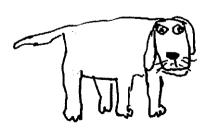
SHARON CREECH

WINNER OF THE NEWBERY MEDAL FOR WALK TWO MOONS

LOVE THAT DOG

a novel



INCLUDES AN EXCERPT FROM THE SEQUEL HATE THAT CAT

JACK

ROOM 105—MISS STRETCHBERRY

SEPTEMBER 13

I don't want to because boys don't write poetry.

Girls do.

SEPTEMBER 21

I tried. Can't do it. Brain's empty.

SEPTEMBER 27

I don't understand the poem about the red wheelbarrow and the white chickens and why so much depends upon them.

If that is a poem about the red wheelbarrow and the white chickens then any words can be a poem.
You've just got to make short lines.

Do you promise not to read it out loud?

Do you promise not to put it on the board?

Okay, here it is, but I don't like it.

So much depends
upon
a blue car
splattered with mud
speeding down the road.

What do you mean— Why does so much depend upon a blue car?

You didn't say before that I had to tell why.

The wheelbarrow guy didn't tell *why*.

What was up with the snowy woods poem you read today?

Why doesn't the person just keep going if he's got so many miles to go before he sleeps?

And why do I have to tell more about the blue car splattered with mud speeding down the road?

I don't want to write about that blue car that had miles to go before it slept, so many miles to go in such a hurry.

I am sorry to say
I did not really understand
the tiger tiger burning bright poem
but at least it sounded good
in my ears.

Here is the blue car with tiger sounds:

Blue car, blue car, shining bright in the darkness of the night: who could see you speeding by like a comet in the sky?

I could see you in the night, blue car, blue car, shining bright. I could see you speeding by like a comet in the sky. Some of the tiger sounds are still in my ears like drums beat-beat-beating.

Yes
you can put
the two blue-car poems
on the board
but only if
you don't put
my name
on them.

NOVEMBER 6

They look nice typed up like that on blue paper on a yellow board.

(But still don't tell anyone who wrote them, okay?)

(And what does *anonymous* mean? Is it good?)

November 9

I don't have any pets so I can't write about one and especially I can't write a POEM about one.

NOVEMBER 15

Yes, I used to have a pet. I don't want to write about it.

You're going to ask me *Why not?*Right?

November 22

Pretend I still have that pet?

Can't I make up a pet—a different one?
Like a tiger?
Or a hamster?
A goldfish?
Turtle?

Snail?

Worm?

Flea?

November 29

I liked those small poems we read today.

When they're small like that you can read a whole bunch in a short time and then in your head are all the pictures of all the small things from all the small poems.

I liked how the kitten leaped in the cat poem and how you could see the long head of the horse in the horse poem

and especially I liked the dog in the dog poem because that's just how my yellow dog used to lie down, with his tongue all limp and his chin between his paws and how he'd sometimes chomp at a fly and then sleep in his loose skin. just like that poet, Miss Valerie Worth, says, in her small dog poem.

DECEMBER 4

Why do you want to type up what I wrote about reading the small poems?

It's not a poem. Is it?

I guess you can
put it on the board
if you want to
but don't put
my name
on it
in case
other people
think
it's not a poem.

DECEMBER 13

I guess it does look like a poem when you see it typed up like that.

But I think maybe it would look better if there was more space between the lines.
Like how I wrote it the first time.

And I liked the picture of the yellow dog you put beside it.

But that's not how my yellow dog looked.

JANUARY 10

I really really really did NOT get the pasture poem you read today.

I mean:
somebody's going out
to the pasture
to clean the spring
and to get
the little tottery calf
while he's out there
and he isn't going
to be gone long
and he wants YOU
(who is YOU?)
to come too.

I mean REALLY.

And you said that Mr. Robert Frost who wrote about the pasture was also the one who wrote about those snowy woods and the miles to go before he sleeps—well!

I think Mr. Robert Frost has a little too much time on his hands.

JANUARY 17

Remember the wheelbarrow poem you read the first week of school?

