



Author: Dianne Wolfer
Illustrator: Erica Wagner
ISBN: 9781922507686
RRP: \$29.99

Blurb

Tossing his mane, the Colt from Old Regret tears through the scrub. Stones clatter and crimson rosellas shriek as he canters higher.

You may have heard the story of the man from Snowy River and his fearless ride through the mountains. This is Colt's story, of nickered mares and a rearing stallion. What does Colt see, feel and smell as he charges through the bush? Will he escape the snapping stockwhips, to find shelter in an alpine meadow?

Beloved children's author Dianne Wolfer responds to *The Man from Snowy River*, creating an essential companion to the original poem. With exquisite collages by Erica Wagner, this book is a new classic in the making.

About the Author

Dianne Wolfer is an award-winning author of 25 books, including the acclaimed Light series, *The Dog With Seven Names* and *The Last Light Horse*. Most recently, Dianne's book *Scout and the Rescue Dogs* won the Children's Book of the Year at the Western Australian Premier's Literary Awards.

About the Illustrator

Erica Wagner is an artist, publisher and creative consultant to storytellers. For over three decades, Erica has edited and published many ground-breaking and award-winning books for children and young adults. Erica's first book, *Hope Is the Thing* (2023), written by Johanna Bell, won the CBCA New Illustrator Award. Erica is a painter, drawer and collage artist.

The Colt from Old Regret Teachers' Notes

Recommended for: Years 3–6

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONTENT

Learning areas

- English
- HASS (Humanities and Social Sciences)

General capabilities

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Literacy

Cross-curriculum priorities

- Sustainability

National Library of Australia Digital Classroom

- Year 6

Module: 'Documenting Federation'

- library.gov.au/learn/digital-classroom/documenting-federation

Topic: 'A national identity'

- library.gov.au/learn/digital-classroom/documenting-federation/national-identity

Topic: 'The poet of Australia'

- library.gov.au/learn/digital-classroom/documenting-federation/poet-australia



BEFORE YOU READ

Imagery

Look at the cover and discuss what you see.

- What do you think this book is going to be about?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- How does imagery impact your sense of what the book will be about?

Poetry

Many forms of poetry exist in literature, from haiku originating in Japan to the bush ballads featured in *The Colt from Old Regret*.

- Discuss the various poetic techniques and structures of a poem.
- Look at the different types of poems that exist.
- Discuss strategies for understanding and appreciating a poem.

Australian Bush Poetry

Traditionally, bush poems (also known as bush ballads) have a clear rhyming pattern. Poems are written in stanza form, usually with an Australian theme, relating to people living in remote communities and an outback way of life.

Discuss:

- The poetic techniques specific to Australian bush poetry. What meter and rhyme do they most commonly use? How does this affect the reader's experience of the poem?
- The figure of the bushman in Australian literature. Where did this come from? What does it convey to the reader? How did Banjo Paterson use this in his poetry?

- Other Australian iconography and imagery used in Australian bush poetry. What motifs recur, particularly in the description of place and scenery?
- Look at other famous Australian poets, such as Henry Lawson, Marie Pitts, Louisa Lawson or Dorothea Mackellar. What other themes and motifs did these poets focus on?

The Man from Snowy River

Read *The Man From Snowy River* aloud with the class. Discuss the poem, looking at:

- Structure: form, rhythm, meter and line length
- Language: Diction, imagery, metaphor, simile
- Sound: Rhyme, alliteration, assonance, tone
- Theme: Central idea, motifs, main theme
- Context: Who was the writer? What is the time period? What is the poem describing? What is the setting?

Banjo Paterson

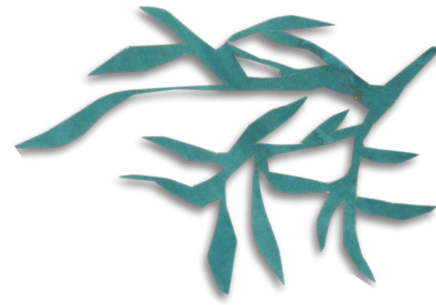
Banjo Paterson is one of Australia's best-loved poets, with his works in print for 130 years.

Have students research Banjo Paterson and discuss his influence on Australian literature with the class. Look at his various other famous poems and verse, such as *Waltzing Matilda*, and their impact of other poets and how people write on Australia.

AFTER YOU READ

After reading *The Colt from Old Regret* aloud with the class, discuss the following:

- Poetic Technique: Discuss the structure, language, sound, theme and context of the poem.
- Imagery: What imagery does the illustrator draw on? What imagery does the author draw on? Are these similar or different to the original poem?
- Compare and Contrast: What are the similarities between the writing of *The Man from Snowy River* and *The Colt from Old Regret*? How does the context and time change the readers experience of the text? What are the literary and poetic devices used by both Banjo Paterson and Dianne Wolfer?



Place/Setting

The Australian bush is the ever-present backdrop to the bush poets' stories. Natural elements recur in different poems by different poets: hills of granite, blazing sun, crystal clear night air. Sometimes the bush is desolate and brooding, a place 'where beauty is not' according to Henry Lawson; and at others it is a thing of spectacular beauty, compared with gemstones by Dorothea Mackellar.

Discuss with the class how they think about Australia, and the country and landscape. Locate descriptions of landscapes in *The Colt from Old Regret* and discuss:

- How does this compare to *The Man from Snowy River* and other bush ballads as mentioned above? What do these descriptions convey to the reader?
- How does this compare with students' ideas about the Australian landscape?

Collage

Have students pick a stanza from a poem. This could either be from *The Colt from Old Regret*, an anthology or another bush poem. Create a collage of this stanza using old magazines, scrap paper and mixed mediums.

- What elements did you include from the source material?
- What motifs did you focus on?
- How did you convey the mood of the text in your artwork?



Creative Writing

Dianne Wolfer describes *The Colt from Old Regret* as a 'creative retelling'. Using a poetry anthology, such as *This Is Home*, or a classic bush ballad (perhaps by Henry Lawson or another by Banjo Paterson), pick out a poem and write your own response.

This could be from the perspective of a different character within the poem, an exploration of a theme or setting, or your own bush ballad inspired by the poem you picked.

- How did you use the earlier poetic techniques discussed?
- What themes and motifs did you explore?

Mixed Medium

Select two poems from two Australian poets and print them out. Cut out each line of the poems and reorganise them into a completely new poem. Identify and explain how choices in language (for example emphasis, repetition and metaphor) influence personal response to different texts.

Discuss:

- Does the poem still reflect the meaning, subject and theme of the original poems? Has a new theme or subject come to life?
- How well, or how badly, do the two poems mesh together to create a whole new poem? Is the metre, rhyme or form still the same? Is it different?
- Can you still identify the voice of the poets or is your own voice reflected?

Brumbies

For many Australians, brumbies evoke a sense of freedom. They see these iconic horses as a heritage breed, one that is part of our history, reflecting the romance of the high country.

Discuss:

- When were brumbies first introduced to Australia? Where did they come from?
- What is the impact of introduced species on Australia's natural environment?
- What is an author trying to convey to the readers by using brumbies as imagery in Australian literature, specifically poetry?

Who Is The Man from Snowy River?

Various people claim to know the identity of the stockman who inspired Banjo's fearless rider. Others believe Paterson created his character as an amalgam of different people. Across the high country, there are hotels, pubs and parks named after *The Man from Snowy River*. The story is an especially important part of the history of the Upper Murray town of Corryong.

Using Trove, have students search through old newspapers and articles to find a story that they find inspiring or interesting. They could then write their own bush ballad in response.

