

Muse Project

Batch # 5

14 Science Poems Poems

1 Science Play

5 Bonus Poems—Autumn/Halloween

Content Guide

Batch-5 consists of fourteen science poems, one science play, and a bonus section of five autumn/Halloween poems. Target audiences vary from primary to middle school students. (The last two autumn poems are appropriate for adults as well.)

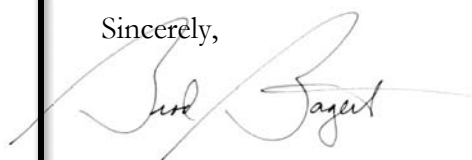
To make this more useful to you, I'm continuing the idea of focusing on specific content blocks. Thus Batch-5 is all science, focusing on scientific method, thinking, instruments, and measure. The jury's always out until I get your feed back, but in the meantime I'm cautiously contented.

Please let me know if I've missed some element in this area, and, as always, keep in mind that these poems are all "Works in Progress" so please look at them with a critical eye.

I've pasted in some non-copyrighted clipart to add some spark for your students. And again, should anyone question your right to use and copy these poems for your students, you'll find a formal "Permission to Use Poems" on page 28.

Thanks again for doing what you do. I could never overstate how important your presence is to this work. Sometimes I think about the scope of what we're trying to do and feel this deer-in-the-headlights kind of paralysis. So I sit down at my computer and think about you guys and how you take it one bite at a time: weekly lesson plans, daily command-performances. My mantra has become "If you can do it, I can too." How I love what you do. Nothing brings purpose to the day like knowing that my hours at the computer might end up in your classroom as a part of your work. Thank you.

Sincerely,

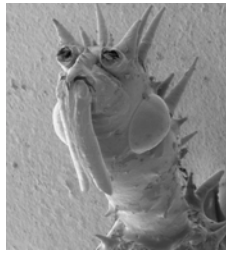


Real Monsters

by Brod Bagert

There's no such thing as monsters?
Please don't believe that lie.
I promise you, I've seen them,
they're as real as you and I.

The sight of the Spiny Assassin Bug
will fill you with dismay,
all covered with spikes and poison tubes
it sticks into its prey.



Spiny Assassin Bug
(uglybug.org)

Dust mites crawling in your bed
to find their favorite treat—
those yummy flakes of human skin
that settle on your sheet.



Dust Mites
(uglybug.org)

And oh, the common maggot,
the larva of the fly—
with flesh tearing fangs they assemble in gangs
to eat us when we die.



Maggot
(uglybug.org)

With bulgy eyes and creepy thighs
and clinging claws they crawl,
real monsters by the billions
but they're very-very small.

Monsters don't exist?
It's a big-fat-dirty lie.
I saw them in a microscope,
as real as you and I.

PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 58

Note:

Robert Hooke designed one of the first microscopes and was one of the first to discover the tiny monsters it revealed. He drew pictures of what he saw, and in 1665 he published his drawings in his now famous book, *Micrographia*.

These images came from uglybug.org. It's a very cool website with tons of pictures of ugly bugs. Check it out.

Time Master

by Brod Bagert

Big hand — MINUTES!

Little hand — HOUR!

Telling time — I HAVE THE POWER!

Time for ice-cream.

Time for candy.

Telling time is very handy.

Big hand — MINUTES!

Little hand — HOUR!

Telling time — I HAVE THE POWER!

Time to play.

Time to run.

Telling time is so much fun.

Big hand — MINUTES!

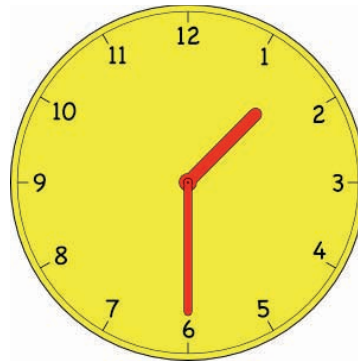
Little hand — HOUR!

Telling time — I HAVE THE POWER!

FASTER! Sloooooower...

Sloooooower... FASTER!

Telling time — I AM THE MASTER!



