



Originally published as
**REQUIRED POEMS
FOR READING
AND MEMORIZING**

THIRD AND FOURTH GRADES
Prescribed by State Courses
of Study

- 1906 -

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A FOREWORD

Practically every state course of study gives a list of poems from which it is required that selection be made for reading or memorizing. These lists and their grading vary in the different states, although the same poems are used in many of them and there are some which are required in every state.

In the preparation of this book the lists of the third and fourth grade poems prescribed by the syllabi of twelve states have been examined and the contents have been made up from these. The breadth of this method of selection insures the inclusion in this volume of a large proportion of the required poems for every state. Since the grading in different states varies so widely, teachers will find included, also, many poems which in their own particular states are required in other grades. It is hoped that this volume will be of real service to teachers in providing a collection of "required poems" in a form convenient for school use.

*THE PUBLISHERS.
Required Poems for Third
and Fourth Grades*

POEMS BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

AUTUMN FIRES

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers;
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on the green,
In comes the playmate that never was seen.
When children are happy and lonely and good,
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your head;
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself!

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit.
They sit at home, and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read,
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes,
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away,
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear Land of Story-books.

PIRATE STORY

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea--
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,
The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all--
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
 O wind, a-blowing all day long,
 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

WINTER-TIME

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or, with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

POEMS BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an'
sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board an'
keep;
An' all us other childern, when the supper-things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

 Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

Wunst they wuz a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,--
An' when he went to bed at night, away upstairs,
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wuzn't there at all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an'
press,
An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever' wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found wuz thist his pants an' roundabout:--
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

 Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever' one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' wunst, when they was "company," an' ole folks wuz
there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They wuz two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed
what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

 Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,--
You better mind yer parunts, an' yer teachurs fond an' dear,
An' cherish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' help the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns'll git you

Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

THE BROOK-SONG

Little brook! Little brook!
You have such a happy look--
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and
curve and crook--
And your ripples, one and one,
Reach each other's hands and run
Like laughing little children in the sun!

Little brook, sing to me:
Sing about a bumblebee
That tumbled from a lily-bell and grumbled
mumblingly,
Because he wet the film
Of his wings, and had to swim,
While the water-bugs raced round and laughed
at him!

Little brook--sing a song
Of a leaf that sailed along
Down the golden-braided center of your current
swift and strong,
And a dragon-fly that lit
On the tilting rim of it,
And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing--how oft in glee
Came a truant boy like me,
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting
melody,
Till the gurgle and refrain
Of your music in his brain
Wrought a happiness as keen to him as pain.

Little brook--laugh and leap!
Do not let the dreamer weep;
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in
softest sleep;
And then sing soft and low
Through his dreams of long ago--
Sing back to him the rest he used to know!

A LIFE LESSON

There! little girl! don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your play-house, too,
Are things of long ago;
But childish troubles will soon pass by,
There! little girl! don't cry!

There! little girl! don't cry!
They have broken your slate, I know;
And the glad wild ways
Of your school-girl days
Are things of the long ago;
But life and love will soon come by,
There! little girl! don't cry!

There! little girl! don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But heaven holds all for which you sigh,
There! little girl! don't cry!

POEMS BY EDWARD LEAR

THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT

On the top of the Crumpetty Tree
The Quangle Wangle sat,
But his face you could not see,
On account of his Beaver Hat.
For his Hat was a hundred and two feet wide,
With ribbons and bibbons on every side,
And bells, and buttons, and loops, and lace,
So that nobody ever could see the face
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

The Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree,
"Jam, and jelly, and bread
Are the best of food for me!
But the longer I live on this Crumpetty Tree
The plainer than ever it seems to me
That very few people come this way
And that life on the whole is far from gay!"
Said the Quangle Wangle Quee.

But there came to the Crumpetty Tree
Mr. and Mrs. Canary;
And they said, "Did ever you see
Any spot so charmingly airy?
May we build a nest on your lovely Hat?
Mr. Quangle Wangle, grant us that!
Oh, please let us come and build a nest
Of whatever material suits you best,
Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee!"

And besides, to the Crumpetty Tree
Came the Stork, the Duck, and the Owl;
The Snail and the Bumblebee,
The Frog and the Fimble Fowl
(The Fimble Fowl, with a corkscrew leg);
And all of them said, "We humbly beg
We may build our homes on your lovely Hat,--
Mr. Quangle Wangle, grant us that!
Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee!"

And the Golden Grouse came there,
And the Pobble who has no toes,
And the small Olympian bear,
And the Dong with a luminous nose.
And the Blue Baboon who played the flute,
And the Orient Calf from the Land of Tute,
And the Attery Squash, and the Bisky Bat,--
All came and built on the lovely Hat
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

And the Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree,
"When all these creatures move

What a wonderful noise there'll be!"
And at night by the light of the Mulberry moon
They danced to the Flute of the Blue Baboon,
On the broad green leaves of the Crumpetty Tree,
And all were as happy as happy could be,
With the Quangle Wangle Quee.

THE POBBLE WHO HAS NO TOES

The Pobble who has no toes
Had once as many as we;
When they said, "Some day you may lose them all,"
He replied, "Fish fiddle de-dee!"
And his Aunt Jobiska made him drink
Lavender water tinged with pink;
For she said, "The World in general knows
There's nothing so good for a Pobble's toes!"

The Pobble who has no toes
Swam across the Bristol Channel;
But before he set out he wrapped his nose
In a piece of scarlet flannel.
For his Aunt Jobiska said, "No harm
Can come to his toes if his nose is warm;
And it's perfectly known that a Pobble's toes
Are safe--provided he minds his nose."

The Pobble swam fast and well,
And when boats or ships came near him,
He tinkledy-binkledy-winkled a bell
So that all the world could hear him.
And all the Sailors and Admirals cried,
When they saw him nearing the farther side,
"He has gone to fish for his Aunt Jobiska's
Runcible Cat with crimson whiskers!"

But before he touched the shore--
The shore of the Bristol Channel,
A sea-green Porpoise carried away
His wrapper of scarlet flannel.
And when he came to observe his feet,
Formerly garnished with toes so neat,
His face at once became forlorn
On perceiving that all his toes were gone!

And nobody ever knew,
From that dark day to the present,
Whoso had taken the Pobble's toes,
In a manner so far from pleasant.
Whether the shrimps or crawfish gray,
Or crafty mermaids stole them away,
Nobody knew; and nobody knows
How the Pobble was robbed of his twice five toes!

The Pobble who has no toes
Was placed in a friendly Bark,
And they rowed him back and carried him up

To his Aunt Jobiska's Park.
And she made him a feast at his earnest wish,
Of eggs and buttercups fried with fish;
And she said, "It's a fact the whole world knows,
That Pobbles are happier without their toes."

THE JUMBLIES

They went to sea in a sieve, they did;
In a sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a sieve they went to sea.
And when the sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, "You'll all be drowned!"
They called aloud, "Our sieve ain't big;
But we don't care a button, we don't care a fig:
In a sieve we'll go to sea!"
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

They sailed away in a sieve, they did,
In a sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a ribbon by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast.
And every one said who saw them go,
"Oh! won't they soon be upset, you know?
For the sky is dark and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a sieve to sail so fast."
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

The water it soon came in, it did;
The water it soon came in;
So, to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat;
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar;
And each of them said, "How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our sieve we spin."
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown.

"O Timballoo! How happy we are
When we live in a sieve and a crockery-jar!
And all night long, in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea-green sail
In the shade of the mountains brown."
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,--
To a land all covered with trees:
And they bought an owl and a useful cart,
And a pound of rice, and a cranberry-tart,
And a hive of silvery bees;
And they bought a pig, and some green jackdaws,
And a lovely monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of ring-bo-ree,
And no end of Stilton cheese.
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

And in twenty years they all came back,--
In twenty years or more;
And every one said, "How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore."
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And every one said, "If we only live,
We, too, will go to sea in a sieve,
To the hills of the Chankly Bore."
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

POEMS BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S-NEST

Once the Emperor Charles of Spain,
With his swarthy, grave commanders,
I forget in what campaign,
Long besieged, in mud and rain,
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,
In great boots of Spanish leather,
Striding with a measured tramp,
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,
Over upland and through hollow,
Giving their impatience vent,
Perched upon the Emperor's tent,
In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,
Built of clay and hair of horses,
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,
Found on hedge-rows east and west,
After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
As he twirled his gray mustachio,
"Sure this swallow overhead
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,
And the Emperor but a Macho!"

Hearing his imperial name
Coupled with those words of malice,
Half in anger, half in shame,
Forth the great campaigner came
Slowly from his canvas palace.

"Let no hand the bird molest,"
Said he solemnly, "nor hurt her!"
Adding then, by way of jest,
"Golondrina is my guest,
'Tis the wife of some deserter!"

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,
Through the camp was spread the rumor,
And the soldiers, as they quaffed
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed
At the Emperor's pleasant humor.

So unharmed and unafraid
Sat the swallow still and brooded,
Till the constant cannonade

Through the walls a breach had made
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
Struck its tents as if disbanding,
Only not the Emperor's tent,
For he ordered, ere he went,
Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
Till the brood was fledged and flown,
Singing o'er those walls of stone
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

THE RAINY DAY

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary!

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

AN APRIL DAY

When the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has returned again,
'Tis sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and colored wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green slope throws
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland glows.

And when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching far,
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide,
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows throw,
And the fair trees look over, side by side,
And see themselves below.

Sweet April!--many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.

RAIN IN SUMMER

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!

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain!

DAYBREAK

A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O Chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry tower,
"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, "Not yet! in quiet lie."

AFTERNOON IN FEBRUARY

The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.

Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.

The snow recommences;
The buried fences
Mark no longer
The road o'er the plain;

While through the meadows,
Like fearful shadows,
Slowly passes
A funeral train.

The bell is pealing,
And every feeling
Within me responds
To the dismal knell;

Shadows are trailing,
My heart is bewailing
And tolling within
Like a funeral bell.

HIAWATHA'S FISHING

Forth upon the Gitche Gumee,
On the shining Big-Sea-Water,
With his fishing-line of cedar,
Of the twisted bark of cedar,
Forth to catch the sturgeon Nahma,
Mishe-Nahma, King of Fishes,
In his birch canoe exulting
All alone went Hiawatha.

Through the clear, transparent water
He could see the fishes swimming
Far down in the depths below him;
See the yellow perch, the Sahwa,

Like a sunbeam in the water,
See the Shawgashee, the craw-fish,
Like a spider on the bottom,
On the white and sandy bottom.

At the stern sat Hiawatha,
With his fishing-line of cedar;
In his plumes the breeze of morning

Played as in the hemlock branches;
On the bows, with tail erected,
Sat the squirrel, Adjidaumo;
In his fur the breeze of morning
Played as in the prairie grasses.

On the white sand of the bottom
Lay the monster Mishe-Nahma,
Lay the sturgeon, King of Fishes;
Through his gills he breathed the water,
With his fins he fanned and winnowed,
With his tail he swept the sand-floor.

There he lay in all his armor;
On each side a shield to guard him,
Plates of bone upon his forehead,
Down his sides and back and shoulders
Plates of bone with spines projecting!
Painted was he with his war-paints,
Stripes of yellow, red, and azure,
Spots of brown and spots of sable;
And he lay there on the bottom,
Fanning with his fins of purple,
As above him Hiawatha
In his birch canoe came sailing,
With his fishing-line of cedar.

"Take my bait!" cried Hiawatha,
Down into the depths beneath him,
"Take my bait, O sturgeon, Nahma!
Come up from below the water,
Let us see which is the stronger!"
And he dropped his line of cedar
Through the clear, transparent water,
Waited vainly for an answer,
Long sat waiting for an answer,
And repeating loud and louder,
"Take my bait, O King of Fishes!"

Quiet lay the sturgeon, Nahma,
Fanning slowly in the water,
Looking up at Hiawatha,
Listening to his call and clamor,
His unnecessary tumult,
Till he wearied of the shouting;
And he said to the Kenozha,
To the pike, the Maskenozha,
"Take the bait of this rude fellow,
Break the line of Hiawatha!"

In his fingers Hiawatha
Felt the loose line jerk and tighten;
As he drew it in, it tugged so
That the birch canoe stood endwise,
Like a birch log in the water,
With the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Perched and frisking on the summit.

Full of scorn was Hiawatha
When he saw the fish rise upward,
Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,
Coming nearer, nearer to him,
And he shouted through the water,
"Esa! esa! shame upon you!
You are but the pike, Kenozha,
You are not the fish I wanted,
You are not the King of Fishes!"

Reeling downward to the bottom
Sank the pike in great confusion,
And the mighty sturgeon, Nahma,
Said to Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
To the bream, with scales of crimson,
"Take the bait of this great boaster,
Break the line of Hiawatha!"

Slowly upward, wavering, gleaming,
Rose the Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
Seized the line of Hiawatha,
Swung with all his weight upon it,
Made a whirlpool in the water,
Whirled the birch canoe in circles,
Round and round in gurgling eddies,
Till the circles in the water
Reached the far-off sandy beaches,
Till the water-flags and rushes
Nodded on the distant margins.

