

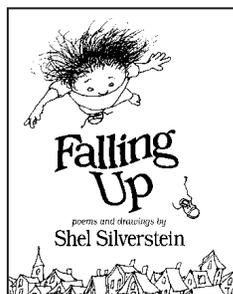
If you are a dreamer . . . come in. So begins the very first poem in Shel's first poetry collection, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. It's an invitation into the zany, wild, irreverent, and very creative world of Shel Silverstein. No poet has touched children's lives more than Shel through his simplicity, clarity, and fun with language. His books and performances are timeless treasures that address the deep feelings, joys, and fears of everyday life with humor and compassion.

HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks hopes you will enjoy sharing his work with your classroom. The kit is based on the books below.

Shel Silverstein "is a magnificent poet of the spirit, and what he says in light verse and drawing to children is of such importance, such urgency, that we must be grateful that more than three\* million [sic] copies of his books are being read. In a world that needs a generation of imaginative thinkers, may there be millions and millions more."

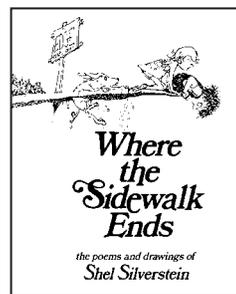
—MYRA COHN LIVINGSTON,  
*New York Times*, March 9, 1986

\*Sales of Shel Silverstein's book exceed 20 million copies to date.



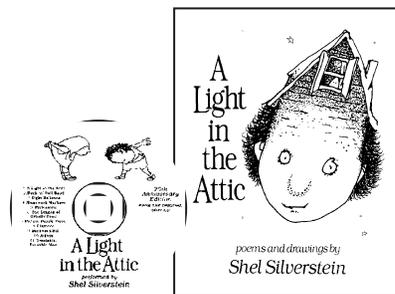
### Falling Up

Booklist Editor's Choice  
ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant  
Young Adult Readers  
New York Public Library Book  
for the Teen Age  
New York Public Library  
Children's Books  
Children's Choices (IRA/CBC)



### Where the Sidewalk Ends

ALA Notable Children's Book  
1984 Grammy Award,  
Best Children's Recording  
A *New York Times* Outstanding  
Children's Book  
1988 Choice, Association of  
Booksellers for Children  
Notable Titles of 1974  
(*New York Times Book Review*)  
Michigan Young Readers' Award  
George C. Stone Center for  
Children's Books (Claremont, CA)  
"Recognition of Merit" Award



### A Light in the Attic 20th Anniversary Edition Book with CD

CD Performed by Shel Silverstein  
ALA Notable Children's Book  
A *School Library Journal* Best Book  
A Library of Congress  
Children's Book  
A New York Public Library  
Children's Book  
A USA Children's Book of  
International Interest  
Winner of the William Allen  
White Award (Kansas)

See last page for ordering information.

# April is National Poetry Month

Celebrate with the  
Works of

Shel Silverstein

A SPECIAL CLASSROOM POETRY KIT  
TO HELP READERS OF ALL AGES  
READ, UNDERSTAND, AND LOVE POETRY

HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

www.harperchildrens.com

**The kit includes:**

- Audio CD of Shel Silverstein performing selected poems from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*
- *Cuttin' Kate* drawing and activity booklet to photocopy for your students
- Classroom poetry booklet that will help you and your class explore the world of Shel Silverstein
- Reproducible activities to photocopy for your students
- Author highlight

**You will also need:**

- Photocopies of the activities
- Pencils
- Blank paper
- A copy of *Falling Up*
- A copy of *Where the Sidewalk Ends*
- A copy of *A Light in the Attic* 20th Anniversary Edition Book with CD
- A CD player
- Optional: Overhead projector or enlargements of certain activities, crayons or other drawing materials

**The kit will address some of the basics of poetry, including:**

- Pre-Reading
- The Structure of Poetry
- Verbal Skills: Expression, Language Development, and Reading
- Meaning and Content
- Themes and Perspectives
- Numbers and Word Play
- Creative Writing Poetry Starters
- Extension Activities

**Preparation.** Go through the activities in advance. Familiarize yourself with the poems on the CDs and those cross-referenced in the rest of the activities. The following poems are on the enclosed *Where the Sidewalk Ends* CD:

1. "Sick" (p. 58)
2. "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" (p. 16)
3. "The Silver Fish" (p. 148)
4. "With His Mouth Full of Food" (p. 128)

5. "Crocodile's Toothache" (p. 66)
6. "Listen to the Musn'ts" (p. 27)
7. "Smart" (p. 35)
8. "The Farmer and the Queen" (p. 32)
9. "Dreadful" (p. 141)
10. "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" (p. 70)

The following poems are on the *A Light in the Attic* CD:

1. "A Light in the Attic" (p. 7)
2. "Rock 'n' Roll Band" (p. 24)
3. "Eight Balloons" (p. 58)
4. "Homework Machine" (p. 56)
5. "Prehistoric" (p. 79)
6. "The Dragon of Grindly Grun" (p. 33)
7. "Picture Puzzle Piece" (p. 21)
8. "Clarence" (p. 154)
9. "Backward Bill" (p. 40)
10. "Ations" (p. 59)
11. "Twistable, Turnable Man" (p. 138)

**PRE-READING**

Begin with the enclosed *Where the Sidewalk Ends* CD on which Shel Silverstein performs selections from his original album. Using an overhead projector or an enlarged photocopy of the page from the book, read along with Shel as he recites "The Silver Fish" (p. 148, CD Track 3). Ask students if they know who wrote the poem.