Analogue



Digital

PRIMARY - SC. 1. 59

Measure Up #1 of 3

Stinky Feet

(The English Units of Measurement)

by Brod Bagert

Tell me what you want to measure,
chicken feet or buried treasure,
Happy! Happy! Happy News!
THERE'S A UNIT I CAN USE!

Measure water? I'm so smart.
Use a *gallon*! Use a *quart*!

Sweet potatoes? Let me check.
By the *bushel*! By the *peck*!

Ribbon! Ribbon! Thinking hard.
By the *inch* or by the *yard*.

What's the weather? Get it right.
Use *degrees of Fahrenheit*.

Chocolate candy! Crunchy sound!
I can eat it by the *pound*.

Tell me what you want to measure,
chicken feet or buried treasure,
Happy! Happy! Happy News!
THERE'S A UNIT I CAN USE!



A Foot?

PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 60

Note:

English units of measure grew out of a combination of the ancient Roman and Anglo-Saxon systems. Other names for this system are “Imperial Units of Measure” or the “United States Customary System.” Today’s world standard is the International System of Units or SI. The United States is one of only three countries that has not yet adopted the metric system (SI) as their standard system of measurement, but as a practical matter the metric system is the standard among US scientists, medical professionals, the US government, and the US armed forces.

Measure Up #2 of 3

Metric Magic

(The Metric System of Measurement)

by Brod Bagert

A thermometer is what we've got.
to measure how cold or how...

(Class) **HOT!**

Centigrade's the very best;
much easier than all the rest.
Zero is freezing, a hundred's a boil.
No muss, no fuss, no terrible toil.

To measure the weight of a Killer Whale
I'll have to use a giant...

(Class) **SCALE!**

English ounces? Such a scam!
Make it easy! Use the gram!
Yes it's true. No debate.
Grams are best to measure weight.

To measure the height of a water cooler
I think I'll have to use a...

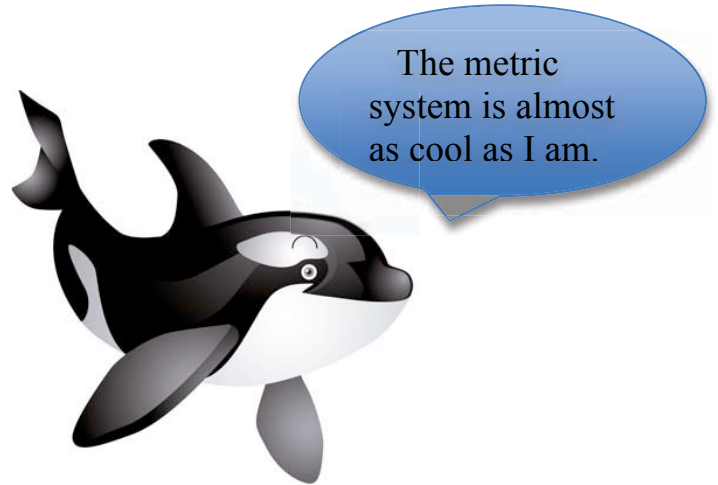
(Class) **RULER!**

Inches and feet? Oh-so hectic!
Make it easy! Make it metric!
Measuring is so much sweeter
when you use the awesome meter.

To measure children...

(Class) **MEASURE CHILDREN?**

Cold! Hot! Heavy! Long!
Not a single answer wrong.
You can cheer and make a fuss,
BUT THERE'S NO WAY TO MEASURE US!



PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 61



Simon Stevin 1548-1620
Flemish mathematician who in 1586 wrote
that measuring in decimal-tenths was so much
easier than ordinary fractions that it was only a
matter of time before it became the universal
system of weights and measures.

Measure Up #3 of 3

The Joy of “10” or Time for Us to Measure Up by Brod Bagert

An “inch” a “foot” a “yard” a “mile”—
familiar words that made me smile.
An “ounce” a “cup” a “pint” a “quart”—
it’s how I learned it from the start.

Back then when I heard “kilogram”
it made my calculator jam.
It seemed so strange at first, but then
I learned it all divides by ten.

Metric is such an easier way,
I learned it all in just one day,
and now it’s as though I always knew it.
It’s totally cool, and YOU CAN DO IT!

PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 62



English System



Metric System



In 1791 France adopted the first metric system which defined the length of a meter to be equal to one ten-millionth of the distance from the north pole to the equator.

New Brain Magic

(A One Act Play)

by Brod Bagert

Cast of Characters —

Denisha: Bossy girl.

Javier: Funny boy.

Chorus: Three witches and/or wizards.

Chorus:

Thunder, lightening, wind, and rain.

All the things we must explain.

Ignorance is such a pain.

We need a scientific brain.

Denisha:

(Hesitates a moment as though thinking to herself, shakes her head affirmatively, raises a fist, and shouts.)

YES!

I'LL DO IT!

Javier:

What are you going to do, Denisha.

Denisha:

With the help of these three witches...

(She turns to the Chorus and waves her hand, as if presenting them to them to Javier.)

I am going to make a magic potion
that will turn normal brains
into brilliant scientific wonders.

Javier:

(With a mischievous grin, Javier turns to the audience and points his index finger to the side of his head with a twirling she-must-be-crazy gesture.)

Denisha:

(Stomping her foot.)

Javier, get yourself over here.

I am going to do this
and I need your help.



Aristotle 384-322 BCE

Ancient Greek scientists didn't do experiments. They understood things like temperature and speed but without thermometers and clocks they had no way to measure them. Does that mean that it's important for scientists to be able to measure things? YES! YES! YES! YES!



Javier:

(Saluting like a soldier.)

Yeeees-MAM!

I'm happy to help!

(Aside in a stage whisper.)

*It's never a good idea
to say "no" to Denisha.*

Denisha:

Stop that fooling around, Javier.

Grab that pot,

put it over here,

and let's get to work.

**(Javier obediently places a large
pot on a stool center stage.)**

Denisha:

Let's see...

what comes first?

Any ideas, funny boy?

Javier:

Well a scientific brain finds answers,
but you can't find answers if you don't ask
questions.

So we need to make a brain that questions
everything.

Denisha:

Hm!

Alright, witches,

we need a little help here.

We need a questioning spell.

Chorus:

**(Chorus gathers round the pot and together
recites the following chant three times. As they
chant they circle the pot in a rhythmic dance
using one hand to shoot magic rays at the
container. Each has the words printed on a piece
of paper. At the end, they tear their papers
into little pieces and drop them into the pot.)**

Teacher! Preacher! Poet! King!

We can question everything!

What and when and where and who

and how can we be sure it's true!

(Repeat 3 times, progressively more dramatic.)



Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham) 965–1040
An Arab scientist and a pioneer of scientific
method. "Truth is sought for its own sake."

Denisha:

Ok, that's enough.

(Turning to Javier.)

Not bad, Jav.

So what comes next?

Javier:

Well,

believe it or not,

a scientist has got to be a good guesser.

They start with a question,

something like, "Do plants need sunshine to grow?"

Then they think of everything they know about plants,

and everything they know about sunshine,

and all the possibilities they can imagine,

and make their best guess at an answer.

Scientists call it a "hypothesis,"

which means a "really smart guess."

Denisha:

Alright, witches.

let's have a hypothesis spell.

Chorus:

(Same dance; paper into the pot.)

We do not know! We must confess!

So now it's time to make a guess!

Think long and wide and high and deep,

then close your eyes and make a leap!

(Repeat 3 times, progressively more dramatic.)

Denisha:

Ok, Javier, you're on a roll.

What next?

Javier:

Well, now the scientists has to figure out

if she guessed right.

They call it "testing the hypothesis."

(Turning to the Chorus.)

And what do we use to test a hypothesis?



Roger Bacon 1214-1294

English scientist who used repeated cycles of observation, hypothesis, and experimentation. He also stressed the importance of independent verification.

Chorus:

(Same dance; pieces of paper into the pot.)

Experiment! Collect the data!

Factual investigator!

Don't be nervous. Just relax.

Take your time and get the facts.

(Repeat 3 times, progressively more dramatic.)

— PLEASE HELP ME! —

Pronounce “data” like “beta,”
and for “investigator” drop the “r” and
say “investigata” to make the rhyme.

Denisha:

(Big smile. She obviously knows the answer.)

And when you finish your experiment,
what do you do with all that data?

Chorus:

(Same dance; pieces of paper into the pot.)