But when Hiawatha saw him
Slowly rising through the water,
Lifting up his disk refulgent,
Loud he shouted in derision,
"Esa! esa! shame upon you!
You are Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
You are not the fish I wanted,
You are not the King of Fishes!"

Slowly downward, wavering, gleaming,
Sank the Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
And again the sturgeon, Nahma,
Heard the shout of Hiawatha,
Heard his challenge of defiance,
The unnecessary tumult,
Ringing far across the water.

From the white sand of the bottom
Up he rose with angry gesture,
Quivering in each nerve and fibre,
Clashing all his plates of armor,
Gleaming bright with all his war-paint;
In his wrath he darted upward,
Flashing leaped into the sunshine,
Opened his great jaws, and swallowed
Both canoe and Hiawatha.

Down into that darksome cavern

Plunged the headlong Hiawatha,
As a log on some black river,
Shoots and plunges down the rapids,
Found himself in utter darkness,
Groped about in helpless wonder,
Till he felt a great heart beating,
Throbbing in that utter darkness.

And he smote it in his anger,
With his fist, the heart of Nahma,
Felt the mighty King of Fishes
Shudder through each nerve and fibre,
Heard the water gurgle round him
As he leaped and staggered through it,
Sick at heart, and faint and weary.

Crosswise then did Hiawatha
Drag his birch-canoe for safety,
Lest from out the jaws of Nahma,
In the turmoil and confusion,
Forth he might be hurled and perish.
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Frisked and chattered very gayly,
Toiled and tugged with Hiawatha
Till the labor was completed.

Then said Hiawatha to him,
"O my little friend, the squirrel,
Bravely have you toiled to help me;
Take the thanks of Hiawatha,
And the name which now he gives you;
For hereafter and forever
Boys shall call you Adjidaumo,
Tail-in-air the boys shall call you!"

And again the sturgeon, Nahma,
Gasped and quivered in the water,
Then was still, and drifted landward
Till he grated on the pebbles,
Till the listening Hiawatha
Heard him grate upon the margin,
Felt him strand upon the pebbles,
Knew that Nahma, King of Fishes,
Lay there dead upon the margin.

Then he heard a clang and flapping,
As of many wings assembling,
Heard a screaming and confusion,
As of birds of prey contending,
Saw a gleam of light above him,
Shining through the ribs of Nahma,
Saw the glittering eyes of sea-gulls,
Of Kayoshk, the sea-gulls, peering,
Gazing at him through the opening,
Heard them saying to each other,
"'Tis our brother, Hiawatha!"

And he shouted from below them,

Cried exulting from the caverns:
"O ye sea-gulls! O my brothers!
I have slain the sturgeon, Nahma;
Make the rifts a little larger,
With your claws the openings widen,
Set me free from this dark prison,
And henceforward and forever
Men shall speak of your achievements,
Calling you Kayoshk, the sea-gulls,
Yes, Kayoshk, the Noble Scratchers!"

And the wild and clamorous sea-gulls
Toiled with beak and claws together,
Made the rifts and openings wider
In the mighty ribs of Nahma,
And from peril and from prison,
From the body of the sturgeon,
From the peril of the water,
They released my Hiawatha.

He was standing near his wigwam,
On the margin of the water,
And he called to old Nokomis,
Called and beckoned to Nokomis,
Pointed to the sturgeon, Nahma,
Lying lifeless on the pebbles,
With the sea-gulls feeding on him.

"I have slain the Mishe-Nahma,
Slain the King of Fishes!" said he;
"Look! the sea-gulls feed upon him,
Yes, my friends Kayoshk, the sea-gulls;
Drive them not away, Nokomis,
They have saved me from great peril
In the body of the sturgeon,
Wait until their meal is ended,
Till their craws are full with feasting,
Till they homeward fly, at sunset,
To their nests among the marshes;
Then bring all your pots and kettles,
And make oil for us in Winter."

And she waited till the sun set,
Till the pallid moon, the Night-sun,
Rose above the tranquil water,
Till Kayoshk, the sated sea-gulls,
From their banquet rose with clamor,
And across the fiery sunset
Winged their way to far-off islands,
To their nests among the rushes.

To his sleep went Hiawatha,
And Nokomis to her labor,
Toiling patient in the moonlight,
Till the sun and moon changed places,
Till the sky was red with sunrise,
And Kayoshk, the hungry sea-gulls,
Came back from the reedy islands,

Clamorous for their morning banquet.

Three whole days and nights alternate
Old Nokomis and the seagulls
Stripped the oily flesh of Nahma,
Till the waves washed through the rib-bones,
Till the sea-gulls came no longer,
And upon the sands lay nothing
But the skeleton of Nahma.

HIAWATHA'S FRIENDS

Two good friends had Hiawatha,
Singled out from all the others,
Bound to him in closest union,
And to whom he gave the right hand
Of his heart, in joy and sorrow;
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind.

Straight between them ran the pathway,
Never grew the grass upon it;
Singing birds, that utter falsehoods,
Story-tellers, mischief-makers,
Found no eager ear to listen,
Could not breed ill-will between them,
For they kept each other's counsel,
Spake with naked hearts together,
Pondering much and much contriving
How the tribes of men might prosper.

Most beloved by Hiawatha
Was the gentle Chibiabos,
He the best of all musicians,
He the sweetest of all singers.
Beautiful and childlike was he,
Brave as man is, soft as woman,
Pliant as a wand of willow,
Stately as a deer with antlers.

When he sang, the village listened;
All the warriors gathered round him,
All the women came to hear him;
Now he stirred their souls to passion,
Now he melted them to pity.

From the hollow reeds he fashioned
Flutes so musical and mellow,
That the brook, the Sebowisha,
Ceased to murmur in the woodland,
That the wood-birds ceased from singing,
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Ceased his chatter in the oak-tree,
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Sat upright to look and listen,

Yes, the brook, the Sebowisha,

Pausing, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach my waves to flow in music,
Softly as your words in singing!"

Yes, the bluebird, the Owaissa,
Envious, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as wild and wayward,
Teach me songs as full of frenzy!"

Yes, the robin, the Opechee,
Joyous, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as sweet and tender,
Teach me songs as full of gladness!"
And the whippoorwill, Wawonaissa,
Sobbing, said, "O Chibiabos,
Teach me tones as melancholy,
Teach me songs as full of sadness!"

All the many sounds of nature
Borrowed sweetness from his singing;
All the hearts of men were softened
By the pathos of his music;
For he sang of peace and freedom,
Sang of beauty, love, and longing;
Sang of death, and life undying
In the Islands of the Blessed,
In the kingdom of Ponemah,
In the land of the Hereafter.

Very dear to Hiawatha
Was the gentle Chibiabos,
He the best of all musicians,
He the sweetest of all singers;
For his gentleness he loved him,
And the magic of his singing.

Dear, too, unto Hiawatha
Was the very strong man, Kwasind,
He the strongest of all mortals,
He the mightiest among many;
For his very strength he loved him,
For his strength allied to goodness.

Idle in his youth was Kwasind,
Very listless, dull, and dreamy,
Never played with other children,
Never fished and never hunted,
Not like other children was he;
But they saw that much he fasted,
Much his Manito entreated,
Much besought his Guardian Spirit.

"Lazy Kwasind!" said his mother,
"In my work you never help me!
In the Summer you are roaming
Idly in the fields and forests;
In the Winter you are cowering
O'er the firebrands in the wigwam!"

In the coldest days of Winter
I must break the ice for fishing;
With my nets you never help me!
At the door my nets are hanging,
Dripping, freezing with the water;
Go and wring them, Yenadizze!
Go and dry them in the sunshine!"

Slowly, from the ashes, Kwasind
Rose, but made no angry answer;
From the lodge went forth in silence,
Took the nets, that hung together,
Dripping, freezing at the doorway,
Like a wisp of straw he wrung them,
Like a wisp of straw he broke them,
Could not wring them without breaking,
Such the strength was in his fingers.

"Lazy Kwasind!" said his father,
"In the hunt you never help me;
Every bow you touch is broken,
Snapped asunder every arrow;
Yet come with me to the forest,
You shall bring the hunting homeward."

Down a narrow pass they wandered,
Where a brooklet led them onward,
Where the trail of deer and bison
Marked the soft mud on the margin,
Till they found all further passage
Shut against them, barred securely
By the trunks of trees uprooted,
Lying lengthwise, lying crosswise,
And forbidding further passage.

"We must go back," said the old man,
"O'er these logs we cannot clamber;
Not a woodchuck could get through them,
Not a squirrel clamber o'er them!"
And straightway his pipe he lighted,
And sat down to smoke and ponder.
But before his pipe was finished,
Lo! the path was cleared before him;
All the trunks had Kwasind lifted,
To the right hand, to the left hand,
Shot the pine-trees swift as arrows,
Hurled the cedars light as lances.

"Lazy Kwasind!" said the young men,
As they sported in the meadow:
"Why stand idly looking at us,
Leaning on the rock behind you?
Come and wrestle with the others,
Let us pitch the quoit together!"

Lazy Kwasind made no answer,
To their challenge made no answer,
Only rose, and, slowly turning,

Seized the huge rock in his fingers,
Tore it from its deep foundation,
Poised it in the air a moment,
Pitched it sheer into the river,
Sheer into the swift Pauwating,
Where it still is seen in Summer.

Once as down that foaming river,
Down the rapids of Pauwating,
Kwasind sailed with his companions,
In the stream he saw a beaver,
Saw Ahmeek, the King of Beavers,
Struggling with the rushing currents,
Rising, sinking in the water.

Without speaking, without pausing,
Kwasind leaped into the river,
Plunged beneath the bubbling surface,
Through the whirlpools chased the beaver,
Followed him among the islands,
Stayed so long beneath the water,
That his terrified companions
Cried, "Alas! good-bye to Kwasind!
We shall never more see Kwasind!"
But he reappeared triumphant,
And upon his shining shoulders
Brought the beaver, dead and dripping,
Brought the King of all the Beavers.

And these two, as I have told you,
Were the friends of Hiawatha,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind.
Long they lived in peace together,
Spake with naked hearts together,
Pondering much and much contriving
How the tribes of men might prosper.

HIAWATHA'S HUNTING

Forth into the forest straightway
All alone walked Hiawatha
Proudly, with his bow and arrows,
And the birds sang round him, o'er him,
"Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!"
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
Sang the blue bird, the Owaissa,
"Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!"

Up the oak tree, close beside him,
Sprang the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
In and out among the branches,
Coughed and chattered from the oak tree,
Laughed, and said between his laughing,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!"

And the rabbit from his pathway
Leaped aside, and at a distance
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Half in fear and half in frolic,
Saying to the little hunter,
"Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!"

But he heeded not, nor heard them,
For his thoughts were with the red deer;
On their tracks his eyes were fastened,
Leading downward to the river,
To the ford across the river,
And as one in slumber walked he,

Hidden in the alder bushes.
There he waited till the deer came,
Till he saw two antlers lifted,
Saw two eyes look from the thicket,
Saw two nostrils point to windward,
And a deer came down the pathway,
Flecked with leafy light and shadow.
And his heart within him fluttered,
Trembled like the leaves above him,
Like the birch-leaf palpitated,
As the deer came down the pathway.

Then, upon one knee uprising,
Hiawatha aimed an arrow;
Scarce a twig moved with his motion,
Scarce a leaf was stirred or rustled,
But the wary roebuck started,
Stamped with all his hoofs together,
Listened with one foot uplifted,
Leaped as if to meet the arrow;
Ah! the singing, fatal arrow,
Like a wasp it buzzed and stung him!

Dead he lay there in the forest,
By the ford across the river;
Beat his timid heart no longer,
But the heart of Hiawatha
Throbbled and shouted and exulted,
As he bore the red deer homeward,
And Iagoo and Nokomis
Hailed his coming with applause.

From the red deer's hide Nokomis
Made a cloak for Hiawatha,
From the red deer's flesh Nokomis
Made a banquet in his honor.
All the village came and feasted,
All the guests praised Hiawatha,
Called him Strong-heart, Soan-ge-taha!
Called him Loon-Heart, Mahn-go-taysee!

HIAWATHA'S SAILING

"Give me of your bark, O Birch-Tree!
Of your yellow bark, O Birch-Tree!
Growing by the rushing river,
Tall and stately in the valley!
I a light canoe will build me,
Build a swift Cheemaun for sailing,
That shall float upon the river,
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily!

"Lay aside your cloak, O Birch-Tree!
Lay aside your white-skin wrapper,
For the Summer-time is coming,
And the sun is warm in heaven,
And you need no white-skin wrapper!"

Thus aloud cried Hiawatha
In the solitary forest,
By the rushing Taquamenaw,
When the birds were singing gayly,
In the Moon of Leaves were singing,
And the sun, from sleep awaking,
Started up and said, "Behold me!
Gheezis, the great Sun, behold me!"

And the tree with all its branches
Rustled in the breeze of morning,
Saying, with a sigh of patience,
"Take my cloak, O Hiawatha!"

