

Jackson, Rob. *Animal Mischief*. Illus. by Laura Jacobsen. 2006. 32p. Boyds Mills/Wordsong, \$15.95 (1-59078-254-2). 811.

Gr. 2–4. Biologist Rob Jackson shares both his knowledge of animals and his way with words in this collection of 18 short, witty poems. A typical selection zeroes in on a particular species and comments on some aspect of its appearance or behavior. Though Jackson uses rhythm and rhyme effectively throughout the book, the verse forms vary a bit from poem to poem. Rhyming couplets abound. “Manners” is a limerick: “When the archerfish first learned to spit / His parents were instantly split / One sent him to bed / But the other one said, / ‘Just look at the bug junior hit!’” Four appended pages called “Fun Facts” carry an illustrated paragraph about each of a dozen featured species. Younger readers may find the vocabulary more challenging in this section, which ideally would be shared with an adult. Appealing colored-pencil artwork reflects the light tone of the verse. Books of animal poems are not hard to find, but few so successfully integrate zoology with amusing verse. —*Carolyn Phelan*