Here's the data! Black and white!

Are we wrong or are we right!

Analysis is what we do

to tell us if our guess is true!

(Repeat 3 times, progressively more dramatic.)



Denisha:

Alright.

The moment of truth.

Witches and wizards, do your duty!

(Witches move through the audience [or class] sprinkling bits of torn paper from the pot over the heads of the students. Each student when sprinkled performs some gesture or strikes a pose to indicate that he/she has been turned into a scientific genius. Then when finished...)

Francis Bacon 1561-1626

An English scientist who was totally committed to the process of experimentation. Author of “Novum Organum,” which means “New Organ,” which is why I named this play “New Brain Magic.” By the way, he was no relation to Roger Bacon.

Denisha:

Alright.

Let's see if this worked.

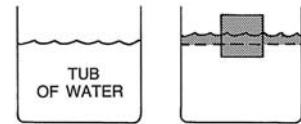
(Cast forms line facing audience, as cast and audience, led by Denisha, recite all the chants together.)

Thunder, lightening, wind, and rain.
All the things we must explain.
Ignorance is such a pain.
We need a scientific brain.

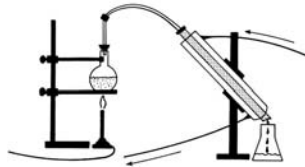


Teacher! Preacher! Poet! King!
We can question everything!
What and when and where and who
and how can we be sure it's true!

We do not know! We must confess!
So now it's time to make a guess!
Think long and wide and high and deep,
then close your eyes and make a leap!



Experiment! Collect the data!
Factual investigator!
Don't be nervous. Just relax.
Take your time and get the facts.



Here's the data! Black and white!
Are we wrong or are we right!
Analysis is what we do
to tell us if our guess is true!

Thunder! ... Lightening! ... Wind and rain!
Natural things! ... We must explain!
Ignorance is such a pain!
WE NEED... A SCIENTIFIC... BRAIN!



PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 63

What — Then Why

by Brod Bagert

As I sat and stared at the data
I could hardly believe my eyes.
It was not what I expected.
I was totally surprised.

I had carefully counted each swing
I had written everything down,
so I'm sure that the data is accurate
but the outcome's a little profound.

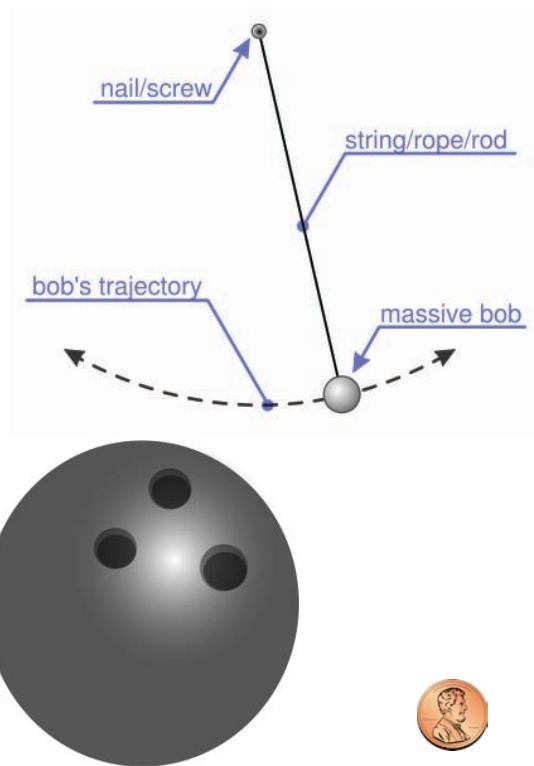
How many times did each pendulum swing?
It's a little hard to explain—
for the penny and the bowling ball,
the count was EXACTLY THE SAME.

The length of the arc didn't matter,
and neither did the weight.
The number of swings was always the same
in the same gravitational state.

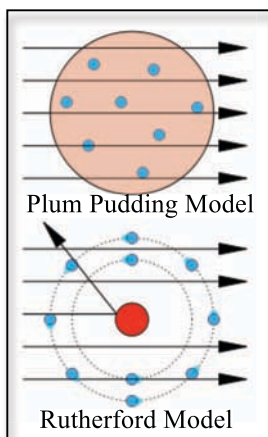
Now this is really cool, I thought,
it's an unexpected thing,
but it seems the controlling factor
is simply the length of the string.

