

## ***Runny Babbit is at it: having fun with rhyme and reversed initial letters.***

There are a lot of ways to have fun with words and still make sure that people know what you are trying to say. There are a few famous writers, such as Lewis Carroll (Jabberwocky) and Shel Silverstein (Runny Babbit) who have a lot of fun with invented or slightly altered language. Ogden Nash is another writer who has played with words, too! There is also a cool story by Jean Little (*Once Upon a Golden Apple*) that also tests what a reader knows and has a bit of fun at the same time.

Though there are no rules to follow when it comes to playing around with language in a poem or verse or story that is already well known and familiar, some simple structures will help to make sure your reader understands what your intentions are (and what your poem or story actually means).

1. Be selective in the changes that you make. If you are re-writing something in the style of Runny Babbit, keep in mind that too many changes in one line become a little confusing for your reader. Note how Shel Silverstein often chooses to flip only two words in a line, and also how he chooses to leave some lines as is:

Runny Babbit lent to wunch  
And heard the waitress way,  
“We have some lovely stabbit rew--  
Our Special for today.”

2. If you are writing a piece like Jabberwocky, keep in mind how the words you create sound out loud. Poems like Jabberwocky, that are really like adventures in the structure of a rhyme, often are written to be read aloud. The sound and size of your words will want to follow along with the sound of the poem out loud.

p.s. *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, by Robert Service, would be a really fun poem to try and Jabberwock!

3. Limericks are other fun ways to play with words, particularly with homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings). Limericks all follow the same rhyming pattern, so they are easy to write once you know what your key rhymes are going to be.

4. Hot dog Red Herrings! *Once Upon a Golden Apple* uses a simple form of Red Herring (ie., meant to mislead or distract the reader) to jolt the reader into paying attention. In the same way, you can substitute one word for another (Prince Charming found Cinderella after he had every maiden in the kingdom try on the glass banana she left behind the night of the ball) and allow your reader to “catch” your mistake.

It can be really fun to “re-tell” a well known story (The Three Little Pigs, Old Mother Hubbard) using a Jabberwork or Runny Babbit style. Experiment a bit with words and have some fun!

Another super fun way to play with words is by writing in what is referred to as “Pig Latin.” Sometimes being silly can get you seeing and thinking about words you know in a whole new different way!