**Introduction**

In "The Silver Fish," Shel creates a magical setting, full of fantasy and promise which sharply contrasts with its ending. Ask students what words are used to create the mood and setting (e.g., *colors*: blue, gold, silver; and *place*: lagoon, a body of water that is hidden away, which is more interesting than a plain old river or pond and has a special sound). Explain that word choices are very important to poetry. Read another of Shel's poems, such as "Crystal Ball" (*Falling Up*, p. 17). Ask students what words in the poem create the mood (e.g., messy foods such as *mashed* potatoes and *green pea* soup). Explain that the poem would not have the same effect if *baked* potatoes or *chicken* soup were used.

### Author Highlight

After the students have become acquainted with some of the poems, share the author highlight with them. Ask if they have read any of the books mentioned. Explain that although Shel Silverstein is best known for his poetry, he was also a writer, composer, lyricist, playwright, and folk singer, who began his career as a cartoonist. Discuss with students how one's interests influence one's work. For example, the musical rhythm of Shel's poetry was influenced by his experience as a composer and musician.

**Music as an Influence.** Play "Ickle Me, Pickle Me, Tickle Me Too" and read along (*Where the Sidewalk Ends* CD Track 2, book p. 16). Have students find other poems in the three poetry books that relate to music or sound, for example:

- "Music Lesson" (*Falling Up*, p. 135)
- "Musical Career" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 60)
- "My Guitar" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 80)
- "Noise Day" (*Falling Up*, p. 26)
- "Plugging In" (*Falling Up*, p. 8)
- "Ourchestra" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 23)
- "What a Day" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 118)

Demonstrate that a poem can also be a song by first reading the poems below, then play the *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and/or *A Light in the Attic* CD:

- "Crocodile's Toothache" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 66, CD Track 5)
- "Ations," (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 59, CD Track 10)
- "Twistable, Turnable Man" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 138, CD Track 11)

**Theater as an Influence.** Shel Silverstein's work as a playwright also influenced his poems. Ask students to act out a poem, for example:

- "The Farmer and the Queen" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 88, CD Track 8)
- "Mirror, Mirror" (*Falling Up*, p. 88)
- "The Nap Taker" (*Falling Up*, p. 140)
- "When I Was Your Age" (*Falling Up*, p. 159)
- "Little Abigail and the Beautiful Pony" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 120)

Ask students to find more poems that could be a play. Dramatic expression will be explored further with the *Cuttin' Kate* booklet.

### THE STRUCTURE OF POETRY

The words below are used to describe and discuss some of the basic elements of poetry:

- poem: Writing that is imaginative and condensed by using words chosen for their sound and meaning, with phrases that have a certain pattern made with rhythm and rhyme.
- rhyme: Words that, at the end of a line of a poem, sound alike.
- rhythm: In poetry, a pattern created with long and short, soft and loud, weak and strong sounds.
- cadence: A balanced, rhythmic flow of words.
- meter: A rhythm that continuously repeats a single basic pattern.
- verse: A line of a poem, or a group of lines within a long poem.
- stanza: A part of a poem with similar rhythm and rhyme that will usually repeat later in the poem.
- rhyming couplet: Two lines of a poem together with the same rhythm and same rhyme at the end.

Begin by discussing why a poem is different from any other kind of writing. A poem can be long or short. (For example: Long: "Clooney the Clown," *A Light in the Attic*, p. 74. Short: "Ridiculous Rose," *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 63.) It can tell a story or convey a single thought.

### Rhyme and Rhythm

**Rhyme.** Explain that poems don't have to rhyme, but many do. Rhymes can occur every two lines, every four, etc. Have students identify the lines that rhyme in the following poem. Explain that this is a *rhyme pattern*. For example, the underlined words below rhyme every two lines.

ALICE (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 112)

She drank from a bottle call DRINK ME  
And up she grew so tall,

She ate from a plate called TASTE ME  
 And down she shrank so small.  
 And so she changed, while other folks  
 Never tried nothin' at all.

**Rhythm.** Cadence and rhythm are integral to Shel Silverstein's poetry. To demonstrate this, have students clap out the poems together, one clap per syllable. Then ask them to make marks on paper and count out the syllables per line. Working with the same poem, "Alice," you can demonstrate how the rhyme pattern and rhythm patterns correspond as shown below. The lines that rhyme have the same rhythm pattern. Explain that words such as bottle count as a one-syllable word in this poem.