With his knife the tree he girdled;
Just beneath its lowest branches,
Just above the roots, he cut it,
Till the sap came oozing outward:
Down the trunk, from top to bottom,
Sheer he cleft the bark asunder,
With a wooden wedge he raised it,
Stripped it from the trunk unbroken.

"Give me of your boughs, O Cedar!
Of your strong and pliant branches,
My canoe to make more steady,
Make more strong and firm beneath me!"

Through the summit of the Cedar
Went a sound, a cry of horror,
Went a murmur of resistance;
But it whispered, bending downward,
"Take my boughs, O Hiawatha!"

Down he hewed the boughs of cedar,
Shaped them straightway to a framework,
Like two bows he formed and shaped them,
Like two bended bows together.

"Give me of your roots, O Tamarack!
Of your fibrous roots, O Larch-Tree!
My canoe to bind together.
So to bind the ends together,
That the water may not enter,
That the river may not wet me!"

And the Larch, with all its fibres,
Shivered in the air of morning,
Touched his forehead with its tassels,
Said, with one long sigh of sorrow,
"Take them all, O Hiawatha!"

From the earth he tore the fibres,
Tore the tough roots of the Larch-Tree,
Closely sewed the bark together,
Bound it closely to the framework.

"Give me of your balm, O Fir-Tree!
Of your balsam and your resin,
So to close the seams together
That the water may not enter,
That the river may not wet me!"

And the Fir-Tree, tall and sombre,
Sobbed through all its robes of darkness,
Rattled like a shore with pebbles,
Answered wailing, answered weeping,
"Take my balm, O Hiawatha!"

And he took the tears of balsam,
Took the resin of the Fir-Tree,
Smear'd therewith each seam and fissure,
Made each crevice safe from water.

"Give me of your quills, O Hedgehog!
All your quills, O Kagh, the Hedgehog!
I will make a necklace of them,
Make a girdle for my beauty,
And two stars to deck her bosom!"

From a hollow tree the Hedgehog
With his sleepy eyes looked at him,
Shot his shining quills, like arrows,
Saying, with a drowsy murmur,
Through the tangle of his whiskers,
"Take my quills, O Hiawatha!"

From the ground the quills he gathered,
All the little shining arrows,
Stained them red and blue and yellow,
With the juice of roots and berries;
Into his canoe he wrought them,
Round its waist a shining girdle,
Round its bow a gleaming necklace,
On its breast two stars resplendent.

Thus the Birch Canoe was builded
In the valley, by the river,
In the bosom of the forest;
And the forest's life was in it,
All its mystery and its magic,
All the lightness of the birch-tree,
All the toughness of the cedar,
All the larch's supple sinews;
And it floated on the river
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
Like a yellow water-lily.

Paddles none had Hiawatha,
Paddles none he had or needed,
For his thoughts as paddles served him,
And his wishes served to guide him;
Swift or slow at will he glided,
Veered to right or left at pleasure.

Then he called aloud to Kwasind,
To his friend, the strong man, Kwasind,
Saying, "Help me clear this river
Of its sunken logs and sand-bars."

Straight into the river Kwasind
Plunged as if he were an otter,
Dived as if he were a beaver,
Stood up to his waist in water,
To his arm-pits in the river,
Swam and shouted in the river,
Tugged at sunken logs and branches,
With his hands he scooped the sand-bars,
With his feet the ooze and tangle.

And thus sailed my Hiawatha
Down the rushing Taquamenaw,
Sailed through all its bends and windings,
Sailed through all its deeps and shallows,
While his friend, the strong man, Kwasind,
Swam the deeps, the shallows waded.

Up and down the river went they,
In and out among its islands,
Cleared its bed of root and sand-bar,
Dragged the dead trees from its channel,
Made its passage safe and certain
Made a pathway for the people,
From its springs among the mountains,
To the water of Pauwating,
To the bay of Taquamenaw.

POEMS BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO A BUTTERFLY

I've watched you now a full half hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!--not frozen seas
More motionless!--and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers:
Here rest your wings when they are weary,
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

THE RAINBOW

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

WE ARE SEVEN

--A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
--Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"

"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!--I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

POEMS BY MARY HOWITT

THE VOICE OF SPRING

I am coming, I am coming!
Hark! the honey bee is humming;
See, the lark is soaring high
In the blue and sunny sky,
And the gnats are on the wing
Wheeling round in airy ring.

Listen! New-born lambs are bleating,
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms--a noisy crowd.
All the birds are singing loud,
And the first white butterfly
In the sunshine dances by.

Look around you, look around!
Flowers in all the fields about,
Every running stream is bright,
All the orchard trees are white,
And each small and waving shoot
Promises sweet autumn fruit.

BIRDS IN SUMMER

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in each leafy tree;
In the leafy trees so broad and tall,
Like a green and beautiful palace hall,
With its airy chambers light and boon,
That open to sun and stars and moon;
That open to the bright blue sky,
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by.

They have left their nests on the forest bough;
Those homes of delight they need not now;
And the young and the old they wander out,
And traverse their green world round about;
And hark! at the top of this leafy hall,
How one to the other in love they call!
"Come up! Come up!" they seem to say,
"Where the topmost twigs in the breezes sway."

"Come up! come up! for the world is fair
Where the merry leaves dance in the summer air."
And the birds below give back the cry,
"We come, we come to the branches high."
How pleasant the lives of the birds must be,
Living in love in a leafy tree!
And away through the air what joy to go,
And to look on the green, bright earth below!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Skimming about on the breezy sea,

Cresting the billows like silvery foam,
Then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!
What joy it must be to sail, upborne,
By a strong free wing, through the rosy morn,
To meet the young sun, face to face,
And pierce, like a shaft, the boundless space!

To pass through the bowers of the silver cloud;
To sing in the thunder hall aloud;
To spread out the wings for a wild, free flight
With the upper cloud-wings,--oh, what delight!
Oh, what would I give, like a bird, to go,
Right on through the arch of the sun-lit bow,
And see how the water-drops are kissed
Into green and yellow and amethyst.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Wherever it listeth, there to flee;
To go, when a joyful fancy calls,
Dashing down 'mong the waterfalls;
Then wheeling about, with its mate at play,
Above and below, and among the spray,
Hither and thither, with screams as wild
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child.

What joy it must be, like a living breeze,
To flutter about 'mid the flowering trees;

Lightly to soar, and to see beneath,
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,
And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,
That gladdened some fairy region old!
On the mountain tops, on the billowy sea,
On the leafy stems of a forest tree,
How pleasant the life of a bird must be!

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

"Will you walk into my parlor?"
Said a spider to a fly;
"'Tis the prettiest little parlor
That ever you did spy.
The way into my parlor
Is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things
To show you when you're there."
"O no, no," said the little fly,
"To ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair
Can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary
With soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?"
Said the spider to the fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around;

The sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile,
I'll snugly tuck you in."
"O no, no," said the little fly,
"For I've often heard it said
They never, never wake again,
Who sleep upon your bed."

Said the cunning spider to the fly,
"Dear friend, what shall I do
To prove the warm affection
I've always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry,
Good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome--
Will you please to take a slice?"
"O no, no," said the little fly,
"Kind sir, that cannot be;
I've heard what's in your pantry,
And I do not wish to see."

"Sweet creature," said the spider,
"You're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings,
How brilliant are your eyes.
I have a little looking-glass
Upon my parlor shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear,
You shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said,
"For what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning now,
I'll call another day."

The spider turned him round about,
And went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly
Would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle web
In a little corner sly,
And set his table ready
To dine upon the fly.

He went out to his door again,
And merrily did sing,
"Come hither, hither, pretty fly,
With pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple,
There's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright,
But mine are dull as lead."

Alas, alas! how very soon
This silly little fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words,
Came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft,
Then near and nearer drew--

Thought only of her brilliant eyes,
And green and purple hue;
Thought only of her crested head--
Poor foolish thing! At last
Up jumped the cunning spider,
And fiercely held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair,
Into his dismal den
Within his little parlor--but
She ne'er came out again!
And now, dear little children
Who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words,
I pray you, ne'er give heed.
Unto an evil counselor
Close heart and ear and eye;
And take a lesson from this tale
Of the spider and the fly.

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW

"And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?"
"I've been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer night to see!"

"And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?"
"I saw the glad sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

"And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?"
"I heard the drops of the water made,
And the ears of the green corn fill."

"Oh! tell me all, my Mary--
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies
Last night on the Caldon Low."

"Then take me on your knee, mother;
And listen, mother of mine:
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine;

"And their harp-strings rung so merrily
To their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the words of their talking
Were merrier far than all."

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That then you heard them say?"
"I'll tell you all, my mother;
But let me have my way.

"Some of them play'd with the water,
And roll'd it down the hill;
'And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill;

"For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man will the miller be
At dawning of the day.

"Oh! the miller, how he will laugh
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh
Till the tears fill both his eyes!"

"And some they seized the little winds
That sounded over the hill;
And each put a horn unto his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill;

"And there,' they said, 'the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And they shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind old widow's corn.

"Oh! the poor, blind widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be blithe enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands tall and strong,"

"And some they brought the brown lint-seed,
And flung it down from the Low;
'And this!' they said, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow.

"Oh! the poor, lame weaver,
How he will laugh outright
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!"

"And then outspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin;
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

"I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another;
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother.'

"With that I could not help but laugh,
And I laugh'd out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon Low
There was no one left but me.

"And all on the top of the Caldon Low
The mists were cold and gray,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

"But, coming down from the hill-top,
I heard afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how the wheel did go.

"And I peep'd into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, were seen
The yellow ears of the mildew'd corn,
All standing stout and green.

"And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were sprung;
And I met the weaver at his gate,
With the good news on his tongue.

"Now this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, pr'ythee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be."

OLD CHRISTMAS

Now he who knows old Christmas,
He knows a carle of worth;
For he is as good a fellow
As any upon earth.

He comes warm cloaked and coated,
And buttoned up to the chin;
And soon as he comes a-nigh the door
We open and let him in.

And with sprigs of holly and ivy
We make the house look gay,
Just out of an old regard for him,
For it was his ancient way.

He must be a rich old fellow,
What money he gives away!
There is not a lord in England
Could equal him any day.

Good luck unto old Christmas,
And long life, let us sing,
For he doth more good unto the poor
Than many a crowned king.

POEMS BY ALICE AND PHOEBE CARY

THE PIG AND THE HEN

The pig and the hen,
They both got in one pen,
And the hen said she wouldn't go out.
"Mistress Hen," says the pig,
"Don't you be quite so big!"
And he gave her a push with his snout.

"You are rough, and you're fat,
But who cares for all that;
I will stay if I choose," says the hen.
"No, mistress, no longer!"
Says pig, "I'm the stronger,
And mean to be boss of my pen!"

Then the hen cackled out
Just as close to his snout
As she dare: "You're an ill-natured brute,
And if I had the corn,
Just as sure as I'm born,
I would send you to starve or to root!"

"But you don't own the cribs;
So I think that my ribs
Will be never the leaner for you:
This trough is my trough,
And the sooner you're off,"
Says the pig, "why the better you'll do!"

"You're not a bit fair,
And you're cross as a bear;
What harm do I do in your pen?
But a pig is a pig,
And I don't care a fig
For the worst you can say," says the hen.

Says the pig, "You will care
If I act like a bear
And tear your two wings from your neck,"
"What a nice little pen
You have got!" says the hen,
Beginning to scratch and to peck.

Now the pig stood amazed
And the bristles, upraised
A moment past, fell down so sleek.
"Neighbor Biddy," says he,
"If you'll just allow me,
I will show you a nice place to pick!"

So she followed him off,
And they ate from one trough--

They had quarreled for nothing, they saw;
And when they had fed,
"Neighbor Hen," the pig said,
"Won't you stay here and roost in my straw?"

"No, I thank you; you see
That I sleep in a tree,"
Says the hen; "but I _must_ go away;
So a grateful good-by."
"Make your home in my sty,"
Says the pig, "and come in every day."

Now my child will not miss
The true moral of this
Little story of anger and strife;
For a word spoken soft
Will turn enemies oft
Into friends that will stay friends for life.

A LESSON OF MERCY

A boy named Peter
Found once in the road
All harmless and helpless,
A poor little toad;

And ran to his playmate,
And all out of breath
Cried, "John, come and help,
And we'll stone him to death!"

And picking up stones,
The two went on the run,
Saying, one to the other,
"Oh, won't we have fun?"

Thus primed and all ready,
They'd got nearly back,
When a donkey came
Dragging a cart on the track.

Now the cart was as much
As the donkey could draw,
And he came with his head
Hanging down; so he saw,

All harmless and helpless,
The poor little toad,
A-taking his morning nap
Right in the road.

He shivered at first,
Then he drew back his leg,
And set up his ears,
Never moving a peg.

Then he gave the poor toad,
With his warm nose a dump,
And he woke and got off
With a hop and jump.

And then with an eye
Turned on Peter and John,
And hanging his homely head
Down, he went on.

"We can't kill him now, John,"
Says Peter, "that's flat,
In the face of an eye and
An action like that!"

"For my part, I haven't
The heart to," says John;
"But the load is too heavy
That donkey has on:

"Let's help him"; so both lads
Set off with a will
And came up with the cart
At the foot of the hill.