Which is kind of nice to know,
and pretty cool to say,
but now my brain is asking me:
Why... does it happen... that way?

My experiment showed me what pendulums do,
it's a fact I cannot deny,
but knowing the WHAT is the easiest part,
the hard part is knowing the WHY.



PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SC. 2. 64



Note:

Some of the greatest advances in science happen when experiments produce totally unexpected results. In the Rutherford Gold-Foil experiment (1911) the alpha particles were supposed to pass right through the gold foil. To everyone's surprise a few of them bounced back. As a result, the accepted Plum Pudding Model of atomic structure (electrons floating around like plums in a pudding) was thrown out, and the new Rutherford Model (electrons orbiting around a tightly packed nucleus) was adopted. Since then the model of atomic structure has changed again, several times: more experiments with unexpected results. (Don't worry if you don't understand this yet. Just put it in the back of your head so when it comes up later you'll be ready to gobble it up.)

Open Up

by Brod Bagert

Some things are pretty tricky.
Did you ever wonder why
the sun gets big and orange
at the bottom of the sky?

What grows hair on your father's face?
What makes the black in tar?
Where do locust come from?
How heavy is a star?

Well don't let questions scare you,
cause you don't have far to look.
'The whole world is your crystal ball
when you open up a book.

And if you find an answer there
there's one more thing to do.
It time for you to question
if that answer's really true.



PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 65

Note:

Here are three of my favorite quotes about curiosity and the importance of questioning:

“I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be **curiosity**.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

“The important thing is to never stop **questioning**. **Curiosity** has its own reason for existing.”

— Albert Einstein

“Children should be taught to **question** everything.”

— George Carlin



The Scientific Method or Detention, an A in Science, and a Reggae Teacher

by Brod Bagert

(In the voice of Shayna Potts—Goth 7th Grader)

Our teachers have been teaching us the scientific method since first grade,
but this year Mr. Valente made us memorize this six step thing,
and then he told us we had to design our own experiments.
Sooooo... being the conscientious student that I am,
I decided to do it... my way.

Step # 1: Observation

I started by checking around for an observation,
and there it was: Mr. Valente himself,
how when he gets annoyed with me
(which happens almost every day)
he clenches his teeth and kind-of holds his breath,
and his face get red like he's about to explode.

Step # 2: Question

Then I wondered:
what would it take to make Mr. Valente blow his top?

Now a scientist has to be very exact,
so I took my time,
thought it through, over and over,
and came up with what I thought was very good hypothesis.

Step # 3: Hypothesis

If I expose Mr. Valente to an annoying stimulus
in the form of an invasive sound,
from an unknown source,
some time before the end of science class
Mr. Valente is bound to blow his stack.

Step # 4: Experiment

I found a recording of this very cool reggae beat,
and I got an MP3-player with a remote control
and hid it in the back of our science room,
and the plan was to hit play when Mr. Valente faced the other direction,
and then pause it when he turned around.
I figured it would it would take four, maybe five cycles,
before Mr. Valente achieved critical mass,
and BA-BOOM! Experiment complete.

Step # 5: Data & Analysis

Cycle 1: The music begins,
Mr. Valente turns, clenches his teeth,
and, as the music stops, stares suspiciously around the room.

Cycle 2: The music begins,
Mr. Valente turns again, more quickly this time,
takes two rapid steps toward the source of the sound,
than, as the music stops again,
raises one eyebrow and shakes his head suspiciously.

Cycle 3: The music begins a third time,
Mr. Valente freezes and does not turn toward the music as before.
Then, ever so slowly, and to the amazement of the entire class,
Mr. Valente began a dance that Bob Marley himself
would have been proud of,
and, to the cheers and applause of the entire class,
continued dancing for two minutes and twenty-six seconds.

Step # 6: Conclusion

Mr. Valente is a lot cooler than I thought,
and that science-man can dance.

When Mr. Valente returned my report
he was smiling cheek to cheek.
“A-plus on the report,” he said.
and detention for a week.

