

# **Humor at Halloween: My Broom, it Flew!**

by Charlie Buck

**EDUCATION LEVEL:** Elementary School

**GENRE:** Poetry/Prose

**FORMAT:** Lesson Plan

**TIME FRAME:** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Paper and pencils

**LITERARY MODEL:** Student writing

Although there are not that many adult humorists, classrooms abound with them! In fall excitement increases with Halloween's approach. Young writers seem especially attuned to the creepiness of the commonplace, and how to render that with humor. They understand how everyday objects or occurrences can be both startling and hilarious.

## **Sequence of Activities:**

### ***Introduction (20 minutes)***

I'll invite the class to talk about something in their house that scared them, or that they once found scary. The classroom becomes boisterous as they react to each other's examples: their dog giving them side-eye; the "monster crack" between their bed and the wall; the way no matter how many bites of [insert gross food here] they take, there is never any less of it. Once the energy level is up, I'll ask for a volunteer to read an example of student work:

#### **Uh-oh**

One day my nana asked me to sweep the floor and the broom came alive.

"Aiiiiiieeeeehhhhh!" I screamed. My nana wasn't home at the time, no one was home but me, because I was grounded. Just me and the broom, which was...sweeping?

"Hi," the broom said—Oh my god, the broom can talk? "I can take you anywhere you want to go," it said.

"My nana will be back in an hour or two, I don't know..."

"I can make that work," the broom said.

"First let me change," I said. "OK, done, let's go to the Tucson mall."

“Okay,” said the broom, but then I said, “Wait.”

“OMG, for what!” the broom said.

“I need to find my phone.”

“Could. You. Hurry?” said the broom.

“Okay, let’s go now!” I said.

We went to the Tucson mall, and guess who was there?

My nana.

—Araceli Moreno

What did they like about this piece of writing? Did it make them laugh? Were the voices distinct? Was it original? This is a good opportunity to talk about why clichés, like scary clowns, don’t take much creativity, but making a broom have a personality and talk *really* does take a lot!

### ***Writing/Drawing (20 minutes)***

Is there a household object or occurrence they would like to write about? Sometimes I give a thematic prompt, like a magic broom, but I also let writers know that they are free to follow their own ideas.

As they settle down to write I’ll read poems with a similar topic, so they know that they can write prose or a poem:

#### **Swept Away**

My mom told me to start sweeping

because she was going to work

Yes, I said

I started sweeping so hard

the house vanished

Now that's a magic broom!

—Emily Y. Esparza Rodriguez

### **Broomzoom**

I was cleaning with my broom and my broom was glowing,  
it was taking me to another planet. It was zooming past planets  
until we got to THE planet, the planet that had never been seen before.

I saw a one-eyed alien dog and it was adorable! It jumped at me  
and I thought it was going to eat me, but it just licked me  
and wagged its seven tails.

I told the broom to take me back, and I took the dog with me back home,  
zooming past the planets, but I do not know what to feed the dog—  
I'll just feed it dog food.

I put that broom under my bed, and that is my new car.

— Mauricio Armenta

**Sharing: (20 minutes)**

Some writers will be done in ten minutes—I challenge them to a few more lines or details, but when they feel their poem is complete, I'll read it out loud as other people are finishing their poems. As most of the class finishes, they gather in a circle and individual writers read their pieces out loud. A few writers remain at their desks, writing: if there is no time for them to read their poem, at the beginning of the next class I will ask if they want to.

**Note:** If the classroom teacher is hoping to build certain skills, such as dialogue or vocabulary, this exercise is easy to adapt: for instance, for vocabulary the class can brainstorm flying words, or grasping words, or onomatopoeia words and sounds, and you can write them on the board as a word bank. A classroom teacher wanted to encourage complete sentences and closure, so I created a worksheet:

### **My Broom, it Flew!**

How did you discover the broom in your house can fly?\_\_\_\_\_

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How did you hold on?\_\_\_\_\_

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What was flying like?\_\_\_\_\_

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Where did you go and what did you do?

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How did your trip/adventure end? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you use some of these words?

Holding words: grasp, clasp, clutch, crush, wrap

Flying words: tug, lift, climb, soar, glide, zoom, breeze, wind, sweep, float, clouds, birds, planes, comets, planets, aliens, whisk, crash

Onomatopoeia words/sounds: squish, plop, crackle, gasp, scream, crunch