

The Waldorf Book of Poetry

Discover the Power of Imagination

Edited by David Kennedy

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for Elise

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Foreword

“Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems.”

-RAINER MARIA RILKE

In my travels as a Waldorf consultant, I will now and then encounter a teacher who wistfully asks if I know of one all-purpose book that would show her the way to provide her children with the healthy rhythmic foundation they need to master their multiplication tables; that would map out a consistent approach to building vocabulary and improving spelling; that would cultivate good writing skills, style, and structure; and that would galvanize the teaching of history and geography, capturing the children’s imaginative feeling for time and place.

A tall order, to be sure, yet I would venture to say that you are at this moment holding such a book. This unparalleled collection of poetry for Waldorf practitioners is at once an assemblage of powerful rhythmic exercises, a miniature dictionary/thesaurus of English usage and etymology, a manual of style by its most sensitive and trenchant masters, and an encyclopedic compendium of historical events and evocations of geographical settings (including a number of places that, technically, do not even exist). Read through these carefully selected and artfully categorized poems and you will receive the better part of a Waldorf education. If such a claim seems excessive, then please read on.

The memorization and recitation of great poetry was, for centuries, the mainstay of a good education. The image of an Athenian boy performing gymnastic exercises while his slave (pedagogue) recited the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* has reverberated down the ages as the archetype of “a sound mind in a healthy body,” and poetry was the elixir that provided this salutary wholeness.

In the early 1960s I attended a prestigious public high school in New York City. Once a month the 5000 boys who attended that school—most of them destined to be mathematicians, scientists, and engineers—would gather in its grand auditorium for an assembly. Although this was a public school, every assembly began with a specially chosen honor student reading from the Bible. The selection was always drawn from the *Psalms*, the contents of which were undoubtedly acceptable both to the predominantly Catholic

school administration as well as the overwhelmingly Jewish faculty—and it was recited to an audience that sat rapt with silence and reverence. At the end of those assemblies, Mr. Wood, my homeroom teacher and an avowed atheist, would delightedly deconstruct the Psalm and show us how cleverly its honeyed surface was designed to open listeners up to its evocation of fear and trembling, guilt and mortification, and to effectively squelch anything individual or defiant from awakening within them.

In this way I was twice blessed. In the morning I learned to *appreciate* poetry, as I experienced the quiet power with which it could inspire inwardness and reverence, soothing the five thousand savage breasts of my boisterous and testosterone-driven schoolmates. In the afternoon, under Mr. Wood's incisive tutelage, I learned how to *analyze* poetry, to recognize that it was not the words alone, but also their placement and rhythm, that comprised the poem and that worked so profoundly upon the human psyche.

Alas, few such experiences are vouchsafed to schoolchildren anymore. This is not to say that children do not crave poetry: just witness the unprecedented proliferation of advertising jingles, mottos, and even the concise, iconic phrases that commonly accompany so many corporate logos in our time. As schools began to eschew immersion in literary and artistic pursuits in favor of subjects that were “relevant,” children (and the adults they became) sought poetry wherever they could find it. Perhaps future sociologists will find a correlation between the twentieth century's supplanting of genuine poetry with its commercial caricatures and the substitution of genuine nourishment with fast food.

Fortunately, in this domain among many others, Waldorf education has a better idea. Rudolf Steiner, the progenitor of Waldorf methodology, had such a profound respect for poetry that he developed a new art of recitation, Sprachgestaltung, or “speech formation.” Alongside this art he developed yet another, Eurythmy, or “beautiful movement.” Eurythmy is performed not only to music but to the spoken word as well. Steiner's eurythmy choreography is replete with indications to performers concerning the sounds, meter, rhyme, and meaning of many great poems. This profound regard for poetry flowed into the life of the very first Waldorf school in 1919 and continues unabated to this day. Waldorf students begin to recite poetry in Nursery and Kindergarten as they imitate their teachers; by the middle and upper grades the more wakeful students may memorize hundreds of lines of poetry that they have read on their own, recited with classmates, or performed in eurythmy and school plays.

Over the course of the near-century since the first Waldorf school was founded, this poetic impulse has suffered at the hands of “school improvement.” Even though Waldorf teachers may take pride in being removed from the fads and foibles of contemporary life, they have an uncanny knack for reflecting the cultural trends around them, and the treatment of poetry in the classroom is no exception to this rule. Through the first two-thirds of the twentieth

century (the period in which my public high school still honored the *Psalms*), Waldorf teachers worked almost exclusively with poems drawn from the canon of European and nineteenth-century American literature. By the 1980s, as the Waldorf movement expanded exponentially into the western states, such poems appeared too Eurocentric, and the rapidly changing demographics of a state like California seemed to call for a more culturally diverse selection of poets and poetic experiences. While many of these changes were intended to “expand” the culture of the Waldorf school, all too often they diluted it.

At this time, too, teachers were encouraged to “write their own material” to suit the needs, temperaments, and ethnicities of their pupils. Without being able to draw upon their own recollections of hearing meaningful poetry, teachers responded heroically to the call, but their creations were usually jejune at best. With the onset of growing numbers of conferences—and, in time, the archival capacities of the Internet—such homegrown poems circulated so widely that their provenance became increasingly hazy. I recall how, several years after I had written the “Number Verses” that appear in this book, I mentored a first grade Waldorf teacher. Her class recited “Number Verses” with gusto, and I could not resist asking her if she knew who had written it. “I don’t know the name,” she replied, “But someone told me it was translated from the German.”

Cultural trends aside, we must also recognize that Waldorf teachers are themselves the product of an educational system—usually the distinctly prosaic American system. Except for the small cadre of Waldorf practitioners who are Waldorf school graduates, most of today’s teachers had little meaningful poetry as part of their own school experience on the elementary, secondary, or university level.

In the 1990s I would give my Sunbridge College Waldorf teacher trainees a short “entrance exam” on the first day of class. Among other things, trainees were asked to give the century of birth for ten poets (John Donne, Lord Byron, Alfred Tennyson, Walt Whitman, and Dylan Thomas among them) and to name one poem written by each. Foreign students might identify five or six of the poets, but Americans (English majors included) usually knew only one or two. Faced with a collection of poetry for children, such teachers would be likely to chose the “easier” poems for their classes, or to skip the anthologies altogether and use only the Waldorf verses they received as handouts in a summer conference.

Just when we have good cause to despair at the eclipse of great poetry in the Waldorf setting, David Kennedy has come to our rescue with this book. David’s long experience as a Waldorf school class teacher, his skills as a writer, and what I can only term his enthusiastic discernment, make him the right person at the right time to resuscitate the barely breathing spirit of the Word in the classroom. He has arranged the poetry in a way that harmonizes with the structure and content of the Waldorf curriculum, yet leaves the reader free to meander at will. This is a collection of wonderful, classical, meaningful poems

written by masters of the English language, or in masterful translations from ancient languages. Recycle those conference handouts, teachers, for herein lies eight years of nourishment and edification for your students!

Their poems are not merely main lesson content arranged to scan and rhyme. In many of the poems in this collection we all but meet the living and breathing poet, as well as the age in which that poet worked, and a world of soul and spirit that would otherwise have remained mute. We teachers and parents will teach these poems and be elevated, for we have heard the voice of an Initiate. Our students and our children, no less significantly, will speak these poems and be elevated as, for the first time, they hear their own voice.

