

# PEACHTREE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Margaret Quinlin Books

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## *Nature's Remarkable Partners* *Wild Poems for Two Voices*

by Leslie Bulion; illustrated by Robert Meganck

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

### ABOUT THE BOOK

These wild poems for two voices offer young readers an up-to-date peek at an intriguing array of symbiotic partnerships in nature.

Most upper-elementary students are familiar with mutually beneficial partnerships in nature—butterflies and milkweed, for example, or clownfish and anemones. But award-winning science poetry author Leslie Bulion has delved into recent research on mutualism and found fresh examples of these relationships for young readers to investigate, including the egg-laying carrion beetle and its hitchhiking mite passengers, as well as the little goby fish that guards the pistol shrimp from predators in exchange for a safe haven.

Reading aloud these clever verses for two voices will help young learners engage with and enjoy these marvels of nature, and notes in the back of the book shed more light on the diversity of poetic forms. In addition, brief science notes accompanying each featured partnership and comprehensive back matter provide more opportunities for study.

Robert Meganck's witty drawings add another layer of fun to this humorous gallery of perfect partners. This collection is ideal for cross-curricular learning, including units on biology, mutualism, and poetry. Other popular science poetry collections by this creative team include *Superlative Birds*, *Amphibian Acrobats*, and *Spi-ku*, a book about the trick-filled world of spiders.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Consider the title and discuss what the book is about.
- Study the cover of the book. How many remarkable creatures do you see? What makes them remarkable?
- Read the poem "Meet the Mutualists!" (p. 8). Discuss the meaning of the first two lines of the last stanza. Give examples of ways "all life on our planet is interconnected."
- Define genre. Discuss the genre of this book. How does the information on the page opposite each poem contribute to the book?

- What characterizes a partner? In what ways are the animals in the book partners with each other, and partners with the earth?
- Read and discuss the definitions of the following: symbiotic, mutualism, commensal, and parasite (p. 9). Make a chart and categorize the animals in the book by their type of partnership. Use books in the library and sites on the internet to identify other animal partnerships.
- Explain the concept of poems for two voices. Discuss the rhythm and musicality of this type of poetry. How do Daisy and Honey Bee help each other in nature and in the poem on page 11?
- Discuss why the artist includes an illustration of Daisy and Honey Bee on the page with each poem. How does this help readers understand the theme of the book?
- What is the most unusual partnership in the book?
- How does punctuation guide the reader in reading poetry? Choose a partner and select one poem to perform in class. Use the punctuation as a guide for pauses and emphasis as the poem is read aloud.
- Jot down all the countries and regions where nature's partners live. Use pushpins to identify these places on a map.
- Think beyond the book and discuss the partnership between a human and a mosquito, and an animal and a tick. Choose one of the pairs, and write a poem for two voices that illustrates the type of partnership between the two. Then write one or two paragraphs that provide information to a reader.
- Study the illustration on pages 42–43. Why are the animals looking at Daisy? What is the significance of the book that Daisy is holding? Explain why Daisy is pointing to a map of the earth. Note the expressions on the animals' faces. Point out which animals show alarm.
- Analyze the poem "Ecosystem Earth!" Explain how the poem and the information to the right serve as a warning and a charge.
- Discuss the humor in the book. Why do you think the author and illustrator chose humor to relate animal partnerships?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Leslie Bulion** creates award-winning science poetry steeped in hands-on learning experiences, nature observation, research, humor, and imagery in a variety of poetic forms. Her nine other illustrated collections invite readers on multilayered science adventures investigating spiders, birds, sea creatures, insects, amphibians, and more. Her newest science poetry books include *Serengeti: Plains of Grass*, *Galápagos: Islands of Change*, and *Nature's Remarkable Partners*. Leslie's graduate marine science work and her years as a school social worker inform her science poetry and her three science-infused novels for young readers.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Designer and illustrator **Robert Meganck** recently retired as a professor of illustration, graphic design, digital imaging, and color theory at Virginia Commonwealth University. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan, and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He has received over 300 regional, national, and international awards for illustration and graphic design work, and has been recognized for excellence by such organizations as The Society of Illustrators in New York and The Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles. Robert has illustrated twelve picture books for children. He loves the mutualistic partnership that began with Peachtree in 2017.