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# We Animals Would Like a Word with You

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

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The endearing animal illustrations to this title are engagingly amusing, but there is much more than fun here. Kitamura captures Agard's questioning tone about how humans treat animals in the illustrations: there is the donkey whose back literally 'bears the Cross', the world in a goldfish bowl and the skunks' disgust at 'the smell of death/you faring to our rivers/from the fumes of your factories.' There is also the virtuosity of line and composition that Kitamura brings to those black and white drawings which echo the enquiring perspectives of many of the poems. Both poet and artist are first rate at humour: for example, there are the affectionately portrayed hippos who write love poems to each other, 'Oh my lubby-dubby hubby-hippo/With your widely-winning lippo'; or the distinctive Kitamura pussy-cat with its enormous eyes staring out at the reader as it nestles on a book, while, Agard asks 'How often can you take a poem/and stroke it on your lap?' But there is grit here too - the elephant reminds the hunter that it's 'a beautiful day for a stampede' and the hare accuses him of murdering 'the moon's ambassador'. Agard and Kitamura were made for each other and their work just gets better and better. This collection is a must for the junior classroom.

Running Order:

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