INTERMEDIATE & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 66



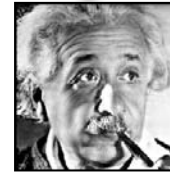
Knowledge in Motion

by Brod Bagert

Newton declared the magnificent notion
that three basic laws governed objects in motion.
This giant idea was the ultimate thing,
and for almost three centuries Newton was king.

Then Einstein declared, it's important to know
that these laws only work if the motion is slow,
but when speeds start approaching the swiftness of light,
the laws of Sir Isaac are no longer right.

So you see how our knowledge keeps inching along.
It seems perfect today, but tomorrow it's wrong.
And who will be next to propose something new?
First Newton... then Einstein... and next? ... Maybe you.



PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 67

Note:

Science is always changing, sometimes little by little, sometimes in big revolutions. The biggest revolution in the history of science began in 1543 when Nicolaus Copernicus published a book that showed that the Earth revolves around the Sun and not the other way around. It was the beginning of a wave of discovery that is still going on today. Someday, many of you will be a part of it.

By the way, Sir Isaac Newton was right about many, many things and many people still consider him to be the greatest scientist of all time.

The Calculus Battle

by Brod Bagert

'They made such a fuss,
it was one of the worst,
over who had invented
the *Calculus* first.

Newton or Leibniz?
Leibniz or Newton?
A whole lot of fightin',
and lots of disputin'.

'They squabbled and fought
till the day that they died,
but neither had cheated,
and neither had lied.

And the Calculus question?
There seems little doubt
that Leibniz and Newton
BOTH figured it out.



INTERMEDIATE & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 68

Note:

Calculus is a powerful kind of mathematics that makes most of modern science possible. Back when it was first developed, over three hundred years ago, there was a big controversy over who deserved credit for the discovery: Sir Isaac Newton or Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Science historians have since studied the papers of both men and concluded that they both arrived at the discovery independently.

Now here's the cool part: this happens all the time. In the 1700s Antoine Lavoisier gets credit for the discovery of oxygen, but three years earlier Joseph Priestley had isolated oxygen and describe its properties, though he misunderstood what it was. In the 1800's Charles Darwin gets credit for the theory of evolution by natural selection, but a naturalist by the name of Alfred Russel Wallace had come up with the idea at about the same time.

So here's the point. The people who write about the history of science are always telling us about the scientist who was first, but the reality is often more complicated. In every case, the great scientists of each generation build on the work of their predecessors. As Isaac Newton wrote in 1676 in a letter to Robert Hooke: "If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

A Moment in the Sky

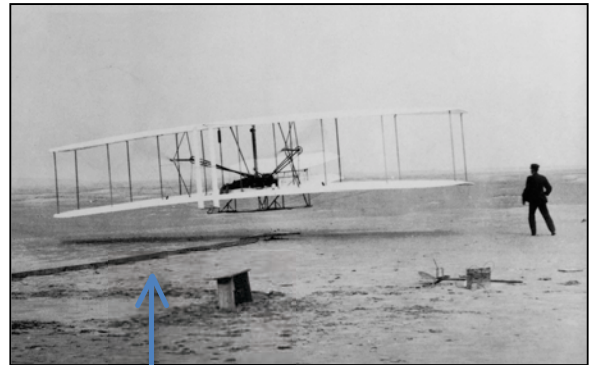
by Brod Bagert

Just thirty-seven meters,
twelve seconds in the sky,
but that was long enough to prove
that human beings could fly.

Orville's hanging in the cradle.
Wilbur's standing on the ground.
The engine's running steady.
The propeller's spinning round.

Then the moment of truth, the plane starts to slide
along eighteen meters of rail.
The moment of truth that could end in success,
but could just as easily fail.

Two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright,
with the courage to give it a try.
Thirty-seven meters... twelve seconds of flight...
a moment in the sky.



The Wright brothers' plane had no wheels. To take off it slid along a steel

INTERMEDIATE & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 69

Note:

On December 17, 1903 in North Carolina, the Wright brothers successfully completed the first controlled, powered and sustained flight in a heavier-than-air machine. The Wrights were not the only inventors flying around that year. In Germany, starting back in August, Karl Jatho was making little hops in his airplane, but his flights were not controlled and his longest was only 18 meters. By the end of November he had given up.