In the first four grades, it is essential to choose and work with poems that have a regular, predictable rhyme scheme, e.g. rhyming couplets, and a strong and predictable rhythm. Both of these poetic qualities strengthen that part of the child termed by Rudolf Steiner the “etheric body,” or “body of formative forces,” or “life body.” It is this aspect of the child’s being that serves all later growth and health on a physiological basis, and serves the unfolding of the memory on the level of soul. In this respect, all poems are mnemonic devices, playing this role in branches of culture as diverse as religious ritual and modern advertising. And because the awakening of memory is so interwoven with poetic recitation, it is important that the primary grades child learns directly from the teacher’s recitation of the poem, rather than by reading the poem. And it is no less important that the teacher learns the poem by heart, before bringing it to the child. In particular, what Steiner termed the “rhythmic-circulatory system,” the interplay of breathing and the circulation of blood, is enlivened and regulated by this type of poetic recitation.

By fifth grade, the interplay of breathing and circulation is essentially stabilized, and it needs far less rhythmic support than in the earlier years. For the rest of the student’s time in the grade school, the etheric body withdraws and what Rudolf Steiner described as the “astral body,” or “soul body” assumes a position of growing importance. Now it is the life of feeling that must be educated along with the memory. The subtleties of meter (particularly iambic pentameter in English) and the nuanced harmonies of alternating rhymes (as in the abab/cdcd/efef/gg of the sonnet) intrigue and surprise the adolescent’s burgeoning soul forces, giving form to otherwise stochastic emotions and elevating them to the level of conscious feelings. Meter, with its occasional irregularities and its connection to the spoken word, here may serve as a healthy antidote to the power of beat that plays such a commanding role in the life of the adolescent.

Given the central importance of the poetic experience for the child’s growth and future learning, it is essential that poems not be taught hastily, superficially, or casually. If children do not get to savor every element of a poem, the poem may work upon them, but it will never come to fruition within them. As Alexander Pope (a poet that none of my teacher trainees could ever

identify) said famously, “A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

With this in mind, I urge the teachers whom I mentor to stay with a poem for a month. Begin by learning it by heart, practicing its recitation at home, reciting it beautifully and clearly to your class (not just reading it aloud) and then, over the course of three days or more, have the students join you in its recitation. Whether you are teaching a short poem or dividing a longer piece into parts, never recite just once in a lesson; always repeat a poem two or three times. (And don’t feel that you have to teach a dozen poems in every circle or warm-up; one or two meaningful poems a day may be plenty.) It has been my experience that the strongest spellers in a classroom are not necessarily the most voracious readers, but rather the children who recite the best. If we recall that the word “spell” originally mean a spoken invocation, we can understand the almost magical relationship between clear, well-enunciated poetic recitation and a preternatural sense for the structure of a word.

After three days, your recitation should be pared back, and the children should be reciting, as much as possible, without you. This way you can listen to them, providing constructive criticism, moving far away so that they must emote, or drawing very close so that they will whisper. Prepare every poem with your class as though you are rehearsing it for an assembly, or, better yet, for their eighth grade graduation, even if they are still in first grade. As you pull away and listen to your students, you may realize that some children have not been reciting at all. The shadow side of the Waldorf approach is that some children can hide in the group, appearing to be speaking a poem or chanting a multiplication table when, indeed, when quizzed by their parents one-on-one, they are clueless. By the time you are ready to move on to a new poem, you should have had many children recite the poem solo, or at least in a group no larger than two or three.

The past decade has seen a growing concern about the need for sufficient movement in the Waldorf main lesson. Unquestionably, poetry can be a springboard for movement, be it expressive or part of a game; this is especially true in the many American schools that lack a eurythmist. However, it is no less essential that children learn how to recite while standing still, as well, so that they are more awake to the inner movement that a poem may evoke. And poetry is not just about speaking—listening plays no less a role, and both are necessary if a class will recite with “one voice.” Dividing the class into small groups, as described above, is an invaluable practice.

I would urge the teacher to set to work and read these poems twice, in two different ways. Firstly, study them in the way that David Kennedy presents them, according to the subjects taught from the lower to the higher grades. Secondly, with the help of a timeline or a book such as John Wulsin’s *The Spirit of the English Language* (AWSNA Publications), experience them in the order in which they were written. The first reading will give you insight into

the changing consciousness of the child; the second reading will allow you to experience the evolution of consciousness of humanity at large, and particularly of the English-speaking peoples. An understanding of both transformations of consciousness is sine qua non for a Waldorf teacher.

“Camerado!” Walt Whitman tells us in his masterpiece, *Leaves of Grass*, “This is no book; who touches this touches a man.” In this book, David Kennedy shares with us the currents of sound and meaning that passed between him and his students in the course of his teaching career. His years of experience have helped to make his selection of poems and the order in which they appear a model that may be followed by any teacher wishing to encounter and honor the Word within the Waldorf curriculum. Touch this book, and you will touch and teach each child in your care.

EUGENE SCHWARTZ
Spring 2011

*“Words are the voice of the heart.”
-Confucius*

Imagination

THE FAIRIES

ROSE FYLEMAN

The fairies have never a penny to spend,
 They haven't a thing put by,
 But theirs is the dower of bird and flower
 And theirs is the earth and sky.
 And though you should live in a palace of gold
 Or sleep in a dried up ditch,
 You could never be as poor as the fairies are,
 And never as rich.

Since ever and ever the world began
 They danced like a ribbon of flame,
 They have sung their song through the centuries long,
 And yet it is never the same.
 And though you be foolish or though you be wise,
 With hair of silver or gold,
 You can never be as young as the fairies are,
 And never as old.

A CLOAK FOR A FAIRY

Spider, spider, what are you spinning?
A cloak for a fairy, I'm just beginning.
 What is it made of, tell me true?
Threads of moonshine, pearls of dew!
 When will the fairy be wearing it?
Tonight, when the glow worms' lamps are lit.
 Can I see her if I come peeping?
All good children must then be sleeping.

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

OLIVER HERFORD

Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
 Out of the rain to shelter himself.

Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
 Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf, frightened, and yet
 Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
 Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee smile,

Tugged till the toadstool toppled in two.
 Holding it over him, gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home, dry as could be.
 Soon woke the Dormouse—“Good gracious me!

Where is my toadstool?” loud he lamented.
 —And that’s how umbrellas first were invented.

SOME ONE

WALTER DE LA MARE

Some one came knocking
 At my wee, small door;
 Some one came knocking,
 I’m sure—sure—sure;
 I listened, I opened,
 I looked to left and right,
 But naught there was a-stirring
 In the still dark night;
 Only the busy beetle
 Tap-tapping in the wall,
 Only from the forest
 The screech-owl’s call,
 Only the cricket whistling
 While the dewdrops fall,
 So I know not who came knocking,
 At all, at all, at all.

LITTLE DWARFS

Little dwarfs so short and strong
Heavy-footed march along;
Every head is straight and proud,
Every step is firm and loud.

Pick and hammer each must hold,
Deep in the earth to mine the gold
Ready over each one's back
Hangs a little empty sack.

When the hard day's work is done,
Home again they march as one.
Full sacks make a heavy load
As they tramp along the road.

I'D LOVE TO BE A FAIRY'S CHILD

ROBERT GRAVES

Children born of fairy stock
Never need for shirt or frock,
Never want for food or fire,
Always get their heart's desire:

Jingle pockets full of gold,
Marry when they're seven years old.
Every fairy child may keep
Two strong ponies and ten sheep;

All have houses, each his own,
Built of brick or granite stone;
They live on cherries, they run wild—
I'd love to be a Fairy's child.

FAIRY SHOES

ANNETTE WYNNE

The little shoes of fairies are
So light and soft and small
That though a million pass you by
You would not hear at all.

ALMS IN AUTUMN

ROSE FYLEMAN

Spindle-wood, spindle-wood, will you lend me pray,
 A little flaming lantern to guide me on my way?
 The fairies all have vanished from the meadow and the glen,
 And I would fain go seeking till I find them once again.
 Lend me now a lantern that I may bear a light,
 To find the hidden pathways in the darkness of the night.

