



Here, two middle school students from completely different parts of the country, both wrote poems inspired by WritingFix's [Backwards Poem writing lesson](#). Playing with verbal irony and oxymorons (inspired by Louis Sachar's chapter book, [Holes](#)), these poets both created a celebration of language with their words. Read both poems, then compare and contrast each poet's skills and ideas. What writing skills do both poets show? Where are they different? Which poet's style inspires you to create your own *Backwards Poem*?

### Colorful Zebras

by Nick, 7th grade poet

My brother's zebras are highly paid  
They're colorful zebras that tan in the shade  
They can juggle balloons filled with helium  
But you have to pay high prices just to see 'em.

The very first thing they do in the show  
Is play violin without using a bow  
They drag their tails across every string  
And play music better than any other thing.

At this point in the show, my brother comes out  
And talks about his zebras while he rubs their snout  
He shouts out their names while he whispers his speech  
He says, "This one's called Charcoal and this one's called Bleach."

The zebras start their grand finale about now  
They climb into a rocket and blast off with a POW  
But when the rocket flies up the zebras go down  
At first the crowd gasps then no one makes a sound.

The crowd says they are wrong but they know they are right  
They say, "I don't believe it, what a terrible sight!"  
The zebras were brought down by one tiny rocket  
And the crowd walked away with empty pockets.

Once the tent is taken down  
My brother leaves with a terrible frown  
But late that night, with smiles on their faces  
The zebras leave their hiding places.



### Memories

by Ashkan, 8th grade poet

There, as I sat on my porch  
Drinking an empty cup of soda  
In last year's Halloween costume—Yoda—,  
I smelled something funny.  
It smelled just like cat poop,  
Must have been the dog,  
But that smell brought back some memories:

Like the time I was chased by a cop with no legs  
Just because I was caught trying to steal some eggs.

Or the time I was mauled by a big Grizzly bear.  
That gorgeous monster ruined my hair.

And when I met the world's biggest miniature pony,  
I almost thought this would just be a phony.

Once as I opened a bolted door,  
I had no idea on the other side was a wild boar.

Now I remember that I've caused all this destruction,  
But back then, I must have thought it was all just construction!

