

Strict.

We had a teacher who was so strict, you weren't allowed to breathe in her lessons.
She used to stand out the front going, "No breathing!" And you had the *whole morning* to get through.
The weak ones just used to keel over and die, you'd hear them going down behind you!
Ka-boom! Ka-boom! Ka-boom!
And there was always a whiny kid going, "Miss, can I go out and do some breathing?"
And she'd say, "No, you've got all playtime to do it!"
"And oh come on Miss, oh come on!"

Did you know at the beginning of the week there were forty eight kids in my class,
And at the end of the week there were only five of them left.
Yeah, d'you know at the end of the day you'd be stepping over kids just to get out of the room.
Oh no! There's Melanie! That's a shame, she was really nice!
There's Dave. Hard luck Dave, always knew you were a bit weak.

You know people say to me, "If that's true, how come you're here to tell the tale?"
Fair enough and I'll tell you.
It's because, when I was at school, we used to sit at desks.
We didn't sit around tables like you do now, we used to sit at desks, with lids.
And some of us figured out, what you had to do...
...was snatch a quick breath under the desk lid when she wasn't looking.

So once more from the beginning.
"No breathing!"
The weak ones, Ka-bum, ka-bum, ka-bum.
The whiny ones, "Miss, can I go out and do some breathing?"
"No, you've got all playtime to do it!"
"Oh, go on Miss, oh go on!" Us lot,

That was a mistake; slamming the desk lid down!
If you made a noise with the desk, lid it was...
"Out! School Prison!"

There was a school prison underneath the school hall where they used to string you up from the wall bars.
"Miss, I've been up here for 3 weeks! And there's rats... and they're nibblin' my toenails!"
So I figured it out, what you had to do was put your thumb 'round the edge of the desk lid,
so when it went down, it didn't make any noise at all.

So once more from the beginning.
"No breathing!"
The weak ones, Ka-bum, ka-bum, ka-bum.
The whiny ones, "Miss, can I go out and do some breathing?"
"No, you've got all playtime to do it!"
"Oh, go on Miss, oh go on!"
"Out! School Prison!"
"Miss, I've been up here for 3 weeks, and there's... rats! And they're nibbling... my toenails, Miss!"
Me, thumb 'round the edge of the desk,
No noise at all.
Survival!



1. I would certainly say that Michael Rosen doesn't just read his poem, he *performs* it. What is the difference between *reading* a poem and *performing* a poem?



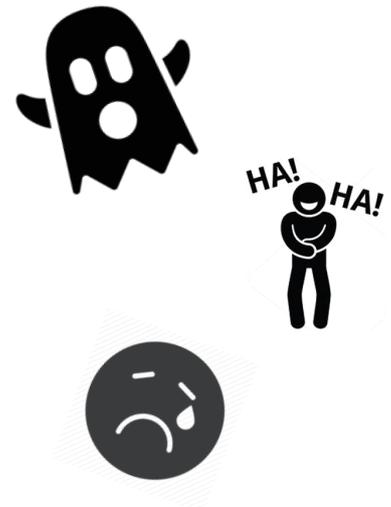
2. There were extra details in the performance that didn't show up in the text. These details gave you a better understanding of what is happening in the poem. What were these extra details?

3. As a person who enjoyed this poem (consumes is a bit like eating or using up), did you prefer reading the poem or watching the poem? Give me two reasons.

4. I think that this poem is so good because it contains many different ideas and feelings all at once. Help me understand why I like it so much...

Explain why....

A) The poem is like a horror story because



B) This poem is a comedy because

C) This poem is a tragedy because

D) All the funniest jokes are in some way true. There is obviously not much truth in this poem, but what parts are *nearly* true? Could Michael Rosen have had a strict teacher when he was at school? Do you think he enjoyed school? Why do you think that?

Extension

Can you think of a funny thing that a very strict teacher might say? Could you draw your idea and explain it in your own words? Or even write your own poem? Or even perform it and post a recording?