

**Dear Hot Dog**  
**Mordicai Gerstein**  
**Reviewed by: Rina Guo, 16**  
**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**  
[www.bethestaryouare.org](http://www.bethestaryouare.org)

*Dear Hot Dog* is a collection of short free-verse poetry for children. Each poem describes small objects or portions of a kid's daily life like the titles, "KITE", "SUMMER" or "ICE-CREAM CONE". The author spins a small story often from the perspective of the inanimate object or idea, in order to capture and relate to the imaginations of younger readers. Along the pages are also decorative acrylic illustrations that add a bit of charm to each poem.

I liked how the poems were simple and yet creative. You can tell that each poem was designed to be written and understood from the perspective of a child. However, the poems didn't connect in a very specific theme or story. The title, *Dear Hot Dog*, may be a bit misleading, but it is in reference to one of the poems in the book titled "HOT DOG", which is one of the few poems in the book about food. Additionally, there was no consistent rhythm or rhyming, which may have made it more attractive to kids. Since this wasn't a flat-out picture book, there were also less illustrations in it, which may be a bit disappointing for some kids. This would make a nice quick read for children, but it might not excite them as much as the poetry from Dr. Seuss or Shel Silverstein.

However, this would still make a good introduction to free-verse poetry for readers age 3-8 years old. The terminology and word count is a bit longer and more complex than usual poetry books for kids. But all the topics and themes are clearly designed for the average preschooler to enjoy.

**Recommended Titles:**

- Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein
- Falling Up by Shel Silverstein
- Oh, the Places You'll Go! by Dr. Seuss
- Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss
- The Berenstain Bears and the Missing Honey by Stan and Jan Berenstain