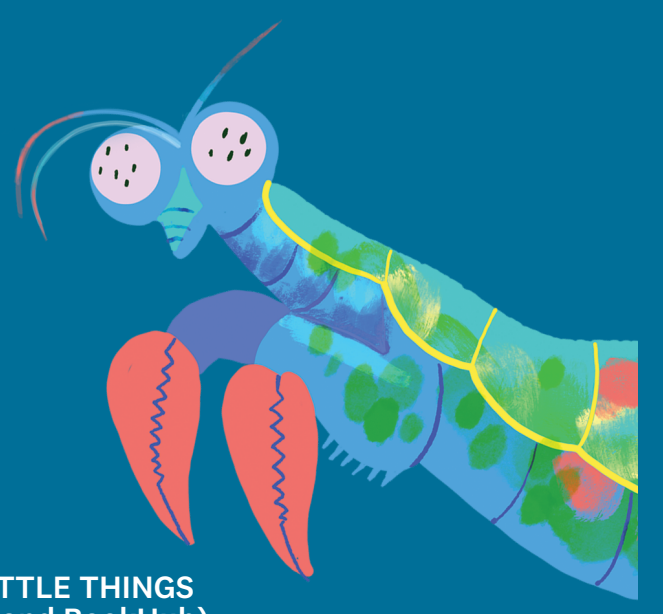
Peacock Mantis Shrimp

A flurry of colour, scuttling down deep,
In ocean floor burrows, you'll find them asleep.
They're just teeny tiny, a few inches long.
Some think they look harmless,
But they would be wrong.
This rainbow hued critter, while only a shrimp,
Is far from a meek and defenceless wee wimp.
Its front claws are clubs and while hunting for lunch,
Quick as a flash it delivers a punch,
That's fifty times faster than you and I blink -
Enough to break glass.
Pretty neat, don't you think?
So watch out intruders, mollusks and crabs
For this coloured crustacean's mighty swift jabs.
That isn't all that this creature can do,
It also sees colours quite foreign to you
And rather than looking in front or behind,
Its eyes can see both all at once, you will find.
Stealthy and strong with the sharpest eyesight
Who says you need size to give others a fright?



Joint Winner of the 2025 Phantom Billstickers National Poetry Day BIG THINGS, LITTLE THINGS Poetry for Children Competition run by the Poets XYZ (also supported by SLANZA and BookHub).

PHANTOM BILLSTICKERS NATIONAL POETRY DAY

Amanda McKenzie is a children's writer and poet from Aotearoa. She lives in the small but spectacular seaside village of Haumoana, with her two children, husband and cat. Amanda loves libraries, reading and language. She writes poetry for children because it's heaps of fun (and children give her much more thoughtful feedback than her cat). Her poetry has been published on The Dirigible Balloon. You can find her playing with words and nattering about children's books that she loves on Instagram @theplaypoet.