And when each a shoulder
Had put to the wheel,
They helped the poor donkey
A wonderful deal.

When they got to the top
Back again they both run,
Agreeing they never
Had had better fun.

NOVEMBER

The leaves are fading and falling,
The winds are rough and wild,
The birds have ceased their calling,
But let me tell you, my child,

Though day by day, as it closes,
Doth darker and colder grow,
The roots of the bright red roses
Will keep alive in the snow.

And when the winter is over,
The boughs will get new leaves,
The quail come back to the clover,
And the swallow back to the eaves.

The robin will wear on his bosom
A vest that is bright and new,
And the loveliest wayside blossom
Will shine with the sun and dew.

The leaves to-day are whirling,
The brooks are all dry and dumb,
But let me tell you, my darling,
The spring will be sure to come.

There must be rough, cold weather,
And winds and rains so wild;
Not all good things together
Come to us here, my child.

So, when some dear joy loses
Its beauteous summer glow,
Think how the roots of the roses
Are kept alive in the snow.

LITTLE GOTTLIEB

Across the German Ocean,
In a country far from our own,
Once, a poor little boy, named Gottlieb,
Lived with his mother alone.

They dwelt in the part of a village
Where the houses were poor and small,
But the home of little Gottlieb,
Was the poorest one of all

He was not large enough to work,
And his mother could do no more
(Though she scarcely laid her knitting down)
Than keep the wolf from the door.

She had to take their threadbare clothes,
And turn, and patch, and darn;
For never any woman yet
Grew rich by knitting yarn.

And oft at night, beside her chair,
Would Gottlieb sit, and plan
The wonderful things he would do for her,
When he grew to be a man.

One night she sat and knitted,
And Gottlieb sat and dreamed,
When a happy fancy all at once
Upon his vision beamed.

'Twas only a week till Christmas,
And Gottlieb knew that then
The Christ-child, who was born that day,
Sent down good gifts to men.

But he said, "He will never find us,
Our home is so mean and small.
And we, who have most need of them,
Will get no gifts at all."

When all at once a happy light
Came into his eyes so blue,
And lighted up his face with smiles,
As he thought what he could do.

Next day when the postman's letters
Came from all over the land;
Came one for the Christ-child, written
In a child's poor trembling hand.

You may think he was sorely puzzled
What in the world to do;
So he went to the Burgomaster,
As the wisest man he knew.

And when they opened the letter,
They stood almost dismayed
That such a little child should dare
To ask the Lord for aid.

Then the Burgomaster stammered,
And scarce knew what to speak,
And hastily he brushed aside
A drop, like a tear, from his cheek.

Then up he spoke right gruffly,
And turned himself about:
"This must be a very foolish boy,
And a small one, too, no doubt."

But when six rosy children
That night about him pressed,
Poor, trusting little Gottlieb
Stood near him, with the rest.

And he heard his simple, touching prayer,
Through all their noisy play;
Though he tried his very best to put
The thought of him away.

A wise and learned man was he,
Men called him good and just;
But his wisdom seemed like foolishness,
By that weak child's simple trust.

Now when the morn of Christmas came
And the long, long week was done,
Poor Gottlieb, who scarce could sleep,
Rose up before the sun,

And hastened to his mother,
But he scarce might speak for fear,
When he saw her wondering look, and saw
The Burgomaster near.

He wasn't afraid of the Holy Babe,
Nor his mother, meek and mild;
But he felt as if so great a man

Had never been a child.

Amazed the poor child looked, to find
The hearth was piled with wood,
And the table, never full before,
Was heaped with dainty food.

Then half to hide from himself the truth
The Burgomaster said,
While the mother blessed him on her knees,
And Gottlieb shook for dread;

"Nay, give no thanks, my good dame,
To such as me for aid,
Be grateful to your little son,
And the Lord to whom he prayed!"

Then turning round to Gottlieb,
"Your written prayer, you see,
Came not to whom it was addressed,
It only came to me!"

"'Twas but a foolish thing you did,
As you must understand;
For though the gifts are yours, you know,
You have them from my hand."

Then Gottlieb answered fearlessly,
Where he humbly stood apart,
"But the Christ-child sent them all the same,
He put the thought in your heart!"

OUR HEROES

Here's a hand to the boy who has courage
To do what he knows to be right;
When he falls in the way of temptation,
He has a hard battle to fight.
Who strives against self and his comrades
Will find a most powerful foe;
All honor to him if he conquers--
A cheer for the boy who says "No!"

There's many a battle fought daily
The world knows nothing about;
There's many a brave little soldier
Whose strength puts a legion to rout.

And he who fights sin single-handed
Is more of a hero, I say,
Than he who leads soldiers to battle,
And conquers by arms in the fray.

Be steadfast, my boy, when you're tempted
And do what you know to be right;
Stand firm by the colors of manhood,
And you will overcome in the fight.

"The Right" be your battle-cry ever,
In waging the warfare of life;
And God, who knows who are the heroes,
Will give you the strength for the strife.

AN APRIL WELCOME

Come up, April, through the valley,
In your robes of beauty drest,
Come and wake your flowery children
From their wintry beds of rest;
Come and overblow them softly
With the sweet breath of the south;
Drop upon them, warm and loving,
Tenderest kisses of your mouth.

Touch them with your rosy fingers,
Wake them with your pleasant tread,
Push away the leaf-brown covers,
Over all their faces spread;

Tell them how the sun is waiting
Longer daily in the skies,
Looking for the bright uplifting
Of their softly-fringed eyes.

Call the crow-foot and the crocus,
Call the pale anemone,
Call the violet and the daisy,
Clothed with careful modesty;
Seek the low and humble blossoms,
Of their beauties unaware,
Let the dandelion and fennel,
Show their shining yellow hair.

Bid the little homely sparrows
Chirping, in the cold and rain,
Their impatient sweet complaining,
Sing out from their hearts again;
Bid them set themselves to mating,
Cooing love in softest words,
Crowd their nests, all cold and empty,
Full of little callow birds.

Come up, April, through the valley,
Where the fountain sleeps to-day,
Let him, freed from icy fetters,
Go rejoicing on his way;
Through the flower-enameled meadows
Let him run his laughing race,
Making love to all the blossoms
That o'erleant and kiss his face.

But not birds and blossoms only,
Not alone the streams complain,
Men and maidens too are calling,
Come up, April, come again!

Waiting with the sweet impatience
Of a lover for the hours
They shall set the tender beauty
Of thy feet among the flowers!

AUTUMN

Shorter and shorter now the twilight clips
The days, as through the sunset gates they crowd,
And Summer from her golden collar slips
And strays through stubble-fields and moans aloud.

Save when by fits the warmer air deceives,
And, stealing hopeful to some sheltered bower,
She lies on pillows of the yellow leaves,
And tries the old tunes over for an hour.

The wind, whose tender whisper in the May
Set all the young blooms listening through the grove,
Sits rustling in the faded boughs to-day
And makes his cold and unsuccessful love.

The rose has taken off her 'tire of red--
The mullein-stalk its yellow stars have lost,
And the proud meadow-pink hangs down her head
Against earth's chilly bosom, witch'd with frost.

The robin, that was busy all the June,
Before the sun had kissed the topmost bough,
Catching our hearts up in his golden tune,
Has given place to the brown cricket now.

The very cock crows lonesomely at morn--
Each flag and fern the shrinking stream divides--
Uneasy cattle low, and lambs forlorn
Creep to their strawy sheds with nettled sides.

Shut up the door: who loves me must not look
Upon the withered world, but haste to bring
His lighted candle, and his story-book,
And live with me the poetry of spring.

POEMS BY CHARLES KINGSLEY

THE THREE FISHERS

Three fishers went sailing away to the west--
Away to the west as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep;
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimm'd the lamps as the sun went down;
They look'd at the squall, and they look'd at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up, ragged and brown;
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep--
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep--
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

THE "OLD, OLD SONG"

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen,--
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down,--
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

A FAREWELL

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray;
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

THE LOST DOLL

I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in 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 in the heath one day;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled;
Yet for old sakes' sake, she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

POEMS BY HELEN HUNT JACKSON

"DOWN TO SLEEP"

November woods are bare and still;
November days are clear and bright;
Each noon burns up the morning's chill;
The morning's snow is gone by night.
Each day my steps grow slow, grow light,
As through the woods I reverent creep,
Watching all things lie "down to sleep."

I never knew before what beds,
Fragrant to smell, and soft to touch,
The forest sifts and shapes and spreads;
I never knew before how much
Of human sound there is in such
Low tones as through the forest sweep,
When all wild things lie "down to sleep."

Each day I find new coverlids
Tucked in, and more sweet eyes shut tight;
Sometimes the viewless mother bids
Her ferns kneel down full in my sight;
I hear their chorus of "good-night";
And half I smile, and half I weep,
Listening while they lie "down to sleep."

November woods are bare and still;
November days are bright and good;
Life's noon burns up life's morning chill;
Life's night rests feet which long have stood;
Some warm soft bed, in field or wood,
The mother will not fail to keep,
Where we can "lay us down to sleep."

SEPTEMBER

The goldenrod is yellow,
The corn is turning brown,
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down;

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun;

The sedges flaunt their harvest
In every meadow nook,
And asters by the brookside
Make asters in the brook;

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies--

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather
And autumn's best of cheer.

OCTOBER'S BRIGHT BLUE WEATHER

O suns and skies and clouds of June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather.

When loud the bumble-bee makes haste,
Belated, thriftless, vagrant,
And golden-rod is dying fast,
And lanes with grapes are fragrant;

When gentians roll their fringes tight
To save them for the morning,
And chestnuts fall from satin burrs
Without a sound of warning;

When on the ground red apples lie
In piles like jewels shining,
And redder still on old stone walls
Are leaves of woodbine twining;

When all the lovely wayside things
Their white-winged seeds are sowing,
And in the fields, still green and fair,
Late aftermaths are growing;

When springs run low, and on the brooks,
In idle golden freighting,
Bright leaves sink noiseless in the hush
Of woods, for winter waiting;

When comrades seek sweet country haunts,
By twos and twos together,
And count like misers hour by hour,
October's bright blue weather.

O suns and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.

POEMS BY GABRIEL SETOUN

ROMANCE

I saw a ship a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea;
Her masts were of the shining gold,
Her deck of ivory;
And sails of silk, as soft as milk,
And silver shrouds had she.

And round about her sailing,
The sea was sparkling white,
The waves all clapped their hands and sang
To see so fair a sight.
They kissed her twice, they kissed her thrice,
And murmured with delight.

Then came the gallant captain,
And stood upon the deck;
In velvet coat, and ruffles white,
Without a spot or speck;
And diamond rings, and triple strings
Of pearls around his neck.

And four-and-twenty sailors
Were round him bowing low;
On every jacket three times three
Gold buttons in a row;
And cutlasses down to their knees;
They made a goodly show.

And then the ship went sailing,
A-sailing o'er the sea;
She dived beyond the setting sun,
But never back came she,
For she found the lands of the golden sands,
Where the pearls and diamonds be.

JACK FROST

The door was shut, as doors should be,
Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see,
And left your window silver white.

He must have waited till you slept;
And not a single word he spoke,
But pencilled o'er the panes and crept
Away again before you woke.

And now you cannot see the hills
Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane;
But there are fairer things than these
His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
Hills and dales, and streams and fields;
And knights in armor riding by,
With nodding plumes and shining shields.

And here are little boats, and there
Big ships with sails spread to the breeze;
And yonder, palm trees waving fair
On islands set in silver seas,

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
And herds of cows and flocks of sheep;
And fruit and flowers and all the things
You see when you are sound asleep.

For, creeping softly underneath
The door when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe,
And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window-pane
In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake you see again
The lovely things you saw in dream.

THE WORLD'S MUSIC

The world's a very happy place,
Where every child should dance and sing,
And always have a smiling face,
And never sulk for anything.

I waken when the morning's come,
And feel the air and light alive
With strange sweet music like the hum
Of bees about their busy hive.

The linnets play among the leaves
At hide-and-peek, and chirp and sing;
While, flashing to and from the eaves,
The swallows twitter on the wing.

The twigs that shake, and boughs that sway;
And tall old trees you could not climb;
And winds that come, but cannot stay,
Are singing gaily all the time.

From dawn to dark the old mill-wheel
Makes music, going round and round;
And dusty-white with flour and meal,
The miller whistles to its sound.

And if you listen to the rain
Where leaves and birds and bees are dumb,
You hear it pattering on the pane
Like Andrew beating on his drum.

The coals beneath the kettle croon,
And clap their hands and dance in glee;
And even the kettle hums a tune
To tell you when it's time for tea.

The world is such a happy place
That children, whether big or small,
Should always have a smiling face,
And never, never sulk at all.

POEMS BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A MORNING SONG

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise!

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.
Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

SONG OF THE FAIRY

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be!
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favors,
In those freckles live their savors:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

LULLABY FOR TITANIA

FIRST FAIRY

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Chorus

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh!
So good-night, with lullaby.

SECOND FAIRY

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm, nor snail, do no offence.