Ash-tree, ash-tree, throw me, if you please,
 Throw me down a slender bunch of russet-gold keys,
 I fear the gates of Fairyland all be shut so fast
 That nothing but your magic keys will ever take me past.
 I'll tie them to my girdle and as I go along,
 My heart will find a comfort in the tinkle of their song.

Holly-bush, holly-bush, help me in my task,
 A pocketfull of berries is all the alms I ask:
 A pocketfull of berries to thread on golden strands,
 (I would not go a-visiting with nothing in my hands).
 So fine will be the rosy chains, so gay, so glossy bright,
 They'll set the realms of Fairyland all dancing with delight.

THE SONG OF THE
 KING OF IRELAND'S SON

PADRAIC COLUM

I put the fastenings on my boat
 For a year and for a day,
 And I went where the rowans grow,
 And where the moorhens lay;

And I went over the stepping-stones
 And dipped my feet in the ford,
 And came at last to the Swineherd's house,—
 The Youth without a Sword.

A swallow sang upon his porch
 "Glu-ee, glu-ee, glu-ee,"
 "The wonder of all wandering,
 The wonder of the sea;"
 A swallow soon to leave ground sang
 "Glu-ee, glu-ee, glu-ee."

WINDY NIGHTS

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

IN DAYS GONE BY

IDA M. MILLS

I feel that in the days gone by
I did not live with walls and roofs.
Long years ago in deserts dry
I lived beneath the open sky
And heard the roar of thundering hoofs,
And I was racing madly,
My head bent to the wind,
And fifty thousand horsemen
Galloping behind!

I feel that in that long ago
I must have been a Nomad child
Feeling the desert sun's fierce glow,
And then, in saddle, head bent low,
Heading a horde of Bedouins wild.
I shut my eyes an instant
And see them in my mind,
These fifty thousand horsemen
Galloping, galloping,
Fifty thousand horsemen
Galloping behind!

OZYMANDIAS

PERCY BYSSCHE SHELLEY

I met a traveler from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Ozymandias, another name for Ramesses the Great, Pharaoh of the nineteenth dynasty of ancient Egypt, represents a transliteration into Greek of a part of Ramesses' throne name, Usermaat-re Setep-en-re. The sonnet paraphrases the inscription on the base of the statue; "King of

Kings am I, Ozymandias. If anyone would know how great I am and where I lie, let him surpass one of my works." The name Ozymandias should be pronounced with four syllables in the tenth line in order to fit the poem's meter.

THE KRAKEN

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Below the thunders of the upper deep;
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
 The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
 About his shadowy sides: above him swell
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
 And far away into the sickly light,
 From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
 Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
 There hath he lain for ages and will lie
 Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
 Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
 Then once by man and angels to be seen,
 In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

A SMUGGLER'S SONG

RUDYARD KIPLING

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
 Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street.
 Them that ask no questions isn't told a lie.

Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

Five and twenty ponies,
 Trotting through the dark—

Brandy for the Parson,
 'Baccy for the Clerk;

Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,

And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

Running round the woodlump if you chance to find
 Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of brandy-wine,
 Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em for your play.
 Put the brushwood back again—and they'll be gone next day!

If you see the stable-door setting open wide;
 If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
 If your mother mends a coat cut about and tore;
 If the lining's wet and warm—don't you ask no more!

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue and red,
 You be careful what you say, and mindful what is said.
 If they call you "pretty maid," and chuck you 'neath the chin,
 Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no one's been!

Knocks and footsteps round the house—whistles after dark—
 You've no call for running out till the house-dogs bark.
Trusty's here, and *Pincher's* here, and see how dumb they lie—
They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen go by!

If you do as you've been told, likely there's a chance,
 You'll be given a dainty doll, all the way from France,
 With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood—
 A present from the Gentlemen, along o' being good!

Five and twenty ponies,
 Trotting through the dark—

Brandy for the Parson,
 'Baccy for the Clerk;

Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie—

Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by.

SEA-FEVER

JOHN MASEFIELD

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
 And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
 And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
 And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
 And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover
 And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

THE SPLENDOR FALLS

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes dying, dying, dying.

O love they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field, or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow forever and forever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Sun, Moon, Earth & Stars

STARS AND DAISIES

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

At evening when I go to bed
I see the stars shine overhead;
They are the little daisies white
That dot the meadow of the Night.

And often while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the Moon will go;
It is a lady, sweet and fair,
Who comes to gather daisies there.

For, when at morning I arise,
There's not a star left in the skies;
She's picked them all and dropped them down
Into the meadows of the town.

THE STAR

JANE TAYLOR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
 And often through my curtains peep,
 For you never shut your eye,
 Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark,
 Lights the traveller in the dark,—
 Though I know not what you are,
 Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

THE SUN IS IN MY HEART

A. C. HARWOOD

The Sun is in my heart,
 He warms me with his power,
 And wakens, wakens life and love
 In bird and beast and flower,
 In bird and beast and flower.

The stars above my head
 Are shining in my mind
 As spirits, spirits of the world
 That in my thought I find,
 That in my thought I find.

The earth whereon I tread
 Lets not my feet go through,
 But strongly, strongly doth uphold
 The weight of deeds I do,
 The weight of deeds I do.

Then must I thankful be
 That man on earth I dwell,
 To know, to know and love the world,
 And work all creatures well,
 And work all creatures well.

THE EARLY MORNING

HILAIRE BELLOC

The moon on the one hand, the dawn on the other:
 The moon is my sister, the dawn is my brother.
 The moon on my left and the dawn on my right.
 My brother, good morning: my sister, good night.

THE MOON

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;
 She shines on thieves on the garden wall,
 On streets and fields and harbour quays,
 And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,
 The howling dog by the door of the house,
 The bat that lies in bed at noon,
 All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day
 Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;
 And flowers and children close their eyes
 Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

LADY MOON

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES

“Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?”
 “*Over the sea.*”

“Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?”
 “*All that love me.*”

“Are you not tired with rolling and never
 Resting to sleep?
 Why look so pale and so sad, as for ever
 Wishing to weep?”

“*Ask me not this, little child, if you love me;
 You are too bold.
 I must obey my dear Father above me,
 And do as I’m told.*”

“Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?”
 “*Over the sea.*”

“Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?”
 “*All that love me.*”

SOME RIVERS

FRANK ASCH

Some rivers rush to the sea.
They push and tumble and fall.
But the Everglades is a river
with no hurry in her at all.
Soaking the cypress
that grows so tall;
nursing a frog,
so quiet and small;
she flows but a mile
in the course of a day,
with plenty of time
to think on the way.
But how can she cope
with the acres of corn
and sorrowful cities that drain her?
With hunters and tourists and levees
that chain and stain and pain her?
Does the half of her that's left
think only of the past?
Or does she think of her future
and how long it will last?
Some rivers rush to the sea.
They push and tumble and fall.
But the Everglades is a river
with no hurry in her at all.

ALASKA

JOAQUIN MILLER

Ice built, ice bound, and ice bounded,
Such cold seas of silence! such room!
Such snow-light, such sea-light, confounded
With thunders that smite like a doom!
Such grandeur! such glory! such gloom!
Hear that boom! Hear that deep distant boom
Of an avalanche hurled
Down this unfinished world!

Ice seas! and ice summits! ice spaces
 In splendor of white, as God's throne!
 Ice worlds to the pole! and ice places
 Untracked, and unnamed, and unknown!
 Hear that boom! Hear the grinding, the groan
 Of the ice-gods in pain! Hear the moan
 Of yon ice mountain hurled
 Down this unfinished world!

MANAHATTA'S MUSINGS

EUGENE SCHWARTZ

I am the majestic Hudson,
 Born out of fire and ice,
 I am Manitou's daughter,
 The Mother of Waters,
 I greet Brother Sun at his rise.

