

Is the Trend of Books in Verse Finished?

The answer always comes back to good writing and finding the right fit for the story you're trying to tell. Here are comments from the editorial and agenting perspectives:

Robin Corey, Executive Editor at Random House:

“Good writing is always in style, no matter what the format or current trends. If the story you're telling calls for verse, I would write it that way—you can always revise it to prose later if you need to. What I would be careful of is writing verse for the sake of writing verse. Free verse novels are not just novels with line breaks, they're poetry and the verse should bring to something to the novel that you wouldn't get if you were telling the same story in prose.”

Tara Weikum, Editorial Director at HarperCollins

“In my opinion, novels in verse have always been difficult to publish successfully—the ones that are great (Ellen Hopkins, Karen Hesse, Sonya Sones etc) rise to the top and find their audience, and many more do not. So I would not say there is a trend that exists or a trend to follow. Write the book in the format that feels natural and that speaks to you, but know that novels in verse always face a bit more of a challenge than a prose novel just because of the nature of the format.”

Erin Murphy, Owner of Erin Murphy Literary Agency

“Personally, I don't think of novels in verse as a trend so much as a steady “sub-format.” I don't come across them very often, but I don't necessarily think the format hinders their success, especially if it's done well and the sparseness matches the story and the appeal to reluctant readers.”