WINTER

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who;
Tu-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all around the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who;
Tu-whit, to-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

POEMS BY VARIOUS AUTHORS

FRAIDIE-CAT

I shan't tell you what's his name:
When we want to play a game,
Always thinks that he'll be hurt,
Soil his jacket in the dirt,
Tear his trousers, spoil his hat,--
Fraidie-Cat! Fraidie-Cat!

Nothing of the boy in him!
"Dasn't" try to learn to swim;
Says a cow'll hook; if she
Looks at him he'll climb a tree;
"Scart" to death at bee or bat,--
Fraidie-Cat! Fraidie-Cat!

Claims there're ghosts all snowy white
Wandering around at night
In the attic; wouldn't go
There for anything, I know;
B'lieve he'd run if you said "Scat!"
Fraidie-Cat! Fraidie-Cat!

Clinton Scollard

JACK IN THE PULPIT

Jack in the pulpit
Preaches to-day,
Under the green trees
Just over the way.
Squirrel and song-sparrow,
High on their perch,
Hear the sweet lily-bells
Ringing to church.
Come, hear what his reverence
Rises to say,
In his low painted pulpit
This calm Sabbath-day.
Fair is the canopy
Over him seen,
Penciled by Nature's hand,
Black, brown, and green.
Green is his surplice,
Green are his bands;
In his queer little pulpit
The little priest stands.

In black and gold velvet,
So gorgeous to see,
Comes with his bass voice
The chorister bee.
Green fingers playing
Unseen on wind-lyres,
Low singing bird voices,--
These are his choirs.
The violets are deacons--
I know by the sign
That the cups which they carry
Are purple with wine.
And the columbines bravely
As sentinels stand
On the look-out with all their
Red trumpets in hand.

Meek-faced anemones,
Drooping and sad;
Great yellow violets,
Smiling out glad;
Buttercups' faces,
Beaming and bright;
Clovers, with bonnets,--
Some red and some white;
Daisies, their white fingers
Half-clasped in prayer;
Dandelions, proud of
The gold of their hair;
Innocents,--children
Guileless and frail,
Meek little faces
Upturned and pale;
Wild-wood geraniums,
All in their best,

Languidly leaning
In purple gauze dressed:--
All are assembled
This sweet Sabbath-day
To hear what the priest
In his pulpit will say.

Look! white Indian pipes
On the green mosses lie!
Who has been smoking
Profanely so nigh?
Rebuked by the preacher
The mischief is stopped,
But the sinners, in haste,
Have their little pipes dropped.
Let the wind, with the fragrance
Of fern and black birch,
Blow the smell of the smoking
Clean out of the church!
So much for the preacher:
The sermon comes next,--
Shall we tell how he preached it,
And where was his text?
Alas! like too many
Grown-up folks who play
At worship in churches
Man-builed to-day,--
We heard not the preacher
Expound or discuss;

But we looked at the people,
And they looked at us.
We saw all their dresses,
Their colors and shapes;
The trim of their bonnets,
The cut of their capes.
We heard the wind-organ,
The bee, and the bird,
But of Jack in the pulpit
We heard not a word!

Clara Smith

THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

A silly young cricket, accustomed to sing
Through the warm, sunny months of gay summer and spring,
Began to complain, when he found that at home
His cupboard was empty and winter was come.

Not a crumb to be found
On the snow-covered ground;
Not a flower could he see,
Not a leaf on a tree.

"Oh, what will become," says the cricket, "of me?"
At last by starvation and famine made bold,
All dripping with wet and all trembling with cold,
Away he set off to a miserly ant
To see if, to keep him alive, he would grant

Him shelter from rain.
A mouthful of grain
He wished only to borrow,
He'd repay it to-morrow;

If not helped, he must die of starvation and sorrow.

Says the ant to the cricket: "I'm your servant and friend,
But we ants never borrow, we ants never lend.
Pray tell me, dear sir, did you lay nothing by
When the weather was warm?" Said the cricket, "Not I.

My heart was so light
That I sang day and night,
For all nature looked gay."
"You sang, sir, you say?"

Go then," said the ant, "and sing winter away."

Thus ending, he hastily lifted the wicket
And out of the door turned the poor little cricket.
Though this is a fable, the moral is good--
If you live without work, you must live without
food.

__Anonymous__

WISHING

Ring-Ting! I wish I were a Primrose,
A bright yellow Primrose, blowing in the spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the Elm tree for our king!

Nay--stay! I wish I were an Elm tree,
A great, lofty Elm tree, with green leaves gay!
The winds would set them dancing,
The sun and moonshine glance in,
The birds would house among the boughs,
And sweetly sing.

Oh no! I wish I were a Robin,
A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go;

Through forest, field, or garden,
And ask no leave or pardon,
Till winter comes with icy thumbs
To ruffle up our wing!

Well--tell! Where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
Before a day was over,
Home comes the rover,
For mother's kiss--sweeter this
Than any other thing.

William Allingham

ROBIN REDBREAST

Good-bye, good-bye to Summer!
For Summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun!
Our thrushes now are silent,--
Our swallows flown away,--
But Robin's here in coat of brown,
And scarlet breast-knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The scanty pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough;
It's autumn, autumn, autumn late,
'Twill soon be winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheat-stack for the mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,--
Alas! in winter dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

William Allingham

THE CHESTNUT BURR

A wee little nut lay deep in its nest
Of satin and brown, the softest and best,
And slept and grew while its cradle rocked--
As it hung in the boughs that interlocked.

Now, the house was small where the cradle lay,
As it swung in the winds by night and day;
For a thicket of underbrush fenced it round,
This lone little cot by the great sun browned.

This little nut grew, and ere long it found
There was work outside on the soft, green ground;
It must do its part, so the world might know
It had tried one little seed to sow.

And soon the house that had kept it warm
Was tossed about by the autumn storm;
The stem was cracked, the old house fell,
And the chestnut burr was an empty shell.

But the little nut, as it waiting lay,
Dreamed a wonderful dream one day,
Of how it should break its coat of brown,
And live as a tree, to grow up and down.

Anonymous

MARJORIE'S ALMANAC

Robins in the tree-top,
Blossoms in the grass,
Green things a-growing
Everywhere you pass;
Sudden little breezes,
Showers of silver dew,
Black bough and bent twig
Budding out anew;
Pine-tree and willow-tree,
Fringed elm and larch,--
Don't you think that May-time's
Pleasanter than March?

Apples in the orchard
Mellowing one by one;
Strawberries upturning
Soft cheeks to the sun;

Roses faint with sweetness,
Lilies fair of face,
Drowsy scents and murmurs
Haunting every place;
Lengths of golden sunshine,
Moonlight bright as day,--
Don't you think that summer's
Pleasanter than May?

Roger in the corn-patch
Whistling negro songs;
Pussy by the hearth-side
Romping with the tongs;
Chestnuts in the ashes
Bursting through the rind;
Red leaf and gold leaf
Rustling down the wind;
Mother "doin' peaches"
All the afternoon,--
Don't you think that autumn's
Pleasanter than June?

Little fairy snow-flakes
Dancing in the flue;
Old Mr. Santa Claus,
What is keeping you?
Twilight and firelight
Shadows come and go;

Merry chime of sleigh-bells
Tinkling through the snow;
Mother knitting stockings
(Pussy's got the ball),--
Don't you think that winter's
Pleasanter than all?

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

KRISS KRINGLE

Just as the moon was fading
Amid her misty rings,
And every stocking was stuffed
With childhood's precious things,

Old Kriss Kringle looked around,
And saw on the elm-tree bough,
High hung, an oriole's nest,
Lonely and empty now.

"Quite a stocking," he laughed,
"Hung up there on a tree!
I didn't suppose the birds
Expected a present from me!"

Then old Kriss Kringle, who loves
A joke as well as the best,
Dropped a handful of snowflakes
Into the oriole's empty nest.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

LITTLE BY LITTLE

"Little by little," an acorn said,
As it slowly sank in its mossy bed,
"I am improving every day,
Hidden deep in the earth away."

Little by little, each day it grew;
Little by little, it sipped the dew;
Downward it sent out a thread-like root;
Up in the air sprung a tiny shoot.

Day after day, and year after year,
Little by little the leaves appear;
And the slender branches spread far and wide,
Till the mighty oak is the forest's pride.

Far down in the depths of the dark blue sea,
An insect train work ceaselessly.
Grain by grain, they are building well,
Each one alone in its little cell.

Moment by moment, and day by day,
Never stopping to rest or to play,
Rocks upon rocks, they are rearing high,
Till the top looks out on the sunny sky.

The gentle wind and the balmy air,
Little by little, bring verdure there;
Till the summer sunbeams gayly smile
On the buds and the flowers of the coral isle.

"Little by little," said a thoughtful boy,
"Moment by moment, I'll well employ,
Learning a little every day,
And not spending all my time in play.
And still this rule in my mind shall dwell,
Whatever I do, I will do it well."

"Little by little, I'll learn to know
The treasured wisdom of long ago;
And one of these days, perhaps, we'll see
That the world will be the better for me";
And do you not think that this simple plan
Made him a wise and useful man?

Anonymous

THE FAIRY QUEEN

Come, follow, follow me--
You, fairy elves that be,
Which circle on the green--
Come, follow Mab, your queen!
Hand in hand let's dance around,
For this place is fairy ground.

When mortals are at rest,
And snoring in their nest,
Unheard and unespied,
Through keyholes we do glide;
Over tables, stools, and shelves,
We trip it with our fairy elves.

And if the house be foul
With platter, dish, or bowl,
Upstairs we nimbly creep,
And find the sluts asleep;
There we pinch their arms and thighs--
None escapes, nor none espies.

But if the house be swept,
And from uncleanness kept,
We praise the household maid,
And duly she is paid;
For we use, before we go,
To drop a tester in her shoe.

Upon a mushroom's head
Our tablecloth we spread;
A grain of rye or wheat
Is manchet, which we eat;
Pearly drops of dew we drink,
In acorn cups, fil'd to the brink.

The brains of nightingales,
With unctuous fat of snails,
Between two cockles stew'd,
Is meat that's easily chew'd;
Tails of worms, and marrow of mice,
Do make a dish that's wondrous nice.

The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve us for our minstrelsy;
Grace said, we dance a while,
And so the time beguile;
And if the moon doth hide her head,
The glow-worm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewy grass
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when we do walk;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been.

Anonymous

A BUSY DAY

The bluff March wind set out from home
Before the peep of day,
But nobody seemed to be glad he had come,
And nobody asked him to stay.

Yet he dried up the snow-banks far and near,
And made the snow-clouds roll,
Huddled up in a heap, like driven sheep,
Way off to the cold North Pole.

He broke the ice on the river's back
And floated it down the tide,
And the wild ducks came with a loud "Quack, quack,"
To play in the waters wide.

He snatched the hat off Johnny's head
And rolled it on and on,
And oh, what a merry chase it led
Little laughing and scampering John!

He swung the tree where the squirrel lay
Too late in its winter bed,
And he seemed to say in his jolly way,
"Wake up, little sleepy head!"

He dried the yard so that Rob and Ted
Could play at marbles there,
And he painted their cheeks a carmine red
With the greatest skill and care.

He shook all the clothes-lines, one by one,
What a busy time he had!
But nobody thanked him for all he had done;
Now wasn't that just too bad?

Anonymous

A LAUGHING CHORUS

Oh, such a commotion under the ground
When March called, "Ho, there! ho!"
Such spreading of rootlets far and wide,
Such whispering to and fro;
And, "Are you ready?" the Snowdrop asked,
"Tis time to start, you know."
"Almost, my dear," the Scilla replied;
"I'll follow as soon as you go."
Then, "Ha! ha! ha!" a chorus came
Of laughter soft and low,
From the millions of flowers under the ground--
Yes--millions--beginning to grow.

"I'll promise my blossoms," the Crocus said,
"When I hear the bluebirds sing."
And straight thereafter, Narcissus cried,
"My silver and gold I'll bring."
"And ere they are dulled," another spoke,
"The Hyacinth bells shall ring."
And the Violet only murmured, "I'm here,"
And sweet grew the air of spring.
Then, "Ha! ha! ha!" a chorus came
Of laughter soft and low,
From the millions of flowers under the ground--
Yes--millions--beginning to grow.

Oh, the pretty, brave things! through the coldest days,
Imprisoned in walls of brown,
They never lost heart though the blast shrieked loud,
And the sleet and the hail came down,
But patiently each wrought her beautiful dress,
Or fashioned her beautiful crown;
And now they are coming to brighten the world,
Still shadowed by Winter's frown;
And well may they cheerily laugh, "Ha! ha!"
In a chorus soft and low,
The millions of flowers hid under the ground--
Yes--millions--beginning to grow.

Anonymous

THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might:
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright--
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done--
"It's very rude of him," she said,
"To come and spoil the fun!"

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead--
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand:
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand:
"If this were only cleared away,"
They said, "It would be grand!"

"If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,
"That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"
The Walrus did beseech.
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach:
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said:
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head--
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat--
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them
And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more--
All hopping through the frothy waves,
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low:
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
"Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,
"Is what we chiefly need:
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed--
Now, if you're ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed."