I once was a river of fire,
 Volcanoes ruled then—wild, untamed;
 Molten stone flowed,
 For ages untold,
 And my blazing banks flickered, aflame.

Those smoldering peaks spewed and sputtered
 Thick vapors of smothering smoke;
 From my heights to my deeps
 I shuddered in sleep
 When with a loud CLAP! I awoke.

From the northlands grim glaciers descended,
 In their grip all grew solid and still;
 Cracking and crushing,
 Pounding and pushing,
 My mountains gave way to their will.

Those fierce frosty sculptors sliced through me,
 Scooped stone and sand out of my depths,
 In their pulverized play
 They ground rocks into clay
 As the Palisades rose in the west.

The ice melted and water coursed through me,
From bubbling brooks and swift streams,
It crashed in cascades,
Splashed past Palisades,
'Til into the sea it careened.

Though I now seem to stream so serenely,
Ice and fire wrestle still in my veins,
And when the salty sea's force
Mingles with my fresh source;
When the lightning's bright flash
And Storm King's cold crag clash;
When my brittle ice crumbles
And the Dunderberg rumbles,
You will hear my ancient name:
Manahatta, Mother of Waters,
Manitou's mighty daughter...
I am the majestic Hudson!

IN THE MOUNTAINS

EUGENE SCHWARTZ

Though dark the night, we move in light
Amidst the radiant mountain peaks;
Earth's crystal gaze, subdued by day,
At night reflecting starlight seeks.

This rock kingdom, seemingly dumb,
To wakeful ears is sounding;
Each crag to each thunderously speaks,
'Gainst vales each voice rebounding.

In limestone's chill and crystal's fire
The mountains brood o'er their abyss;
Intone in adamantine choir
Mysteries of their genesis.

The rocks, roused from long epochs' sleep,
Riddles solve of Space and Time,
While metals, gleaming in the deeps,
Harmoniously chime.

O seeker, slumbering in the haze,
Awaken with the stones!
Find crystal's flame within your gaze,
Lime's might in blood and bone.

Seasons

THE SEASONS

The world is waking up again,
And *Spring* has just begun.
The catkins on the willow-tree
Turn yellow in the sun.
March brings us bright and windy days,
April gives us showers;
Then May puts green leaves everywhere,
Makes meadows full of flowers.

Now every day the *Summer* sun
Climbs higher in the sky;
The farmer's fields are stacked with hay
In June and July.
Long holidays are here again,
Blue sea and sandy beaches.
The time of sun-ripe fruit has come,
Of pears and golden peaches.

When *Autumn* comes, the weather's calm,
The sun is not so strong;
The days are shorter than before,
The nights are getting long.
Summer flowers are fading now
And die in late September;
Yellow and red October leaves
Must fall in grey November.

Winter is here; the days are cold;
The clouds bring rain and snow.
The roads are icy, slippery,
Our steps must be quite slow.
December brings us Christmas,
And January New Year;
Then snowdrops say in February
That *Spring* will soon be here.

A CALENDAR*SARA COLERIDGE*

January brings the snow;
 Makes our feet and fingers glow.
 February brings the rain,
 Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,
 To stir the dancing daffodil.
 April brings the primrose sweet,
 Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs
 Skipping by their fleecy dams.
 June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
 Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers,
 Apricots and gillyflowers.
 August brings the sheaves of corn,
 Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit;
 Sportsmen then begin to shoot.
 Fresh October brings the pheasant,
 Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast;
 Then the leaves are whirling fast.
 Chill December brings the sleet,
 Blazing fire and Christmas treat.

**THE MORNS ARE MEEKER
 THAN THEY WERE***EMILY DICKINSON*

The morns are meeker than they were,
 the nuts are getting brown;
 The berry's cheek is plumper,
 the rose is out of town.
 The maple wears a gayer scarf,
 the field a scarlet gown.
 Lest I should be old-fashioned,
 I'll put a trinket on.

AUTUMN SONG

MARGARET ROSE

October is a piper,
 Piping down the dell—
 Sad sweet songs of sunshine—
 Summer's last farewell,
 He pipes till grey November
 Comes in the mist and rain,
 And then he puts his pipe away
 Till Autumn comes again.

SUKKOT

R. H. MARKS

Here, where
 we build our sukkah,
 the air is sweet:
 Fragrant earth, our floor.

Here we
 lay green bough and pine
 to lace our roof:
 Sun shines through, and stars.

Here we
 hang festoons of grape,
 apple and pear:
 Fruits of late summer.

Here we
 heap pumpkin and squash,
 tall sheaves of corn:
 Gifts of autumn fields.

Here we
 summon Abraham
 and our fathers:
 Ancestors of old.

Here we
welcome in Sarah
and our mothers:
 All are exalted guests.

Here we
invite the hungry
to share our food:
 Let them enter in.

Winding
palm branch with willow
and green myrtle
 We weave our lulav.

Citron,
fragrantly scented
is our etrog:
 We wave it in prayer.

Here we
remember our past
and our people
 Who lived by the land.

Here we
will give thanks to God
for earth's bounty:
 Thanksgiving is ours.

JACK FROST*CECILY E. PIKE*

Look out! Look out!
 Jack Frost is about!
 He's after our fingers and toes;
 And all through the night,
 The gay little sprite
 Is working where nobody knows.

He'll climb each tree,
 So nimble is he.
 His silvery powder he'll shake;
 To windows he'll creep,
 And while we're asleep,
 Such wonderful pictures he'll make.

Across the grass
 He'll merrily pass,
 And change all its greenness to white.
 Then home he will go;
 And laugh, "Ho! Ho! Ho!
 What fun I have had in the night!"

GOBLINS ON THE DOORSTEP*DOROTHY BROWN THOMPSON*

Goblins on the doorstep,
 Phantoms in the air,
 Owls on witches' gateposts,
 Giving stare for stare,

Cats on flying broomsticks,
 Bats against the moon,
 Stirrings round of fate-cakes,
 With a solemn spoon.

Whirling apple parings,
 Figures draped in sheets,
 Dodging, disappearing,
 Up and down the streets,

Jack-o-Lanterns grinning,
 Shadows on a screen,
 Shrieks and starts with laughter—
 This is Halloween!

No!*THOMAS HOOD*

No sun—no moon!
 No morn—no noon!
 No dawn--no dusk—no proper time of day—
 No sky—no earthly view—
 No distance looking blue—
 No road—no street—no “t’other side this way”—
 No end to any Row—
 No indications where the Crescents go—
 No top to any steeple—
 No recognitions of familiar people—
 No courtesies for showing ‘em—
 No knowing ‘em!
 No traveling at all—no locomotion—
 No inkling of the way—no notion—
 “No go” by land or ocean—
 No mail—no post—
 No news from any foreign coast—
 No Park, no Ring, no afternoon gentility—
 No company—no nobility—
 No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
 No comfortable feel in any member—
 No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
 No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—
 November!

THANKSGIVING

The year has turned its circle,
 The seasons come and go.
 The harvest is all gathered in
 And chilly north winds blow.

Orchards have shared their treasures,
 The fields, their yellow grain.
 So open wide the doorway—
 Thanksgiving comes again!

Fables

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

AESOP

Said the Tortoise one day to the Hare,
 "I'll run you a race if you dare.

I'll bet you cannot
 Arrive at that spot
 As quickly as *I* can get there."

Quoth the Hare, "You are surely insane.
 Pray, *what* has affected your brain?
 You seem pretty sick.
 Call a doctor in—quick,
 And let him prescribe for your pain."

"Never mind," said the Tortoise. "Let's run!
 Will you bet me?" "Why, certainly." "Done!"
 While the slow Tortoise creeps,
 Mr. Hare makes four leaps,
 And then loafes around in the sun.

