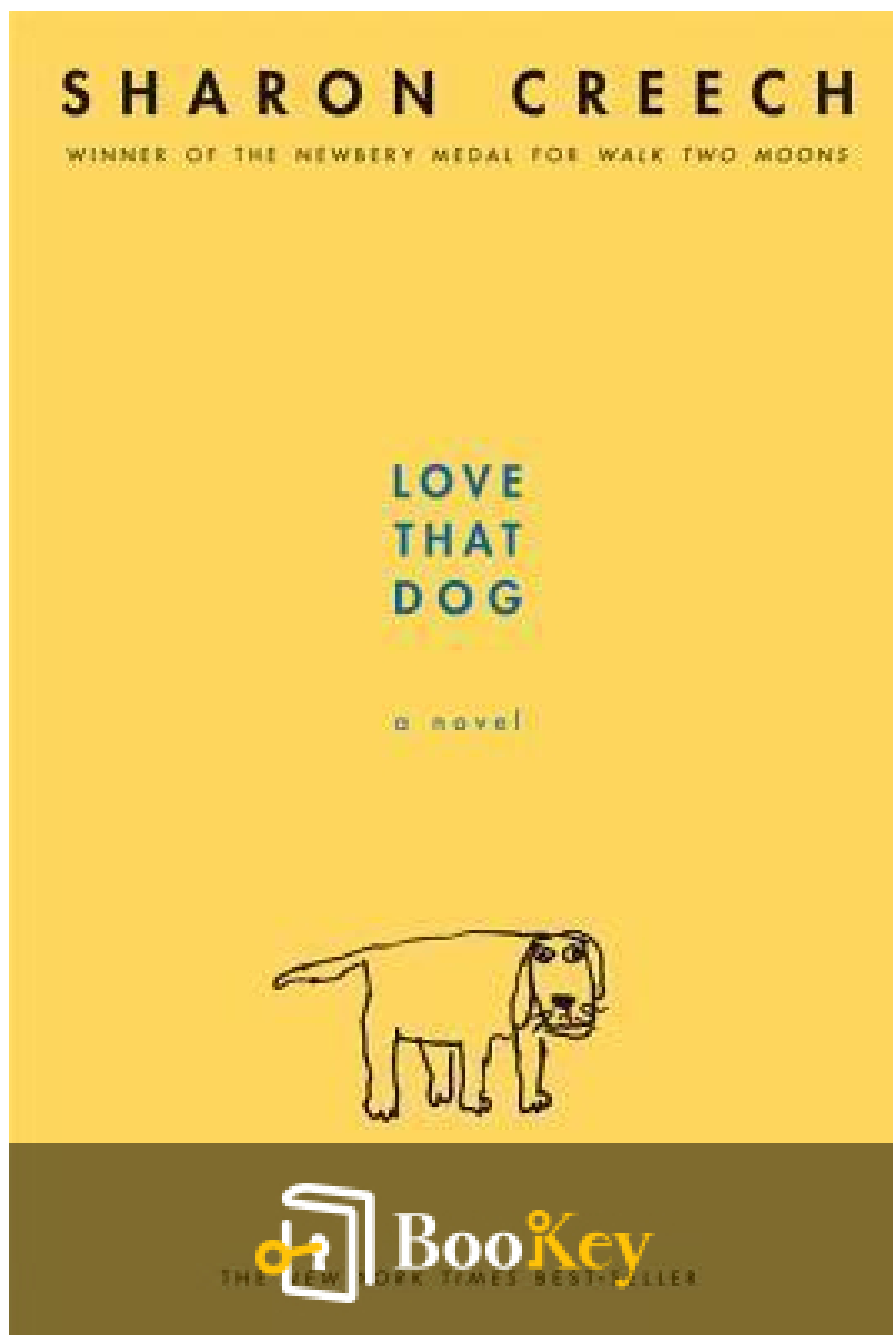


# Love That Dog PDF (Limited Copy)

Sharon Creech



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# **Love That Dog Summary**

"Discovering the Voice Within Through Poetry and Paws"

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## About the book

In "Love That Dog" by Sharon Creech, readers embark on an evocative journey through poetry and prose as they witness young Jack's metamorphosis from a reluctant writer to a budding poet. Set against the backdrop of a classroom, this novel deftly captures the innocence and complexity of a child's mind grappling with self-expression and personal loss. Jack's world is brought to life through a series of diary-like entries and poems, transforming simple classroom assignments into a heartfelt exploration of identity, resilience, and the unbreakable bond with his beloved pet dog, Sky. As his teacher nudges him to find his poetic voice, readers revel in the rhythm of Jack's newfound confidence and introspection. It's an endearing tale of discovery that sings to the transformative power of words and the compelling stories waiting beneath their surface.

