

Picture Books

African Acrostics: A Word in Edgeways

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Ah, the acrostic: uninspired staple of poetry sessions in third and fourth grades. Well heres something to shake it up. These poems dont just spell out the obvious with adjectives, they ask questions, move diagonally, and contain whole sentences.

Now Listen to Me, Son

*First, my fowl,
Avoid all humans, who only come
To gawk and giggle. They
Hanker for our ostrich plumes and
Envy how are swan-necks wiggle.
Really! Have you seen those people-toes?
Little tiny things in rows! How they
Yearn for ones weve got: so down to earth,
And second, esteem your lot.
Drink in the
View! Wear lofty airs!
Implant upon your brow a scowl.
Colored feathers? Well, who cares
Enjoy the gifts youve got, my fowl.*

African Acrostics is inspiration for budding poets and their masters.

Heather Shaw