"But not on us!" the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
"After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do!"
"The night is fine," the Walrus said,
"Do you admire the view?"

"It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very nice!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"Cut us another slice.
I wish you were not quite so deaf--
I've had to ask you twice!"

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,
"To play them such a trick.
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"The butter's spread too thick!"

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize."

With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none--
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one.

Lewis Carroll

A LOBSTER QUADRILLE

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting
to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and
he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all
advance!
They are waiting on the shingle--will you come
and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will
you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't
you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion how delightful
it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the
lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and
gave a look askance--
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he
would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not,
would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could
not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly
friend replied,
"There is another shore, you know, upon the
other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to
France--
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and
join the dance.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will
you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't
you join the dance?"

Lewis Carroll

DANDELION

He is a roguish little elf,
A gay audacious fellow,
Who tramps about in doublet green
And skirt of brightest yellow;
In ev'ry field, by ev'ry road,
He peeps among the grasses,
And shows his sunny little face
To ev'ry one that passes.

Within the churchyard he is seen,
Beside the headstones peeping,
And shining like a golden star
O'er some still form there sleeping;
Beside the house door oft he springs,
In all his wanton straying,
And children shout in laughing glee
To find him in their playing.

At eve he dons his nightgown green,
And goes to bed right early,
At morn, he spreads his yellow skirts
To catch the dewdrops pearly;
A darling elf is Dandelion,
A roguish wanton sweeting;
Yet he is loved by ev'ry child,
All give him joyous greeting.

Kate L. Brown

NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are cover'd warm,
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm:--
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

William Blake

A LAUGHING SONG

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary, and Susan, and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths sing, "Ha, ha, he!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:
Come live, and be merry, and join with me
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he!"

William Blake

THE LAND OF DREAMS

"Awake, awake, my little boy!
Thou wast thy mother's only joy;
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
O wake! thy father does thee keep."

--"O what land is the Land of Dreams?
What are its mountains, and what are its streams?
O father! I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

"Among the lambs, clothed in white,
She walk'd with her Thomas in sweet delight:
I wept for joy; like a dove I mourn:--
O when shall I again return!"

--"Dear child! I also by pleasant streams
Have wander'd all night in the Land of Dreams:--
But, though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side."

--"Father, O father! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear?--
The Land of Dreams is better far,
Above the light of the morning star."

William Blake

ROBERT OF LINCOLN

Merrily swinging on briar and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name.
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright, black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders, and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Look what a nice, new coat is mine;
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Brood, kind creature, you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note;
Braggart, and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Never was I afraid of man,
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can.
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight:
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,

This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work, and silent with care,
Off is his holiday garment laid,
Half forgotten that merry air:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Nobody knows but my mate and I,
Where our nest and our nestlings lie,
Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;
Fun and frolic no more he knows,
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum drone;
Off he flies, and we sing as he goes,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

William Cullen Bryant

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

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 made,
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

"BOB WHITE"

I see you, on the zigzag rails,
You cheery little fellow!
While purple leaves are whirling down,
And scarlet, brown, and yellow.
I hear you when the air is full
Of snow-down of the thistle;
All in your speckled jacket trim,
"Bob White! Bob White!" you whistle.

Tall amber sheaves, in rustling rows,
Are nodding there to greet you;
I know that you are out for play--
How I should like to meet you!
Though blithe of voice, so shy you are,
In this delightful weather;
What splendid playmates you and I,
"Bob White," would make together!

There, you are gone! but far away
I hear your whistle falling.
Ah! may be it is hide-and-peek,
And that's why you are calling.
Along those hazy uplands wide
We'd be such merry rangers;
What! silent now, and hidden too?
"Bob White," don't let's be strangers.

Perhaps you teach your brood the game,
In yonder rainbowed thicket,
While winds are playing with the leaves,
And softly creaks the cricket.
"Bob White! Bob White!"--again I hear
That blithely whistled chorus;
Why should we not companions be?
One Father watches o'er us!

George Cooper

THE DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their saying was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Bliss Carman

WAITING TO GROW

Little white snowdrop just waking up,
Violet, daisy, and sweet buttercup,
Think of the flowers that are under the snow,
Waiting to grow!

And think what a number of queer little seeds,
Of flowers and mosses, of ferns and of weeds,
Are under the leaves and under the snow,
Waiting to grow!

Think of the roots getting ready to sprout,
Reaching their slender brown fingers about,
Under the ice and the leaves and the snow,
Waiting to grow!

No seed is so small, or hidden so well,
That God cannot find it; and soon he will tell
His sun where to shine, and His rain where to go,
Making it grow!

Frank French

THE DANDELIONS

Upon a showery night and still,
Without a sound of warning,
A trooper band surprised the hill,
And held it in the morning.

We were not waked by bugle notes
No cheer our dreams invaded,
And yet, at dawn, their yellow coats
On the green slopes paraded.

We careless folk the deed forgot;
Till one day, idly walking,
We marked upon the self-same spot
A crowd of veterans, talking.
They shook their trembling heads and gray,
With pride and noiseless laughter,
When, well-a-day! they blew away,
And ne'er were heard of after.

Helen Gray Cone

A FAIRY TALE

There stands by the wood-path shaded
A meek little beggar maid;
Close under her mantle faded
She is hidden like one afraid.

Yet if you but lifted lightly
That mantle of russet brown,
She would spring up slender and sightly,
In a smoke-blue silken gown.

For she is a princess, fated,
Disguised in the wood to dwell,
And all her life long has awaited
The touch that should break the spell;

And the Oak, that has cast around her
His root like a wrinkled arm,
Is the wild old wizard that bound her
Fast with his cruel charm.

Is the princess worth your knowing?
Then haste, for the spring is brief,
And find the Hepatica growing,
Hid under a last year's leaf!

Helen Gray Cone

A FABLE

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig";
Bun 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 so spry.

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 NIGHT WIND

Have you ever heard the wind go "Yoooooo"?
'Tis a pitiful sound to hear!
It seems to chill you through and through
With a strange and speechless fear.
'Tis the voice of the night that broods outside
When folk should be asleep,
And many and many's the time I've cried
To the darkness brooding far and wide
Over the land and the deep:
"Whom do you want, O lonely night,
That you wail the long hours through?"
And the night would say in its ghostly way:
"Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!"

My mother told me long ago
(When I was a little tad)
That when the night went wailing so,
Somebody had been bad;

And then, when I was snug in bed,
Whither I had been sent,
With the blankets pulled up round my head,
I'd think of what my mother'd said,
And wonder what boy she meant!
And "Who's been bad to-day?" I'd ask
Of the wind that hoarsely blew;
And the voice would say in its meaningful way:
"Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!"

That this was true I must allow--
You'll not believe it, though!
Yes, though I'm quite a model now,
I was not always so.
And if you doubt what things I say,
Suppose you make the test;
Suppose, when you've been bad some day
And up to bed are sent away
From mother and the rest--
Suppose you ask, "Who has been bad?"
And then you'll hear what's true;
For the wind will moan in its ruefulest tone:
"Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!
Yooooooooo!"

Eugene Field

DON'T KILL THE BIRDS

Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds
That sing about your door,
Soon as the joyous spring has come
And chilling storms are o'er.
The little birds, how sweet they sing!
Oh, let them joyous live,
And never seek to take the life
That you can never give!

Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds
That play among the trees;
'Twould make the earth a cheerless place
Should we dispense with these.
The little birds, how fond they play!
Do not disturb their sport;
But let them warble forth their songs
Till winter cuts them short.

Don't kill the birds, the happy birds,
That bless the fields and grove;
So innocent to look upon,
They claim our warmest love.
The happy birds, the tuneful birds,
How pleasant 'tis to see!
No spot can be a cheerless place
Where'er their presence be.

J. Colesworthy

A THANKSGIVING FABLE

It was a hungry pussy cat, upon Thanksgiving morn,
And she watched a thankful little mouse, that ate an ear of
corn.
"If I ate that thankful little mouse, how thankful he should be,
When he has made a meal himself, to make a meal for me!

"Then with his thanks for having fed, and his thanks for
feeding me,
With all his thankfulness inside, how thankful I shall be!"
Thus mused the hungry pussy cat, upon Thanksgiving Day;
But the little mouse had overheard and declined (with thanks)
to stay.

Oliver Herford

THE BALLAD OF THE TEMPEST

We were crowded in the cabin,
Not a soul would dare to sleep,--
It was midnight on the waters,
And a storm was on the deep.

'Tis a fearful thing in winter
To be shattered by the blast,
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Cut away the mast!"

So we shuddered there in silence,--
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring
And the breakers talked with Death.

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy with his prayers,
"We are lost!" the captain shouted,
As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered,
As she took his icy hand,
"Isn't God upon the ocean,
Just the same as on the land?"

Then we kissed the little maiden,
And we spoke in better cheer,
And we anchored safe in harbor,
When the morn was shining clear.

James T. Fields

A CHILD'S PRAYER

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 neighbor best.

God make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise,--
Of faith, that never waxeth dim,
In all His wondrous ways.

Matilda B. Edwards

JACK FROST

The Frost looked forth one still, clear night,
And whispered, "Now I shall be out of sight;
So, through the valley, and over the height,
In silence I'll take my way.
I will not go on like that blustering train,
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain,
That make such a bustle and noise in vain,
But I'll be as busy as they!"

So he flew to the mountain, and powdered its crest;
He lit on the trees, and their boughs he drest
With diamonds and pearls; and over the breast
Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The downward point of many a spear
That he hung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the windows of those who slept,
And over each pane, like a fairy, crept;
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stepped,
By the light of the morn were seen
Most beautiful things; there were flowers and trees;
There were beavies of birds and swarms of bees;
There were cities with temples and towers; and these
All pictured in silvery sheen!

But he did one thing that was hardly fair--
He peeped in the cupboard, and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare--
"Now, just to set them a-thinking,

I'll bite this basket of fruit," said he,
"This costly pitcher I'll burst in three;
And the glass of water they've left for me
Shall 'tchick' to tell them I'm drinking!"
Hannah F. Gould

FAIRY SONG

Shed no tear! oh, shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more! oh, weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes! oh, dry your eyes!
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies,--
Shed no tear.

Overhead! look overhead!
'Mong the blossoms white and red--
Look up, look up! I flutter now
On this fresh pomegranate bough.
See me! 'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.
Shed no tear! oh, shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, adieu--I fly--adieu!
I vanish in the heaven's blue,--
Adieu, adieu!

John Keats

THE DOVE

I had a dove, and the sweet dove died;
And I have thought it died of grieving:
Oh, what could it grieve for? its feet were tied
With a silken thread of my own hands' weaving.
Sweet little red feet! Why should you die--
Why would you leave me, sweet bird! why?
You lived alone in the forest tree;
Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?
I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

John Keats

THE WIND IN A FROLIC

The wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, "Now for a frolic! now for a leap!
Now for a madcap, galloping chase!
I'll make a commotion in every place!"
So it swept with a bustle right through a great town,
Creaking the signs, and scattering down
The shutters, and whisking, with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
There never was heard a much lustier shout
As the apples and oranges tumbled about;
And urchins, that stand with their thievish eyes
Forever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the fields it went blustering and humming,
And the cattle all wondered whatever was coming.
It plucked by their tails the grave matronly cows,
And tossed the colts' manes all about their brows,
Till offended at such a familiar salute,
They all turned their backs and stood silently mute.

So on it went, capering and playing its pranks;
Whistling with reeds on the broad river banks;
Puffing the birds, as they sat on a spray,
Or the travelers grave on the king's highway.
It was not too nice to bustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags.
'Twas so bold that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig, and the gentleman's cloak.
Through the forest it roared, and cried gayly, "Now,
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow!"
And it made them bow without more ado,
Or it cracked their great branches through and through.

Then it rushed like a monster o'er cottage and farm,
Striking their inmates with sudden alarm;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm.
There were dames with kerchiefs tied over their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mishaps.
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd;
There was rearing of ladders, and logs laying on,
Where the thatch from the roof threatened soon to be gone.
But the wind had passed on, and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain,
For it tossed him, and twirled him, then passed, and he stood
With his hat in a pool and his shoe in the mud.

William Howitt

A DAY

I'll tell you how the sun rose,--
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.
Then said I softly to myself,
"That must have been the sun!"

But how he set I know not;
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while.

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

Emily Dickinson

THE GRASS

The grass so little has to do,--
A sphere of simple green,
With only butterflies to brood,
And bees to entertain,

And stir all day to pretty tunes
The breezes fetch along,
And hold the sunshine in its lap
And bow to everything;

And thread the dews all night, like pearls,
And make itself so fine,--
A duchess were too common
For such a noticing.

And even when it dies, to pass
In odors so divine,
As lowly spices gone to sleep,
Or amulets of pine.

And then to dwell in sovereign barns,
And dream the days away,--
The grass so little has to do,
I wish I were the hay.

Emily Dickinson

WHITE SEAL

Oh! hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.

Where billow meets billow, there soft be thy pillow;
Ah, weary, wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.