ALICE (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 112)

	Number of Syllables	
She drank from a bottle called DRINK <u>ME</u>		9
And up she grew so <u>tall</u> ,		6
She ate from a plate called TASTE <u>ME</u>		8
And down she shrank so <u>small</u> .		6
And so she changed, while other folks		8
Never tried nothin' at <u>all</u> .		6

Other examples of corresponding rhyme and rhythm patterns are:

"My Beard" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 163)

"Come Skating" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 71)

"The Deadly Eye" (*Falling Up*, p. 37)

"A Closet Full of Shoes" (*Falling Up*, p. 118)

**Rhyming Couplet.** See "Sick" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 58, CD Track 1). Write the poem on the blackboard or use an overhead projector, leaving off the last word of each line as below. Ask students to fill in the blanks with words that rhyme with the underlined words. Only the first few couplets of the poem are written below. Use the entire poem or just part of it as shown below.

SICK

I have the measles and the mumps,  
 A gash, a rash, and purple \_\_\_\_\_. (5 letters)

My mouth is wet, my throat is dry  
 I'm going blind in my right \_\_\_\_\_. (3 letters)

I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,  
 I'm sure that my left leg is \_\_\_\_\_. (5 letters)

My nose is cold, my toes are numb,  
 I have a sliver in my \_\_\_\_\_. (5 letters)

Explain that each group of two lines is a rhyming couplet. Point out that the rhyme occurs in each of two successive lines. Afterwards, play the track from the CD.

**Reproducible: "The Romance"**

Photocopy page 8 for each student or enlarge it to use with an overhead projector. Explain to students that this is a poem that has never before been published, which means they would not be able to find it in any of Shel Silverstein's books. Ask students to find the rhyming lines. After discussing the poem, ask students to think of their own combination of animals, insects, machines, etc., to write and illustrate a poem of their own.

**Non-Rhyming Poems.** Find a poem in one of the books that doesn't rhyme, for example: "Stone Telling" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 147). Ask students if it is a poem even though it doesn't rhyme. Explain that it is still a poem because it contains many of the other elements of a poem—writing that is imaginative and condensed, words that have been chosen for their sound and meaning, with phrases that have a certain pattern and rhythm.

**Meter.** See "Two Boxes" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 41). Explain to students that meter is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem. Write out the poem on the blackboard or use an enlarged photocopy or overhead projector. The boldface syllables indicate the stressed syllables. Ask students to read the poem first stressing the bold-faced syllables. Then ask them to read it again stressing the syllables that are not bold. Ask which they prefer. Discuss how different the poem sounds. Ask students if they think changing the meter of the poem affects the meaning of the poem.

TWO **BOXES** (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 41)

Two **boxes met** upon a road  
Said **one** unto the **other**,  
"If **you're** a **box**,  
And **I'm** a **box**,  
Then **you** must **be** my **brother**.  
Our **sides** are **thin**,  
We're **cavin' in**,  
And **we** must **get** no **thinner**."  
And **so** two **boxes**, **hand** in **hand**,  
Went **home** to **have** their **dinner**.

### VERBAL SKILLS: EXPRESSION, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, AND READING

Read one of the poems listed below aloud without feeling or inflection. Then play the selection from the CD. Discuss enunciation, how words sound, what words are emphasized, the repetition of vowel sounds, the repetition of consonants (consonance), and the pacing of the lines. Ask students how this affects their understanding and enjoyment of the poem.

"Dreadful" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 141, CD Track 9)

"Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 70, CD Track 10)

#### "With His Mouth Full of Food"

Read "With His Mouth Full of Food" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 128, CD Track 4), then play the CD. Explain that the pronunciation and sound of the words reinforce the idea presented in the poem. Explain that it is important to understand the meaning of the poem in order to recite it well. For example, a very sad poem would probably not be recited in a cheerful voice.

#### "Dentist Dan"

Read "Dentist Dan" (*Falling Up*, p. 130). Ask the class why the words are spelled the way they are. Then ask several students each to read the poem out loud. See who can give the best "toothless" performance.

#### "Hard to Please"

Have students read aloud "Hard to Please" (*Falling Up*, p. 74) and see how far they get through the poem in one breath. Ask students why they think Shel suggests reading the poem in one breath. Ask students how it might be different if you did not read it in one breath.

#### "James"

Read "James" (*Falling Up*, p. 115). Ask students if they can guess why James has a G instead of a J on his shirt? Hint to students that getting the answer right requires close reading of the poem and looking at the illustration on the page.

#### "Long Mobile"

Read "Long Mobile" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 39) and ask three students to read the first line separately, each emphasizing a different word. Discuss how this changes our perception of the poem.

### MEANING AND CONTENT

The imaginative content of Shel's poems most often employs the collaboration of words and images. Illustrations are especially helpful to emergent readers as they provide meaning and content to the words. In many cases, the drawing completes the thought which is not in the text of the poem. Without the drawing, we would not fully understand the poem. This technique is used in poems such as:

"Have Fun" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 145)

"Hungry Kid Island" (*Falling Up*, p. 165)

"Mister Moody" (*Falling Up*, p. 95)

"The Planet of Mars" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 93)

"The Sack Race" (*Falling Up*, p. 147)

"Short Kid" (*Falling Up*, p. 101)

"Spelling Bee" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 81)

"Sun Hat" (*Falling Up*, p. 10)

"Surprise" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 96)

#### "Deaf Donald" Picture Poem

Read "Deaf Donald" (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 143). This poem is in the form of a rebus, a representation of words with pictures. Ask students to write their own poems either entirely with pictures or in combination with words.

## THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES

Shel Silverstein often set up a dynamic relationship between opposites in a poem so the reader will explore both points of view. The insight gained by students is important in helping them to experience empathy and to develop social skills.

With any of the poems listed below, discuss the points of view of the various characters in each. Ask students to identify some of the things they think Shel Silverstein expresses in the poem(s) about changing points of view.

“A Cat, a Kid, and a Mom” (*Falling Up*, p. 104)

“Outside or Underneath?” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 107)

“Reflection” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 29)

“People Zoo” (*Falling Up*, p. 80)

### “Listen to the Mustn’ts

Read and play “Listen to the Mustn’ts” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 27, CD Track 6). Ask students what the poem means. Ask students to write a “Mustn’t/Don’t/Shouldn’t/Impossible/Won’t/Never Have.”

Then ask students to write an ANYTHING to counter it as the basis for a creative idea. For example, “Horses Can’t Fly” could become a poem or story about “My Flying Horse.”

### “One Inch Tall”

Read “One Inch Tall” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 55). Ask students to write a poem from a different point of view, for example “one mile long.”

### Reproducible: “Me and My Giant”

(*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 38. See booklet page 9.) Photocopy the page and ask students to write an extension to the poem’s first two stanzas. Ask them how they would communicate with a giant. Allow time for students to share with the class and then read the rest of the poem “Me and My Giant.”

## NUMBERS AND WORD PLAY

### “The Monkey”

Write the poem “The Monkey” (*Falling Up*, p. 40) on the blackboard, large chart paper, or photocopy onto a transparency for an overhead projector. Discuss the numbers and the word-sounds they

represent. Read the poem to the class. Ask students to call out the number/word as you come to it. Discuss why the numbers are a good substitution for words. Challenge students to create a short poem or riddle using numbers as words. Note that not only are numbers substituted for words, but they appear in numerical sequence, a very difficult thing to achieve.

### “Smart”

Read the poem “Smart” and play the track from the CD (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 35, CD Track 7). As a hilarious lesson in math and logic, ask students to calculate the son’s losses each time he makes a trade. Students can do their calculations in writing, or, as the poem is reread a second time, give their answers verbally.

### “Importnt?”

Read the poem “Importnt?” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 54). Ask students to write a poem with one vowel and one consonant missing.

**Homophones** are words that sound alike but are different in meaning and spelling. Here are some examples:

“The Edge of the World” (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p.89)  
world whirled

“Cat Jacks” (*Falling Up*, p. 137) lion lyn’

“Anteater” (*A Light in the Attic*, p. 61) anteater aunt eater

“Little Hoarse” (*Falling Up*, p. 29) hoarse horse

After reading the poems, ask students to make a list of more homophones and use them in a sentence.

**Homonyms** are words that are usually spelled the same but have different meanings. In these cases, the homonyms are integral to the meaning of the poems. Here are some examples:

“Turkey?” (*Falling Up*, p. 34) drumstick (turkey leg)  
drumstick (music)

“Safe?” (*Falling Up*, p. 25) safe (to cross the street)  
safe (falling from building)

After reading the poems, ask students to make a list of more homonyms and use them in a sentence.

## CREATIVE WRITING POETRY STARTERS

Below are the first lines from two Shel Silverstein poems. Write these first lines on the blackboard or overhead projector. Ask students to choose one and write a poem. After completing the poem, read Shel Silverstein's poems to see how he treated the subject.

This morning I jumped on my horse . . .

"True Story" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 43)

Lester was given a magic wish . . .

"Lester" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 69)

### Reproducible: "No"

Read "No" (*Falling Up*, p. 117. See booklet page 10.). Ask students to choose one word and to write a list of words that rhyme with it, then to choose a second word, possibly an *antonym* (opposite) and write a list of rhymes for it as well. Alternate a word from each of the two lists to write in the sign. For example, with dogs and cats, you might come up with the following:

1) No dogs rhymes with:

No hogs, No cogs, No bogs, No frogs, No jogs, No logs . . .

2) No cats rhymes with:

No bats, No fats, No gnats, No hats, No mats, No pats, No rats, No splats, No vats . . .

Resulting alternating rhyming couplets:

No dogs, No cats, No hogs, No bats, No frogs, No rats . . .

### "Poem on the Neck of a Giraffe"

Read and show "Poem on the Neck of a Giraffe" (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 107). Ask students to try to write a title for this poem. Is a title necessary? Ask students to explain how the shape of a giraffe and the way the words are written are intertwined.

### Reproducible: "Use for a Moose"

Read "Use for a Moose" (*Falling Up*, p. 155). Photocopy the moose on page 11 of this booklet. Ask students to write a poem within the shape of the animal. Suggest that they might write about where the moose lives or any special characteristics it has. You might suggest they find rhymes for moose before they begin writing their poems.

