

NOTES

A Man and His Watermelon is a narrative poem written and performed by the legendary Jackie Vernon, who is perhaps best-known to younger generations as the voice of *Frosty* in the iconic, animated television show, *Frosty the Snowman*. This selection should be performed by a male and be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Jackie Vernon was a popular comedian, and he performed this poem many times before live audiences; therefore, a performer may also choose to enter this selection in Humorous Interpretation. Along with the underlying innocence of the narrator, the beauty of this poem lies in its undeniable dry sense of humor. Play that humor; however, do not overplay it. If delivered correctly, the poem itself will do most of the work for the performer. There are several characters found within this poem. Make each character clear, distinct, and vocally unique for the audience. The drama mask icons simply serve as suggestions for when to turn the pages in the manuscript. Ultimately, this poem is about searching for a companion; however, as Aristotle once wrote, “Wishing to be friends is quick work, but true friendship is a slow, ripening fruit.”

I was discovered by Dean Rusk.

I was selling watermelons in the back of a truck
And Mister Rusk was passing by
And I had a beautiful tenor voice in those days:
“Watermel-ons!”

And he said,
“Would you do that again?”

And I said,
“Sure, Mister Rusk.
Watermel-ons!”

He took my name and address.
Said he had a lot of connections.
He also purchased this huge watermelon
We had in the back of the truck
We never expected to sell.
It was one of those freaky watermelons.
We used to sit on it.
And carve out tic-tac-toe games on it.

A Man and His Watermelon

By Jackie Vernon

I said,
“Gee, Mister Rusk,
That’s a big watermelon you’re buying.
Having a party or something?”

He said,
“No, I’m buying it as a pet.”

And I didn’t say anything.
I figured, well, to each his own, you know.



I finally did get into show business myself
And for years I traveled all over the country
Working small, small nightclubs.
And being shy and introverted by nature,
I didn’t have too many friends.
I’d get very lonely.
And one night
I was sitting in a small dingy hotel room
In Peoria, Illinois,
Feeling lonely and desperate for companionship.
I thought back to those days on the watermelon truck
And Dean Rusk and his pet.
So I wondered if maybe
He didn’t have something there.
As I said,
I was desperate enough to try anything.



I walked around town
And found a little fruit store.
They had the watermelons piled up outside.
I kind of browsed around the watermelons.
I was trying to feel a rapport with one of them.
I was about to give it all up
When I noticed this one watermelon
Was winking at me.
And I bought that watermelon.
I felt kind of silly
As I was taking it up the elevator to my room.
But I figured,