Maybe the wheelbarrow poet
was just
making a picture
with words
and
someone else—
like maybe his teacher—
typed it up
and then people thought
it was a poem
because
it looked like one
typed up like that.

And maybe that's the same thing that happened with Mr. Robert Frost.
Maybe he was just making pictures with words about the snowy woods and the pasture—and his teacher typed them up and they looked like poems so people thought they were poems.

Like how you did with the blue-car things and reading-the-small-poems thing. On the board

typed up
they look like
poems
and the other kids
are looking at them
and they think
they really are
poems
and they
are all saying
Who wrote that?

JANUARY 24

We were going for a drive and my father said

We won't be gone long—

You come too
and so I went
and we drove and drove
until we stopped at a
red brick building
with a sign
in blue letters

ANIMAL PROTECTION SHELTER.

And inside we walked down a long cement path past cages with all kinds of dogs big and small fat and skinny some of them
hiding in the corner
but most of them
bark-bark-barking and
jumping up
against the wire cage
as we walked past
as if they were saying
Me! Me! Choose me!
I'm the best one!

And that's where we saw the yellow dog standing against the cage with his paws curled around the wire and his long red tongue hanging out and his big black eyes looking a little sad and his long tail wag-wag-wagging as if he were saying Me me me! Choose me!

And we did. We chose him.

And in the car
he put his head
against my chest
and wrapped his paws
around my arm
as if he were saying
Thank you thank you thank you.

And the other dogs in the cages get killed dead if nobody chooses them.

JANUARY 31

Yes
you can type up
what I wrote
about my yellow dog
but leave off the part
about the other dogs
getting killed dead
because that's too sad.

And don't put my name on it please.

And maybe it would look good on yellow paper.

And maybe the title should be YOU COME TOO.

FEBRUARY 7

Yes
it looks good
on yellow paper
but you forgot
(again)
to leave more
space
between the lines
like I did
when I wrote it.

That's okay though.

FEBRUARY 15

I like that poem we read today about street music in the city.

My street is not in the middle of the city so it doesn't have that LOUD music of horns and trucks clash flash screech.

My street is on the edge of a city and it has
quiet music
most of the time
whisp
meow
swish.

My street is a TIIN one with houses on both sides and my house is the white one with the red door.

There is not too much traffic on my street—not like in the middle of a city.

We play in the yards and sometimes

in the street
but only if
a grown-up
or the big kids
are out there, too,
and they will shout
Car!
if they see a car
coming down our street.

At both ends
of our street
are yellow signs
that say
Caution! Children at Play!
but sometimes
the cars
pay no attention
and speed down
the road
as if

they are in a BIG hurry with many miles to go before they sleep.

FEBRUARY 21

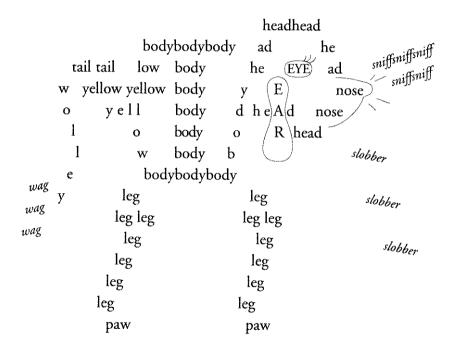
That was so great
those poems you showed us
where the words
make the shape
of the thing
that the poem
is about—
like the one about an apple
that was shaped like an apple
and the one about the house
that was shaped like a house.

My brain was pop-pop-popping when I was looking at those poems. I never knew a poet person could do that funny kind of thing.

FEBRUARY 26

I tried one of those poems that looks like what it's about.

MY YELLOW DOG by Jack



March 1

Yes
you can type up
the yellow dog poem
that looks like a dog
but this time
keep the spaces
exactly
the same
and maybe
it would look
really really good
on yellow paper.

Maybe you could put my name on it.
But only if you want to.
Only if you think it looks
good enough.

March 7

I was
a little embarrassed
when people said
things to me like
Neat poem, Jack
and
How'd you think of that, Jack?