You can also suggest that students create their own drawings to write their poems in.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### Cuttin' Kate Booklet

Explain to students that a poem can be the beginning of many other ways to express oneself. A poem could become a song, a drawing, or even a play.

**Drawing/Art Activity.** Make copies of the pages and give them to your class to draw. Students can work in pairs, two people drawing on the same page if you have a big class, or one page per person if your class is small. When you're finished, tape the pages together in the same order as the book to make one long illustrated poem.

Each student could make his or her own unique scissors as described at the end of the *Cuttin' Kate* booklet. After the play activity, display the scissors on your class bulletin board in a special pattern. As another art activity, students can transform their scissors into other moving objects, a bird's beak, walking legs, etc.

**Play Activity.** The instructions are located in the back of the *Cuttin' Kate* booklet.

### Shel Silverstein Journal

Have students keep a Shel Silverstein journal in which to record their reactions to his poetry. Their journals could include emotions and feelings that his poetry evokes in them, which poems are their favorites and why, poems that they might not have understood, etc. Invite students to share some of their reactions and journal entries with the class.

**For further information about Shel Silverstein and his books, please visit:**

[www.harperchildrens.com](http://www.harperchildrens.com).

**Coming soon:**

[www.ShelSilverstein.com](http://www.ShelSilverstein.com)—official website for children

**For more information about the National Poetry Month celebration with Shel Silverstein, you can also visit the following website:**

[www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)

Can you find the words that rhyme in this poem? Please underline them.

### THE ROMANCE

Said the pelican to the elephant,  
"I think we should marry, I do.  
'Cause there's no name that rhymes with me,  
And no one else rhymes with you."

Said the elephant to the pelican,  
"There's sense to what you've said,  
For rhyming's as good a reason as any  
For any two to wed."

And so the elephant wed the pelican,  
And they dined upon lemons and limes,  
And now they have a baby pelican,  
And everybody rhymes.

Shel Silverstein

Think of some new combinations  
of animals, plants, insects,  
machines, or whatever else you  
might like.

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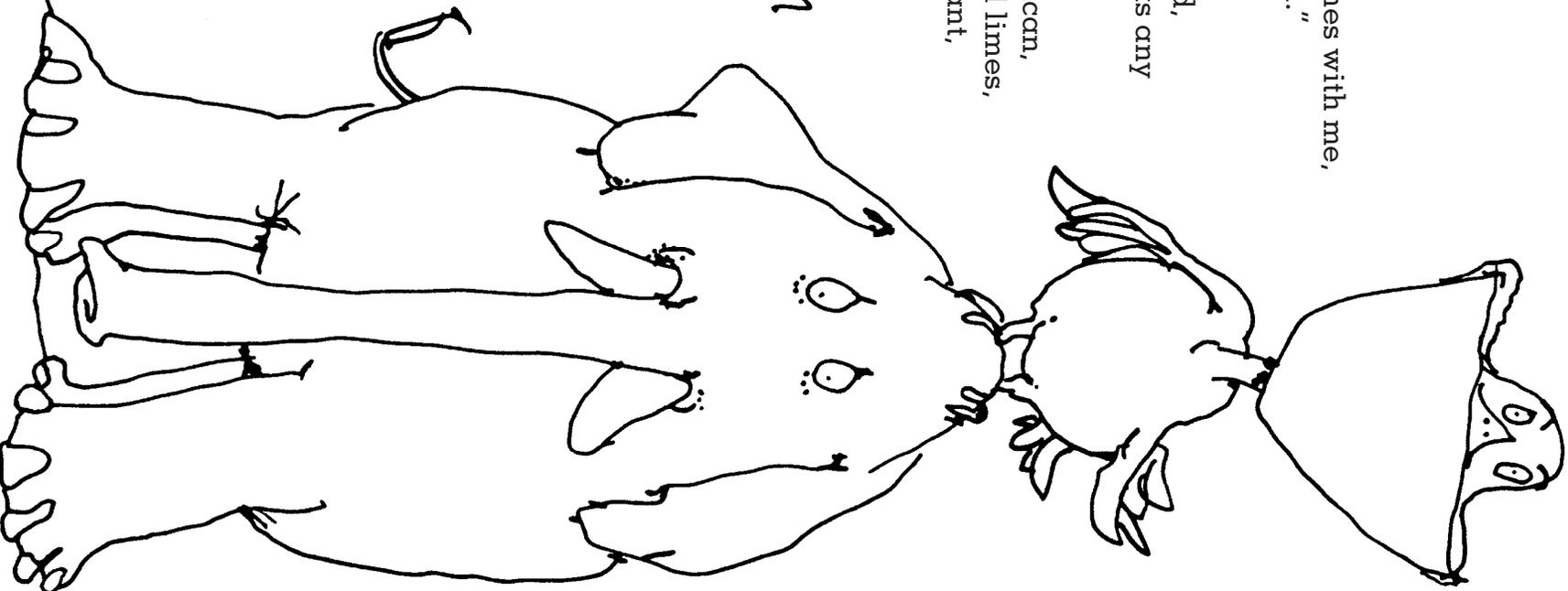
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Now you can draw them on a  
separate piece of paper.

