

After The Party

1

Jonathan Blake
Ate too much cake,
He isn't himself today;
He's tucked up in bed
With a feverish head,
And he doesn't much care to play.

Jonathan Blake
Ate too much cake,
And three kinds of ice cream too—
From latest reports
He's quite out of sorts,
And I'm sure the reports are true.

I'm sorry to state
That he also ate
Six pickles, a pie, and a pear;
In fact I confess
It's a reasonable guess
He ate practically everything there.

Yes, Jonathan Blake
Ate too much cake,
So he's not at his best today;
But there's no need for sorrow—
If you come back tomorrow,
I'm sure he'll be out to play.

William Wise

The Arrow And The Song

2

I shot an arrow into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For so swiftly it flew, the sight,
 Could not follow it in its flight.
I breathed a song into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
 That it can follow the flight of song?
Long, long afterward, in an oak,
 I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
 I found again in the heart of a friend.

Henry W Longfellow

At the Garden Gate

3

Who so late at the garden gate?
Emily, Kate, and John.
"John, where have you been? It's after six;
Supper is on,
And you've been gone
An hour,
John!"
"We've been, we've been,
We've just been over
The field," said, John.
(Emily, Kate, and John.)

Who so late at the garden gate?
Emily, Kate, and John.
"John, what have you got?"
"A whopping toad
Isn't he big?
He's a terrible
Load.
(We found him
A little ways
Up the road," said Emily, Kate, and John.)

Who so late at the garden gate?
Emily, Kate, and John.
"John, put that thing down!
Do you want to get warts?"
(They all three have 'em
By last
Reports.)
Still, finding toads
Is the best of
Sports,
Say Emily, Kate, and John.

David McCord

I went to the park
And I bought a balloon.
It sailed through the sky
Like a large orange moon.
It bumped and it fluttered
And swam with the clouds.
Small birds flew around it,
In high chirping crowds.
It bounced and it balanced
And bowed with the breeze.
It skimmed past the leaves
On the tops of the trees.
And then as the day
Started turning to night
I gave a short jump
And I held the string tight
And home we all sailed
Through the darkening sky,
The orange balloon, the small birds,
And I.

Karla Kuskin

Five minutes, five minutes more please!
Let me stay five minutes more!

Can't I just finish the castle
I'm building here on the floor?

Can't I just finish the story
I'm reading here in my book?

Can't I just finish this bead-chain—
It almost is finished, look!

Can't I just finish this game, please!
When a game's once begun

It's a pity never to find out
Whether you've lost or won.

Can't I just stay five minutes?
Well, can't I just stay four?

Three minutes then? two minutes?
Can't I stay one minute more?

Eleanor Farjeon

Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown

6

Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown
Was really the dirtiest boy in town.
He'd play in the mud, and splash in the pool,
When starting out each morning for school.
His teacher said, with a sorry frown,
"You certainly are a disgrace to the town.
Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown."

Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown
Was caught, when policemen were searching the town
To find a bad boy. Said they: "Here's the scamp!
He surely looks like a wild little tramp!"
But as he stood trembling, with tears running down,
Said his clean little sister, in dainty pink gown,
"His name is Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown!"

Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown
Is now without spot, from his soles to his crown.
His shoes are polished—his suit is clean
A neater boy could never be seen.
And teacher says now with a smile, looking down:
"When you've grown, you'll be Mayor of the town,
Bernard Bartholomew Benjamin Brown."

Carolyn Cawthorne

Blessing Of God's Love

7

Each day I thank the Lord above
For these: The blessings of His love,
The emerald grass beneath my feet,
The scent of roses, soft and sweet.
The coolness of a summer breeze,
The sound of birds in budding trees,
The laughter of a child at play,
The golden sun at dawn of day,
The warmth of spring that fills the air,
The fruitful birth where ground was bare.
The waves that dance upon the sea,
The wonder of what life can be;
The love of friends, the joy of birth,
The miracles of Mother Earth,
The winter, summer, spring, and fall,
I thank the Lord I've shared them all.

Patricia Emme

Books Fall Open

8

Books fall open,
you fall in,
delighted where
you've never been;
hear voices not once
heard before,
reach world on world
through door on door;
find unexpected
keys to things
locked up beyond
imaginings.
What might you be,
perhaps become,
because one book
is somewhere? Some
wise delver into
wisdom, wit,
and wherewithal
has written it.
True books will venture,
dare you out,
whisper secrets,
maybe shout
across the gloom
to you in need,
who hanker for
a book to read.

David McCord

The Brook

9

I know a little prattling brook
That chatters all the day;
It always is in such a rush,
With never time to stay.

And yet it seems quite friendly like,
A-babbling this and that;
I do believe 'twould like to stay
And have a cozy chat.

Sometimes it seems so very near,
A-coaxing me to play;
But all the time it's running far,
Just miles and miles away.