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## About the author

Sharon Creech, a celebrated American author known for her whimsical and poignant storytelling, has made a significant impact on the realm of children's and young adult literature. Born in South Euclid, Ohio, in 1945, Creech's upbringing in a vibrant family with numerous siblings provided rich fodder for her creative tales. Her writing journey was further shaped by her academic pursuits in literature, having studied at Hiram College and earning her mastery of expression in English and Creative Writing from George Mason University. Before embarking on her prolific writing career, she spent several years teaching English in both the US and Europe, experiences that deepened her understanding of diverse narratives and perspectives. Creech's works, marked by their clarity and depth, have been honored with numerous accolades, including the Newbery Medal for "Walk Two Moons." Her unique ability to weave complex characters with lyrical prose shines through her extensive literary portfolio, making her a cherished staple on bookshelves around the world, particularly with her ever-relevant and touching book, "Love That Dog."

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# Summary Content List

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## Chapter 1 Summary: 5

The narrator expresses confusion and skepticism about poetry, particularly the works of Robert Frost and another poet known for a "wheelbarrow poem." The narrator grapples with understanding the intent behind poetry, suspecting that these poems might merely be word pictures mistakenly elevated to art by someone else. This reflection stems from a classroom experience where the teacher presented poems that seemed simple yet profound in their presentation.

On January 24, there's a narrative shift as the narrator recounts a personal experience. Their father uses a line reminiscent of Frost's work, "We won't be gone long—You come too," inviting the character on a drive. This phrase takes on a new meaning as they arrive at an animal shelter. The shelter is filled with various dogs, eager for attention and adoption. Amidst the clamor, a yellow dog captivates the narrator. This dog's hopeful eyes and wagging tail silently plead for a new home, compelling them to choose him. The connection is immediate and profound, with the dog expressing gratitude through affectionate gestures during the car ride home.

By January 31, the narrator has written about this emotional experience, capturing the joy of adopting the yellow dog while omitting the grim reality that other unchosen dogs might face euthanasia. They request their teacher to type up their writing, suggesting a title, "YOU COME TOO," on yellow



paper but ask to remain anonymous. This encapsulates the narrator's evolving comprehension of poetry, recognizing how personal experiences can be poetically significant, transcending mere word pictures to convey deeper emotions and connections.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: 7

### March 1 - March 27 Summary

In this introspective narrative segment, the protagonist, Jack, embarks on a personal journey of discovery through poetry. Initially, Jack expresses excitement over creating a visual poem about a dog, suggesting it be typed just right to look good on yellow paper. He shyly entertains the idea of putting his name on it if it turns out well enough, indicating a budding confidence in his work.

As the days progress, Jack navigates the complexities of receiving praise for his poetic efforts. On March 7, he recounts feeling embarrassed when classmates compliment his poem about a tree, which he designed to look like a real one with straggly branches. Yet, he's curious about another talented yet anonymous poet in his class and wonders why they chose to remain unnamed, drawing a parallel to his former reluctance to share his poetry with the world.

March 14 marks a pivotal moment for Jack, as he discovers and takes inspiration from a poem titled "Love That Boy" by Mr. Walter Dean Myers. Jack's excitement over discovering a piece that deeply resonates with him leads to a minor incident where he inadvertently damages a library book



page. Despite his remorse, he reflects on his connection to the poem, inspired by how it mirrors the way his father affectionately calls him and reminisces about his beloved yellow dog, Sky.

The presence of Sky in his life is intricately explored through nostalgic and vivid descriptions, particularly on March 22. Sky, Jack's faithful companion, accompanies him everywhere, eager to play and display joyful antics that bring warmth and laughter to Jack's youth, full of slobbery affection and funny moments that cement their bond. Jack recalls how Sky would follow him, showing unconditional love and gratitude, creating cherished memories as they played outside.

By March 27, Jack becomes more introspective. He's willing to share his writings about Sky, yet remains cautious about another, more private poem inspired heavily by Mr. Myers's works. His apprehension about having borrowed some of the author's words reflects both his admiration for the poem and his fear of overstepping creative boundaries.

These entries capture Jack's evolution from a shy, budding poet to someone who not only finds solace and strength in poetry but also develops a deeper understanding of his emotions and connections to those around him, particularly through the memory of his cherished dog, Sky, and the influence of literary inspirations.