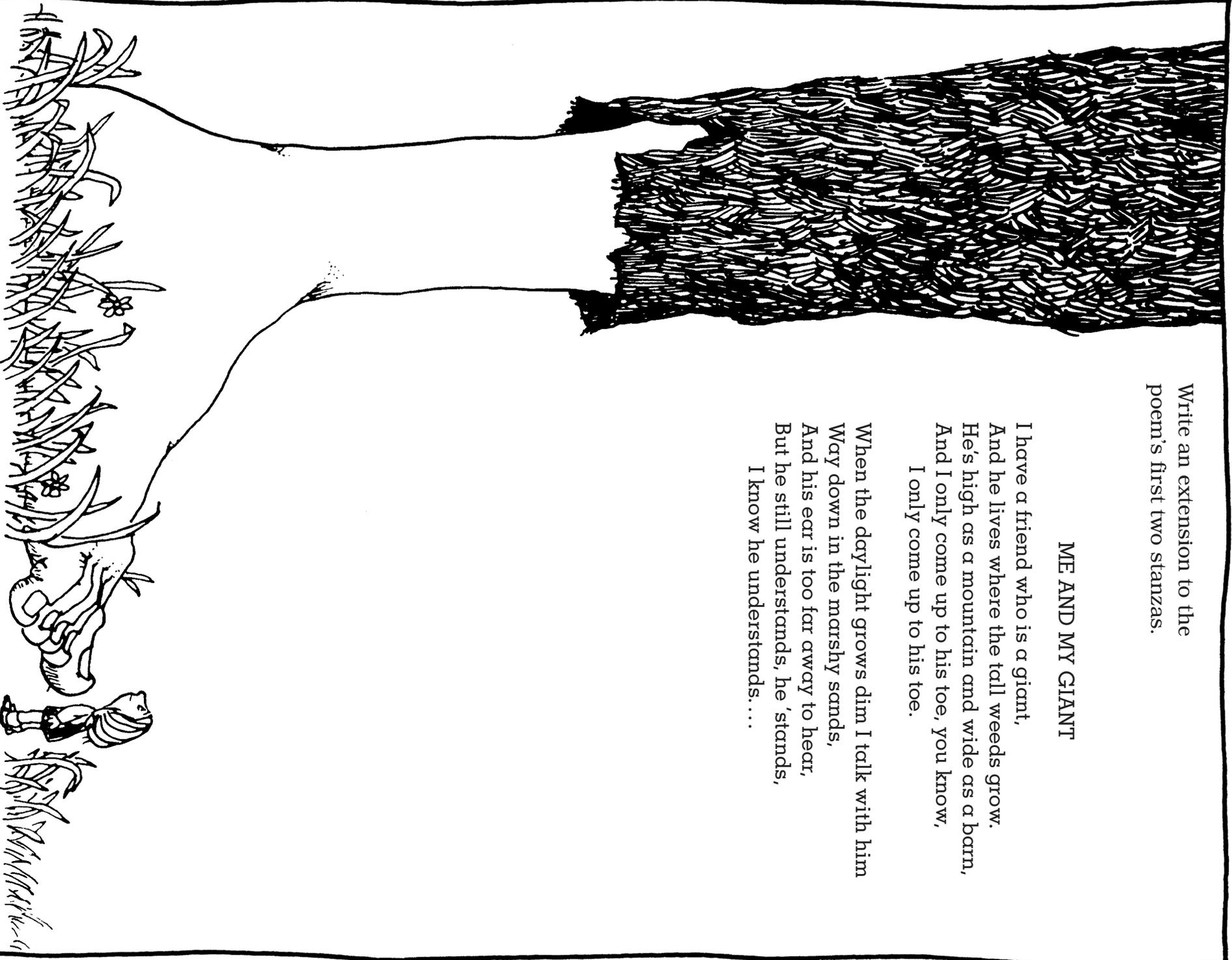


Write an extension to the poem's first two stanzas.

### ME AND MY GIANT

I have a friend who is a giant,  
And he lives where the tall weeds grow.  
He's high as a mountain and wide as a barn,  
And I only come up to his toe, you know,  
I only come up to his toe.

When the daylight grows dim I talk with him  
Way down in the marshy sands,  
And his ear is too far away to hear,  
But he still understands, he 'stands,  
I know he understands....

