

Joseph Coelho



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Joseph grew up in the last village in London, in Roehampton during the 1980's in a tower block with his mum and his little sister. He doesn't recall wanting to be a writer when he was little - he claims that it didn't even occur to him that he could be a writer. He thought writers were special people who existed in other far-off places - they didn't exist in Roehampton. He does, however, remember sitting with a copy of Fungus the Bogeyman by Raymond Briggs and copying the pictures and writing out.

His earliest memories of writing a poem is from when he was in secondary school in Year Eight. There was a poetry competition, he wrote a poem about the life of a performing bear, chained up and made to dance. He wrote other poems too about how he was feeling, poems about life at school, angry poems, sad poems and sad poems which he would occasionally share in drama class.





At university he studied archaeology (the study of the physical past). He was digging up bones in Peru, but he still wrote poems and began directing and writing plays.

After university he worked in many places - he was a gym instructor, a salesman, a film extra and he even had a spell as a transport planner but he still wrote.

One day he discovered a performance poetry course at Battersea Arts Centre being run by Performance Poetry Organisation Apples and Snakes. He wrote poems and shared them on stage, some of the poems made people laugh and he began sharing his poems in schools. Many years passed running creative writing workshops in schools writing plays for theatres including Oily Cart, The Unicorn Theatre, Polka, Soho Theatre, Theatre Centre, and The Lyric Theatre Hammersmith. Slowly, he began to dream about being a published writer.



He spent many more years performing his poems whenever he could. He even managed to have some poems published by Macmillan Books. Then in 2012 he met Janetta Otter-Barry at the London Book Fair and showed her some of his poems.

Janetta agreed to publish them and Joseph's poetry collection *Werewolf Club Rules* was published in 2014 and won the CLPE CLIPPA Poetry Award 2015. He has been steadily writing and performing ever since. His work across poetry includes the collection *Overheard in a Tower Block* which was shortlisted shortlisted for the CLPE CLIPPA PoetryAward 2018.

You might want to read more of Joseph's poetry by following the links:

[The Poetry of Joseph Coelho | Downloadable Resources](#)

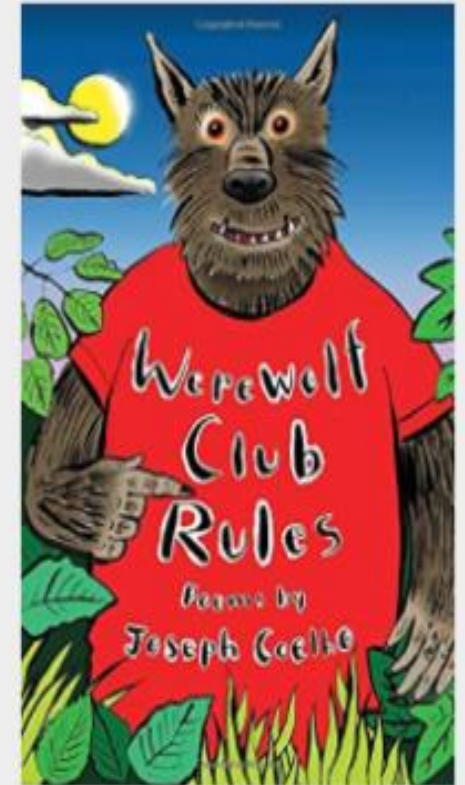
[The Poetry of Joseph Coelho | Joseph Coelho reads The Hairdo That Got Away, illustrated by Fiona Lumbers](#)

Book of the week

Werewolf Club Rules (8-10 Junior/Middle)

Joseph Coelho
(Frances Lincoln
Children's Books)
96pp, POETRY, 978-
1847804525, RRP £6.99,
Paperback

This is Joseph Coelho's first collection. Taking the familiar world of the primary school, he explores relations with teachers, the events that make up the school day, the children and the parents in succinct, contemporary verses.





Coelho writes for children of all ages; his picture books include the critically acclaimed *Luna Loves...* series illustrated by Fiona Lumbers and *If All the World Were.....* illustrated by Allison Colpoys which one the Independent Bookshop Week Book Award 2019.

The Girl Who Became a Tree in 2019 was shortlisted for the 2021 CLIP Carnegie Medal. Other work includes *Fairytales Gone Bad* and *The Boy Lost in the Maze*, as well as non-fiction titles including *How To Write Poems*.