Rudyard Kipling

THE CAMEL'S HUMP

The Camel's hump is an ugly lump
Which well you may see at the Zoo;
But uglier yet is the hump we get
From having too little to do.

Kiddies and grown-ups too-oo-oo,
If we haven't enough to do-oo-oo,
We get the hump--
Cameelious hump--
The hump that is black and blue!

We climb out of bed with a frouzly head
And a snarly-yarly voice.
We shiver and scowl and we grunt and we growl
At our bath and our boots and our toys!

And there ought to be a corner for me
(And I know there is one for you)
When we get the hump--
Cameelious hump--
The hump that is black and blue!

The cure for this ill is not to sit still,
Or frowst with a book by the fire;
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also,
And dig till you gently perspire.

And then you will find that the sun and the wind
And the Djinn of the Garden too,
Have lifted the hump--
The horrible hump--
The hump that is black and blue!

I get it as well as you-oo-oo,
If I haven't enough to do-oo-oo,
We all get hump--
Cameelious hump--
Kiddies and grown-ups too!

Rudyard Kipling

THE TREE

The Tree's early leaf buds were bursting their brown;
"Shall I take them away?" said the Frost, sweeping down.
"No, leave them alone
Till the blossoms have grown,"
Prayed the Tree, while he trembled from rootlet to crown.

The Tree bore his blossoms, and all the birds sung:
"Shall I take them away?" said the Wind, as he swung.
"No, leave them alone
Till the berries have grown,"
Said the Tree, while his leaflets quivering hung.

The Tree bore his fruit in the mid-summer glow:
Said the girl, "May I gather thy berries now?"
"Yes, all thou canst see:
Take them; all are for thee,"
Said the Tree, while he bent down his laden boughs low.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

CHOOSING A NAME

I have got a new-born sister.
I was nigh the first that kissed her.
When the nursing-woman brought her
To papa, his infant daughter,
How papa's dear eyes did glisten!
She will shortly be to christen,
And papa has made the offer
I shall have the naming of her.

Now, I wonder what would please her--
Charlotte, Julia, or Louisa?
Ann and Mary, they're too common;
Joan's too formal for a woman;
Jane's a prettier name beside,
But we had a Jane that died.
They would say, if 'twas Rebecca,
That she was a little Quaker;
Edith's pretty, but that looks
Better in old English books;

Ellen's left off long ago;
Blanche is out of fashion now.
None that I have named as yet
Are so good as Margaret.
Emily is neat and fine;
What do you think of Caroline?
How I'm puzzled and perplexed
What to choose or think of next!
I am in a little fever
Lest the name that I should give her
Should disgrace her or defame her:--
I will leave papa to name her.

Mary Lamb

CALLING THE VIOLET

Dear little Violet,
Don't be afraid!
Lift your blue eyes
From the rock's mossy shade!
All the birds call for you
Out of the sky:
May is here, waiting,
And here, too, am I.

Why do you shiver so,
Violet sweet?
Soft is the meadow-grass
Under my feet.
Wrapped in your hood of green,
Violet, why
Peep from your earth-door
So silent and shy?

Trickle the little brooks
Close to your bed;
Softest of fleecy clouds
Float overhead;
"Ready and waiting!"
The slender reeds sigh:
"Ready and waiting!"
We sing--May and I.

Come, pretty Violet,
Winter's away:
Come, for without you
May isn't May.
Down through the sunshine
Wings flutter and fly;--
Quick, little Violet,
Open your eye!

Hear the rain whisper,
"Dear Violet, come!"
How can you stay
In your underground home?
Up in the pine-boughs
For you the winds sigh.
Homesick to see you,
Are we--May and I.

Ha! though you care not
For call or for shout,
Yon troop of sunbeams
Are winning you out.
Now all is beautiful
Under the sky:
May's here--and violets!
Winter, good-by!

Lucy Larcom

THE BROWN THRUSH

There's a merry brown thrush sitting up in the tree.
"He's singing to me! He's singing to me!"
And what does he say, little girl, little boy?
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
Don't you hear? Don't you see?
Hush! Look! In my tree,
I'm as happy as happy can be!"

And the brown thrush keeps singing, "A nest do you see,
And five eggs, hid by me in the juniper tree?
Don't meddle! don't touch! little girl, little boy,
Or the world will lose some of its joy!
Now I'm glad! now I'm free!
And I always shall be,
If you never bring sorrow to me."

So the merry brown thrush sings away in the tree,
To you and to me, to you and to me;
And he sings all the day, little girl, little boy,
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
But long it won't be,
Don't you know? Don't you see?
Unless we are as good as can be!"

Lucy Larcom

THE WIND AND THE MOON

Said the Wind to the Moon, "I will blow you out.
You stare
In the air
Like a ghost in a chair,
Always looking what I am about;
I hate to be watched--I'll blow you out."

The Wind blew hard, and out went the Moon.
So deep,
On a heap
Of clouds, to sleep,
Down lay the Wind, and slumbered soon--
Muttering low, "I've done for that Moon."

He turned in his bed; she was there again!
On high
In the sky
With her one ghost eye,
The Moon shone white and alive and plain.
Said the Wind--"I will blow you out again."

The Wind blew hard, and the Moon grew dim.
"With my sledge
And my wedge
I have knocked off her edge!
If only I blow right fierce and grim,
The creature will soon be dimmer than dim."

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.

"One puff
More's enough

To blow her to snuff!

One good puff more where the last was bred,
And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go the thread!"

He blew a great blast, and the thread was gone;

In the air
Nowhere

Was a moonbeam bare;

Far off and harmless the shy stars shone;
Sure and certain the Moon was gone.

The Wind, he took to his revels once more;

On down
In town,

Like a merry-mad clown,

He leaped and hallooed with whistle and roar,
"What's that?" The glimmering thread once more!

He flew in a rage--he danced and blew;

But in vain
Was the pain

Of his bursting brain;

For still the broader the Moon-scrap grew,
The broader he swelled his big cheeks and blew.

Slowly she grew--till she filled the night,

And shone
On her throne

In the sky alone,

A matchless, wonderful, silvery light,
Radiant and lovely, the Queen of the night.

Said the Wind--"What a marvel of power am I!

With my breath,
Good faith!

I blew her to death--

First blew her away right out of the sky--
Then blew her in; what strength have I!"

But the Moon, she knew nothing about the affair,

For high
In the sky,

With her one white eye,

Motionless, miles above the air,
She had never heard the great Wind blare.

George Macdonald

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;

And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,--

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash;

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave a luster of mid-day to objects below;

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!--

To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall,
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,

So, up to the housetop the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys,--and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound;

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes how they twinkled; his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.

He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump--a right jolly old elf--
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.

But I heard him exclaim, ere they drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight!"

Clement C. Moore

HUNTING SONG

Up, up! ye dames and lasses gay!
To the meadows trip away.
'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,
And scare the small birds from the corn.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
To the cricket and the mouse:
Find grannam out a sunny seat,
With babe and lambkin at her feet.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Samuel T. Coleridge

HOW THE LEAVES CAME DOWN

"I'll tell you how the leaves came down,"
The great tree to his children said,
"You're getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red.
It is quite time to go to bed."

"Ah!" begged each silly, pouting leaf,
"Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief;
Tis such a very pleasant day
We do not want to go away."

So, for just one more merry day
To the great tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced, and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among,--

"Perhaps the great tree will forget,
And let us stay until the spring,
If we all beg, and coax, and fret."
But the great tree did no such thing;
He smiled to hear their whispering.

"Come, children, all to bed," he cried;
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer,
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
White bedclothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare tree looked down and smiled,
"Good-night, dear little leaves," he said.
And from below each sleepy child
Replied, "Good-night," and murmured,
"It is so nice to go to bed!"

Susan Coolidge

THE LITTLE LADYBIRD

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
The field-mouse has gone to her nest,
The daisies have shut up their sleepy red eyes,
And the bees and the birds are at rest.

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
The glow-worm is lighting her lamp,
The dew's falling fast, and your fine speckled wings
Will flag with the close-clinging damp.

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
Good luck if you reach it at last!
The owl's come abroad, and the bat's on the roam,
Sharp set from their Ramazan fast.

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
The fairy bells tinkle afar!
Make haste or they'll catch you, and harness you fast
With a cobweb to Oberon's car.

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
To your house in the old willow-tree,
Where your children so dear have invited the ant
And a few cozy neighbors to tea.

Ladybird, ladybird! fly away home!
And if not gobbled up by the way,
Nor yoked by the fairies to Oberon's car,
You're in luck! and that's all I've to say!

Caroline B. Southey

THE FIR-TREE

The winds have blown more bitter
Each darkening day of fall;
High over all the house-tops
The stars are far and small
I wonder, will my fir-tree
Be green in spite of all?

O grief is colder--colder
Than wind from any part;
And tears of grief are bitter tears,
And doubt's a sorer smart!
But I promised to my fir-tree
To keep the fragrant heart.

Josephine Preston Peabody

THE BLUEBIRD

I know the song that the bluebird is singing,
Out in the apple-tree where he is swinging;
Brave little fellow, the skies may look dreary;
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark! how the music leaps out from his throat,
Hark! was there ever so merry a note?
Listen awhile and you'll hear what he's saying,
Up in the apple-tree swinging and swaying.

"Dear little blossoms down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know;
Hark, while I sing you a message of cheer;
Summer is coming and spring-time is here!"

"Little white snowdrop! I pray you arise;
Bright yellow crocus! come, open your eyes;
Sweet little violets, hid from the cold,
Put on your mantles of purple and gold;
Daffodils! daffodils! say, do you hear?--
Summer is coming and spring-time is here!"

Emily Huntington Miller

THE BLUE JAY

O Blue Jay up in the maple tree,
Shaking your throat with such bursts of glee,
How did you happen to be so blue?
Did you steal a bit of the lake for your crest,
And fasten blue violets into your vest?
Tell me, I pray you,--tell me true!

Did you dip your wings in azure dye,
When April began to paint the sky,
That was pale with the winter's stay?
Or were you hatched from a blue-bell bright,
'Neath the warm, gold breast of a sunbeam light,
By the river one blue spring day?

O Blue Jay up in the maple tree,
A-tossing your saucy head at me,
With ne'er a word for my questioning,
Pray, cease for a moment your "ting-a-link,"
And hear when I tell you what I think,--
You bonniest bit of spring.

I think when the fairies made the flowers,
To grow in these mossy fields of ours,
Periwinkles and violets rare,
There was left of the spring's own color, blue,
Plenty to fashion a flower whose hue
Would be richer than all and as fair.

So, putting their wits together, they
Made one great blossom so bright and gay,
The lily beside it seemed blurred:
And then they said, "We will toss it in air;
So many blue blossoms grow everywhere,
Let this pretty one be a bird."

Susan Hartley Swett

THE VIOLET

Down in a green and shady bed
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colors bright and fair!
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet there it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused its sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see,
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

Jane Taylor

THE FERN SONG

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern,
And spread out your palms again,
And say, "Tho' the Sun
Hath my vesture spun,
He hath labored, alas, in vain,
But for the shade
That the Cloud hath made,
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."
Then laugh and upturn
All your fronds, little Fern,
And rejoice in the beat of the rain!

John Bannister Tabb

KING SOLOMON AND THE BEES

A Tale of the Talmud

When Solomon was reigning in his glory,
Unto his throne the Queen of Sheba came,
(So in the Talmud you may read the story)
Drawn by the magic of the monarch's fame,
To see the splendors of his court, and bring
Some fitting tribute to the mighty king.

Nor this alone; much had her Highness heard
What flowers of learning graced the royal speech;
What gems of wisdom dropped with every word;
What wholesome lessons he was wont to teach
In pleasing proverbs; and she wished, in sooth,
To know if Rumor spoke the simple truth.

Besides, the queen had heard (which piqued her most)
How through the deepest riddles he could spy;
How all the curious arts that women boast
Were quite transparent to his piercing eye;
And so the queen had come--a royal guest--
To put the sage's cunning to the test.

And straight she held before the monarch's view,
In either hand, a radiant wreath of flowers;
The one, bedecked with every charming hue,
Was newly culled from Nature's choicest bowers;
The other, no less fair in every part,
Was the rare product of divinest Art.

"Which is the true, and which the false?" she said,
Great Solomon was silent. All-amazed,
Each wondering courtier shook his puzzled head,
While at the garlands long the monarch gazed,
As one who sees a miracle, and fain,
For very rapture, ne'er would speak again.

"Which is the true?" once more the woman asked,
Pleased at the fond amazement of the king;
"So wise a head should not be hardly tasked,
Most learned liege, with such a trivial thing!"
But still the sage was silent; it was plain
A deepening doubt perplexed the royal brain.

While thus he pondered, presently he sees,
Hard by the casement,--so the story goes,--
A little band of busy, bustling bees,
Hunting for honey in a withered rose.
The monarch smiled, and raised his royal head;
"Open the window!"--that was all he said.

The window opened at the king's command;
Within the room the eager insects flew,
And sought the flowers in Sheba's dexter hand!
And so the king and all the courtiers knew
That wreath was Nature's; and the baffled queen
Returned to tell the wonders she had seen.

