

Quick Let's Get Out of Here

Michael Rosen (Puffin)

Write a poem based on 'I Wake Up' (page 13)

The journey to and from sleep is a magical one. One moment you are in your bed in a world where science rules and rules rule. In the next... you are in dream-world where no rules rule! How *do* you get from one place to the other?

We often talk about falling asleep as if it were a little journey: **falling** asleep, **going** to sleep, **drifting** off to sleep. In his poem 'I Wake Up', Michael talks about being *in the sea of my mind*, and *afloat in a sea of nothing*.

Read the poem out loud with your class...

I Wake Up

I wake up
I am not me
I am bodyless
I am weightless
I am legless
I am armless
I am in the sea of my mind
I am in the middle of my brain
I am afloat in a sea of nothing

It lasts for one flicker
of one eyelash

and then
once again
I am my full heaviness
I am my full headedness
I am my full bodyness
Here.
Hallo.

From: *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here*, Puffin Books, 1983.

Things to talk about

- Is the journey of falling asleep the same as the one of waking up? Ask pupils to think of a few things we need for sleepiness...darkness, peace, quiet. How does waking differ?
- What sort of things do you notice travelling in the wide-awake world: views, seating, noises, announcements and companions?

- Talk about types of motion and transport. In world-of-no-rules people can swim in air, trains might float, buses might fly.

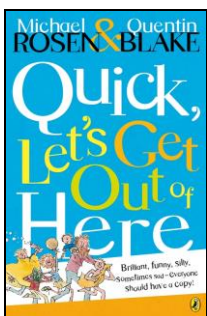
Ask pupils to write a poem describing falling asleep as a real journey between two lands.

Getting started

- Ask pupils to consider how they travel. Do they fly or sail? Is there a special door, path, bus or bridge? Is there a cliff to jump off, a sleep-tree to climb? Ask them to describe these things in their poem and tell us what they do and see on this journey.
- Michael's poem talks about being heavier in the real world than the sleep-world. Pupils might decide that their size, weight or abilities change during their journey.
- With a calculator, ask pupils to work out how many times in their life they have done this falling-asleep journey. This makes them a real dream-commuter! Pupils can include this number in the title of their poem.
- At what point does the journey start? How will pupils know they have arrived in sleep?
- The children's poems don't have to rhyme, but 'I Wake Up' does use repetition. Pupils might want to repeat lines to create a rhythm in their poems.

Follow-up activities

- Ask students to **draw the ticket or passport** needed for their sleep-journey.
- Michael's poem is about waking up. A lovely poem to read about travelling in the other direction is '**Falling Asleep**' by **Siegfried Sassoon**.
- To explore a sleep-journey even further, listen to the **music of Ravel: Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty**. This very quiet suite is only one minute long and tells the part of the story where the princess falls asleep. It is the perfect music to play before, or during, a performance of your poems.
- Read the poem '**On the Train**' (also in *Let's Get Out of Here*). Invite students to describe another type of journey. On a sheet of A3 paper, create a group poem that grows – a few lines each morning – by detailing what pupils see on their way to school.



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Activities written by Mandy Coe

Mandy Coe's poetry has been broadcast on BBC radio and television; her work with schools has been featured in the TES (www.mandycoe.com).