

One of Australia's most popular writers—before he died in 1938—was given a very long name at birth: Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis. He's much better known as C.J. Dennis.

By 1917, Dennis was doing well and had become Australia's most-prosperous poet. A prolific writer, he sometimes wrote in dialect—like his still-famous work *The Sentimental Bloke*—and was known as Australia's Robert Burns.

This clip—featuring scenes from a one-man show based on *Sentimental Bloke*—provides some background on C.J. Dennis ... a man who liked to write poems infused with humor.

He also wrote poems infused with excitement. Take "The Circus," for example, which appears in *A Book for Kids* (published in 1921).

This famous poem is infused with love for the big top and all of its exciting exhibits. In twelve lines of poetry, Dennis uses fourteen exclamation points. That's one way to communicate excitement.

*Hey, there! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!
Have you seen the elephant? Have you seen the clown?
Have you seen the dappled horse gallop round the ring?
Have you seen the acrobats on the dizzy swing?
Have you seen the tumbling men tumble up and down?
Hoop-la! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!*

*Hey, there! Hoop-la! Here's the circus troupe!
Here's the educated, dog jumping through the hoop.
See the lady Blondin with the parasol and fan,
The lad upon the ladder and the india-rubber man.
See the joyful juggler and the boy who loops the loop.
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Here's the circus troupe!*

The narrator of this poem urges everyone to join the fun. "Seize the day," he seems to say. Get out there and do it! Why miss one of the greatest shows that will come to town?

To whom is the poet directing his questions? It seems as though it could be anyone within earshot. Have you seen it? If not ... get going!

Beyond the circus itself, and all the happiness it brings to its spectators, this poem just might have a deeper meaning. Is it a metaphor for life? Does it urge us to jump in and participate - not just at a circus but into life itself?

One could make a good argument that it does precisely that.

Credits:

Clip from "The Australians - The Bloke" (1980), featuring John Derum andn C. J. Dennis, online courtesy Gezza1967's Channel at YouTube.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/C.J.-Dennis-The-Circus)

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