

Onomatopoeia

(Greek ονοματοποιία, onomatopoeia, from ὄνομα *onoma*, ‘a name’ and ποιέω *poiein*, ‘to make, to produce’ = “to make a name”)

A word that imitates the sound it represents. The word contains sounds similar to the noises it describes.

The Sound Collector

by Roger McGough

A stranger called this morning
Dressed all in black and grey
Put every sound into a bag
And carried them away

The whistling of the kettle
The turning of the lock
The purring of the kitten
The ticking of the clock

The popping of the toaster
The crunching of the flakes
When you spread your marmalade
The scraping noise it makes

The hissing of the frying-pan
The ticking of the grill
The bubbling of the bathtub
As it starts to fill

The drumming of the raindrops
On the window-pane
When you do the washing-up
The gurgle of the drain

The crying of the baby
The squeaking of the chair
The swishing of the curtain
The creaking of the stair

A stranger called this morning
He didn't leave his name
Left us only silence
Life will never be the same.

Match the following sentences to the onomatopoeia that describes them:

a plate being dropped on the floor	tinkle
a balloon being burst	bang
a gun being shot	smash
someone eating crisps	growl
a light being switched on	pop
a fierce dog	crunch
a small bell being rung	click