At about the same time in Paris, Brazilian born Alberto Santos-Dumont was also working hard on inventing his own plane. Eventually he succeeded but not until October 23, 1906, three years after the Wright brothers.

So here's an interesting question for you: Where in North Carolina did the Wright brothers make their first flight? a) Kitty Hawk; or b) Kill Devil Hills.

Light It Up #1

Mad Scientist

by Brod Bagert

It's totally unfair.
It's totally not right.
'They make me study all day at school,
then they make me study at night.

How did this ever happen?
Is there someone who's to blame?
'The answer's yes, I have figured it out,
I even know his name.

Thomas Edison invented the light bulb,
turning nighttime into day,
but he didn't stop to think about
the price we'd have to pay.

Shouldn't scientists have to consider
the pain that they might cause
by the practical application
of their scientific laws?

If it weren't for the light bulb,
oh how lovely it would be.
I could live as nature intended
watching movies on TV.

But no, I have to study all day,
then I have to study at night.
IT'S TOTALLY UNFAIR!
IT'S TOTALLY NOT RIGHT!



INTERMEDIATE & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 70

Note:

This poem is playful treatment of a serious question. Should scientists invent things just because they can without considering the possible harm? It's a question that made it's first literary appearance two hundred years ago in Mary Shelley's famous novel, *Frankenstein*. Since then they've been about a zillion books and movies written about the mad-scientist who starts out with good intentions but, in the end, is destroyed by his own creation.

So here are some real questions to think about. Would the world be better off if we had never invented the atom bomb? Should scientists clone human beings? If we make a medicine that could keep people alive for a thousand years, should we use it?

Light It Up #2

The Light of Science

by Brod Bagert

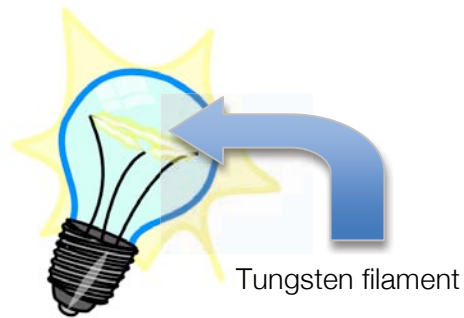
I don't believe in monsters,
there is nothing under my bed,
but I just can't stop those scary thoughts
from popping in my head.

So I have a little nightlight,
and I know what you're going to say—
What makes me think that little light
could scare a monster away?

Well we start with *electrical current*,
a thing I much admire,
a flow of electricity
inside a piece of wire.

Then we add a *tungsten filament*,
and as everybody knows,
the current heats the filament
and that's why a light bulb glows.

So I keep that light right by my bed,
it's been sitting there for years.
In the dark of night that little light
can banish foolish fears.



INTERMEDIATE & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 71

Note:

Why does a light bulb have a glass bubble? The filament inside an incandescent light bulb is made of tungsten. Hot tungsten, if it were exposed to oxygen, would burn away in a flash. To prevent this from happening, the filament is sealed inside a glass bulb filled with argon, an inert (chemically unreactive) gas that prevents the filament from burning.

Good and Goofy

by Brod Bagert

My science report was totally wild,
I declared I was really an alien child,
and while making my favorite alien-face
I described eating ice cream while weightless in space.

Then Alice was even more goofy than me
when she gave her report about life in the sea.
At the end her behavior caused quite a commotion
as she crawled like a worm on the floor of the ocean.

You might think that our teacher would punish and fuss,
but this year our teacher's as goofy as us.
She makes science a game, she makes spelling a song,
she falls flat on the floor when our answers are wrong.

She's really a grown-up, she's not immature,
but watching her teach, you would never be sure.
"I'm an artist," she says, "and teaching's an art,
and the very best teachers are children at heart."

I used to think school was a terrible bore,
but now I work harder than ever before.
Being goofy is good, my friends all agree,
and this year my teacher's as goofy as me.

PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & MIDDLE - SC. 2. 72

Note:

Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths theater.

— Gail Godwin



From: *School Fever- Dial Books for Young Readers (2008)*



Here are five seasonal poems, four of which have never before been published. I hope you enjoy them.

