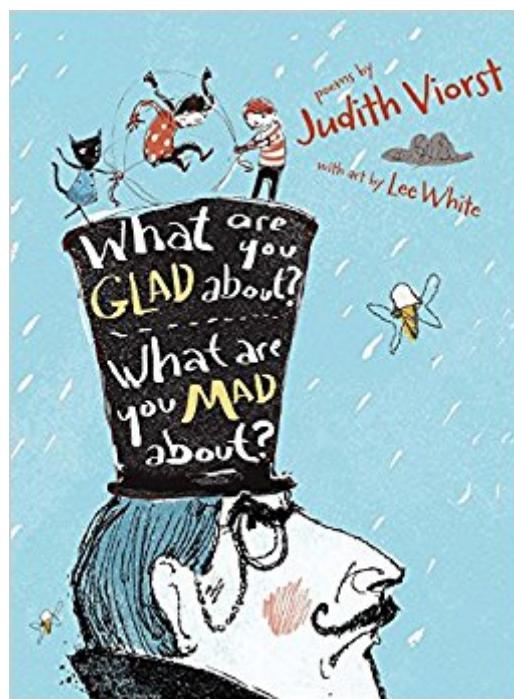


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# What Are You Glad About? What Are You Mad About?: Poems For When A Person Needs A Poem



## Synopsis

From the beloved and internationally bestselling author of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, Judith Viorst comes a brand-new collection of clever, hilarious, and poignant poems that touch on every aspect of the roller-coaster ride that is childhood. Did you wake up this morning all smiley inside? Does life taste like ice cream and cake? Or does it seem more like your goldfish just died? And your insides are one great big ache? From school to family to friends, from Grrrr to Hooray!, Judith Viorst takes us on a tour of feelings of all kinds in this thoughtful, funny, and charming collection of poetry that's perfect for young readers just learning to sort out their own emotions.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

The title of Viorst's latest collection of poetry for children provides an open invitation for readers not only to ponder feelings in general, but to examine their reactions to the assembled poems as well. Complemented by White's free-flowing mixed-media illustrations, the light lyric pieces cover topics ranging from "School Stuff" to descriptions of the seasons, with the most memorable poems centering on personal and familial relations. The reasons "Why Cats Are Better Than My Older Sister" include (but are not limited to) the following: "They never tell you what to do. / They

neverever yell at you. / They don't think that they're always right. / They're prettier to look at, too." In "New Brother," trenchant free-verse anti-new-sibling sentiment is hilariously underscored by White's rendering of a smiling, swaddled babe strapped to a rocket heading "To Mars." But some stumbles make for an uneven reading experience. There are occasional grammatical lapses, as found in "Could Somebody Please Explain This to Me, Please?," which hinges on subject-verb disagreement, and questionable messages, as offered in "Help Me!": "Help me please with all my / Ninety-seven other chores. / Then help me make excuses / When you ask for help with yours." Though likely made in the service of humor or adopting a child's persona, such poetic choices might give adult readers less to be "glad" than "mad about." An unusually mixed bag. (Kirkus Reviews November 1, 2015) Viorst's most famous book is *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, and this collection of over fifty poems expresses the same wry humor and sharp observation about the range of feelings children experience in their everyday lives. Viorst plays with school subjects such as reading, writing, and "arithmetic" (in the "School Stuff" section), and there are poems about competition with friends (the "Friends and Other People" section), bossy moms ("About the Family"), and the mystery of time sometimes seeming fast and sometimes slow. But the strongest poems go to the heart of feelings, such as worrying: "I like the sun hot on my back. / If killer sharks did not attack, / I'd like beaches." One especially poignant piece deals with breaking up with a best friend: "We've never had an argument, or even a small fuss, / But I'm not my best friend" best friend anymore. White's illustrations bring zany humor to the poems, and even sometimes add their own little twist, as in "Whoops," where a poem about trying to reach something high up is pictured with someone reaching for a treasure chest on the back of a dragon. From a riff on *The Sound of Music* ("My Least Favorite Things") to a clever poem pondering the purpose of toes, this collection will delight kids and the adults who read it aloud, too. (The Horn Book Magazine January/February 2016) In this newest collection of poetry, Viorst captures the experience of childhood through 11 rich categories, such as school, family, friends, and seasons. With a rhyming narrative, humor, and a sampling of haiku, Viorst touches on themes relevant to children, including losing friendships, bullying, coping with bothersome siblings, and facing fears. White's soft, whimsical illustrations help create an imaginative space for readers to explore troubling emotions. In "The Best and the Worst," for instance, a young boy walks a tightrope of Christmas lights between his parents, with his dad offers a surfboard on one side and his mom a horse on the other. Viorst writes, "They'd promise me

Hawaii/They'd promise me a horse,/If that made me not notice/They're getting a divorce.