My story teaches (every tale should bear
A fitting moral) that the wise may find
In trifles light as atoms in the air,
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,
Some truth designed to profit or to please,--
As Israel's king learned wisdom from the bees!

John G. Saxe

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF

O hush thee, my baby, thy sire was a knight,--
Thy mother a lady both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear baby, to thee.

O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman drew near to thy bed.

O hush thee, my baby, the time soon will come,
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

Sir Walter Scott

HAIL, COLUMBIA!

Hail, Columbia! happy land!
Hail, ye heroes! heaven-born band!
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
And when the storm of war was gone,

Enjoyed the peace your valor won.
Let independence be our boast,
Ever mindful what it cost;
Ever grateful for the prize,
Let its altar reach the skies.

Firm, united, let us be,
Rallying round our Liberty;
As a band of brothers joined,
Peace and safety we shall find.

Immortal patriots! rise once more:
Defend your rights, defend your shore:
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Invade the shrine where sacred lies
Of toil and blood the well-earned prize.
While offering peace sincere and just,
In Heaven we place a manly trust,
That truth and justice will prevail,
And every scheme of bondage fail.

Sound, sound, the trump of Fame!
Let WASHINGTON'S great name
Ring through the world with loud applause;
Ring through the world with loud applause;
Let every clime to Freedom dear,
Listen with a joyful ear.
With equal skill, and godlike power,
He governed in the fearful hour
Of horrid war; or guides, with ease,
The happier times of honest peace.

Behold the chief who now commands,
Once more to serve his country, stands--
The rock on which the storm will beat,
The rock on which the storm will beat;
But, armed in virtue firm and true,
His hopes are fixed on Heaven and you;
When hope was sinking in dismay,
And glooms obscured Columbia's day,
His steady mind, from changes free,
Resolved on death or liberty.

Joseph Hopkinson

THE SNOWDROP

Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid!
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

THE OWL

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round,
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

A TRAGIC STORY

There lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore;
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon this curious case,
And swore he'd change the pigtail's place,
And have it hanging at his face,
Not dangling there behind him.

Said he, "The mystery I've found,--
I'll turn me round."--
He turned him round;
But still it hung behind him.

Then round and round, and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;
In vain--it mattered not a pin--
The pigtail hung behind him.

And right, and left, and round about,
And up, and down, and in, and out
He turned; but still the pigtail stout
Hung steadily behind him.

And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist, and twirl, and tack,
Alas! still faithful to his back
The pigtail hangs behind him.

William M. Thackeray

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

There's a song in the air!
There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer
And a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.

There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth,
For the virgin's sweet boy
Is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire and the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.

In the light of that star
Lie the ages imperaled;
And that song from afar
Has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.

We rejoice in the light,
And we echo the song
That comes down through the night
From the heavenly throng.
Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in his cradle our Saviour and King.

J.G. Holland

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

"Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,--
World, you are beautifully drest.

"The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree,
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

"You friendly Earth! how far do you go
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs, and isles
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

"Ah, you are so great, and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers, to-day,
A whisper inside me seemed to say,
'You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot:
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!'"

William B. Rands

NOBODY KNOWS

Often I've heard the Wind sigh
By the ivied orchard wall,
Over the leaves in the dark night,
Breathe a sighing call,
And faint away in the silence,
While I, in my bed,
Wondered, 'twixt dreaming and waking,
What it said.

Nobody knows what the Wind is,
Under the height of the sky,
Where the hosts of the stars keep far away house
And its wave sweeps by--
Just a great wave of the air,
Tossing the leaves in its sea,
And foaming under the eaves of the roof
That covers me.

And so we live under deep water,
All of us, beasts and men,
And our bodies are buried down under the sand,
When we go again;
And leave, like the fishes, our shells,
And float on the Wind and away,
To where, o'er the marvellous tides of the air,
Burns day.

Walter de la Mare

THE TRUANTS

Ere my heart beats too coldly and faintly
To remember sad things, yet be gay,
I would sing a brief song of the world's little children
Magic hath stolen away.

The primroses scattered by April,
The stars of the wide Milky Way,
Cannot outnumber the hosts of the children
Magic hath stolen away.

The buttercup green of the meadows,
The snow of the blossoming may,
Lovelier are not than the legions of children
Magic hath stolen away.

The waves tossing surf in the moonbeam,
The albatross lone on the spray,
Alone know the tears wept in vain for the children
Magic hath stolen away.

In vain: for at hush of the evening,
When the stars twinkle into the grey,
Seems to echo the far-away calling of children
Magic hath stolen away.

Walter de la Mare

WILL EVER?

Will he ever be weary of wandering,
The flaming sun?
Ever weary of waning in lovelight,
The white still moon?
Will ever a shepherd come
With a crook of simple gold,
And lead all the little stars
Like lambs to the fold?

Will ever the Wanderer sail
From over the sea,
Up the river of water,
To the stones to me?
Will he take us all into his ship,
Dreaming, and waft us far,
To where in the clouds of the West,
The Islands are?

Walter de la Mare

WANDERERS

Wide are the meadows of night,
And daisies are shining there,
Tossing their lovely dew,
Lustrous and fair;
And through these sweet fields go,
Wanderers amid the stars--
Venus, Mercury, Uranus, Neptune,
Saturn, Jupiter, Mars.

"Tired in their silver, they move,
And circling, whisper and say,
Fair are the blossoming meads of delight
Through which we stray.

Walter de la Mare

CHRISTMAS

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he,--for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind--
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town, this day
Is born, of David's line,
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels, praising God, and thus
Addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace:
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease!"

Nahum Tate

THE SNOW-BIRD'S SONG

The ground was all covered with snow one day,
And two little sisters were busy at play,
When a snow-bird was sitting close by on a tree,
And merrily singing his chick-a-dee-dee,
Chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee,
And merrily singing his chick-a-dee-dee.

He had not been singing that tune very long,
Ere Emily heard him, so loud was his song;
"Oh, sister, look out of the window," said she,
"Here's a dear little bird singing chick-a-dee-dee.
Chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee,
Here's a dear little bird singing chick-a-dee-dee.

"Oh, mother, do get him some stockings and shoes,
And a nice little frock, and a hat if you choose;
I wish he'd come into the parlor, and see
How warm we would make him, poor chick-a-dee-dee!
Chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee,
How warm we would make him, poor chick-a-dee-dee!"

"There is One, my dear child, though I cannot tell who,
Has clothed me already, and warm enough too.
Good morning! Oh, who are so happy as we?"
And away he went singing his chick-a-dee-dee.
Chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee,
And away he went singing his chick-a-dee-dee.

F.C. Woodworth

SPRING

The alder by the river
Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over
And oh, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
That once again 'tis spring.

The gay green grass comes creeping
So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
And scarlet columbine,
And in the sunny meadows
The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
There peeps the violet blue;
O happy little children!
God made them all for you.

Celia Thaxter

THE SANDPIPER

Across the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I;
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,--
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry;

He starts not at my fitful song,
Or flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
He scans me with a fearless eye.
Staunch friends are we, well tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

Celia Thaxter

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Phillips Brooks

THE SANDMAN

The rosy clouds float overhead,
The sun is going down,
And now the sandman's gentle tread
Comes stealing through the town.

"White sand, white sand," he softly cries,
And, as he shakes his hand,
Straightway there lies on babies' eyes
His gift of shining sand.
Blue eyes, gray eyes, black eyes, and brown,
As shuts the rose, they softly close, when he
goes through the town.

From sunny beaches far away,
Yes, in another land,
He gathers up at break of day
His store of shining sand.
No tempests beat that shore remote,
No ships may sail that way;
His little boat alone may float
Within that lovely bay.
Blue eyes, gray eyes, black eyes, and brown,
As shuts the rose, they softly close, when he
goes through the town.

He smiles to see the eyelids close
Above the happy eyes!
And every child right well he knows--
Oh, he is very wise!
But if, as he goes through the land,
A naughty baby cries,
His other hand takes dull gray sand
To close the wakeful eyes.
Blue eyes, gray eyes, black eyes, and brown,
As shuts the rose, they softly close, when he
goes through the town.

So when you hear the sandman's song
Sound through the twilight sweet,
Be sure you do not keep him long
A-waiting on the street.
Lie softly down, dear little head,
Rest quiet, busy hands,
Till, by your bed his good-night said,
He strews the shining sands.
Blue eyes, gray eyes, black eyes, and brown,
As shuts the rose, they softly close, when he
goes through the town.

Margaret Vandegrift

RED RIDING-HOOD

On the wide lawn the snow lay deep,
Ridged o'er with many a drifted heap;
The wind that through the pine-trees sung

The naked elm-boughs tossed and swung;
While, through the window, frosty-starred,
Against the sunset purple barred,
We saw the sombre crow flap by,
The hawk's gray fleck along the sky,

The crested blue-jay flitting swift,
The squirrel poising on the drift,
Erect, alert, his broad gray tail
Set to the north wind like a sail.
It came to pass, our little lass,
With flattened face against the glass,
And eyes in which the tender dew
Of pity shone, stood gazing through
The narrow space her rosy lips
Had melted from the frost's eclipse:
"Oh, see," she cried, "the poor blue-jays!
What is it that the black crow says?
The squirrel lifts his little legs
Because he has no hands, and begs;
He's asking for my nuts, I know;
May I not feed them on the snow?"

Half lost within her boots, her head
Warm-sheltered in her hood of red,
Her plaid skirt close about her drawn,
She floundered down the wintry lawn;
Now struggling through the misty veil
Blown round her by the shrieking gale;
Now sinking in a drift so low
Her scarlet hood could scarcely show
Its dash of color on the snow.

She dropped for bird and beast forlorn
Her little store of nuts and corn,
And thus her timid guests bespoke:
"Come, squirrel, from your hollow oak,--
Come, black old crow,--come, poor blue-jay,
Before your supper's blown away!
Don't be afraid, we all are good;
And I'm mamma's Red Riding-Hood!"

O Thou whose care is over all,
Who heedest even the sparrow's fall,
Keep in the little maiden's breast
The pity which is now its guest!
Let not her cultured years make less
The childhood charm of tenderness,
But let her feel as well as know,
Nor harder with her polish grow!
Unmoved by sentimental grief
That wails along some printed leaf,
But prompt with kindly word and deed
To own the claims of all who need,
Let the grown woman's self make good
The promise of Red Riding-Hood!

John G. Whittier

THE SONG SPARROW

There is a bird I know so well,
It seems as if he must have sung
Beside my crib when I was young;
Before I knew the way to spell
The name of even the smallest bird,
His gentle, joyful song I heard.
Now see if you can tell, my dear,
What bird it is, that every year,
Sings "Sweet--sweet--sweet--very merry cheer."

He comes in March, when winds are strong,
And snow returns to hide the earth;
But still he warms his head with mirth,
And waits for May. He lingers long
While flowers fade, and every day
Repeats his sweet, contented lay;
As if to say we need not fear
The season's change, if love is here,
With "Sweet--sweet--sweet--very merry cheer."

He does not wear a Joseph's coat
Of many colors, smart and gay;
His suit is Quaker brown and gray,
With darker patches at his throat.
And yet of all the well-dressed throng,
Not one can sing so brave a song.
It makes the pride of looks appear
A vain and foolish thing to hear
His "Sweet--sweet--sweet--very merry cheer."

Henry van Dyke

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember,
The roses, red and white;
The violets and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday,--
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing;
And thought the air must rush as fresh

To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

Thomas Hood

TALKING IN THEIR SLEEP

"You think I am dead,"
The apple tree said,
"Because I have never a leaf to show--
Because I stoop,
And my branches droop,
And the dull gray mosses over me grow!
But I'm still alive in trunk and shoot;
The buds of next May
I fold away--
But I pity the withered grass at my root."

"You think I am dead,"
The quick grass said,
"Because I have parted with stem and blade!
But under the ground
I am safe and sound
With the snow's thick blanket over me laid.
I'm all alive, and ready to shoot,
Should the spring of the year
Come dancing here--
But I pity the flower without branch or root."
"You think I am dead,"
A soft voice said,
"Because not a branch or root I own.
I never have died,
But close I hide
In a plummy seed that the wind has sown.
Patient I wait through the long winter hours;
You will see me again--
I shall laugh at you then,
Out of the eyes of a hundred flowers."

Edith M. Thomas

LITTLE DANDELION

Little bud Dandelion
Hears from her nest,
"Merry heart, starry eye,
Wake from your rest!"
Wide ope the emerald lids;
Robin's above;
Wise little Dandelion
Smiles at his love.

Cold lie the daisy-banks,
Clad but in green,
Where in the Mays agone
Bright hues were seen.
Wild pinks are slumbering,
Violets delay--
True little Dandelion
Greeteth the May.

Meek little Dandelion
Groweth more fair,
Till dries the amber dew
Out from her hair.
High rides the thirsty sun,
Fiercely and high,--
Faint little Dandelion
Closeth her eye.

Dead little Dandelion,
In her white shroud,
Heareth the angel-breeze
Call from the cloud.
Tiny plumes fluttering
Make no delay,
Little winged Dandelion
Soareth away.

Helen L. Bostwick