

### *Stars with Flaming Tales*

By Valerie Bloom

Illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max

Have a go at these creative activities at home or at school. Visit our website for many more ideas and activities linked to our other featured books!

[www.thechildrensbookshow.com/news](http://www.thechildrensbookshow.com/news)



### Write a Poem

Write and illustrate a poem based on Contrary Carl. Before you write your poem, collect a bank of ideas. Play around with different names and alliterative adjectives. Try to imagine each character and how they might react in different situations. Some characters will jump out at you more than others.

Once you have a name, brainstorm different words which come to mind when you think of your character's personality trait. Then play around with different rhymes for these words. Write your poem using the opening lines of Contrary Carl to get you started.

#### **Contrary Carl**

If I say...

He/she will...

I say...

He/she says...

I said...

He/she said

I said...

Now...

#### **Eager Eva**

If I say, "Wait your turn!"

She will push in instead.

I say, "Hang on a minute,"

She says, "Full steam ahead!"

I said, "Slow down Eva!"

She said, "Can't catch me!"

I said, "Look out!" but she paid no heed.

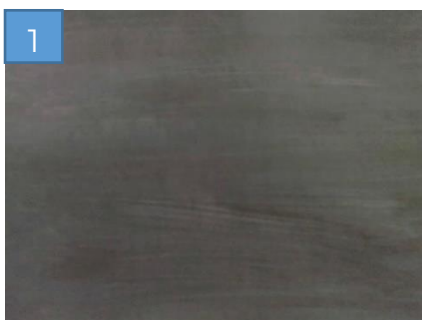
Now she's wrapped 'round a tree.

Watch Val perform Contrary Carl and other poems on publisher Otter Barry's [YouTube](#) channel.

## Make a Shooting Star Slider

### You will need:

A cereal box  
Paint (red, yellow, blue, black, white)  
Brush and/or sponge  
Scissors  
Sellotape




### What to do

1. Cut out one side of the cereal box and paint the plain side with black paint.
2. Once dry, paint over it with different shades of blue, starting darker at the top and gradually getting lighter towards the bottom. Make sure to blend the colours into each other.
3. When the dark sky background has dried, mix white paint with a little water and load a paintbrush with paint. Create a starry sky by spattering the white paint onto the picture, lightly tapping the paintbrush against the back of your hand. You might want to practise this technique on a scrap piece of paper beforehand! Again, leave the paint to completely dry.
4. On another piece of the cereal box, draw a shooting star. Paint the star with orange, yellow and red, just like the colours of the lettering on the cover of the book.
5. Cut a thin piece of card, about 20cm in length, and attach it to the back of the star.
6. Ask an adult to help you cut a curved slit across the sky. Then, push the star through it and make it shoot through the sky by sliding it from one side to another.

## Make a Lift-the-Flap Riddle

Choose one of Val's riddles, or write one of your own, and then present it as a simple lift-the-flap picture.

<p><b>TWINS</b></p> <p>We two are the shining twins, We do everything together, We are always side by side In every kind of weather, We sparkle like lamps all day long, But when the darkness falls We are two shrinking violets, And we won't answer to your call.</p>	
Write the riddle on the flap.	Draw the picture inside the flap.

### Tips for writing riddles

1. Start with the answer – use a concrete noun (e.g. chair, candle, butterfly)
2. Spend time thinking about your answer and jotting down lots of ideas which come to mind to describe it
3. Write the poem in the first person (I/we).
4. Use figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification).
5. Keep it short.
6. It doesn't have to rhyme

## Illustrate a Poem

Choose your favourite poem and draw a new illustration for it.

Use bold black outlines to emulate the style of the illustrator, Ken Wilson-Max.

You can watch Ken drawing some of his illustrations on publisher Otter Barry's YouTube channel.



### Further Activities to Try

1. Watch Val's tips for performing poetry and choose a poem to perform from Stars with Flaming Tails.

<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/valerie-bloom-how-do-you-work-your-poems>

2. Write a metaphor poem, based on either 'You Are' or 'My heart is a Volcano'.

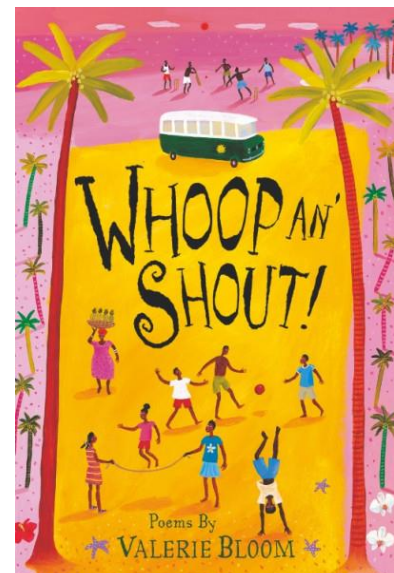
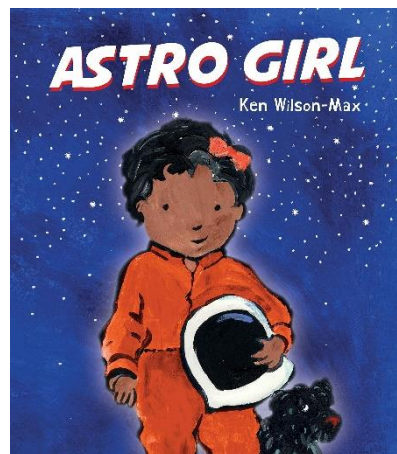
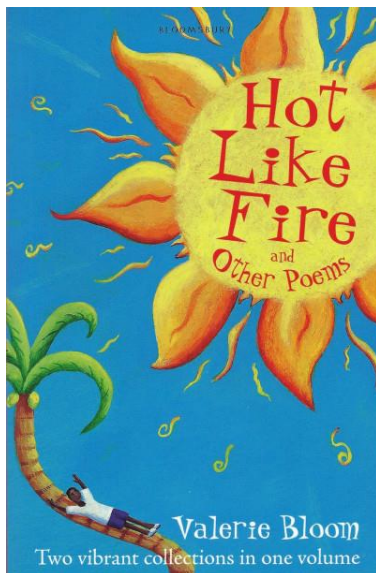
3. Write an alliterative alphabet poem based on 'Adam Had an Accident'. For example:

When **A**lison hurt her **a**rm,  
**B**illy **b**rought some **b**iscuits.  
**C**laire baked her a **c**ake.  
**D**arren **d**idn't know what to **d**o.

4. Create some information posters about each of the animals in the 'Animals' section of the collection.

5. Visit [clpe.org.uk](http://clpe.org.uk) and search for Valerie Bloom. You will find lots of videos of Valerie performing poems and giving great tips about writing poetry.

### More books by Valerie Bloom and Ken Wilson-Max



EMAIL US TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO OUR GALLERY  
[thechildrensbookshow@gmail.com](mailto:thechildrensbookshow@gmail.com)