Do you suppose the time will come
When I shall ever learn
That brooks keep running on and on
And never do return?

Florence Piper Tuttle

My cat
Is quiet.
She moves without a sound.
Sometimes she stretches herself curving
On tiptoe.
Sometimes she crouches low
And creeping.

Sometimes she rubs herself against a chair,
And there
 With a miew and a miew
 And a purrr purrr purrr
 She curls up
 And goes to sleep.

My cat
Lives through a black hole
Under the house.
So one day I
Crawled after her.
And it was dark
And I sat
And didn't know
Where to go
And then—
Two yellow-white
Round little lights
Came . . . Moving . . . Moving . . . toward me.
And there
With a miew and a miew
 And a purrr purrr purrr

My cat
Rubbed, soft, against me.

 And I knew
 The lights
 Were MY CAT'S EYES
 In the dark.

Cats sleep fat and walk thin.
Cats, when they sleep, slump;
When they wake, pull in—
And where the plump's been
There's skin. Cats walk thin

Cats wait in a lump,
Jump in a streak.
Cats when they jump, are sleek
As a grape slipping its skin—
They have technique.
Oh, cats don't creak.
They sneak.

Cats sleep fat.
They spread comfort beneath them
Like a good mat
As if they picked the place
And then sat.
You walk around one
As if he were the City Hall
After that.

Rosalie Moore

A Child's Prayer

12

God make my life a little light,
 Within the world to glow;
A tiny flame that burneth bright
 Wherever I may go.
God make my life a little flower,
 That giveth joy to all,
Content to bloom in native bower,
 Although its place be small
God make my life a little song,
 That comforteth the sad;
That helpeth others to be strong,
 And makes the singer glad.
God make my life a little staff,
 Whereon the weak may rest,
That so what health and strength I have
 May serve my neighbors best.

M. Bentam Edwards

A Child's Thought Of God

13

They say that God lives very high!
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God. And why?

And if you dig down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold,
Though from Him all that's glory shines.

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love untold.

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things
Through sight and sound of every place:

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lids her kisses' pressure,
Half-waking me at night and said
"Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Once there was an elephant,
Who tried to use the telephant—
No! No! I mean an elephone
Who tried to use the telephone
(Dear me! I am not certain quite
That even now I've got it right.)

Howe'er it was, he got his trunk
Entangled in the telephunk;
The more he tried to get it free,
The louder buzzed the telephee—
(I fear I'd better drop the song
Of elephop and telephong.)

Laura E. Richards

The Elf And The Dormouse

15

Under a toadstool
 Crept a wee Elf
Out of the rain
 To shelter himself.
Under the toadstool,
 Sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse
 All in a heap.
Trembled the wee Elf,
 Frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away
 Lest he get wet.
To the next shelter—
 Maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf
 Smiled a wee smile.
Tugged till the toadstool
 Topped in two.
Holding it over him
 Gaily he flew.
Soon he was safe home
 Dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse—
 “Good gracious me!”
“Where is my toadstool?”
 Loud he lamented.
And that’s how umbrellas
 First were invented.

Oliver Herford

Said the rubber dog with the long straight tail
To the duck with the emerald breast,
“You are very lovely to look upon,
But the baby loves me best.

For she takes my whole head in her mouth,
And I patiently let her chew,
And suck and bite with all her might,
To help her teeth come through.”

Said the emerald duck, “She would never dare
Do such a thing to me,
But she finds me floating in her bath,
And laughs and crows with glee.”

“I’ll tell you what,” said the rubber dog,
“Let us together stand
On the bureau top, and see which one
She first takes in her hand.”

So they took their stand on the bureau top,
And stood there side by side,
The dog held his tail up straight and high,
And the green duck swelled with pride.

Then the baby came on her nurse’s arm,
And their hearts went pit-a-pat,
The baby did not glance at them,
She was hugging the worsted cat!

Mildred Whitney Stillman

Galoshes

17

Susie's galoshes
Make splishes and splashes
And slooshes and sloshes
As Susie steps slowly
Along in the slush.

They stamp and they tramp
On the ice and concrete,
They get stuck in the muck and the mud;
But Susie likes much better to hear

The slippery slush
As it slooshes and sloshes,
And splishes and splashes,
All around her galoshes!

Rhoda Bacmeister

Someday I'm going to have a store
With a tinkly bell hung over the door,
With real glass cases and counters wide
And drawers all spilly with things inside.
There'll be a little of everything;
Bolts of calico; balls of string;
Jars of peppermint; tins of tea;
Pots and kettles and crockery;
Seeds in packets; scissors bright;
Kegs of sugar, brown and white;
Sarsaparilla for picnic lunches,
Bananas and rubber boots in bunches.
I'll fix the window and dust each shelf,
And take the money in all myself.
It will be my store and I will say:
"What can I do for you today?"

