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Review: Hate That Cat (Revised)

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Creech, Sharon, *Hate That Cat*. Harper/HarperCollins Publishers, 2008. ISBN: 978006140947

Description:

This novel in verse navigates with Jack, the narrator, the murky waters of poetic devices while revealing to the reader the heart of a sensitive, yet opinionated, middle school boy. Jack and his teacher, Miss Stretchberry first won fame in Creech's multi-award winning companion novel, *Love that Dog*. In fifth grade, under the wise and gifted direction of Miss Stretchberry, Jack learned to love and to express himself in free verse. In the cat book, the reader discovers that Miss Stretchberry has moved up with Jack's class and she now has the pleasure of teaching poetry from another perspective. Jack learns to recognize, appreciate, and write onomatopoeia, alliteration, metaphors and to use other conventions, but not without protest and his typical humorous and sometimes poignant dialogue. As Jack writes, the reader discovers more about the young poet and his family.

Critique:

This powerful little novel will likely be read in one sitting by both adults and children. Hooked by Jack's straight-forward and age appropriate observations about poetic conventions and his passionate response to the "mean black cat," readers are compelled to read to the resolution. As in *Love That Dog*, the poetry Miss Stretchberry introduces to her students for their imitation is included at the conclusion of the story—as is a teaser for *Love That Dog*. Writers selected include a wide variety from Edgar Allan Poe and William Carlos Williams (again) to Valerie Worth and Christopher Myers. Walter Dean Myers also reappears as just the right stimulus to Jack's need (again). This small volume, like its predecessor is not to be missed by parents, teachers, librarians, poetry lovers, college students who aspire to teach, and, of course, the child audience.

Awards: Alaska Battle of the Books, Best Children's Book of the Year (Bank Street), Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award, Choices, Cooperative Children's Book Center Choice, Iowa Children's Choice Award, Maine Student Book Award, North Carolina Children's Book Award,

Related Subjects: Cats, Christopher Myers, Deafness, Edgar Allan Poe, Imitation poetry, Pets, Poetry, Valerie Worth, Walter Dean Myers, William Carlos Williams

Character Themes: Creativity, Honesty, Humor, Imagination, **Inspiration**, Kindness,