

You Can't Be That by Brian Patten

I told them:
When I grow up
I'm not going to be a scientist
Or someone who reads the news on TV.
No, a million birds will fly through me.
I'M GOING TO BE A TREE.

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I told them:
When I grow up
I'm not going to be an airline pilot,
A dancer, a lawyer or an MC.
No, huge whales will swim in me.
I'M GOING TO BE AN OCEAN!

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I told them:
I'm not going to be a DJ,
A computer programmer, a musician or beautician.
No, streams will flow through me, I'll be the home of eagles;
I'll be full of nooks, crannies, valleys and fountains.
I'M GOING TO BE A RANGE OF MOUNTAINS!

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I asked them:
Just what do you think I am?
Just a child, they said,
And children always become
At least one of the things
We want them to be.

They do not understand me.
I'll be a stable if I want, smelling of fresh hay,
I'll be a lost glade in which unicorns still play.
They do not realize I can fulfill any ambition.
They do not realize among them
walks a magician.



Name:	Class:	Date:
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1 Is the narrator of this poem an adult or a child?
Explain how you know.

2d

1 mark

2 Why do you think the narrator does not name “them” or say who “they” are?

2g

1 mark

3 The poem is divided into verses.
Choose **two** reasons why the poet starts a new verse.

A different person is speaking.

It looks good on the page.

Poems need verses.

Each verse is a maximum of six lines long.

Longer verses introduce new ideas.

2f

2 marks

4 “They do not realise among them walks a magician.”
Who is the magician?

2d

1 mark

5 Look at all the things the speaker says he wants to be. Write **one** thing they all have in common.

2c

1 mark

6 What do you think is the poet’s message to children in this poem?
Explain **two** ideas, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

2d

3 marks