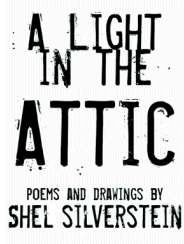


# “Bucking Bronco”

inspired by Shel Silverstein’s poem “Buckin’ Bronco”

SONG BY SCARTH LOCKE



## SONGWRITER’S STATEMENT

“As I read this poem, I had a flash that he was talking about much more than sitting on a horse. He was talking about difficult situations in life and most particularly, I understood it to be about the process of mastering your mind. What a beautiful way of conveying the determination to stay on top of it.”  
Scarth Locke

## LYRICS

I’m gonna ride  
I’m going to ride  
I’m gonna ride that Bucking Bronco

Ride that baby while she’s kickin  
Ride that girl around the ring  
Ride that girl through the thick and through the skinny  
And I’m gonna do it with a smile as I sing

Throw down your head, kick up your heels  
I’m-a stick to you until you come around,  
Until you come around

And you might think I’m a fool for pain  
But I hold the reins

I’m gonna ride  
I’m going to ride  
I’m gonna ride that Bucking Bronco

And you know I won’t give up on you  
Though my spine, my will won’t crack  
Cuz I need you like you need me  
You throw me I’m-a git right back

Cuz I’m-a gonna be a cowboy  
And if you want to you can be my steed  
And if you want to dance  
A little discipline is what you need

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**SOURCE**

Shel Silverstein was a composer, an artist, and the author of numerous books of prose and poetry for younger readers. His prose works include such modern classics as *The Giving Tree* (1963), *Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back* (1963), and *The Missing Piece* (1976), while among his immensely popular poetry collections are *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (Michigan Young Readers Award, 1974), *A Light in the Attic* (School Library Journal Best Books Award, 1982), and, most recently, *Falling Up* (Harper-Collins, 1996). Silverstein's work, which he illustrated himself, is characterized by a deft mixing of the sly and the serious, the macabre and the just plain silly. Silverstein was born on September 25, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois, where he was writing from the time he was a young boy. His wicked, giddy humor is beloved by countless adults as well as by children. He died in May 1999.

**MUSIC**

You can almost hear the boots kicking into the side of the bull as Locke's drumbeat pops in at the top of this song. He wants us to fall right into the ring with him. The tone of his intro guitar pad has an ominous humor to it. When his lead acoustic finally kicks in, the campy mood is firmly set in place. His hook (chorus) melody using the words 'bucking bronco' is almost as visual as it is aural. Each word is verbally 'bucked up' to another note. It's hard not to move your body while listening to this tune. It's also hard to distinguish his guitar picking from the drums sounds - they are completely in sync with each other, which reinforces the resolve of the lyric. He can groove on the bronco just as the song's components effortlessly groove with each other. (Notes by Deborah Pardes)

**SUITABILITY**

Shel Silverstein's poetry is beloved of adults as well as children. Scarth Locke's lyrics invite a distinctly adult interpretation.

## **Lesson Plan** “Bucking Bronco”

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**MEANING AND EXPRESSION • BY CANDACE CUTTING •  
ADAPTED BY JOHN DARTER**

<b>LEVEL</b>	This lesson is designed for adult literacy learners performing at the beginning to intermediate Adult Basic Education level.
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	Volunteer tutor with a single, pair, or group of learners. May also be adapted for book clubs.
<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b> 2 to 3 x 1 1/2 hour sessions
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<i>A Light In The Attic</i> , By Shel Silverstein SIBL Chapter 1 CD, track 11 “Bucking Bronco” Photocopies of lyrics for “Bucking Bronco” CD player 25th anniversary edition CD (accompanies <i>A Light In The Attic</i> ) Biography of Shel Silverstein from <a href="http://www.nassio.com/silverstein/bio.html">http://www.nassio.com/silverstein/bio.html</a> Chart or binder paper Pen/pencil
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Learners will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• examine, construct, and extend meaning of text analyze how the patterns of organization, hierarchic structures, repetition of key ideas, syntax, and word choice in text influence understanding and reveal the author’s purpose</li><li>• determine the author’s purpose</li><li>• read out loud with enthusiasm and self-expression</li></ul>
<b>VOCABULARY</b>	Refer to word families to help build phonogram awareness related to poetry. Some internet resources: <a href="http://www.literacyconnections.com/Phonograms.html">http://www.literacyconnections.com/Phonograms.html</a> <a href="http://www.say-it-in-english.com/WordFamilies.html">http://www.say-it-in-english.com/WordFamilies.html</a> Books in print: Litstart: Strategies For Adult Literacy and ESL Tutors, 1999. Michigan Literacy, Inc. see <a href="http://www.MichiganLiteracy.org">www.MichiganLiteracy.org</a> Choose word families that can be extended from the text of “Bucking Bronco” for learners to practice as a short phonics exercise before and after the reading. Flash cards are a good way to continue the practice throughout the lesson and later at home.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Discuss with the learner/s what they already know about poetry and what, if anything, they already know about Shel Silverstein. On a piece of chart paper or binder paper write the heading "What I (We) Already Know About Poetry and Shel Silverstein." In point form, note what they say. Save this sheet for the end of the lesson, in order to contrast it with what the student learns, noted on a separate sheet entitled "What I (We) Learned About Poetry and Shel Silverstein." Read out the short biography of Shel Silverstein to provide background.