Date Range	Summary
March 1	Jack is enthusiastic about writing a visual poem about a dog, suggesting it should be perfectly typed and printed on yellow paper.
March 7	Jack feels embarrassed about the class's positive response to his tree poem, while he is curious about another anonymous poet in the class.
March 14	Jack draws inspiration from Mr. Walter Dean Myers's poem "Love That Boy," experiencing a significant connection and accidentally damaging a library book page while engaged with the poem.
March 22	Jack vividly describes his fond memories with his dog Sky, showcasing their playful and affectionate bond.
March 27	Jack reflects on his desire to share poems about Sky while hesitating over another piece inspired by Mr. Myers, noting the tension between admiration and creative originality.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Embracing Vulnerability

**Critical Interpretation:** In this chapter, Jack's journey teaches us a valuable lesson about embracing vulnerability as he opens himself up to sharing his poetic work. Initially timid and guarded, Jack gradually learns to embrace his feelings and creativity, connecting deeply with the vivid memory of his beloved dog, Sky. When you allow yourself to be vulnerable, like Jack, you unlock new avenues of self-expression and personal growth, cultivating a deeper understanding of your own emotions and forming meaningful connections to others and experiences. This courage to open up, even if it means sharing raw feelings, can lead to profound healing and discovery. Jack's story inspires us to fearlessly explore our creative instincts and cherish the bonds that shape our lives.



## Chapter 3 Summary: 8

In these chapters, we follow the thoughts and emotional journey of a young boy named Jack, who becomes deeply inspired by the works of Walter Dean Myers, a renowned author. Jack's admiration and connection to Myers's writing spark a desire in him to express himself through poetry, using Myers's words as inspiration. However, Jack is worried that others might see his work as mere copying instead of a tribute, but he feels reassured when his teacher titles the poem as "Inspired by Walter Dean Myers."

Jack's fascination with Myers grows, prompting him to wonder if Myers is still alive and if he might visit their school. Despite his excitement, Jack anxiously hides his poem out of fear that Myers might disapprove. Jack hesitates to contact Myers directly, believing that a teacher, with their eloquence and mastery of language, would be more suited to write to a distinguished author.

Eventually, on April 17, Jack musters the courage to draft a heartfelt letter to Myers, albeit filled with self-doubt. He imagines the writer's daily life filled with obstacles like household chores and family responsibilities, and how little time is left for writing. Jack humbly asks if Myers might visit their school, promising a warm welcome, including homemade brownies from their teacher, Miss Stretchberry.



Awaiting a response, Jack feels a mix of hope and impatience. When he learns about the lengthy process of mail reaching an author through a publisher, his excitement dwindles. Jack feels that it may take months, or perhaps even years, for Myers to read his letter. This realization dampens his hope, and Jack resigns himself to the possibility that he may never receive a response.

Despite trying to distract himself, Jack finds that the idea of Myers responding keeps resurfacing in his mind, like an itch that won't go away. His youthful enthusiasm is tempered with a realistic understanding of the world, highlighting a deep craving for connection and validation from a role model he admires.

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## Chapter 4: 9

The narrator, an enthusiastic young student, navigates their burgeoning relationship with words and the world of literature throughout May. On May 2, the student is hesitant to sign their name on their writing because it feels like a jumble of spontaneous, unfiltered thoughts—not yet something coherent or noteworthy.

By May 7, their curiosity leads them to explore the digital world, expressing a desire to learn how to use a computer. They are fascinated by its capabilities, especially the spell-check feature described as a “miracle little brain,” and seek to enhance their typing skills with hopes of their fingers keeping pace with their racing thoughts. The student's excitement grows on May 8, with anticipation for a typing tutor program to improve their skills.

On May 14, a poignant, self-typed piece narrates a tragic moment. The student recalls playing in the street with friends and their dog, Sky, when a speeding car, inattentive to the happiness on the street, collides with Sky. The aftermath is heart-wrenching, leaving the student and their father helpless, watching as Sky takes his last breath.

Despite their concerns on May 15 and 17 about sharing this emotional story, fearing it may bring sadness, there is a tentative decision to share it, hoping an antidote of chocolate brownies might uplift spirits. This blending of



vulnerability and hope marks the student's journey in using their voice and sharing their story.

By May 21, excitement replaces sorrow with news of a visit from the esteemed author and poet, Mr. Walter Dean Myers. The student's excitement

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## Chapter 5 Summary: 10

In the span of a few days, a young student named Jack is inspired profoundly by a visit from the acclaimed author and poet, Mr. Walter Dean Myers. The narrative captures Jack's overwhelming admiration and gratitude towards Mr. Myers, who made a lasting impression on the students with his engaging presence and powerful readings.