It seemed such a one-sided race,
 To win was almost a disgrace.
 So he frolicked about
 Then at last he set out—
 As the Tortoise was nearing the place.

Too late! Though he sped like a dart,
 The Tortoise was first. She was smart:
 "You can surely run fast,"
 She remarked. "Yet you're last.
 It is better to get a good start."

THE SHEPHERD BOY AND THE WOLF

AESOP

A shepherd boy beside a stream,
 “The wolf, the wolf,” was wont to scream;
 And when the villagers appeared
 He’d laugh and call them silly-eared.

A wolf at last came down the steep:
 “The wolf, the wolf, my legs, my sheep!”
 The creature had a jolly feast,
 Quite undisturbed, on boy and beast.

*For none believes the liar forsooth,
 Even when the liar speaks the truth.*

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

AESOP, WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

Lion, dreaming in his pride of place,
 Was waked by Mouse who cross’d his face.
 The mouse he caught and was about
 To claw and kill, when Mouse cried out,
 “Spare my life! I’ll repay you well.”
 Lion laughed and loosed him. It befell
 A little later some hunters bound
 This king of beasts upon the ground.
 When Mouse, who heard his roar, in glee
 Soon gnawed the ropes and set him free.

*Scorn no man’s friendship,
 Howso small he be.*

THE OAK AND THE REED

AESOP

The great oak tree thinks he’s the strongest,
 As he’s been standing there the longest.
 The wind it blew, the rain came lashing;
 And down the great oak tree came crashing.
 The slender reed, she knows much better,
 For she can bend in stormy weather.
 The slender reed swayed in the weather,
 And at the dawn was strong as ever.

“I Bend and Break Not”

THE WOLF AND HIS SHADOW

AESOP, WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

A Wolf, who roamed the mountain side,
Beheld his Shadow stretching wide,
Considerably magnified,
Because 'twas nearing eventide.
Then said the Wolf, the while he eyed
That shadow with increasing pride:
"Why thus should I in fear abide
Of Lion's roar or Lion's stride—
Could I not eat him hair and hide?"
Meanwhile the hungry Lion spied
This most complacent Wolf and tried
The matter out, and Wolf he died,
And dying mournfully he cried:
 "*Woe worth the fool self-satisfied.*"

THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE CITY MOUSE

RICHARD SCHRAFTON SHARPE

In a snug little cot lived a fat little mouse,
Who enjoyed, unmolested, the range of the house;
With plain food content, she would breakfast on cheese,
She dined upon bacon, and supped on grey peas.

A friend from the town to the cottage did stray,
And he said he was come a short visit to pay;
So the mouse spread her table as gay as you please,
And brought the nice bacon and charming grey peas.

The visitor frowned, and he thought to be witty:
Cried he, "You must know, I am come from the city,
Where we all should be shocked at provisions like these,
For we never eat bacon and horrid grey peas.

"To town come with me, I will give you a treat:
Some excellent food, most delightful to eat.
With me shall you feast just as long as you please;
Come, leave this fat bacon and shocking grey peas."

This kind invitation she could not refuse,
And the city mouse wished not a moment to lose;
Reluctant she quitted the fields and the trees,
The delicious fat bacon and charming grey peas.

They slyly crept under a gay parlour door,
 Where a feast had been given the evening before;
 And it must be confessed they on dainties did seize,
 Far better than bacon, or even grey peas.

Here were custard and trifle, and cheesecakes good store,
 Nice sweetmeats and jellies, and twenty things more;
 All that art had invented the palate to please,
 Except some fat bacon and smoking grey peas.

They were nicely regaling, when into the room
 Came the dog and the cat, and the maid with a broom:
 They jumped in a custard both up to their knees;
 The country mouse sighed for her bacon and peas.

Cried she to her friend, "Get me safely away,
 I can venture no longer in London to stay;
 For if oft you receive interruptions like these,
 Give me my nice bacon and charming grey peas.

"Your living is splendid and gay, to be sure,
 But the dread of disturbance you ever endure;
 I taste true delight in contentment and ease,
 And I feast on fat bacon and charming grey peas."

THE CROW AND THE FOX

AESOP

A crow, with some cheese, sat down at her ease
 to eat it upon a high tree;
 A fox passing by, who did this espy, said,
 "That must be mine speedily!"

"Oh! crow!" he exclaimed, "I'm really ashamed,
 I've never yet heard how you sing!
 When ev'rywhere 'round the praises resound
 of your beauteous voice in the spring!"

The crow, full of pride, at this opened wide
 her beak and cawed loudly and shrill;
 While fox, with a smile, rejoiced at his guile,
 and swallowed the cheese with a will.

And swallowed the cheese with a will.

Flowers, Plants & Trees

THE LITTLE PLANT

KATE LOUISE BROWN

In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep so deep,
A tiny plant
Lay fast asleep.

“Wake,” said the sunshine,
“And creep to the light.”
“Wake,” said the voice
Of the raindrops bright.

The little plant heard
And it rose to see,
What the wonderful,
Outside world might be.

THE HARVEST

ALICE C. HENDERSON

The silver rain, the shining sun,
The fields where scarlet poppies run,
And all the ripples of the wheat
Are in the bread that I do eat.

So when I sit for every meal
And say a grace, I always feel
That I am eating rain and sun,
And fields where scarlet poppies run.

BABY SEED SONG

EDITH NESBIT

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
Are you awake in the dark?
Here we lie cosily, close to each other:
Hark to the song of the lark—
“Waken!” the lark says, “waken and dress you;
Put on your green coats and gay,
Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you
Waken! ‘tis morning ‘tis May!”
Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
What kind of a flower will you be?
I’ll be a poppy all white, like my mother;
Do be a poppy like me.
What! You’re a sunflower! How I shall miss you
When you’re grown golden and high!
But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you;
Little brown brother, good-bye.

APRIL FOOLS

EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER

Shy little pansies tucked away to sleep,
Wrapped in brown blankets piled snug and deep,
Heard in a day-dream a bird singing clear:
“Wake, little sweethearts; the springtime is here!”
Glad little pansies, stirring from their sleep,
Shook their brown blankets off for a peep,
Put on their velvet hoods, purple and gold,
And stood all a-tremble abroad in the cold.
Snowflakes were flying, skies were grim and gray,
Bluebird and robin had scurried away;
Only a cruel wind laughed as it said,
“Poor little April fools, hurry back to bed!”
Soft chins a-quiver, dark eyes full of tears,
Brave little pansies, spite of their fears,
Said, “Let us wait for the sunshiny weather;
Take hold of hands, dears, and cuddle up together.”

IN MY LITTLE GARDEN

In my little garden
By the apple tree,
Daffodils are dancing—
One, two, three!

In my little garden
By the kitchen door,
Daisies red are smiling—
Two, three, four!

In my little garden
By the winding drive,
Roses bright are climbing—
Three, four, five!

In my little garden
By the pile of bricks,
Hollyhocks are growing—
Four, five, six!

In my little garden
Down in sunny Devon,
Violets are hiding—
Five, six, seven!

In my little garden
By the cottage gate,
Pansies gay are shining—
Six, seven, eight!

Daffodils in golden gowns,
Daisies all red,
Hollyhocks so very tall
By the garden shed,

Roses in the sunshine,
Violets dewy bright,
Pansies smiling gaily—
What a lovely sight!

SNOWDROPS

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA

Little ladies, white and green,
 With your spears about you,
 Will you tell us where you've been
 Since we lived without you?

You are sweet, and fresh, and clean,
 With your pearly faces;
 In the dark earth where you've been
 There are wondrous places:

Yet you come again, serene,
 When the leaves are hidden;
 Bringing joy from where you've been
 You return unbidden—

Little ladies, white and green,
 Are you glad to cheer us?
 Hunger not for where you've been,
 Stay till Spring be near us!

