

## Children's Literature Reviews

Item 60 of 130

---

### Potato Joe

Keith Baker.

*Cataloging in Publication*

Orlando : Harcourt, 2008.

p. cm.

### Annotations:

Joe finds all sorts of uses for the potatoes in the familiar nursery rhyme, "One Potato, Two Potato."

### Best Books:

[Kirkus Book Review Stars, May 1, 2008](#) ; United States

[Publishers Weekly Book Review Stars, June 16, 2008](#) ; Cahners; United States

### Horn Book Guide:

Fall 2008 Preschool Rating 3, Recommended, satisfactory in style, content, and/or illustration.

### Reviews:

#### **Gwynne Spencer (Children's Literature)**

This book will grow on you like...potatoes and dirt! It is a take-off on the old counting-out rhyme. (Note: The rhyme is not in the text, so you might want to brush up on it before you read this book aloud to kids--which you will love doing.) Like Baker's *Hickory Dickory Dock* and *Big Fat Hen*, this book takes old rhymes to new places and features nice big print for little readers to enjoy. Potato Joe (who has brown eyes, just two of them) comes up with new uses for his potato-pals, including tic tac toe and some snow covered tiers followed by a rodeo with some do-si-do action. How about a tall potato pile (would the Brits call it a rugby scrum?), a celebration of roundness with Tomato Flo and Watermelon Moe and a final journey back to the garden, back to the rich cool dirt, "where we potatoes grow." This would pair nicely with *Two Old Potatoes and Me* by John Coy or Cynthia de Felice's *One Potato Two Potato* (which is actually a "little pot that wouldn't stop" story) and could be followed by engaging kids in a potato patch activity planting potatoes. As a food lesson, it would be great fun to introduce purple potatoes, fingerling potatoes, Yukon golds and little round reds, but Potato Joe looks like a russet to me. You could use this to teach a counting lesson, some art, some history of potatoes, even ordinals and cardinal numbers using Potato Joe and his pals. The endpapers of the book are a velvety rich brown, the pages feature enticing brown dirt under a sky that changes page by page from green to purple to blue to yellow over and over until the final scene, in which the welcoming brown dirt takes over the page. Keith Baker, a very tall artist and writer, visits schools and libraries. His website, keithbaker.com has all the details. We must mention that no potatoes were harmed in the making of this book! 2008, Harcourt, \$16.00. Ages 3 to 8.

#### **Kirkus (Kirkus Reviews, May 1, 2008 (Vol. 76, No. 9))**

Lively potatoes frisk and frolic across the page in this lighthearted counting book that expands on the familiar rhyme, "One potato, two potato." Popping out of the dirt, Potato Joe initiates the rhyme with his "one potato" call and is joined by a second potato echoing "two potato." As more potato pals join in, they add to the count as they fall into a tic-tac-toe formation, line up in a row and spot a "big black crow." The growing potato pile is covered in snow as it continues the count to ten at which point ten brown spuds sporting cowboy hats are lassoed into a rodeo to do-si-do. Eventually the playful potato pack makes way for Tomato Flo and Watermelon Moe before rolling back into the dirt in descending numerical order. Simple illustrations starring the rotund tubers in assorted shapes, sizes and tones of brown against plain pastel backgrounds prove amazingly expressive and active as Potato

Joe and his gang get down and dirty maneuvering through the count. Spunky spuds with appeal. 2008, Harcourt, 40p, \$16.00. Category: Picture book. Ages 3 to 7. Starred Review. © 2008 Kirkus Reviews/VNU eMedia, Inc. All rights reserved.

**Horn Book (The Horn Book Guide, Fall 2008)**

The vaunted tuberous root vegetable gets its due in this illustrated salute. Using the classic children's rhyme "One potato, two potato" as his springboard, layered with an improvisational rhythm, Baker incorporates other words that rhyme with potato ("tic-tac-toe," "big black crow"). The wonderfully cheeky spreads feature ten smiling potatoes bopping in the dirt, with cameos by fellow garden-grown friends. Category: Preschool. 2008, Harcourt, 40pp, \$16.00 (hb). *Ages 2 to 5*. Rating: 3: Recommended, satisfactory in style, content, and/or illustration.

**Jill West (The Lorgnette - Heart of Texas Reviews (Vol. 21, No. 1))**

This story is an adaptation of the classic nursery rhyme "One Potato, Two Potato." Potato Joe is the main character; he has nine spud friends that help him count to ten. The potatoes play games and meet with other garden friends. This is a fun counting book with rhyming words, which could be used in a preschool classroom. It would be a great book to use when talking about vegetables and things that grow in a garden. Nonfiction. Grades Preschool-K. 2008, Harcourt, Unpaged., \$16.00. *Ages 2 to 5*.

**Subjects:**

[Nursery rhymes, American.](#)  
[Children's poetry, American.](#)  
[Nursery rhymes.](#)  
[Counting-out rhymes.](#)

**Link to a Web Feature or Search for Other Works by:**

[Baker, Keith, 1953-](#)

**Search for other reviews by:**

[Gwynne Spencer](#)  
[Kirkus](#)  
[Horn Book](#)  
[Jill West](#)

Language	Call Number	LCCN	Dewey Decimal	ISBN/ISSN
English (eng)	PZ8.3.B175 Pot 2008	2007005930	811/.54	9780152062309 (hardcover) 0152062300

View the [MARC Record](#) for this item.