And I really really like the one you put up about the tree that is shaped like a tree not a fake-looking tree but like a real tree with straggly branches.

But I want to know who is the

anonymous poet in our class who wrote that and why didn't he or she want to put his or her name on it? Was it like me when I didn't think my words were poems?

Maybe you will tell the anonymous tree poet that his or her tree poem is really
a poem
really really
and a good poem, too.

March 14

That was the best BEST poem you read yesterday by Mr. Walter Dean Myers the best best BEST poem ever.

I am sorry
I took the book home without asking.
I only got one spot on it.
That's why the page is torn.
I tried to get the spot out.

I copied that BEST poem and hung it on my bedroom wall right over my bed where I can see it when I'm lying down.

Maybe you could copy it too and hang it on the wall in our class where we can see it when we are sitting at our desks doing our stuff.

I sure liked that poem by Mr. Walter Dean Myers called "Love That Boy."

Because of two reasons
I liked it:
One is because
my dad calls me
in the morning
just like that.
He calls
Hey there, son!

And also because when I had my yellow dog I loved that dog and I would call him like this—
I'd say—
Hey there, Sky!

(His name was Sky.)

March 22

My yellow dog followed me everywhere every which way I turned he was there wagging his tail and slobber coming out of his mouth when he was smiling at me all the time as if he was saying thank you thank you thank you for choosing me and jumping up on me his shaggy straggly paws on my chest like he was trying

to hug the insides right out of me.

And when us kids were playing outside kicking the ball he'd chase after it and push it with his nose push push push and getting slobber all over the ball but no one cared because he was such a funny dog that dog Sky that straggly furry smiling dog Sky.

And I'd call him every morning every evening Hey there, Sky!

March 27

Yes, you can type up what I wrote about my dog Sky but don't type up that other secret one I wrote the one all folded up in the envelope with tape on it. That one uses too many of Mr. Walter Dean Myers's words and maybe Mr. Walter Dean Myers would get mad about that.

I was very glad to hear that Mr. Walter Dean Myers is not the sort of person who would get mad at a boy for using some of his words.

And thank you
for typing up
my secret poem
the one that uses
so many of
Mr. Walter Dean Myers's
words
and I like what
you put
at the top:
Inspired by Walter Dean Myers.

That sounds good
to my ears.
Now no one
will think
I just copied
because I
couldn't think
of my own words.
They will know
I was
inspired by
Mr. Walter Dean Myers.

But don't put it on the board yet, okay?

Is Mr. Walter Dean Myers a live person?

And if he is do you think he could ever come to our city to our school to our class?

And if he did
we should hide
my poem
with his words—
hide it real good—
just in case
he would get mad
about that.

No.

No, no, no, no, no.

I can't do it.

You should do it.

You're a teacher.

I don't agree that Mr. Walter Dean Myers might like to hear from a boy who likes his poems.

I think Mr. Walter Dean Myers would like to hear from a teacher who uses big words and knows how to spell and to type.

Dear Mr. Walter Dean Myers,

You probably don't want to hear from me because I am only a boy and not a teacher and I don't use big words and you probably won't read this or even if you do read it you probably are way too busy to answer it let alone do the thing I am going to ask you and I want you to know that's okay because our teacher says writers are very very very very busy trying to write their words

and the phone is ringing and the fax is going and the bills need paying and sometimes they get sick (I hope you are not sick, Mr. Walter Dean Myers) or their family gets sick or their electricity goes off or the car needs fixing or they have to go to the grocery store or do the laundry or clean up messes. I don't know how you find the time to write your words if you have to do all that stuff and maybe you should get a helper.

So what I am asking you is this: If you ever get time to leave your house and if you ever feel like visiting a school where there might be some kids who like your poems would you ever maybe think about maybe coming maybe to our school which is a clean place with mostly nice people in it and I think our teacher Miss Stretchberry would maybe even

make brownies for you because she sometimes makes them for us.