DANDELION, YELLOW AS GOLD

NOREEN BATH

O Dandelion, yellow as gold,
 what do you do all day?
*"I just wait here in the tall, green grass,
 till the children come to play."*

O Dandelion, yellow as gold,
 what do you do all night?
*"I wait and wait, till the cool dew falls,
 and my hair grows long and white."*

And what do you do when your hair grows white,
 and the children come to play?
*"They take me in their dimpled hands,
 and blow my hair away!"*

THE ACORN

In small green cup an acorn grew
On tall and stately oak:
The spreading leaves the secret knew,
And hid it like a cloak.
The breezes rocked it tenderly,
The sunbeams whispered low,
“Some day the smallest acorn here
Will make an oak, you know.”

The little acorn heard it all,
And thought it quite a joke:
How could he dream an acorn small
Would ever be an oak?
He laughed so much that presently
He tumbled from his cup,
And rolled a long way from the tree,
Where no one picked him up.

Close by him was a rabbit hole,
And when the wind blew high,
Down went the acorn with a roll
For weeks in gloom to lie.
But, one bright day, a shoot of green
Broke from his body dry,
And pushed its way with longing keen
To see the glorious sky.

It grew and grew, with all its might,
As weeks and months rolled on:
The sunbeam's words were proving right.
For, ere a year had gone,
The shoot became a sturdy plant,
While now the country folk
Can sit beneath the spreading leaves
Of a mighty forest oak.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host of golden daffodils;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars
 That shine and twinkle on the Milky Way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay:
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodil.

AUTUMN FANCIES

The maple is a dainty maid,
 The pet of all the wood,
 Who lights the dusky forest glade
 With scarlet cloak and hood.

The elm a lovely lady is,
 In shimmering robes of gold,
 That catch the sunlight when she moves,
 And glisten, fold on fold.

The sumac is a gypsy queen,
Who flaunts in crimson dressed,
And wild along the roadside runs,
Red blossoms in her breast.
And towering high above the wood,
All in his purple cloak,
A monarch in his splendor is
The round and princely oak.

TREES

SARA COLERIDGE

The Oak is called the King of Trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,
The Pear tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fire tree useful timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

THE WILLOWS

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

By the little river,
Still and deep and brown,
Grow the graceful willows,
Gently dipping down.
Dipping down and brushing
Everything that floats—
Leaves and logs and fishes,
And the passing boats.
Were they water maidens
In the long ago,
That they lean out sadly
Looking down below?
In the misty twilight
You can see their hair,
Weeping water maidens
That were once so fair.

IN FRANCE

FRANCES CORNFORD

The poplars in the fields of France
 Are golden ladies come to dance;
 But yet to see them there is none
 But I and the September sun.

The girl who in their shadow sits
 Can only see the sock she knits;
 Her dog is watching all the day
 That not a cow shall go astray.

The leisurely contented cows
 Can only see the earth they browse;
 Their piebald bodies through the grass
 With busy, munching noses pass.

Alone the sun and I behold
 Processions crowned with shining gold—
 The poplars in the fields of France,
 Like glorious ladies come to dance.

WHAT DO WE PLANT?

HENRY ABBEY

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
 We plant the ship, which will cross the sea.
 We plant the mast to carry the sails;
 We plant the planks to withstand the gales—
 The keel, the keelson, and the beam and knee;
 We plant the ship when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
 We plant the houses for you and me.
 We plant the rafters, the shingles, the floors.
 We plant the studding, the lath, the doors,
 The beams, and siding, all parts that be;
 We plant the house when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
 A thousand things that we daily see;
 We plant the spire that out-towers the crag,
 We plant the staff for our country's flag,
 We plant the shade, from the hot sun free;
 We plant all these when we plant the tree.

Animals

THEY SHALL TEACH THEE

JOB 12:7,8

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
 And the fowls of the air and they shall teach thee:
 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
 And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

THE BUTTERFLY

I know a little butterfly
 With tiny golden wings;
 He plays among the summer flowers,
 And up and down he swings.

He dances on their honey cups
 So happy all the day;
 And then he spreads his tiny wings,
 And softly flies away.

PEACOCKS

ROSE FYLEMAN

Peacocks sweep the fairies' rooms;
 They use their folded tails for brooms;
 But fairy dust is brighter far
 Than any mortal colours are;
 And all about their tails it clings
 In strange designs of rounds and rings;
 And that is why they strut about
 And proudly spread their feathers out.

THE COW

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass,
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

AN OLD RAT'S TALE

LAURA E. RICHARDS

He was a rat, and she was a rat,
And down in one hole they did dwell.
And each was as black as a witch's cat,
And they loved one another well.

He had a tail, and she had a tail,
Both long and curling and fine.
And each said, "Yours is the finest tail
In the world, excepting mine!"

He smelt the cheese, and she smelt the cheese,
And they both pronounced it good;
And both remarked it would greatly add
To the charm of their daily food.

So he ventured out and she ventured out;
And I saw them go with pain.
But what them befell I never can tell,
For they never came back again.

THE TWO KITTENS

Two little kittens, one stormy night,
 Began to quarrel and to fight.
 One had a mouse, the other had none,
 This was the way the fight had begun:

“I’ll have that mouse,” said the bigger cat.
 “You’ll have that mouse? We’ll see about that!”
 “I will have that mouse!” said the older one.
 “You shan’t have that mouse!” said the little one.

I told you before ‘twas a stormy night
 When these two little kittens began to fight.
 The old woman took her sweeping broom,
 And swept the kittens right out of the room.

The ground was covered with frost and snow,
 And the poor little kittens had nowhere to go.
 So they both lay down on the mat at the door,
 While the old woman finished sweeping the floor.

Then they both crept in, as quiet as mice,
 All wet with snow, and cold as ice,
 For they found it was better, that stormy night,
 To lie down and sleep than to quarrel and fight.

DUCK’S DITTY

KENNETH GRAHAME

All along the backwater,
 Through the rushes tall,
 Ducks are a-dabbling,
 Up tails all!

Ducks’ tails, drake’s tails,
 Yellow feet a-quiver,
 Yellow bills all out of sight,
 Busy in the river!

Slushy green undergrowth
 Where the roach swim—
 Here we keep our larder,
 Cool and full and dim!

Everyone for what he likes!
WE like to be
Heads down, tails up,
Dabbling free!

High in the blue above
Swifts whirl and call -
WE are down a-dabbling,
Up tails all!

THE LAMB

WILLIAM BLAKE

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

THE SONG OF THE ROBIN

BEATRICE BERGQUIST

The cows low in the pasture on the hill,
 The blue bird sings, building a nest,
 The water is singing down by the mill—
 But the robin's song is the best!

The squirrels are chattering in the trees,
 The wind is blowing toward the west,
 Around the flowers are humming bees—
 But the robin's song is the best!

The dogwood trees are blossoming white,
 The plow horse is neighing for rest,
 The song sparrow is singing with all his might—
 But the robin's song is the best!

THE ROBIN

The robin is the fairies' page;
 They keep him neatly dressed
 For country service or for town
 In dapper livery of brown
 And little scarlet vest.

On busy errands all day long
 He hurries to and fro
 With watchful eyes and nimble wings
 There are not very many things.
 The robin doesn't know.

And he can tell you, if he will,
 The latest fairy news:
 The quaint adventures of the King,
 And whom the Queen is visiting,
 And where she gets her shoes.

And lately, when the Fairy Court
 Invited me to tea,
 He stood behind the Royal Chair
 And here, I solemnly declare,
 When he discovered I was there,
 That robin winked at me.

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.

THE COW

ROY WILKINSON

Heavily, wearily, moves the cow
In the peaceful country scene,
Sleepily nodding towards the ground
As she grazes the pastures green.