Other, more humorous verse lightens the mood. In "Arithmetrick," Viorst challenges kids to take any number, and after a series of calculations, they'll realize they end up with the number 10. Children will delight in figuring out the trick and trying it out on others.

**VERDICT**-Although there are missteps with some rhymes, generating an uneven selection, Viorst's comedic talents, ability to engage readers, and coverage of universal topics make this an appealing choice.

—Rachel Zuffa, Racine Public Library, WI (School Library Journal January 1, 2016)

In poems grouped into categories including school, family, and friends, Viorst thoughtfully explores the ups and downs of children's lives, without glossing over tough moments—or humans' sometimes less-than-admirable instincts. In one poem, the narrator contemplates her somewhat distant father's happiness ("He's always watching over us./ Here's what I want to know:/ Is anyone watching over him?"), while a retaliatory entry later on addresses "What to Do with a Bully" ("You could give him a fat lip,/Stick your foot out•make him trip"). In loose cartoons accented with a drab pale blue, White (The Maine Coon's Haiku) amplifies the strong emotions at play, from delight in a grandfather's grilled-cheese-making prowess to sadness over losing a best friend (White shows a girl staring sadly out the window, a severed tin-can phone in her hand). Whatever readers' mood may be, they will probably find a poem that suits it.

**Ages 6-9.** (Publishers Weekly December 21, 2015)

And how are you feeling today? Lonely, jealous, scared, silly? Fighting bullies or trying out for the school play? Having methodically explored every adult decade of passage in previous works, beloved author Viorst handily focuses on the emotions of her young audience in poems such as "I'm Not My Best Friend" ("Friend Anymore") and "What I Want to Know about My Dad." As Viorst knows, even the best parents get divorced, and sometimes you might get a baby sibling without ever being asked if you even wanted one. Readers and listeners will find rhyming verses about school, family, friends, seasons, and more, all using vocabulary that tickles. White's blue-and-black illustrations match the feelings, whether whimsical or skeptical. Ever honest, the best lines are those that share the confusion, challenges, and questions of what it means to be you: "Too old to keep my teddy bear, / Too young to let him go. / I'm in between and waiting / For the rest of me to grow." (Booklist December 15, 2015)

Judith Viorst was born and brought up in New Jersey and has lived in Washington, DC, since 1960,

when she married Milton Viorst, a political writer. A graduate in 1981 of the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, Viorst writes in many different areas: science books, children's chapter and picture books—including the beloved *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, which has sold some four million copies; adult fiction and nonfiction including the New York Times bestseller, *Necessary Losses*; poetry for children and adults, and four musicals. Her most recent book of poetry for children, *What Are You Glad About? What Are You Mad About?* was published in 2016. *Lulu Is Getting a Sister* is the fourth book in the *Lulu* series. Lee White lives with his wife and their three crazy cats in Portland, Oregon, and you can visit him online at [LeeWhitelIllustration.com](http://LeeWhitelIllustration.com).

9 Year old loves this book. When she kept wanting to check it out at the library, I figured it should be a part of our permanent library. Fun to read.

My 8 years old love to cuddle with us at night and read 2 poems each night! Love the illustration and funny poems too.

**Summary:** These mostly humorous poems are divided into eleven sections, such as *How Are You Feeling Today?*; *School Stuff*; *About the Family*; *Home and Away*; and *Friends and Other People*. As the title suggests, there are poems about glad topics, like a perfect day, home, and a fun *Arithmetrick*, and others about sad topics, like divorce or an ex-best friend. Black, white, and blue illustrations are on every page. 112 pages; grades 1-4. **Pros:** Published a week after Judith Viorst's 85th birthday, this fun collection shows she still excels at writing for an elementary audience. The topics are perfect for kids, and the poems have a good blend of humor and poignancy. **Cons:** Some of the lines of poetry were a little uneven, so the poems didn't flow quite as smoothly as they could have.

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