All Wet

by Brod Bagert

My brain feels like a volcano.
My heart feels like a blister.
And what's the cause of all this pain?
My kindergarten sister!

With pointy claws and a scary mask
and a big, red Cyclops eye,
she hid behind the classroom door
and pounced when I walked by.

Will I ever live it down?
I don't think there's a chance,
cause when my sister shouted BOO!
I think I wet my pants.

PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & MIDDLE - SE. 2. 73





Dressing Up

by Brod Bagert

I'm always nice and sweet,
I have a pretty smile,
but once a year, at Halloween,
I'm ugly for a while.

My face is yucky-yellow,
my hair is gizzard-green,
I wear a pair of monster fangs
that make me look real mean.

My fingernails are claws,
my lips are grimy-gray,
and everyone who looks at me
just screams and runs away.

At Halloween I make myself
as scary as can be.
A scary sight for just one night,
then PUFF! I'm back to me.

PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - SE. 2. 74

The Kissing Zombie

by Brod Bagert

My sister loves makeup, there's never enough,
she's in high school this year and she thinks she's hot stuff.
But her Halloween party was totally cool.
One guy was a ghost, two girls came as ghouls.
There were vampires and werewolves and Frankensteins too,
a witch all in black, and a zombie all blue.
The zombie was ugly, his face was a blister,
and he growled as he started to dance with my sister.
My sister was dressed like a cat so she hissed,
then they danced very slowly and started to KISS!
I had to do something, I had to think quick,
so I shouted, "Please stop! You are making me sick!"
I'm not bothered by monsters, I'm okay with the witches,
but the mere thought of kissing can fill me with twitches.
I'm not scared of goblins, I'm not scared of ghosts,
but I think growing up is what scares me the most.

PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & MIDDLE - SE. 2. 75



Autumn's Witch

by Brod Bagert

When from the hidden hills of chalk
creep dry whispers of the bone,
eyes bulge from a knotted tree,
voices freeze in stone;

when in the shadow of a vulture's wing
a roving gypsy band
foretells the fortune of a wicked queen
in a veined and wrinkled hand;

when a large and orange moon
howls its hollow melody
through all the things that crackle
to all the souls that groan;

then to a graveyard you must go,
or to some other haunted place,
for Autumn's Witch has come again
to spin her spider's lace.



PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT - SE. 3. 76

Note:

I wrote this poem almost half a century ago. I was a 17 year-old freshman in undergraduate school, which makes it one of my earliest poems. A very cool thing about early poems is that I often remember exactly what inspired them. In the case of Autumn's Witch it was that delightful first breath of cool weather, a welcome reprieve from the long-lingering swelter of New Orleans summer heat. I remember opening the window as I was getting ready for bed and feeling the magical excitement of the season. I got in bed, pulled the covers up to my chin, and the moment I closed my eyes my head began to fill with the images of this poem.

From: *If Only I Could Fly*- Juliabouse Publishing (1985)

When the Wild Goose Flies

by Brod Bagert

I have seen this all before,
when the air turns cool and the wild geese fly.
I have seen the leaves turn orange
and flame fire in the sky.

I have felt the frost, the ooze of sap,
the crunch of fallen leaves,
and the web of woolen memory
that Autumn's fingers weave.

I have smelled sweet smoke from chimneys,
and heard the whisper-wind,
and tasted sour wishes
for the days that might have been.

I have seen it many times before
for time was once my friend,
but now, each year, my prayer
is to see it once again.



PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL, & ADULT - SE. 3. 77

Note:

I wrote this poem at the suggestion of my friend, the wonderful Bill Martin Jr, author of *Brown Bear*. We were eating lunch (peperoni pizza) at a Pathways to Literacy conference in Kentucky. Out of nowhere Bill turned to me with a smile and said, "Brod. I think you should write a poem about autumn." It was very near the end of his life. When I read this poem I feel a bittersweet sadness as I think of Bill and what he meant to all of us who knew him, and the thousands of teachers he loved so dearly, and the millions of children who grew up in the joyful sound of his books.

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Thus done this 8th day of October, 2012,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brod Bagert', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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