Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths by Josée Masse, Marilyn Singer", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/927. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Josée Masse , Marilyn Singer

Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths

United States of America (2015)

TAGS: Arachne Arcadia Atalanta Athena Bellerophon Chimera / Chimaera Daedalus Demeter Echo Eurydice Galatea Gods Golden Touch Hades Hero(es) Icarus Labyrinth Medusa Melanion / Milanion Midas Minotaur Narcissus Olympus Orpheus Pandora Pandora's Box Pegasus Persephone Perseus Pygmalion Theseus Venus Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America, Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Marilyn Singer, *Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015, 32 pp.
ISBN	9780803739925
Awards	2016 – NCTE Notable Book; 2016 – NYPL Best Books of the Year; 2016 – SLJ Best Books of the Year.
Genre	Adaptations, Illustrated works, Myths, Poetry
Target Audience	Children (Recommended for readers aged 6–9; potential appeal for a wider audience)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Josée Masse (Illustrator)

French Canadian illustrator Josée Masse grew up in an artistic household. Her father was a painter and she spent many hours painting with him in his studio. She studied Graphic Design in Montreal and worked in that area before becoming a full time illustrator of children's books. She has collaborated with Marilyn Singer on her three collections of reverse poems, as well as Jane Yolen on *Thunder Underground* (2017). Her latest book is *Good Night, Oliver Wizard* (2019), written by Rebecca Kai Dotlich.

Sources:

Bio (accessed: December 10, 2019)

Official website (accessed: December 10, 2019)

Portfolio at painted-words.com (accessed: December 10, 2019)

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com



Marilyn Singer by Sonya Sones, retrieved from Wikipedia(accessed:

Marilyn Singer , b. 1948 (Author)

Born in the Bronx in New York City, Marilyn Singer spent much of her childhood on Long Island. She says "I was a lucky kid in that my family always read to me a lot, and what I liked most were tales, myths, and poems. I loved their magic, images, and wordplay." She went on to study a Bachelor of Arts at Queen's College in New York and at

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January 7, 2022).

Reading University in England, and later obtained a Master of Arts in Communications from New York University. She taught English in New York high schools through the 1970s before beginning to write stories, as well as teaching guides, film notes and catalogues. Her first book, *The Dog Who Insisted He Wasn't*, was published in 1976, and she has since published over a hundred books for children spanning a variety of genres, fantasy and realistic novels, mysteries, short stories, picture books, fiction and non fiction. She is credited with the invention of the reverso poem, and published three books in which they feature: *Mirror Mirror* (2010), *Follow Follow* (2013) and *Echo Echo* (2016).

Sources:

Official website (accessed: December 10, 2019)

Marilyn Singer, *Reverso Poetry: Writing Verse in Reverse*, readbrightly.com (accessed: December 9, 2019)

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Additional information

Summary

Echo Echo is an anthology of fourteen palindromic poems retelling the standard heroic and moral tales from the corpus of myth, including Pandora's Box, Midas and the Golden Touch, Daedalus and Icarus, Theseus and the Minotaur, Perseus and Medusa, Bellerophon and Pegasus, Demeter and Persephone, Orpheus and Eurydice, Arachne, and Atalanta, alongside less regularly retold stories drawn from Ovid, including Pygmalion and Galatea, and Echo and Narcissus. The first poem in the collection, entitled *An Age of Marvelous Myths*, and the final entry, *Gods and Mortals*, both celebrate the enduring impact of classical mythology on our collective imagination.

Analysis

In the *About this Book* epilogue, Singer describes the structure of the reverso poem, "a poetry form I invented", and guides readers on how to read and make sense of them:

"A reverso consists of two poems. You read the first poem top to bottom. Then, you read the poem again with the lines reversed, with changes only in punctuation and capitalization, and that second poem says something completely different. It may be spoken by the same character at a different point of time or with a different point of view, or – in this collection – it may be spoken by another character altogether."

The book's graphic design accords with the reversals and mirroring of the written text. The pages on which the poems appear are divided vertically and are coloured half white, half bright blue. Masse's lavish, romantic illustrations – dominated by shades of blue, green and gold – reflect this division. In some cases, they illustrate two moments within the same myth. The story of Bellerophon, for example, is accompanied by an image of the hero soaring high on Pegasus above the fire-breathing, three-headed Chimaera on the left hand side of the page. On the right, Bellerophon has tumbled off the back of Pegasus and is in freefall. The unattainable palace of Mount Olympus stands on top of a cloud whose shape resembles the monstrous Chimaera.

Other pages depict a single moment from dual perspectives. In the retelling of the myth of Perseus and Medusa, the two halves of the illustration place each character in the foreground, with their enemy

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	behind them. The reverse poem reflects this relationship in textual terms. The poem on the left articulates Perseus' perspective: "I am the chosen | one to rid the world of you nasty creatures." In reverse, it is Medusa who speaks: "I am the chosen | stone-hearted monster." These contrasting representations offer readers a complex portrait of the characters of mythology, highlighting that there is always more than one side to a story. While some of the poems are more successful than others, and there are moments of meaningless repetition, the book is astoundingly clever and visually stunning. The unique poetic form helps to convey the lyrical quality of the myths and their performative origins. The notion of the echo is employed as a rich metaphor for the reverberation of mythic stories through the ages. The final poem in the collection balances aetiology "These myths | make sense of | the world" with resonance "We, | the world, | make sense of | these myths.'"The accompanying illustration combines a scene in which Hermes, Pan and other mythic characters cavort, with a parade of children entering a door within a giant book.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Arachne Arcadia Atalanta Athena Bellerophon Chimera / Chimaera Daedalus Demeter Echo Eurydice Galatea Gods Golden Touch Hades Hero(es) Icarus Labyrinth Medusa Melanion / Milanion Midas Minotaur Narcissus Olympus Orpheus Pandora Pandora's Box Pegasus Persephone Perseus Pygmalion Theseus Venus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Appearances Character traits Emotions Heroism Joy of reading Storytelling Subjectivity Tradition Values
Addenda	Illustrated collection of Greek myths rendered in reverso poetry.

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