

STUDENT POETRY

RESPONDING TO:

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

WRITTEN BY CPS STUDENTS
IN POETRY RESIDENCY PROGRAMS
BY THE CHICAGO POETRY CENTER



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INTRODUCTION

BY CHICAGO POETRY CENTER STUDENTS

Walking into the fair, I see a big red tent rising above the others
In big letters the sign says: CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS!
I walk inside and my eyes can't believe--
I see a lion holding court
I see hens clucking everywhere
I see donkeys running fast
I see a tortoise going much too slow
and an elephant in a tutu!
and a kangaroo hopping
and fish doing the strangest things
and a proud little horse
I hear a cuckoo in the trees
I see birds flitter flatter in bright color
and pianists being chased by their pianos!
and a T-Rex is on the tightrope!
and a swan swimming gracefully
And then! I hear it start...

The introduction and finale poems are **centos**, using lines from other poems throughout this program, a reference to the style used in the musical introduction and finale to *Carnival of the Animals*.

THE ROYAL LION

BY ALYSSA AHLIS

Grade 6

The Royal Lion marches in to give
his first speech, Happy and proud—

Hi! I am here to tell
You how I will be
Running things.

I would like the
Jaguars to hunt more. And don't sit
in the shade.

Monkeys should stop Messing
around because You might damage
Somebody's stuff.

The toucans who play Music
need to start
Playing better music.

Elephants, don't stomp So hard,
you might
Cause an earthquake.

And that is all
I have to say... For now.

And then all the animals Run off
to do what the Lion said.

HENS

BY EMILY LANDICHO

Grade 7

Out of an egg The light is
bright The air is warm I
topple out
with a soft thud

I am young
Eggs to give
life to have
I beat my wings with
a soft thud

SWIFT ANIMALS

BY CRISTIAN GARCIA

Grade 4

Donkey, Donkey,
from what
are you running?

From a tiny spider? Or
ants?

There's
no need to
run or...

if it's a wolf,
then run,
donkey, run!
run!

SLOWPOKE

BY LAYLA ABDULLAH

Grade 6

Everyone thinks I'm slow, slow, slow. That I won't make it, that the rabbit will win, will beat me to it. That I'm not meant to be associated with red and white. That I'm not a real circus animal. They don't have me cut out on the cookies. Slow, slow, slow. They say that I'm the one sleeping under the tree, but I'm sure we all know how that fable goes. They tell me to come out of my shell, tell me that I'm not worth it, that I'm a slowpoke, but underneath it all, they don't know. Just how determined I am.

ELEPHANT

BY ALEXANDRA MILOVANOVIC

Grade 2

The elephant is dancing ballet with a pink tutu dress. The elephant is huge but kind and gray with ballet shoes on and big floppy ears. The elephant is very beautiful.

The audience is cheering just for her because her pirouettes are amazing. To me she is a blossom blooming in the spring. It feels like she's in The Nutcracker. Her nails are pink and I love her as a ballerina.

KANGAROO

BY MIRYAM GARCIA

Grade 3

I imagine the kangaroo
Is hopping, hopping, and hopping, And the
kangaroo stops hopping.

The kangaroo is doing
Tippytoe, tippytoe, tippytoe
And stop!

The kangaroo is running,
Running, and running.
He runs all the way home and stops!

Then he goes cha-cha-cha because He is
dancing, dancing, dancing!

AQUARIUM

BY LAURYN SHIELDS

Grade 5

I see a school of fish
Making a heart

I see a seahorse
Making art

I see a shark
Dressed like a bear

I see a whale
Sitting in a chair

I see a jellyfish
Trying to bark

I see a squid
In the underwater park

I see an octopus
Holding a box with care

I see clowning fish
Everywhere!

WILD HORSE

BY JACOB WARREN

Grade 4

A scared little horse
crying in the shadows,
eyes watery and dark

Can't sleep, too scared,
running to get a drink
so fast like a torpedo

but then he faces his fears
now his eyes fill with light
he is not afraid

turns on the light
now he knows it's just his imagination that kept him
afraid

he finally can go to sleep

CUCKOO
BY JADE OCYTKO
Grade 4

Strong in deep forest,
heavy footed.

Yelling a song
in the countryside.

Dresses of leaves,
toys of birch,

And boat of bark.

A community

in the deep forest,
heavy footed.

BIRDS

BY REBECCA BESECKER

Grade 2

Flitter flatter birds!
Flying fast. Fly on
faster, but then
stops. I see 15
toucans.

They are all a
beauty. Red, green,
yellow.
One plays my piano.

I wish I could fly
gracefully. Gracefully.
Gracefully.
Gracefully!
I give it my snack.
More birds!

Oh how they fly.
Fast, slow, does it
matter? Pretty, musical,
small, big. In all different
colors. They look like a
beautiful cake.

Chirp! Chirp! Noisy
birds! Chirp! Chirp!
Then the music chip
chirp! Chirp! Chi-chi
chirp!
It flows through my
ears.

They pick me up.
They are small.
I fly now, on and on.

Now they fly me
home. This is a
moment I'll
never forget.

PIANIST

BY OLIVIA DIAZ

Grade 7

I was practicing my piano and let me tell you what happened, although you may not believe me, my piano and chair started to dance, you may think I'm crazy but this is exactly what happened, I tried to run after my piano and my chair followed. I ran and ran but it wasn't enough. I collapsed huffing and puffing. What's with that look? I said it was crazy. I told you you would think I'm insane. Just don't look behind you... *or you'll become crazy too...*

DINOSAUR CIRCUS

BY AARON IVSIN

Grade 7

(A large red and white tent arises in the distance, with flags waving and trumpets blaring, while a figure makes announcements on the megaphone.)

Come one
Come all
to the GREAT DINOSAUR CIRCUS!
balanced precariously upon the tightrope,
the T-rex walks
while pterodactyls spin circles in the air.
Oh no!
The T-rex has fallen,
hanging in the air
but he picks himself up,
and brontosaurus cartwheel across the floor and the
velociraptor makes an appearance riding a unicycle while
juggling
“No humans allowed!” booms an allosaurus to a
disappointed archeologist.
Come one
Come all
to the great dinosaur circus!

SWAN

BY HANNAH BROLIN

Grade 7

A swan
On the peaceful pond
The bright green trees
Shimmer with dazzling light Water
blue murky
With life all around
Fish scales shimmer like stars Grass and
plants flourishing A crisp white swan
Surveys it all

FINALE

BY CHICAGO POETRY CENTER STUDENTS

Come one, come all!
Birds flitter flatter
And cuckoos make toys
While the kangaroo cha-chas
And the T-Rex tightropes

Donkeys run and
Horses become brave
While the tortoise goes slow
and an elephant dances ballet
the swan swims in shimmers
while the fish make strange plans below
the pianists play us out while
the royal lion surveys his work--
“A Fine Carnival We’ve Made!”

The introduction and finale poems are **centos**, using lines from other poems throughout this program, a reference to the style used in the musical introduction and finale to *Carnival of the Animals*.



ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

These poems were written in **Chicago Poetry Center In-School Poetry Residencies** within CPS classrooms across Chicago. This project was originally created in partnership with the Negaunee Musical Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The original student authors performed their work with a live orchestra at Orchestra Hall. The project was then performed again, with new student performers and writers, at Grant Park Music Festival. Special thanks to our partners at Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Grant Park Music Festival, and WFMT.

The biggest of thanks to the student poets: thank you for sharing your poetry with the world!

To learn more, visit: www.poetrycenter.org