Rachel Field

The Gingerbread Man

19

The gingerbread man gave a gingery shout:
“Quick! Open the oven and let me out!”
He stood up straight in his baking pan.
He jumped on the floor and away he ran.
“Catch me,” he called, “if you can, can, can.”

The gingerbread man met a cock and a pig
And a dog that was brown and twice as big
As himself. But he called to them all as he ran,
“You can’t catch a runaway gingerbread man.”

The gingerbread man met a reaper and a sower.
The gingerbread man met a thresher and mower;
But no matter how fast they scampered and ran
They couldn’t catch up with the gingerbread man.

Then he came to a fox and he turned to face him.
He dared Old Reynard to follow and chase him;
But when he stepped under the fox’s nose
Something happened. What do you s’pose?
The fox gave a snap. The fox gave a yawn,
And the gingerbread man was gone, gone, GONE.

Rowena Bennett

Going to Bed

20

I'm always told to hurry up—
Which I'd be glad to do,
If there were not so many things
That need attending to
But first I have to find my towel
Which fell behind the rack
And when a pillow's thrown at me
I have to throw it back.
And then I have to get the things
I need in bed with me
Like marbles and my birthday train
And Pete the chimpanzee.
I have to see my polliwog
Is safely in its pan,
And stand a minute on my head
To be quite sure I can.
I have to bounce upon my bed
To see if it will sink
And then when I am covered up
I find I need a drink

Marchette Chute

Habits Of The Hippopotamus

21

The hippopotamus is strong
And huge of head and broad of bustle;
The limbs on which he rolls along
Are big with hippopotomuscle.
He does not greatly care for sweets
Like ice cream, apple pie, or custard,
But takes to flavor what he eats
A little hippopotomustard.
The hippopotamus is true
To all his principles, and just;
He always tries his best to do
The things one hippopotomust.
He never rides in trucks or trams,
In taxicabs or omnibuses,
And so keeps out of traffic jams
And other hippopotomusses.

Arthur Guiterman

Halfway Down

22

Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
Quite like
It.
I'm not at the bottom
I'm not at the top
So this is the stair
Where
I always
Stop.

Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in the town.
And all sorts of funny
thoughts
Run round my head:
"It isn't really
Anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead!"

A. A. Milne

Have Good Intentions

23

We all have good intentions
As we begin a day,
We're thankful for God's teachings
And we want to walk His way
But in our daily struggles,
We sometimes fail to show
The virtues He has taught us
To those we love and know
So, as you start a busy day,
Be sure to schedule, too,
Some time for caring, sharing,
And a thoughtful deed to do...
And all the love that you bestow,
The kindness that you give,
Will return a hundredfold
To bless the days you live.

Alice Joyce Davidson

I want to know why when I'm late
For school, they get into a state,
But if invited out to tea
I mustn't ever early be.

Why, if I'm eating nice and slow,
It's "Slow-poke, hurry up, you know!"
But if I'm eating nice and quick
It's "Gobble-gobble, you'll be sick!"

Why, when I'm walking in the street
My clothes must always be complete,
While at the seaside I can call
It right with nothing on at all.

Why I must always go to bed
When other people don't instead,
And why I have to say good-night
Always before I'm ready, quite.

John Drinkwater

A Good Play

25

We built a ship upon the stairs,
All made of back-bedroom chairs,
And filled it full of sofa pillows
To go a-sailing on the billows.

We took a saw and several nails,
And water in the nursery pails;
And Tom said, "Let us also take
An apple and a slice of cake";—
Which was enough for Tom and me
To go a-sailing on, till tea.

We sailed along for days
and days, And had the very best of plays;
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,
So there was no one left but me.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Good Morning

26

One day I saw a downy duck,
With feathers on his back;
I said, "Good morning, downy duck,"
And he said, "Quack, quack, quack."

One day I saw a timid mouse,
He was so shy and meek;
I said, "Good morning, timid mouse,"
And he said, "Squeak, squeak, squeak."

One day I saw a curly dog,
I met him with a bow;
I said, "Good morning, curly dog,"
And he said, "Bow-wow-wow."

One day I saw a scarlet bird,
He woke me from my sleep;
I said, "Good morning, scarlet bird,"
And he said, "Cheep, cheep, cheep."

Muriel Sipe

Good Morning

27

Good morning, nurse, good morning, cook,
Good morning, all of you;
Good morning to my picture-book,
And to my window-view,

Good morning to the bird out there
That cannot sing enough,
And to the carpet which my bare
Feet press on, soft and rough.

Good morning to the breakfast smell
That rises from below,
And to the breakfast sound as well
That clatters to and fro.

Good morning, Towzer! Come, let's run,
Jump, shout, and laugh and sing
Good morning to you, every one!
Good morning, everything!

Eleanor Farjeon

How To Write A Letter

28

Maria intended a letter to write,
But could not begin as she thought to indite.
So she went to her mother with pencil and slate,
Containing "Dear Sister," and also a date.