I hope I haven't too much stopped you from doing your writing of words and fixing your car and getting groceries and all that stuffjust to read this letter which probably is taking you maybe fifteen minutes and in that time you could've maybe written a whole new poem or at least the start of one and so I am sorry

for taking up your time and I understand if you can't come to our clean school and read some of your poems to us and let us see your face which I bet is a friendly face.

My name is Jack. Bye, Mr. Walter Dean Myers.

Did you mail it? Did he answer yet? Months???
It might
take months
for Mr. Walter Dean Myers
to answer my letter?
If he answers it?

I didn't know—
until you explained—
that the letter has to go
to Mr. Walter Dean Myers's
publisher company
and then someone
at the publisher company
has to sort all the mail
not just my letter
but hundreds and hundreds
of letters
to hundreds of authors

all that big mess of mail piled up and someone sorting sorting sorting all that mail and then the letters for Mr. Walter Dean Myers go to him and maybe he's away maybe he's on vacation maybe he's sick maybe he's hiding in a room writing poems maybe he's baby-sitting his children or his grandchildren (if he's married and stuff) or maybe he has to go to the dentist or get that car fixed or maybe someone died (I really really hope someone did not die)

if you ask me
it could take him

years
to get around
to answering
that letter

so I guess

we'd better
just forget about it
not count on it
get it out of our minds
do something else
forget it.

Sometimes when you are trying not to think about something it keeps popping back into your head you can't help it you think about it and think about it and think about it until your brain feels like a squashed pea.

MAY 2

Yes you can type up the thing about trying not to think about something but you'd better leave my name off it because it was just words coming out of my head and I wasn't paying too much attention to which words came out when.

May 7

Maybe you could show me how to use the computer and then I could type up my own words?

I didn't know about the spell-checking thing inside the computer. It is like a miracle little brain in there a little helper brain.

But I am a slow typer person.

Did you say there is
a teaching-typing thing
in that computer, too?

Will it help me type
better
and
faster
taptaptaptaptap
so my fingers
can go as fast
as my brain?

(I typed this up myself.)

MY SKY

We were outside in the street me and some other kids kicking the ball before dinner and Sky was chasing chasing chasing with his feet going every which way and his tail wag-wag-wagging and his mouth slob-slob-slobbering and he was all over the place

smiling and wagging and slobbering and making us laugh and my dad came walking up the street he was way down there near the end I could see him after he got off the bus and he was walk-walk-walking and I saw him wave and he called out "Hey there, son!" and so I didn't see the car coming from the other way until someone elseone of the big kidscalled out
"Car!"
and I turned around
and saw a
blue car blue car
splattered with mud
speeding down the road

And I saw Sky
going after the ball
wag-wag-wagging
his tail
and I called him
"Sky! Sky!"
and he turned his
head
but it was too late
because the
blue car blue car
splattered with mud
hit Sky

thud thud thud and kept on going in such a hurry so fast so many miles to go it couldn't even stop and Sky was just there in the road lying on his side with his legs bent funny and his side heaving and he looked up at me and I said "Sky! Sky! Sky!" and then my dad was there and he lifted Sky out of the road and laid him on the grass and

Sky

closed his eyes

and

he

never

opened

them

again

ever.

MAY 15

I don't know.

If you put it on the board and people read it it might make them sad. Okay.
I guess.
I'll put my name on it.

But I hope it doesn't make people feel too sad and if it does maybe you could think of something to cheer everybody up like maybe with some of those brownies you make the chocolate ones that are so good?

MAY 21

Wow!

Wow wow wow wow!

That was the best BEST news ever
I can't believe it.

Mr. Walter Dean Myers is really really really coming to our school?

He was coming to our city anyway to see his old buddy?

And he would be honored to visit our clean school and meet the mostly nice kids who like his poems?

We sure are lucky that his old buddy lives in our town.

WOW!!!

The bulletin board looks like it's blooming words with everybody's poems up there on all those colored sheets of paper yellow blue pink red green.

And the bookcase looks like it's sprouting books all of them by Mr. Walter Dean Myers lined up looking back at us waiting for Mr. Walter Dean Myers himself

to come to our school right into our classroom.

