



**NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T
[STARRED REVIEW!]**

Poems About Creatures That Hide

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Nineteen different animals, placed in five animal categories, are represented first by artwork and poetry and finally by brief paragraphs and references for further reading. The poems are graceful and often humorous, giving good introductions to the reasons behind each animal's protective coloration. The illustrations, which involve "drawing, cutting, painting, and gluing," likewise effectively convey how camouflage works, without pretense of photorealism. The categories—sea life, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, insects and spiders, and birds—reveal a wide variety of animals, from ghost crab to Bengal tiger, walking stick to hawk. An especially funny but accurate poem is the double-page spread about the copperhead, whose letter to "Mr. Vole" is full of sibilance, reinforced in a literal sense: "Find me / if you can, / my sssskin / deceivesss, / helpssss me / dissssappear." The accompanying art shows the mottled, coppery serpent under a scattering of autumn leaves. In contrast, a fawn hides, scentless, "saved by fawny / polka dots / that blend with / gentle sunny spots." The text educates young readers about useful camouflage for predators and for prey, without resorting to anything truly disturbing. Other than a "buzzy fly" becoming "fast food" for a spider and some tiny fish disappearing, predators are shown as merely threatening, and prey are shown as successfully hiding. Endnotes, cover, and layout all add to a thoughtful, well-executed book. An attractive, informative blend of science and the arts. (Informational picture book/poetry. 5-10)