

Laura Purdie Salas – Online Writing Courses

laurasalas.com * ipsalas@bitstream.net

Rhyme Time! A Children's Verse Workshop

An online workshop from May 7 – June 4, 2009

Participate in an online workshop for four weeks and work on revising your rhyming children's poems or rhyming picture book manuscripts.

The first week will be devoted to acclimating yourself to our online classroom environment (which is a thing—don't worry if you've never heard of such a thing!). You'll have small daily tasks to get acquainted with both your classmates and the classroom.

Weeks two through four will be pure workshopping.

Each Thursday, I'll present a written lesson for you to read sometime that day. It will focus on one aspect of children's verse. Our three main areas of focus will be 1) Stuff Your Poem to the Brim with Content, 2) Make Every Word the Right One, and 3) How Does It Sound?

After reading the material, you will post five of your poems **or** one rhyming picture book manuscript (there will be word count/line count restrictions to keep the time investment reasonable for everyone). This can be the same material each week, that you've revised from the previous week, or it can be brand new material each week.

Then, over the course of the week, everyone (including me) will critique everyone else's work, especially focusing on the theme of the week. This will be a lot of critiquing! I will critique everything submitted. You will respond to a good deal of the verse that's submitted—but not necessarily all of it, depending on the amount of time you have available. I'll give you a minimum number to do for each classmate.

This is definitely a WORKshop, where you will learn more through the work you do than through what I simply tell you. Much of what you learn will come not only from the feedback you get on your own poems, but also from reading and analyzing the work of other poets. It's amazing how much of that you can then apply to your own work.

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We'll also read and discuss several children's poetry collections and rhyming picture books each week. Again, we'll talk about what works and why, as well as what doesn't work. I'll ask you to get copies of these books, either by buying them if you like or by checking them out at the library. You won't be required to read every book. We'll have three or four book discussions going on each week. If you got hold of two books, then you'll just participate in those two discussions.

In the online format, we'll be able to comment back and forth at any time of day, whenever it's convenient. Our discussions will consist of questions and comments and answers among all of us.

You should plan to set aside one hour per day for the class. I don't know if the critiquing will take you that long, but it's a good rule of thumb.

Please note: This workshop is designed to work with existing materials. I won't be providing poem starters. It's fine if you submit stuff you've just written, but I think you'll get more out of the class if you submit poems you've ALREADY revised and made as good as you can. That way, this workshop can help you take your work to the next level, to a level you weren't already able to reach with self-editing.

Also, this is not a marketing class. We'll be strictly focusing on the craft of poetry, on making our poems or manuscripts as strong as they can possibly be. (I just want to be up-front so nobody's disappointed about that.)

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Nuts & Bolts Info: Rhyme Time

The class will be **limited to 15 people**.

The cost is \$195.

I will need 5 students minimum in order to hold the class. If fewer than 5 students register, all monies paid will be refunded to those who did register.

You can also register for an in-depth critique by me to be done by the end of July. This would be a collection of up to 16 poems or one rhyming picture book manuscript. The cost for this is \$75 if you register with your class registration. It's \$100 if you register for it later. This extra is in **NO way necessary** to taking the class. I've just found in previous classes that several people approach me about critiques when a class ends. So I'm offering it this way.

All class materials will be confidential. The materials I post are for your information and use, and you are free to print them out to save as a reference. They are not to be forwarded to other people or photocopied, emailed, or shared in any form with other people. Poems posted by classmates are strictly confidential and you should not retain copies of anyone's work. Thanks for your cooperation. We need these assurances to make everyone feel comfortable sharing their work!

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Instructor Bio

Laura Purdie Salas started out writing for grown-ups, but she soon discovered that kids were her favorite audience. After graduating from college with an English degree (emphasis in Creative Writing), she worked as a magazine editor, writing occasional freelance articles for newspapers and other magazines on health and education topics. She then taught 8th-grade English for two years and rediscovered her love for children's literature. Laura turned her focus to writing for kids and has never looked back. Poetry is her first love, but she also writes realistic fiction and nonfiction books and articles.

Laura is a member of the Children's Literature Network and the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She teaches writing for children (to adults) through the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis and is a former instructor for the Institute of Children's Literature.

Laura has 11 poetry books, plus a how-to poetry book. Her newest book is *Stampede! Poems to Celebrate the Wild Side of School*. She has written more than 65 nonfiction books for kids. Please see her website (www.laurasalas.com) to learn more about her books. For a complete listing of her published and some of her forthcoming books, please see this .pdf file:
<http://www.laurasalas.com/pdfs/Other/Book%20List.pdf>.

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Student Comments from Previous Poetry Classes

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! If only every February, I could get a ray of hope and inspiration like that which your course gave me. I have to say that the power of feedback from you cannot be underestimated. Getting quick feedback on each of our poems encouraged, motivated and got me excited to try the next exercise. Most importantly, when you told us something didn't work in our poems, it didn't sting one bit.

--Carol-Anne Hoyte

[Y]our critiques were awesome. They were detailed enough to enable me to revise and (hopefully) improve not just the critiqued poems, but also other poems that had similar problems.

--Laurie Wallmark

Your feedback was invaluable—the perfect balance of praise and guidance. After reading your comments, I always felt good about some part of each poem (even the ones quickly whipped up in the morning poetry blender) and felt I had the tools with which to begin revising.

--Carla Tarini

Everything I hoped to be covered was covered, and then some...I not only learned from feedback on my material, but from feedback on others. Honest, thoughtful and always presented in a way that made me want to get back in there and revise!! And, the answer to questions really highlighted the depth of knowledge you have (and the passion for what you do!)... I got the very tools I was seeking for improving my poetry...and prose.

--Deb Marshall

Your critiques were extremely valuable to me, as were the critiques of my classmates. And you all were so prompt and generous in giving this feedback.

--Pat Solstad