"With nothing to say, my dear girl, do not think
Of wasting your time over paper and ink.
But certainly this is an excellent way,
To try with your slate to find something to say.

"I will give you a rule," said her mother, "my dear,
Just think for a moment your sister is here.
And what would you tell her? Consider, and then
Though silent your tongue, you can speak with your pen.

Elizabeth Turner

I Wish I Was A Little Star

29

Last night I dreamed that I had wings
And flew up in the sky,
I couldn't see our house at all
For I was up too high.
I must have gone a hundred miles,
I know I traveled far,
I didn't know just where I was
Until I touched a star!

And then I said, "Little star,
Please tell me where I am."
The little star said, "Don't you know?
You are in a traffic jam.
All little stars pass this way
When they go to their places,
There are hundreds of tiny stars
With bright and shining faces."

Marching, marching, marching
Glad to light the darkened sky,
I wish I were a little star
So I could live up high!

Edna Hamilton

If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking

30

If I can stop one heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain,
If I can ease one life the aching
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Into his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson

In The Morning

31

I met God in the morning,
When my day was at its best
And His presence came like sunrise
Like a glory in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered.
All day long He stayed with me.
And we sailed with perfect calmness
O're a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered
Other ships were sore distressed.
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings
With a keen remorse of mind,
When I, too, had loosed the moorings
With the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret
Learned from many a troubled way.
You must seek God in the morning
If you want Him through the day.

Ralph Cushman

Jabbering In School**32**

Was that me jabbering?
I expect it was.
It's no use complaining
Why and because;
When you've been jabbering
Teacher doesn't try
To take any interest
In because and why.
I might have seen a heron
Flying in the sun,
Or been telling Jeanie
Her pinny was undone,
I might have been noticing
Something dark and dire,
Like lions in the playground,
Or the curtains on fire,
I might have had a stomach-ache—
Oh, there might have been
Lots of reasons why I
Was jabbering with Jean.
But it's no use explaining
Why and because.
Was that me jabbering?
I expect it was.

Eleanor Farjeon

The Jolly Woodchuck

33

The woodchuck's very very fat
But doesn't care a pin for that.

When nights are long and the snow is deep.
Down in his hole he lies asleep.

Under the earth is a warm little room
The drowsy woodchuck calls his home.

Rolls of fat and fur surround him,
With all his children curled around him,

Snout to snout and tail to tail.
He never awakes in the wildest gale;

When icicles snap and the north wind blows
He snores in his sleep and rubs his nose.

Marion Edey and Dorothy Grider

A Kitten

34

He's nothing much but fur
And two round eyes of blue,
He has a giant purr
And a midget mew.

He darts and pats the air,
He starts and cocks his ear,
When there is nothing there
For him to see and hear.

He runs around in rings,
But why we cannot tell;
With sideways leaps he springs
At things invisible.

Then halfway through a leap
His startled eyeballs close,
And he drops off to sleep
With one paw on his nose.

Eleanor Farjeon

The Kitten And The Falling Leaves**35**

See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall!
Withered leaves, one, two, and three,
From the lofty elder-tree.
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly. One might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Some small fairy, hither tending,
To this lower world descending.

—But the kitten, how she starts!
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow.
Just as light, and just as yellow.
There are many now—now—one—
Now they stop and there are none,
What intentness of desire
In her upturned eye of fire!
With a tiger leap halfway,
Now she meets the coming prey.
Lets it go at last, and then
Has it in her power again.

William Wordsworth

Little Tiger Cat

36

Little Tiger Cat with the spotted face,
Do you think you've found a baby-jungle place?
Going through the grass, stealthily and slow,
Are you waiting to jump out and scare the folks you know?
And send them running to the house as fast as they can go?
Little Tiger Cat, it's no use at all,
No matter what you think yourself, you're rather tame and small,
And with all your hiding and your stem contemplation,
You cannot scare a single one of high or low station,
And so, there's no use trying to be like your wild relation.

Annette Wynne

The Lost Doll

37

I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled;
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played on the heath one day,
And I cried for her more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played on the heath one day;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
And her paint is all washed away,
And her arm trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled;
Yet for old time's sake, she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

Charles Kinglsey

Make Me A Picture Of The Sun

Make me a picture of the sun—
So I can hang it in my room
And make believe I'm getting warm
When others call it "day"!

Draw me a robin on a stem—
So I am hearing him, I'll dream,
And when the orchards stop their tune,
Put my pretense away.

Say if it's really warm at noon,
Whether it's buttercups that "skim,"
Or butterflies that "bloom"?
Then skip the frost upon the lea,
And skip the russet on the tree,
Let's pray those never come!

Emily Dickinson

Marching Song

39

Bring the comb and play upon it!
Marching, here we come!

Willie cocks his highland bonnet,
Johnnie beats the drum.

