

# Dear Treefrog

by Joyce Sidman



## Reader's Guide

*for use at home or in a group*

Capturing the joy of finding a kindred spirit, this book tells the story-in-poems of a lonely girl moving into a new home and the little treefrog that helps her connect to the beautiful world around her. Information about treefrogs is included on every page.

### About the Author

Newbery Honor-winner Joyce Sidman is one of today's foremost nature poets for children. Accolades for her books include a Sibert Award and two Caldecott Honors. For her celebrated body of work, she won the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Joyce lives in Minnesota, where she walks the woods every day. Visit [joycesidman.com](http://joycesidman.com).

### About the Illustrator

Diana Sudyka's paintings reflect a deep passion for the natural world. She has illustrated several volumes of the award-winning book series *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart, as well as the picture books *Sometimes Rain* by Meg Fleming and *How to Find a Bird* by Jennifer Ward. Visit her at [DianaSudyka.com](http://DianaSudyka.com).

## PREDICTIONS

*Questions to ask before reading*

1. Look at the front and back cover of this book. What do you see? How does each element help you predict what the story is about?
2. What is the main color of the cover? What other colors are used? How does Diana Sudyka use color for emphasis?
3. What do you know about frogs? Check in after reading this book: what have you learned?

## WRITING ACTIVITIES

### "Letter Poem"

The poems in this book are called "Letter" poems, which are written to someone or something. Choose an object in the natural world: wind, sunshine, puddle, tree, ant—anything! Take a field trip outside to observe your object if you can. If your object is small (and doesn't crawl around), keep it next to you as you write.

- Study your object closely: What colors and shapes do you see? How does it feel, smell, or sound? What does it remind you of?

- Think: Why is it important? What kind of life has it led? How is it beautiful? What have you always wanted to know about it?
- Write a poem addressed to that object:
  - Start with a **compliment**: "Dear leaf: your bumpy veins look just like a tiny tree."
  - Then ask a **question**: "Does the wind tickle you when it blows?"
  - End with a **wish**: "I wish I could live on your branch and whisper leafy secrets to you."
  - Feel free to include more than one compliment, question, or wish in your poem.

### Nonfiction Note & Artwork

Create a nonfiction note and illustration to go with your poem

- Find out more about your object. In the case of a leaf, find out how leaves grow, how they help the Earth, what happens to them in different seasons.
- Write a short paragraph about what you feel are its most amazing aspects.
- Create a drawing to go with your note. Use any artform!
- If you want, combine your poem, nonfiction note, and illustration to create a display.

## SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

### Nature Journal

Choose an *animal or plant* you frequently see. Learn all you can about it. Record what you've learned in a notebook. Try any of these techniques:

- Draw/write about your subject at different stages of development
- Go outside and observe your subject in real time. What do you notice?
- Draw or write about whatever you see.
- Have you learned anything new by observation?

OR

Choose a *spot outside* where you feel comfortable. Go there as often as you can, taking your notebook.

- Write about or draw whatever you see.
- In addition to things you see, what do you hear, smell, or feel?
- What is the same each time you visit? What is different?
- How your spot change according to the time of day? The weather? The season?
- Include the date and time of each of your entries.