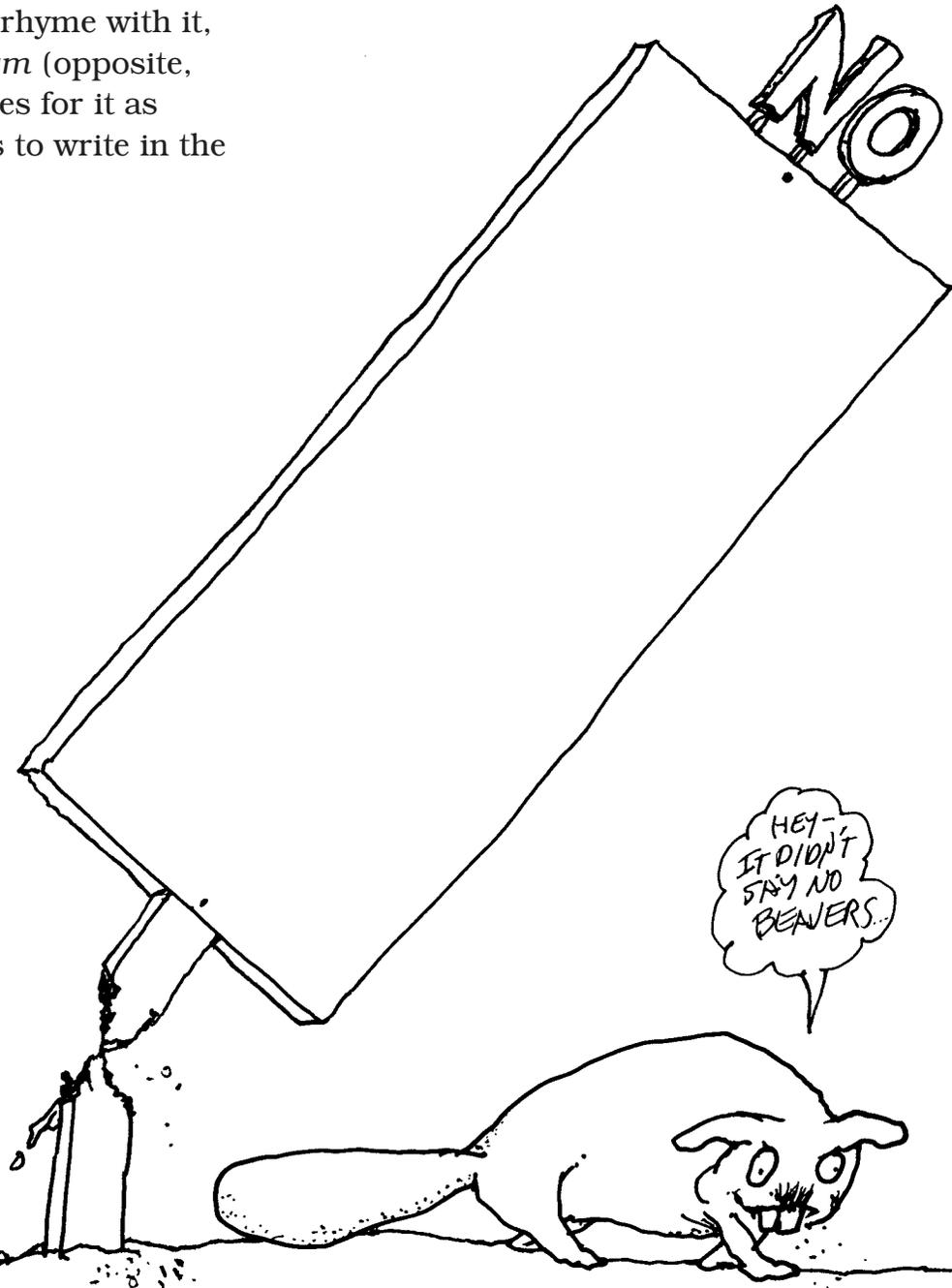


Choose one word and write a list of words that rhyme with it, then choose a second word, possibly an *antonym* (opposite, such as dogs and cats), and write a list of rhymes for it as well. Alternate a word from each of the two lists to write in the sign and see what you get.

Word #1

Word #2

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Write a poem within the shape of the moose. You might write about where the moose lives or any special characteristics it has. Before you begin writing your poem, you could think of words that rhyme with moose.

What words rhyme  
with moose?

