

The Bully



She's big.

She's smart.

She's mean.

She's the bully on the bus.

She picks on me and I don't like it.

But

I don't know

how to make her

stop.

Eeeeeeeomph.

Like a clumsy camel
I stagger ... stumble ...
sprawl flat on my face
as the bus crowd
claps and cheers.
But not Ruby
or me.

Most of all, the bully hurts me with her words.

They spew out
of her mouth like
lava from a volcano.
Red-hot, dangerous words,
burning right down, deep inside.

‘Everybody knows, that Leroy picks his nose,’
the bully chants.
‘Picker-Licker Leroy, he’s the Booger-Boy.’
And everyone laughs ...
except Ruby
and me.

The bully is mean.

But
I don't know
how to make her
stop.

Big Bully

The bully is
bigger than Ruby,
much bigger than me,
as big as my mum,
but not as big as Dad.



She doesn't go to our school –
goes to high school,
doesn't like school,
says it's stupid
and for dummies.

I like school!

Show and tell,
have a go,
words I know,
reading groups,
playing shops
with my friends –
Mrs Wilson's
Superkids!

The bully says she's quitting school
and *never going back!*

She wants to be a hairdresser;
work fulltime at the salon
where she works on weekends;
gets her hair done
for free.

She says, 'Soon there'll be
no more school – ever!'

But until then she's

still

on

the

bus

with

me.

Yes You

'DJ – stop teasing the little kids,'
the bus driver says.

'Who me?'
she asks, as sweet and soft as fairy floss.
'I didn't do a thing.'

She pulls my hair
then flicks my ear
and when I turn around she growls,
'Face the front.
I've seen enough of your
ugly face.'

Sometimes the bully makes my eyes cry.

'Look at the baby,'
she says to the other kids.
'Cry-Baby Leroy – did you forget your dummy?'

‘Leave my brother alone,’
Ruby says.
‘He’s not hurting you.’

‘Shut up!’
snaps the bully
as she turns around to snarl
at Ruby
and her friends
three rows back.
‘It’s none of your
business, Roo-bee.
Little girls in grade five
shouldn’t tell high school kids
what to do!’

Then she spins around,
jabs her finger
at me,
shakes her
shaggy orange mane
and roars,

'WHAT
ARE **YOU**
LOOKING
AT?'

Bus Driver



Sometimes
in the afternoon,
when we wait for all the kids
to get out of school and onboard,
the bus driver turns around
in his seat for a chat.

He's like my grandad –
not much hair on his head,
but it's in his ears and up his nose
instead.

The driver likes it when I tell him
what the *Superkids* have been learning.
'Mrs Wilson's a good teacher,' he says.
I tell him I know that!

Sometimes
the driver tells me about
when he was a boy,
and he rode
bareback to school

with his brothers and sister
on an old horse
called Youngen.

But when the bus door shuts
and the engine starts,
the driver switches off.

‘I can’t be chatting while I’m driving,’
he says, eyes on the road, as we start to roll.
‘It’s a big responsibility getting all you kids
home safe.’

And he’s back in his own world,
facing forwards,
blocking out
bus kid noises
and I’m trapped.

Don’t feel **safe**
going **home**
with the bully
on the bus.

The Wheels on the Bus

*The wheels on the bus
go round and round
all the way to
home.*

‘The Baby on the bus goes,
“Wah! Wah! Wah!”’
the bully bellows, pointing at me
as the bus crowd choruses the cries,
‘Wah! Wah! Wah!’
louder and louder until
‘Wah! Wah! Wah!’
The bus driver thunders,
‘Stop that racket!’
and everyone screams laughing,
except Ruby
and me.

Blood thumps
loud and hot
in my chest,
 head,
 ears,
and the wheels on the bus go
round and round
much
too
slow
for

me.

Drop Offs

Bus stops

door opens

kids off

goodbye chorus.

Door closes

stories chopped

words flung

through windows.

Bus moves

pulls away

driving off

leaving kids

silent actors

miming words.

On the bus

faces pressed

to the glass

calling out,

'I can't *hear* you!'

And the driver
 changing gears
 doesn't hear,
 doesn't want to,
in a world
 of his own,
 eyes the road
 straight ahead.
Does his job.
 Drives the bus.
 Drops the kids
 home safe.

Into the Blue



I hunch down low
in my seat and watch
farms flick past.

Cows,
fences,
trees,
branches reaching high
to the sky,
birds flying
free.

I wish I could climb
to the top of the tallest tree
then step out into
the cool blue sky

and fly

away from the bully

words,

kids,

tears.

But I'm trapped
on the bus
in my seat
with the bully
right behind me –
bubbling,
boiling,
burning
to explode

at me.