Wow!

May 29

I can't wait. I can't sleep.

Are you sure
you hid my poem
that was inspired
by Mr. Walter Dean Myers?

I don't want to do any any anything to upset him. JUNE 1

MR.

WALTER

DEAN

MYERS

DAY

I NEVER
in my whole life
EVER
heard anybody
who could talk
like that
Mr. Walter Dean Myers.

All of my blood
in my veins
was bubbling
and all of the thoughts
in my head
were buzzing
and
I wanted to keep
Mr. Walter Dean Myers
at our school
forever.

JUNE 6

Dear Mr. Walter Dean Myers,

Thank you
a hundred million times
for
leaving your work
and your family
and your things-people-have-to-do
to come and visit us
in our school
in our class.

We hope you liked your visit.
We think maybe you did
because
you were
smile-smile-smiling
all over the place.

And when you read your poems you had the best best BEST voice low and deep and friendly and warm like it was reaching out and wrapping us all up in a big squeeze and when you laughed you had the best best BEST laugh I've ever heard in my life like it was coming from way down deep and bubbling up and rolling and tumbling out into the air.

We hope we didn't ask you too many questions but we thank you for answering every which one and especially for saying that you would be flattered if someone used some of your words and especially if they added a note that they were inspired by Walter Dean Myers.

And it was nice of you to read all of our poems on the bulletin board and I hope it didn't make you too sad when you read the one

about my dog Sky getting smooshed in the road. And I think you liked the brownies, too, right?

Thank you for coming to see us

Mr. Walter Dean Myers.

Inside this envelope
is a poem
using some of your words.
I wrote it.
It was
inspired by
you
Mr. Walter Dean Myers.

From your number one fan,

Jack

LOVE THAT DOG (INSPIRED BY WALTER DEAN MYERS) BY JACK

Love that dog,
like a bird loves to fly
I said I love that dog
like a bird loves to fly
Love to call him in the morning
love to call him
"Hey there, Sky!"



Some of the poems used by Miss Stretchberry

The Red Wheelbarrow BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

so much depends upon

a red wheel barrow

glazed with rain water

beside the white chickens.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
BY ROBERT FROST

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village, though; He will not see me stopping here To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer To stop without a farmhouse near Between the woods and frozen lake The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake To ask if there is some mistake. The only other sound's the sweep Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep. The Tiger*
BY WILLIAM BLAKE

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

^{*}First stanza

dog By Valerie Worth

Under a maple tree The dog lies down, Lolls his limp Tongue, yawns, Rests his long chin Carefully between Front paws; Looks up, alert; Chops, with heavy Jaws, at a slow fly, Blinks, rolls On his side. Sighs, closes His eyes: sleeps All afternoon In his loose skin.

The Pasture
BY ROBERT FROST

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring; I'll only stop to rake the leaves away (And wait to watch the water clear, I may): I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

Street Music BY ARNOLD ADOFF

This city:
the
always
noise
grinding
up from the
subways
under
ground:
slamming from bus tires
and taxi horns and engines
of cars and trucks in all

vocabularies

of

clash
flash
screeching
hot metal language
combinations:

as planes overhead roar

an orchestra of rolling drums and battle blasts assaulting

my ears
with
the
always
noise of
this city:

street music.

The Apple

BY S. C. RIGG

t e m

apple apple apple apple apple yum apple yum apple juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy juicy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy crunchy red yellow green red yellow green red yellow green red apple yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum yum yum yum yum yum wormy worm yuk yuk yum yum yum yum yum yum yum wormy worm 'yuk 'yuk yum yum yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious yum delicious apple red yellow green red yellow green red crunchy crunchy crunchy juicy juicy juicy juicy apple apple

Love That Boy*
BY WALTER DEAN MYERS

Love that boy,
like a rabbit loves to run
I said I love that boy
like a rabbit loves to run
Love to call him in the morning
love to call him
"Hey there, son!"

^{*}First stanza