Mary Jane commands the party,
Peter leads the rear;

Feet in time, alert and hearty,
Each a Grenadier!

All in the most martial manner
Marching double-quick;

While the napkin like the banner
Waves upon the stick!

Here's enough of fame and pillage,
Great commander Jane!

Now that we've been round the village,
Let's go home again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Has anybody seen my mouse?
I opened his box for half a minute,
Just to make sure he was really in it,
And while I was looking, he jumped outside!
I tried to catch him, I tried, I tried.
I think he's somewhere about the house.
Has anyone seen my mouse?
Uncle John have you seen my mouse?
Just a small sort of mouse, a dear little brown one,
He came from the country, he wasn't a town one,
So he'll feel lonely in a London street;
Why, what could he possibly find to eat?
He must be somewhere. I'll ask Aunt Rose:
Have you seen a mouse with a woffelly nose?
Oh, somewhere about—
He's just got out . . .
Hasn't anybody seen my mouse?

A.A. Milne

The Monkeys And The Crocodile

Five little monkeys
Swinging from a tree;
Teasing Uncle Crocodile,
Merry as can be.
Swinging high, swinging low,
Swinging left and right,
“Dear Uncle Crocodile,
Come and take a bite!”

Five little monkeys
Swinging in the air;
Heads up, tails up,
Little do they care.
Swinging up, swinging down,
Swinging far and near:
“Poor Uncle Crocodile,
Aren’t you hungry, dear?”

Four little monkeys
Sitting in the tree;
Heads down, tails down,
Dreary as can be.
Weeping loud, weeping low
Crying to each other:
“Wicked Uncle Crocodile,
To gobble up our brother!”

Laura E. Richards

The Mountain And The Squirrel

42

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel
And the former called the latter "Little prig"
But replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half as sly.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put,
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Mouse

43

I heard a mouse
Bitterly complaining
In a crack of moonlight
Aslant on the floor—

“Little I ask
And that little is not granted.
There are few crumbs
In this world anymore.

The breadbox is tin
And I cannot get in.

The jam’s in a jar
My teeth cannot mar.

The cheese sits by itself
On the pantry shelf—

All night I run
Searching and seeking,
All night I run
About on the floor,

Moonlight is there
And a bare place for dancing,
But no little feast
Is spread anymore.”

Elizabeth Coatsworth

As soon as I'm in bed at night
And snugly settled down,
The little girl I am by day
Goes very suddenly away,
And then I'm Mrs. Brown.

I have a family of six,
And all of them have names,
The girls are Joyce and Nancy Maud,
The boys are Marmaduke and Claude
And Percival and James.

We have a house with twenty rooms
A mile away from town;
I think it's good for girls and boys
To be allowed to make a noise
And so does Mrs. Brown.

We do the most exciting things,
Enough to make you creep;
And on and on and on we go—
I sometimes wonder if I know
When I have gone to sleep.

Rose Fyleman

My Books And I

45

My books and I the whole day through
Find many, many things to do;
We travel anywhere we please.
On dragonflies and bumblebees.

We visit pirates in their den;
We sail the seas and back again.
With Indians, lying all around,
We spread our blankets on the ground.

At night, the fairies on the green
Ask me to be their Fairy Queen
The most exciting time of day
Is when my books and I just play.

Florence Piper Tuttle

My Cat, Mrs. Lick-A-Chin

46

Some of the cats I know about
Spend a little time in and a lot of time out.
Or a lot of time out and a little time in.
But my cat, Mrs. Lick-a-chin,
Never knows where she wants to be.
If I let her in, she looks at me
And begins to sing that she wants to go out.
So I open the door, and she looks about
And begins to sing, "Please let me in!"

Poor silly Mrs. Lick-a-chin!

The thing about cats, as you may find,
Is that no one knows what they have in mind.

And I'll tell you something about that:
No one knows it less than my cat.

John Ciardi

My Policeman

47

He is always standing there
At the corner of the square;
He is very big and fine
And his silver buttons shine.

All the carts and taxis do
Everything he tells them to,
And the little errand boys
When they pass him make no noise.

Though I seem so very small
I am not afraid at all;
He and I are friends, you see,
And he always smiles at me.

Once I wasn't very good
Rather near to where he stood,
But he never said a word
Though I'm sure he must have heard.

Nurse has a policeman too
(Hers has brown eyes, mine has blue.)
Hers is sometimes on a horse,
I like mine best of course.

Rose Fyleman

I built a little house,
With a red front door;
Someone came knocking,
One, two, three, four!
I hurried up to open it,
And what did I see?
Two squirrels and a dormouse
Had come to visit me!

Their eyes were very wistful,
As they peered inside my house;
I stood aside to let them in,
The squirrels and the dormouse;
They curled up on the hearth rug
To warm their little feet;
I gave them buns and banbury cakes
And apple tarts to eat.