On June 1, Jack is mesmerized by Mr. Myers's ability to connect with the students through his commanding and warm voice. Jack describes how every part of his being was electrified and how he wished Mr. Myers could stay forever, a testimony to the author's impact.

By June 6, Jack, with heartfelt sincerity, pens a letter to Mr. Myers, expressing his gratitude for the author's visit. Jack appreciates Mr. Myers's dedication to taking time out from his professional and personal life to engage with their classroom. Jack is delighted by the way Mr. Myers read his poems, making it an unforgettable experience. Mr. Myers's deep and friendly voice and infectious laugh left a reassuring warmth among the students.

Jack fondly recalls the way Mr. Myers graciously answered numerous questions from the students, displaying patience and encouragement. The author's openness—even offering flattery to those who might use and adapt



his words—was particularly invigorating to Jack, inspiring him to write his own poetry. Jack even takes the brave step of sharing a poem he authored, incorporating some of Mr. Myers's words, and describes how this inspiration stems from Mr. Myers himself.

The visit also included personal moments, such as Mr. Myers reading poems on the classroom bulletin board, including a poignant one about Jack's dog, Sky, who had tragically passed away. Jack even humorously ensures that Mr. Myers enjoyed the brownies they had prepared.

Accompanying the letter is a poem titled "Love That Dog," written by Jack and inspired by Walter Dean Myers. The poem reflects Jack's adoration for his late pet, Sky, and exemplifies the emotional connection and newfound zeal for poetry that Mr. Myers has instilled in him.

Through these interactions, Sharon Creech's narrative in "Hate That Cat" showcases how influential encounters with role models and literary figures can ignite creativity and passion in young minds, celebrating the bond between student and mentor.



## Chapter 6 Summary: 11

In the series of journal entries, we are introduced to Jack, a young student in Miss Stretchberry's class. Jack kicks off with a poem outlining his disdain for a cat, declaring his hatred for the creature with an intensity reminiscent of classic animosities, like that between dogs and rats. However, he then quickly backpedals, realizing that his teacher likes cats and even owns one herself, which makes Jack reconsider his expression of dislike.

As Jack progresses through the first few days of his new school year, he is confronted with the challenge of revisiting poetry. He fears that he may not remember last year's lessons or that his mind might have "shrunk," making it harder to keep up. Despite his apprehensions, Jack expresses gratitude for having Miss Stretchberry as his teacher again. He appreciates that she understands how his mind works, and he even hopes she continues to move up in grades with him to have her guidance ongoing.

While grappling with a personal loss, Jack initially refuses to write about his beloved, late dog, Sky, fondly recalling the happy moments they shared and lamenting that all his words about Sky have already been used. Instead, Jack considers writing about a "mean cat," perhaps reflecting his lingering frustrations and unresolved feelings towards writing poetry.

Adding to Jack's frustration, his Uncle Bill, a college teacher, dismisses



Jack's heartfelt words about Sky as not being real poetry since they lack rhyme, meter, and other literary elements like symbolism and metaphor. Uncle Bill's critique provokes Jack's anger, making the young boy question his writing style and validity.

Throughout these entries, Jack grapples with how to write his poetry – whether to use the long lines that Uncle Bill suggests or stick to his preferred short lines that feel more natural. He struggles with adhering to traditional poetic rules and fears that longer lines make reading cumbersome. Miss Stretchberry, however, reassures Jack by supporting individual expression through “our own rhythms” and “IMAGES.” She encourages Jack to focus on the essence of his words, reinforcing his unique voice. Jack finds comfort in Miss Stretchberry's understanding, even if Uncle Bill remains skeptical.

Encouraged by his teacher, Jack decides to tackle learning tricky terms like alliteration and onomatopoeia. Although initially daunting and seemingly essential to forming enriched poetry, he realizes that creativity stems from having a subject to write about, not just randomly using poetic devices. Despite his playful mishaps with terminology, Jack gains a clearer perspective on the art of poetry, balancing his growth as an aspiring young poet.



# Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** creativity stems from having a subject to write about

**Critical Interpretation:** In the hustle of daily life, remember that the heart of creativity lies in passion, not just technique. Inspiration doesn't come from piecing random poetic devices; it arises from subjects that genuinely stir your emotions. Just like Jack's journey of understanding poetry, aligning your thoughts with subjects you care about sparks ingenuity and clarity. Embrace your unique perspectives, and let your natural voice be guided by genuine interests, allowing your creativity to soar beyond structured norms, rules, or critiques. Focus on expressing emotions and aspirations dear to you, making creativity enriching and meaningful.

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