## ACTIVITIES

### READING FOR MEANING

1. Listen to Shel Silverstein read "Buckin' Bronco" on the Anniversary CD.
2. Ask the learners what they noticed about the way Shel read his poem. (With depth and feeling. This engages the listener and gives them a visual picture in their mind's eye as to what the poem is about).
3. Echo read the poem "Buckin' Bronco" (*Light In The Attic*: page 62) line by line with the learner to help them practice reading with feeling and enthusiasm. Explain to the learner that this makes reading more fun.
4. Let the learner read the poem on their own, practicing reading with emphasis.
5. Ask the learners what they think the poem is about. Have they ever been to a rodeo?
6. Hand out the lyrics to the "Buckin' Bronco" song, and partner read them with the learners.
7. Tell the learners that you are going to play the song and that you want them to write down how the song makes them feel. Let them know that this is writing in note fashion, so spelling and grammar are not the primary concern.
8. Play "Buckin' Bronco" by Scarth Locke, SIBL Chapter 2, track 11.
9. Review the learners' notes and ask them how they felt about the song. Talk about the chorus of a song and how it's the part that is repeated. Ask the learners what impact this repetition of verse has on them.
10. Help the learners summarize their comments and notes into a couple of paragraphs. Have them include what they think the author had in mind while writing this poem.

## ...ACTIVITIES

### STYLE

1. Point the learners' attention to the author's use of graphic illustration and organization on the page.

Ask the following questions:

How do the illustrations help or hinder the message of the author?

Do you think that Shel drew the illustrations before he wrote the poem, or vice versa?

Why is the choice of words important in getting the meaning of the poem across to the reader?

What do you notice about the organization of the poem on the page? Does this make understanding the poem easier or more difficult?

Why is repetition of ideas important to a poet in getting his/her message across. Is this the same with song writers?

2. Help the learner choose a topic for their poem/song. Let them know that poems, songs, and stories are written in draft form. That is, it takes an author several revisions before he/she has a final product that is worthy of publishing.
3. Have the learner list relevant rhyming words, to use in creating their own poem or song lyrics.
4. Ask them if they would like to draw the pictures before they write the poem/song, or vice versa.
5. Let the learner work on a first draft of the poem or song.
6. Edit the first draft focusing on meaning. Help the learner clarify their thoughts by giving them suggestions. Have the learner rewrite the poem or song.
7. Edit the second draft of the poem for spelling errors (this will probably take place during two separate sessions, so you can have the learner take the poem/song home and work on it).
8. Have the learner rewrite the poem or song one more time for the final draft. Have them combine the poem or song with their illustrations.

## POST-READING

1. Shel Silverstein was much more than a children's poet. He also wrote for adults. Have learners go to one of the following web sites to research more about Shel.

<http://www.banned-width.com/shel.html>

<http://members.tripod.com/~ShelSilverstein/>

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## ASSESSMENT

2. The following questions will guide learners through these sites.  
What were some names of other books that Shel wrote?  
Did he just write stories, or did he write songs as well? If he did write songs, what was the name of one of his albums?  
What was the name of one of his adult books?
  3. Go to your local library and find a book by Shel Silverstein to take home and read.
1. Was the learner able to read with expression? Did they understand what this meant? Have the learner demonstrate this skill with “Buckin’ Bronco” or another poem.
  2. Was the learner able to understand the uses of repetition, word choice, and cadence when reading and writing songs or poetry? If they are still struggling with some of these ideas, repeat the exercises with another poem or another poet.
  3. Did the learner grasp the humor of many of Silverstein’s poems? Did they construct or analyze the meaning of “Buckin’ Bronco” (For example, things are harder than they seem).
  4. Complete the chart of what they learned. Compared with what they knew before the lesson, were there significant gains?