Her big, bulky mass of a body
Flops on the earth and she seems,
Chewing and chewing and chewing,
Lost in her own world of dreams.

THE HORSE

ROY WILKINSON

Dancing on tip-toes,
This is the horse,
Scarcely touching the ground.
Tossing his mane,
Flicking his tail,
Rearing and jumping around.

See him prancing
Over the field,
Kicking his hooves in the air,
Bucking, rolling,
Galloping swiftly,
Unburdened of every care.

THE CAT AND THE MOON

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

The cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,
The creeping cat, looked up.

Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For, wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.

Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
When two close kindred meet,

What better than call a dance?
Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
A new dance turn.

Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
From moonlit place to place,
The sacred moon overhead
Has taken a new phase.

Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
Will pass from change to change,
And that from round to crescent,
From crescent to round they range?

Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes.

History

FROM THE KALEVALA

TRANSLATED BY W. F. KIRBY

I am driven by my longing,
 And my understanding urges
 That I should commence my singing,
 And begin my recitation.
 I will sing the people's legends,
 And the ballads of the nation.
 To my mouth the words are flowing,
 And the words are gently falling,
 Quickly as my tongue can shape them,
 And between my teeth emerging...

Let us clasp our hands together,
 Let us interlock our fingers;
 Let us sing a cheerful measure,
 Let us use our best endeavours,
 While our dear ones hearken to us,
 And our loved ones are instructed,
 While the young ones are standing round us,
 Of the rising generation,
 Let them learn the words of magic,
 And recall our songs and legends,
 Of the belt of Väinämöinen,
 Of the forge of Ilmarinen,
 And of Kaukomieli's swordpoint,
 And of Joukahainen's crossbow:
 Of the utmost bounds of Pohja,
 And of Kalevala's wide heathlands.

Then the aged Väinämöinen
 Went upon his journey singing,
 Sailing in his boat of copper,
 In his vessel made of copper,

Sailed away to loftier regions,
 To the land beneath the heavens.
 There he rested with his vessel,
 Rested weary, with his vessel,
 But his kantele he left us,
 Left his charming harp in Suomi,
 For his people's lasting pleasure,
 Mighty songs for Suomi's children.

THE CHALLENGE OF THOR

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

I am the God Thor,
 I am the War God,
 I am the Thunderer!
 Here in my Northland,
 My fastness and fortress,
 Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs
 Rule I the nations;
 This is my hammer,
 Miölner the mighty;
 Giants and sorcerers
 Cannot withstand it!

These are the gauntlets
 Wherewith I wield it,
 And hurl it afar off;
 This is my girdle;
 Whenever I brace it,
 Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest
 Stream through the heavens,
 In flashes of crimson,
 Is but my red beard
 Blown by the night-wind,
 Affrighting the nations!

Jove is my brother;
 Mine eyes are the lightning;
 The wheels of my chariot
 Roll in the thunder,
 The blows of my hammer
 Ring in the earthquake!

Force rules the world still,
 Has ruled it, shall rule it;
 Meekness is weakness,
 Strength is triumphant,
 Over the whole earth
 Still is it Thor's Day!

Thou art a God too,
 O Galilean!
 And thus singled-handed
 Unto the combat,
 Gauntlet or Gospel,
 Here I defy thee!

THE FORGING OF THOR'S HAMMER

S. M. RYAN

Blow bellows, blow,
 Set the sparks a-glow!
 For Sindri of Swarheim,
 The shaper of swords,
 Is molding and making
 Gifts for the Gods.

Blow bellows, blow,
 Set the sparks a-glow!
 A ring of red gold
 For the master of men;
 A boar with bright bristles
 For Frey and his friends,
 But Thunderer Thor
 Needs weapons of war!

Blow bellows, blow,
 Set the sparks a-glow!
 Fierce and fiery
 Flames the furnace,
 Molten metals gleam like gold;
 Clash and clang of hefty hammers
 In the hands of sweltering smiths.
 Hard and heavy, strong as steel,
 Mighty Miolnir's forged and fashioned.
 Blow bellows, blow,
 Set the sparks a-glow.

HYMN OF CREATION

FROM THE RIG VEDA

nasad asin, no sad asit tadanim;
 nasid rajo no vioma paro yat.
 kim avarivah? kuha? kasya sarmann?
 ambhah kim asid, gahanam gabhiram?

na mrytur asid, amrtam na tarhi.
 na ratria ahna asit praketah.
 anid avatam svadhaya tad ekam.
 tasmad dhanyan na parah kim canasa.

tama asit tamasa gulham agre;
 apraketam salilam sarvam a idam.
 tuchyenabhu apihitam yad asit,
 tapasas tan mahinajayataikam.

*There was not non-existent nor existent:
 There was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.
 What covered in and where? And what gave shelter?
 Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?*

*Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal:
 No sign was there, the day's and the night's divider.
 That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature,
 Apart from it was nothing whatsoever.*

*Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness
 This All was indiscriminated chaos.
 All that existed then was void and formless:
 By the great power of Warmth was born that One.*

THE CREATION

GENESIS 1:1-5

Hebrew transliteration

B'resheet bara Elohim
et hashamayim ve'et ha'arets.

Veha'arets hayetah tohu vavohu
vechoshech al-penay tehom
veruach Elohim merachefet
al-penay hamayim.

Vayomer Elohim
yehi-or vayehi-or.

Vayar Elohim
et-ha'or ki-tov
vayavdel Elohim
beyn ha'or uveyn hachoshech.

Vayikra Elohim la-or yom
velachoshech kara laylah
vayehi-erev vayehi-boker
yom echad.

In the beginning God created
the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without
form, and void; and darkness
was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved
upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be
light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it
was good: and God divided the
light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day,
and the darkness he called
Night. And the evening and
the morning were the first day.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EXODUS 20:2-17

- I. Have thou no other gods but me,
- II. And to no image bow thy knee.
- III. Take not the name of God in vain:
- IV. The Sabbath day do not profane.
- V. Honor thy father and mother too;
- VI. And see that thou no murder do.
- VII. Abstain from words and deeds unclean;
- VIII. Nor steal, though thou art poor and mean.
- IX. Bear not false witness, shun that blot;
- X. What is thy neighbor's covet not.

These laws, O Lord, write in my heart, that I,
May in thy faithful service live and die.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

The Destruction of Sennacherib was first published in 1815 in Lord Byron's Hebrew Melodies. It is based on an event described in the Bible (2 Kings 18-19) during the campaign by Assyrian king Sennacherib to capture Jerusalem in 701 BC.

Sennacherib sacked scores of cities and towns in Judah and carried off over 200,000 people. These ten northern tribes became known as the Ten Lost Tribes. King Hezekiah of Judah realized the error of his rebellion against Assyria which had caused the invasion and sent a great tribute of gold, silver and other treasures to Sennacherib.

The Assyrian army besieged Jerusalem nevertheless. Sennacherib left his supreme commander in charge of the siege while he himself went to fight the Egyptians. The Assyrian commander repeatedly blasphemed Judah and their god Yahweh. Hezekiah tore off his clothes in deep anguish and prayed to Yahweh in the Temple. That night the angel of Yahweh killed 185,000 Assyrian troops and Sennacherib returned to Nineveh in disgrace.

The rhythm of the poem, an anapestic tetrameter, has a feel of the beat of a galloping horse's hooves as the Assyrian rides into battle.

