



## The Alligator in the Closet

### Marilyn Courtot - Children's Literature

Harrison has taken his inspiration from objects that one typically finds around the house. The opening poem, "The Guest in the Pantry," gives us a peek into the life of a little mouse who lives in a tissue box on the shelf. Believe it or not, I too had a little mouse that decided to make a nest using the tissues in a box in one of my cupboards — so I know just how it goes. However, I am not quite so sanguine and did not consider it as just a little friend or pet, but rather something that I wanted quickly removed from my house. Soft pen and ink and watercolor illustrations are spread across the pages of this book, and the one accompanying this particular poem is really a delight. The little mouse looks quite happy under his little tissue blanket. Some of the poems will lend themselves to performance calling for two voices, particularly "Tock Talk," "The Thermostat Wars," "Who Was That? I Don't Know," and "The Alligator in the Closet" which is the title for the collection. Others can be read aloud or just savored alone. This collection will amuse young readers and bring smiles to adults. "Company's Coming" and "The Dust Man" are definitely ones that would appeal more to adults. However, kids will laugh because they too are frequently involved in the mad scurry to clean up things when company is due to arrive. This is a collection that will work in any library. It also can lend itself to supporting potential lessons for kids to try their hand at writing a poem about something as commonplace as their bed, chair, favorite place to read, and the like. 2003, Wordsong/Boyd's Mills Press,