And when I rose next morning,
Before the early dawn,
They'd gone, but on my doorstep
Were hazelnuts and corn.

Ethel H. Chesterfield

I love each shining star because
 It tells a wondrous story;

I love each stripe in our dear flag,
 The flag we call Old Glory!

I love its field of azure blue,
 Each star that twinkles there;

I love its red and snowy white
 To me it all is fair.

I love to see it float on high
 Above each tower and steeple;

I love to doff my hat to it
 The flag of a free people.

I love Old Glory more each day,
 The banner of our nation;

America, our native land
 A land of God's creation!

Alonzo Newton Benn

Have you ever in your life seen a
Possum play possum?
Have you ever in your life seen a
Possum play dead?
When a Possum is trapped and can't get away
He turns up his toes and lays down his head,
Bats both his eyes and rolls over dead.
But then when you leave him and run off to play,
The Possum that really was just playing possum
Gets up in a flash and scurries away.

William Jay Smith

What's ornithology? Pray can you tell?
It's hard to pronounce and it's harder to spell—
Yet that's what you're learning whenever you care
To study the Birds of the Earth, Sea, and Air.
 There's a long word
 To stand for a Bird!
For a Lark or a Sparrow its length is absurd!
Eagles and Ostriches need no apology
If you should label them as ornithology!
 But how can it fit
 The tiny Tom-Tit?
 The Finch.
Wants a word that's no more than an inch!
Yet all the Birds of the East and the West,
Whatever they be, and wherever they nest—
 The Vulture—the Hen—
 The Flamingo—the Wren—
 The Dove—the Canary—
 The queer Cassowary
The Thrush on the bough, and the Duck in the pool—
They are all ornithology when you're in School!

Eleanor Farjeon

Our Snowman

52

Our fat snow man
Was a comical sight,
He had two hands,
But he couldn't write.

He had a wide grin,
But he couldn't talk.
He had a tall cane,
But he couldn't walk.

He had four buttons,
But he had no coat.
We tied a big bow
Around his throat.

The sun looked down
On our fat snow man.
Said mother, "I fear
He'll get a bad tan."

By noon the poor fellow
Had tears in his eyes.
By four he was down
To Tom Thumb size.

By the time the moon shone
On the fast melting snow,
He was down to nothing
But his buttons and bow.

Lucille Chiddix

Portrait By A Neighbor

53

Before she has her floor swept
Or her dishes done,
Any day you'll find her
A-sunning in the sun!
It's long after midnight
Her key's in the lock,
And you never see her chimney smoke
Till past ten o'clock!
She digs in her garden
With a shovel and a spoon,
She weeds her lazy lettuce
By the light of the moon.
She walks up the walk
Like a woman in a dream,
She forgets she borrowed butter
And pays you back cream!
Her lawn looks like a meadow,
And if she mows the place
She leaves the clover standing
And the Queen Anne's lace!

Edna St. Vincent Milla

Questions At Night

54

Why

Is the sky?

What starts the thunder overhead?

Who makes the crashing noise?

Are the angels falling out of bed?

Are they breaking all their toys?

Why does the sun go down so soon?

Why do the night-clouds crawl

Hungrily up to the new-laid moon

And swallow it, shell and all?

If there's a Bear among the stars

As all the people say,

Won't he jump over those Pasture-bars

And drink up the Milky Way?

Does every star that happens to fall

Turn into a fire-fly?

Can't it ever get back to heaven at all?

And why

Is the sky?

Louis Untermeyer

My two white rabbits
Chase each other
With humping, bumping backs,
They go hopping, hopping,
And their long ears
Go flopping, flopping.
And they
Make faces
With their noses
Up and down.

Today
I went inside their fence
To play rabbit with them.
And in one corner
Under a loose bush
I saw something shivering the leaves.
And I pushed
And I looked.
And I found—
There in a hole
In the ground—
Three baby rabbits
Hidden away.
And they
Made faces
With their noses
Up and down.

Dorothy Baruch

Rain In Summer

56

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!
How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!

How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!
Across the window pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Rain In The Night

57

Raining, raining,
Allnight long;
Sometimes loud, sometimes soft,
Just like a song.

There'll be rivers in the gutters,
And lakes along the street.
It will make a lazy kitten
Wash his little dirty feet.

The roses will wear diamonds
Like kings and queens at court;
But the pansies all get muddy
Because they are so short.

I'll sail my boat tomorrow
In wonderful new places,
But first I'll take my watering-pot
And wash the pansies' faces.

Amelia Josephine Burr

The Rain Song

It is not raining rain for me,
It's raining daffodils
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.

The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It is not raining rain to me
It's raining roses down.

It is not raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
May find a bed and room.

A health unto the happy,
A fig for him who frets!
It is not raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

Robert Loveman

The Rainbow

59

The rainbow arches in the sky,
But in the earth it ends;
But if you ask the reason why,
They'll tell you: "That depends."

