Shel Silverstein
Runny Babbit Returns
Event Kit
Activity Booklet
Dear Reader,

Have you heard the nood gews? Runny Babbit is returning to the green woods in a never-before-published collection of *spoonerisms* written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein! What’s a *spoonerism*, you ask? Well . . .

If you say, ‘Let’s bead a rook
That’s billy as can se,’
You’re talkin’ Runny Babbit talk,
Just like mim and he.

We invite you to host a *Runny Babbit Returns* storytime with this event kit that includes:

- Reproducible storytime activities exploring poetry and the world of Shel Silverstein
- Decorative event poster
- Runny Babbit standee
- Runny Babbit rabbit ears

Enjoy!

With thanks,
HarperCollins Children’s Books
Runny Babbit Returns is full of spoonerisms! A spoonerism is a deliberate play on words in which corresponding letters are switched between two words in a phrase.

In “Ramma Mabbit’s Stedtime Bories,” we see that Runny grew up hearing the magical language of spoonerisms in the form of bedtime stories.

Take a look at the spoonerized stories below and decode them to learn which tales Ramma Mabbit was telling.

1. “Little Red Hiding Rood”
2. “Gransel and Hetel”
3. “Binderella”
4. “Dumpty Humpty”
5. “Loldigocks and the Bee Threars”
6. “Hapunzel”
7. “The Tittle Lailor”
8. “Ming Kidas”
10. “Three Mind Blice”
Drawing Activity

Shel Silverstein’s black-and-white drawings are simple but so much fun!
They jump off the page and come to life without any fancy colors.
Read the below poem and illustrate it using a black pen, crayon, or marker.
What do you think is the thing that Runny loves best?

RUNNY LAINTS FOR POVE

Since Runny’s parted staining
His mur is quite a fess.
There’s red whaint on his piskers,
And chellow on his yest,
There’s preen and gurple on his face,
But he could not lare cess.
He’s pappy—’cause he only haints
The things that he loves best.
Runny Babbit speaks a topsy-turvy language of his own called **spoonerisms**, a deliberate play on words in which corresponding letters are switched between two words in a phrase, often with a funny outcome. Imagine if you spoke entirely in **spoonerisms**—what would you sound like?

Translate the everyday actions below into **spoonerisms** and then read them out loud for a hilariously good time.

(Hint: You don’t need to translate words such as “a,” “to,” and “the.”)

- Read a book ______________
- Take a shower ____________________
- Play soccer ____________________
- Cook dinner ____________________
- Eat a sandwich ____________________
- Write a poem ____________________
- Drink water ____________________
- Wash the dishes ____________________
- Talk to friends ____________________
- Listen to music ____________________
List Poetry

Shel Silverstein is known for writing all different types of poetry. List poetry is a great way to be inspired by grouping related items together. Look at “A Closet Full of Shoes” from Falling Up below—Shel takes an ordinary list of footwear and makes it extraordinary. What other types of lists would make funny poems?

On a separate piece of paper, write ten items that would be on your family’s grocery list, such as apples, bread, or broccoli. Then in the space below, turn your list into a poem. Describe the food, being as silly and creative as you can. Read your finished poem the next time you go to the grocery store—you won’t forget a thing!

A CLOSET FULL OF SHOES

Party shoes with frills and bows,  
Workin’ shoes with steel toes,  
Sneakers, flip-flops, and galoshes,  
Boots to wear with mackintoshes,  
Brogans, oxfords, satin pumps,  
Dancin’ taps and wooden clumps,  
Shoes for climbin’, shoes for hikes,  
Football cleats and baseball spiles,  
Shoes of shiny patent leather,  
Woolly shoes for winter weather,  
Loafers, rough-outs, sandals, spats,  
High heels, low heels, platforms, flats,  
Moccasins and fins and flippers,  
Shower clogs and ballet slippers . . .  
A zillion shoes and just one missin’ —  
That’s the one that matches this’n.

A Store Full of Food

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Write a Poem

Sometimes, funny words are all you need to be inspired to write a poem!
Many of Shel Silverstein’s most beloved poems use humor. Read “Lizard” from Every Thing On It as inspiration for writing a funny poem of your own!

LIZARD
A lizard in a blizzard
Got a snowflake in his gizzard
And nothing else much happened, I’m afraid,
But lizard rhymed with blizzard
And blizzard rhymed with gizzard
And that, my dear, is why most poems are made.

Can you write a poem using three of these four funny, rhyming words?

Fickle  Pickle  Nickel  Tickle
Read all of the Shel Silverstein classics!

Also available with CD and as an ebook

NEW!

With 12 new poems