

Is this poem from **The Mermaid's Purse** by Ted Hughes,  
the late Poet Laureate of Britain?

The shipwreck was sad,  
As he wanted to go home.

On the bottom of the sea

He was all alone.

The waves look like horses

Jumping, jumping, jumping

The clouds are grey dragons!



# No. It's by a six-year-old boy.

Over a period of several months, Creative Partnerships Kent Practitioners Roy & Claire Smith and Teacher Deb Walkling worked with the children of Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School to create original artwork and poetry. The remarkable results travelled throughout England in an exhibition entitled “I Spy With My Little Eye.”

The process and products of the work were documented by Researcher Shelby Wolf in an article entitled: The Mermaid's Purse: Looking Closely at Young Children's Art and Poetry, which was published in Language Arts, an American literacy journal.

The research article is also available online at: [www.creative-partnerships.com/mermaidspurse](http://www.creative-partnerships.com/mermaidspurse) as well as on Dr. Wolf's website at [www.colorado.edu/education/faculty/shelbywolf/](http://www.colorado.edu/education/faculty/shelbywolf/)

The research discusses how teachers and artists can help foster creative expression in young children by:

- persuading children to look closely and wonder about the possibilities in their observations. When children are engaged in serious seeing, they learn to hold sustained attention, to see detail and to view alternative perspectives.
- encouraging imaginative thinking. All exemplary teachers use questions to stretch children's writing, but questions that seek out metaphor, personification and emotional links are especially effective.
- reading and analysing professional poetry and art as well as allowing children ample opportunities to create their own. Within these aesthetic opportunities, children will find their own medium and learn to see themselves as artists.