It never comes without the rain,
Nor goes without the sun;
But though you try with might and main,
You'll never catch me one.

Perhaps you'll see it once a year,
Perhaps you'll say: "No, twice";
But every time it does appear,
It's very clean and nice.

If I were God, I'd like to win
At sun-and-moon croquet:
I'd drive the rainbow-wickets in
And ask someone to play.

David McCord

The Reason For The Pelican

60

The reason for the pelican
Is difficult to see:
His beak is clearly larger
Than there's any need to be.

It's not to bail a boat with—
He doesn't own a boat.
Yet everywhere he takes himself
He has that beak to tote.

It's not to keep his wife in—
His wife had got one, too.
It's not a scoop for eating soup.
It's not an extra shoe.

It isn't quite for anything.
And yet you realize
It's really quite a splendid beak
In quite a splendid size.

John Ciardi

See how he dives
From the rocks with a zoom!
See how he darts
Through his watery room
Past crabs and eels
And green seaweed,
Past fluffs of sandy
Minnow feed!
See how he swims
With a swerve and a twist,
A flip of the flipper,
A flick of the wrist!
Quicksilver quick,
Softer than spray,
Down he plunges
And sweeps away;
Before you can think,
Before you can utter
Words like "Dill pickle"
Or "Apple butter,"
Back up he swims
Past sting-ray and shark,
Out with a zoom,
A whoop, a bark;
Before you can say
Whatever you wish,
He plops at your side
With a mouthful of fish!

William Jay Smith

The Shepherd Boy Sings

62

He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride;

He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much:

And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage:

Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan

Slow But Sure

63

A turtle and his forest friends
A-walking went one day;
He poked along serenely
In his own creepy way.

His friends were going the same way
But passed him on the run.
They failed to see the beauty
And missed a lot of fun.

As Mr. Turtle walked along
He gathered news to tell.
The others would not gather much,
And this he knew quite well.

When finally his trip was done
And he had joined the rest,
The stories Mr. Turtle told
Were very much the best.

Lillian Beck

The Things I Do

I'm very good at climbing
I nearly climbed a tree
But just as I was almost up
I sort of skinned my knee.

I'm wonderful at walking
I almost walked a mile
But when I got around the block
I rested for a while.

I'm excellent at swimming
Though I'm not very old
I almost swam the ocean once
But the water was too cold.

But what I'm really best at
Is skipping down the hall.
I'm very good at skipping.
I'm wonderful at skipping.
I'm marvelous at skipping,
That is unless I fall.

Karla Kuskin

So Long As There is Weather

65

Whether it's cold
or
whether it's hot,
I'd rather
have weather
whether or not
it's just what I'd choose
Summer
or
Spring
or
Winter
or
Fall—
any
weather
is
better
than
no weather
at all.
I really like weather.
I never feel
whiney
when weather is
rainy.
And when it's
sunshiny
I don't feel
complainy.
Weather sends me.
So—
Rain?
Let it SPLASH!
Thunder?
CRRRA SH!
Hail?
Clitter-clatter!
What does it
matter—
so long as there's weather!

Tamara Kitt

Timothy Boon

Timothy Boon
Bought a balloon
Blue as the sky,
Round as the moon.
“Now I will try
To make it fly
Up to the moon,
Higher than high!”
Timothy said,
Nodding his head.

Timothy Boon
Sent his balloon
Up through the skies,
Up to the moon.
But a strong breeze
Stirred in the trees
Rocked the bright moon,
Tossed the great seas,
And, with its mirth,
Shook the whole earth.

Timothy Boon,
And his balloon,
Caught by the breeze
Flew to the moon;
Up past the trees,
Over the seas,
Up to the moon—
Swift as you please!—
And, oh, I forget,
They have not come down yet!

Ivy O. Eastwick

Yesterday I skipped all day,
The day before I ran,
Today I'm going to tiptoe
Everywhere I can.
I'll tiptoe down the stairway.
I'll tiptoe through the door.
I'll tiptoe to the living room
And give an awful roar
And my father, who is reading,
Will jump up from his chair
And mumble something silly like
"I don't see you there."
I'll tiptoe to my mother
And give a little cough
And when she spins to see me
Why, I'll softly tiptoe off.
I'll tiptoe through the meadows,
Over hills and yellow sands
And when my toes get tired
Then I'll tiptoe on my hands.

Karla Kuskin

Dear God,

This is the first time ever that
I've written You a letter ... but I just had
to thank You, now that everything is better.

I came to You a while back so troubled
and distressed, I didn't know what course to
take, what action would be best ... I told You
all my troubles, and I felt Your presence near ...
and as I talked the clouds broke up and seemed
to disappear.

So, thank You, God for listening, for
keeping me from harm, for wiping tears and
holding me within Your loving arms.