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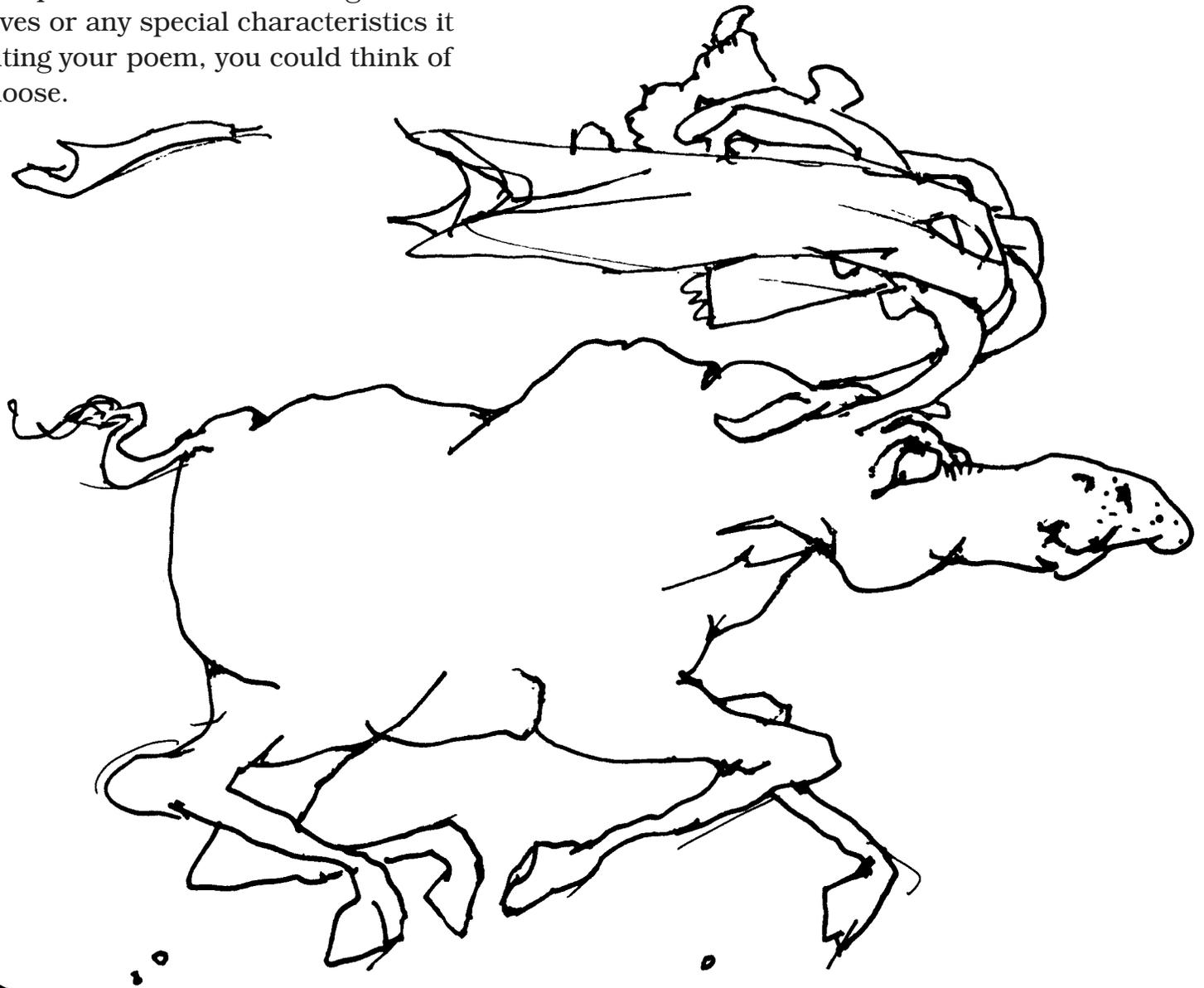
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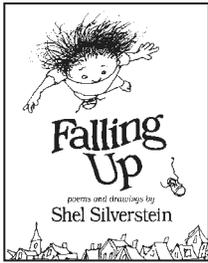
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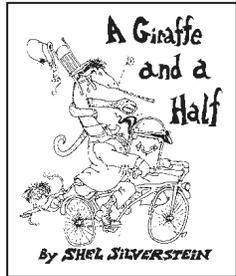
# Favorite Books by

# Shel Silverstein



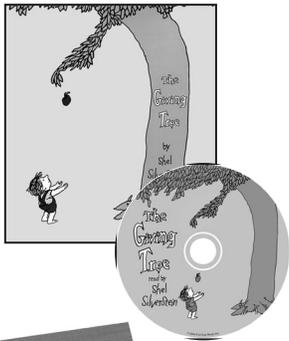
### Falling Up

Tr 0-06-024802-5  
\$17.95 (\$26.50)  
Lb 0-06-024803-3  
\$18.89 (\$28.89)



### A Giraffe and a Half

Tr 0-06-025655-9  
\$15.99 (\$23.99)  
Lb 0-06-025656-7  
\$16.89 (\$25.89)



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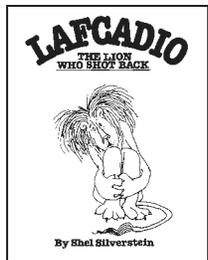
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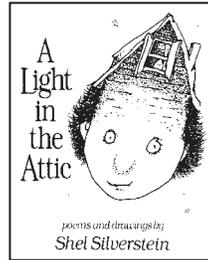
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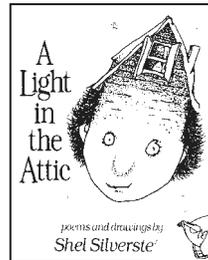
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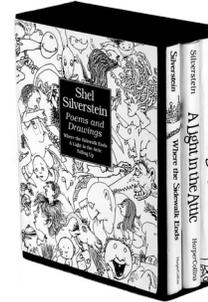
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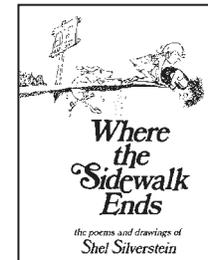
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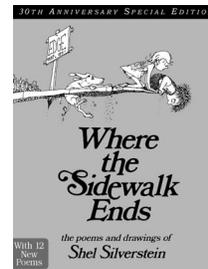
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