declared.

“So do I, Poet!” the Painter responded. “I love painting flowers but I want something new to paint.” She laughed. “The wagon lady covered her wagon with grasshopper wings and used a cricket’s bones for a whip? And her driver was a gnat? Wheels spun by a spider? The whole wagon was made from insects! That’s different!”

“Spiders are not insects,” said an unfamiliar voice.

The Poet and the Painter whipped their heads around and saw a boy standing behind their bench with an overstuffed backpack and a big magnifying glass hanging around his neck.

“Most spiders have two bodies in one,” the boy explained. “The abdomen in the back has glands to spin their threads for webs. The thorax is in the front that has the eyes, mouth, fangs, stomach, brain and glands that make poison. Spiders are arachnids not insects. Do you know how many legs a spider has?”

“Eight! Everybody knows that!” declared the Painter.

“Insects usually have six legs and three body segments: the thorax, abdomen and head. And spiders spin webs. Insects can’t. Did you know

that spiders have forty-eight knees?”

The eyes of the Poet and the Painter were quite wide.

“How do you know all that?” asked the Painter.

“I’m an Entomologist,” the boy replied. “At least I want to be.”

“A what?” asked the Poet.

“Entomologist! I study insects,” said the Entomologist.

“I’m a Poet,” said the Poet.

“And I’m a Painter,” said the Painter. “You sure know a lot about spiders if you only study insects.”

“That’s because most people think spiders are insects and that drives me crazy,” the Entomologist replied.

“What grade are you in?” asked the Painter.

“Sixth,” answered the Entomologist.

“I’m in third and the Poet’s in fifth,” said the Painter. She points at the Entomologist’s backpack. “What’s all that stuff in there?”

“Some tools to catch insects,” replied the Entomologist as he removed a net from his pack. “This is a Sweep Net. It catches insects on leaves and branches.” He put the net back in his pack. I have a smaller net to catch flies and stuff



somewhere in my pack.” But, instead of his smaller net, he took out a small tool with very long handles.

“Tweezers,” continued the Entomologist. “I use it to pick up insects that might pinch, bite or even sting me. I have a pair of gloves to use if I think that will happen. Then I put the insects in separate jars like this one.” He took out a jar from his pack and showed them. “But I have several different sizes for different kinds of insects.”

“Do you find the insects with your magnifying glass?” asked the Poet.

“Most of the time but you sort of need to know where to look,” answered the Entomologist. “Sometimes I have to use my little flashlight to find them.”

“What kind of insects are you looking for, Entomologist?” asked the Poet.

“Unusual ones. I only have two days to find them for the school’s science fair on Saturday but all I found are ants and a couple of butterflies,” explained the Entomologist.

“Good! I don’t like insects anyway but I do love butterflies,” said the Painter. “Maybe I should paint them.”

“Did you know butterflies taste with their feet?”

asked the Entomologist.

“That’s gross,” said the Painter.

“Well, I want to get a really good grade on my science fair project so I’m trying to find really unusual looking insects. Seen any?”

“No,” answered the Poet. “I guess it’ll be hard with most of the leaves off the trees and bushes already. I think even insects like some shelter from the cold.”

“Like butterflies. They can’t fly when they’re cold,” said the Entomologist. “Did you know that people eat insects?”

“Eeeewww!” shrieked the Painter.

“It’s true. Like chocolate-covered ants,” said the Entomologist.

“I love to eat insects,” said a familiar voice. “Crickets. Beetles. Earthworms. Caterpillars. Grasshoppers.”

The kids looked across the path and spotted the Stranger sitting on a branch of a pine tree, crunching into a big grasshopper.

“Hi, Stranger! What’re you doing here?” asked the Painter.

“I always want to find something to eat. Like this spider, insect or not.” The Stranger swiftly snatched a spider from the tree trunk and gulped

it down. “And finding any kind of insect is a very appealing project to complete.” He patted his belly. “As you can see, I’m much bigger now, catching as much as I can for the winter. Maybe we’ll find some frogs, snakes, mice, salamander and other delicacies along the way. Those are my favorites.”

“Those aren’t insects!” the Entomologist retorted.

“You mean you want to take us on another adventure, Stranger?” asked the Painter. “I don’t go anywhere with strangers especially a man that looks like some kind of hawk that talks,” said the Entomologist.

“Hawk that talks! Good rhyme!” said the Poet.

“You’re a hawk, Stranger?” asked a surprised Painter.

“AWK! You can be anything you want in your imagination,” replied the

Stranger. “Are you ready to go find some insects?”

“No!” shouted the Entomologist.

“Don’t worry, Entomologist,” said the Painter. “He’s our friend. He helped us with our homework by taking us on a big adventure by rainbow.”

“And we were back in no time,” added the Poet as he stuffed his skateboard into his backpack.

“What about my bike?” asked the Painter.

“We’ll be back in a flash,” replied the Stranger.

The Painter grabbed her backpack with ease from her bike’s basket and, in a flash, the Stranger swooped down and scooped up the backpacked adventurers with his talons to catch a rainbow as the Entomologist’s loud protests faded through the dark clouds.

But, indeed, something went quite wrong.