Alice Joyce Davidson

To Meet Mr. Lincoln

69

If I lived at the time
That Mr. Lincoln did,
And I met Mr. Lincoln
With his stovepipe lid

And his coalblack cape
And his thundercloud beard,
And worn and sad-eyed
He appeared:

"Don't worry, Mr. Lincoln,"
I'd reach up and pat his hand,
"We've got a fine President
For this land;

And the Union will be saved,
And the slaves will go free;
And you will live forever
In our nation's memory."

Eve Merriam

Tomorrow

70

Tomorrow when the wind is high
I'll build a kite to ride the sky,
Tomorrow, when the wind is high.

Tomorrow when the waters gleam
I'll build a boat to sail the stream,
Tomorrow, when the waters gleam.

Tomorrow when the roads run far
Across the hill, I'll build a car.
I'll build a car with shining wheels
To pass the other automobiles,
Tomorrow, when the roads run far.

Rowena B. Bennett

Nouns are the things I see and touch,
My Cake, my Mother, and my Ball;
I like some nouns very much,
Though some I do not like at all.

Verbs are the things I do, and make,
And feel, in one way or another.
Thanks to Verbs, I eat my Cake,
And throw my Ball, and hug my Mother.

Yet Verbs, which make me laugh and play,
Can also make me cry and fall,
And tease my Mother every day,
And spoil my Cake, and lose my Ball!

Eleanor Farjeon

Wouldn't it be lovely if the rain came down
Till water was quite high over all the town?
If the cabs and buses all were set afloat,
And we had to go to school in a little boat?
Wouldn't it be lovely if it still should pour
And we all went up to live on the second floor?
If we saw the butcher sailing up the hill,
And we took the letters in at the window sill?
It's been raining, raining, all the afternoon;
All these things might happen really very soon.
If we woke tomorrow and found they had begun,
Wouldn't it be glorious? Wouldn't it be fun?

Rose Fyleman

What Robin Told

73

How do robins build their nests?
Robin Redbreast told me—
First a wisp of yellow hay
In a pretty round they lay;
Then some shreds of down floss,
Feathers, too, and bits of moss,
Woven with a sweet, sweet song,
This way, that way, and across;
That's what Robin told me.

Where do robins hide their nests?
Robin Redbreast told me—
Up among the leaves so deep,
Where the sunbeams rarely creep,
Long before the winds are cold,
Long before the leaves are gold,
Bright-eyed stars will peep and see
Baby robins—one, two, three;
That's what Robin told me.

George Cooper

Dot a dot dot . . . dot a dot dot
Spotting the windowpane.
Spack a spack speck . . . flick a flack fleck
Freckling the windowpane.

A spatter a scatter . . . a wet cat a clatter
A splatter a rumble outside.
Umbrella umbrella umbrella umbrella
Bumbershoot barrel of rain.

Slosh a galosh . . . slosh a galosh
Slither and slather a glide
A puddle a jump a puddle a jump
A puddle a jump puddle splosh
A juddle a pump aluddle a dump a
Puddmuddle jump in and slide!

Eve Merriam

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside the "Traveller's Rest,"
And maids come forth sprig-muslin dressed.
And citizens dream of the South and West.
And so do I.
This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh and ply.
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Thomas Hardy

What In The World?

What in the world
goes whiskery friskery
meowling and prowling
napping and lapping
at silky milk?

Psst,
What is it?

What in the world
goes leaping and beeping
onto a lily pad onto a log
onto a tree stump or down to the bog?
Splash, blurp,
Kerchurp!

What in the world
goes gnawing and pawing
scratching and latching
sniffing and squiff-ing
nibbling for tidbits of left-over cheese?
Please?

What in the world
jumps with a hop and a bump
and a tail that can thump
has pinky pointy ears and a twitchy nose
looking for anything crunchy that grows?
A carrotty lettucey cabbagey luncheon
To munch on?

What in the world
climbs chattering pattering swinging from trees
like a flying trapeze
with a tail that can curl
like the rope cowboys twirl?
Wahoo!
Here's a banana for you!

What in the world
goes stalking and balking
running and sunning
thumping and dumping
lugging and hugging
swinging and singing
wriggling and giggling
sliding and hiding
throwing and knowing and
growing and growing
much too big for
last year's clothes?

Will There Really Be A Morning

77

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like water lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!
Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies!

Emily Dickinson

Winter Is Coming

The busy little
squirrels Are hiding
nuts away,
So they'll have food to eat
Upon a winter's day.

The robins and the
bluebirds, And other
songbirds too,
Have started for the
Southland. I think they're
wise, don't you?

The little frogs and
turtles Are in their soft
mud beds.
When Old Man Winter comes
along They'll cover up their
heads.

The big brown bear has
eaten As much as he can
hold.
Now he'll curl up inside a
cave And sleep when days
are cold.

The furry little rabbit
Wears a coat as white as
snow. He changes for the
winter,
Just like you and me, you know.

Velda Blumhagen