FROM THE ILIAD, BOOK I

HOMER, TRANSLATED BY C. S. CALVERLEY

Sing, O daughter of heaven,
 of Peleus' son, of Achilles,
 Him whose terrible wrath
 brought thousand woes on Achaia,
 Many a stalwart soul
 did it hurl untimely to Hades,
 Souls of the heroes of old:
 and their bones lay strown on the sea-sands,
 Prey to the vulture and dog.
 Yet was Zeus fulfilling a purpose;
 Since that far-off day,
 when in hot strife parted asunder
 Atreus' sceptered son,
 and the chos'n of heaven, Achilles.
 Say then, which of the Gods
 Bid arise up battle between them?

THE ODYSSEY

ANDREW LANG

As one that for a weary space has lain
 Lull'd by the song of Circe and her wine
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
 Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
 And only the low lutes of love complain,
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine—
 As such an one were glad to know the brine
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again—
 So gladly from the songs of modern speech
 Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
 Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
 And through the music of the languid hours
 They hear like Ocean on a western beach
 The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

FROM THE ODYSSEY, BOOK I

HOMER, TRANSLATED BY SAMUEL BUTLER

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
 πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν
 πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
 πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
 ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὧς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ·
 αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
 νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βούς Ὑπερίονος Ἑλίοιο
 ἦσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.
 τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

Greek transliteration

andra moi ennepe, mousa, polutropon, hos mala polla
 plagchthê, epei Troiês hieron ptoliethron epersen;
 pollôn d' anthrôpôn iden astea kai noon egnô,
 polla d' ho g' en pontô pathen algea hon kata thumon,
 arnumenos hên te psuchên kai noston hetairôn.
 all' oud' hôs hetarous errusato, hiemenos per;
 autôn gar spheterêsin atasthaliêsîn olonto,
 nêpioi, hoi kata Bous Huperionos Êelioio
 êsthion; autar ho toisin apheileto nostimon hêmar.
 tôn hamothen ge, Thea, Thugater Dios, eipe kai hêmin.

English translation

*Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far
 and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy.
 Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations
 with whose manners and customs he was acquainted;
 moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save
 his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what
 he might he could not save his men, for they perished
 through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the
 Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them from ever
 reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, oh
 daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know
 them.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT, MATTHEW 6:9-13

Greek

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ
 ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
 ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου
 ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου
 γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου,
 ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον
 δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον
 καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν
 τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,
 ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν
 τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν
 καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς
 ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν,
 ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς
 ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.
 Ἀμήν.

Greek transliteration

Pater hēmōn ho
 en tois ouranois
 hagiasthētō to onoma sou:
 elthetō hē basileia sou:
 genēthētō to thelēma sou,
 hōs en ouranō kai epī tēs gēs:
 ton arton hēmōn ton epiousion
 dos hēmin sēmeron
 kai aphes hēmin
 ta ophelēmata hēmōn,
 hōs kai hēmeis aphiemēn
 tois ophelētais hēmōn:
 kai mē eisenegkēs
 hēmas eis peirasmon,
 alla rusai hēmas
 apo tou ponērou.
 Amēn.

Latin

Pater noster, qui es in caelis:
 sanctificetur Nomen Tuum;
 adveniat Regnum Tuum;
 fiat voluntas Tua,
 sicut in caelo, et in terra.
 Panem nostrum cotidianum
 da nobis hodie;
 et dimitte nobis debita nostra,
 Sicut et nos dimittimus
 debitoribus nostris;
 et ne nos inducas in tentationem;
 sed libera nos a Malo.
 Amen.

Our Father, which art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name;
 thy kingdom come;
 thy will be done,
 in earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day
 our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive them that
 trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation;
 but deliver us from evil.
 (For thine is the kingdom,
 the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever.)
 Amen.

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT, EPHESIANS 6:11-17

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

FROM THE MEDITATIONS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

No more talk about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such.

Men despise one another and flatter one another; and men wish to raise themselves above one another and crouch before one another.

How ridiculous and what a stranger he is who is surprised at anything which happens in life.

If it is not right, do not do it: if it is not true, do not say it.

Do nothing inconsiderately, nor without a purpose.

If you are able, correct by teaching those who do wrong; but if you cannot, remember that indulgence is given you for this purpose.

He who does wrong does wrong against himself. He who acts unjustly acts unjustly to himself, because he makes himself bad.

He often acts unjustly who does not do a certain thing;
not only he who does a certain thing.

Receive wealth or prosperity without arrogance; and be
ready to let it go.

Consider that men will do the same things nevertheless,
even if you should burst.

The perfection of moral character consists in this, in
passing every day as the last, and in being neither violently
excited, nor torpid, nor playing the hypocrite.

Look within. Within is the fountain of good, and it will
ever bubble up if you will ever dig.

The art of life is more like the wrestler's art than the
dancer's in respect of this, that it should stand ready and firm
to meet onsets which are sudden and unexpected.

Consider yourself to be dead, and to have completed your
life up to the present time; and live according to nature the
remainder which is allowed you.

THE WAR SONG OF THE VIKINGS

FIONA MACLEOD

Let loose the hounds of war,
The whirling swords!
Send them leaping afar,
Red in their thirst for war;
Odin laughs in his car
At the screaming of the swords!

Far let the white-ones fly,
The whirling swords!
Afar off the ravens spy
Death-shadows cloud the sky.
Let the wolves of the Gael die
'Neath the screaming swords!

The Shining Ones yonder
High in Valhalla
Shout now, with thunder:
Drive the Gaels under,
Cleave them asunder—
Swords of Valhalla!

THE MOON IS UP

ALFRED NOYES

The moon is up, the stars are bright.

The wind is fresh and free!

We're out to seek the gold tonight

Across the silver sea!

The world is growing grey and old:

Break out the sails again!

We're out to see a Realm of Gold

Beyond the Spanish Main.

We're sick of all the cringing knees,

The courtly smiles and lies

God, let Thy singing channel breeze

Lighten our hearts and eyes!

Let love no more be bought and sold

For earthly loss or gain;

We're out to seek an Age of Gold

Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,

Beyond all mortal dreams,

Beyond the reach of night and day

Our El Dorado gleams,

Revealing—as the skies unfold—

A star without a stain,

The Glory of the Gates of Gold

Beyond the Spanish Main.

In the days of the Spanish New World Empire, the mainland of the American continent enclosing the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico was referred to as the Spanish Main. It included present-day Florida, the east shore of the Gulf of Mexico in Texas, Mexico, Central America and the north coast of South

America. In particular, the term is most strongly associated with that stretch of the Caribbean coastline that runs from the ports of Porto Bello on the Isthmus of Darien, through Cartagena de Indias in New Granada, and Maracaibo to the Orinoco delta.

POOR RICHARD'S MAXIMS

SVERRE ELSMO

You've heard of Benjamin Franklin,
Of his work, his joys and whims,
As you read this poem you'll find, I'm sure
The truth in "Poor Richard's" maxims.

"Wealth is not his that has it"
'Cause money's not everything,
"But wealth is his that enjoys it"
Whether beggar, pauper or king.

"If a man could have half his wishes
He would certainly double his trouble,
So better a little with content
Than much with contention and grumble.

"Experience keeps a dear school
Yet fools will learn no other,
And he that cannot obey
Cannot command another.

"Don't go to the Doctor with each distemper,
Nor to the pot for every thirst,
Or to the lawyer for every quarrel,"
Just think a little first.

"Early to bed, and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,"
And should you sometimes tempted be,
Speak only truth, there's nothing in lies.

Now if I've changed a word or two
Or added here and there,
I simply meant to rhyme the lines,
Yet, with utmost care.

Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, a leading author and printer, political theorist, politician, postmaster, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat.

As a scientist, he was a major figure in the American Enlightenment and the history of physics for his discoveries and theories regarding electricity. He invented the lightning rod, bifocals, the Franklin stove, a carriage odometer,

and the glass 'armonica'. He formed both the first public lending library in America and the first fire department in Pennsylvania.

Poor Richard's Almanack was a yearly almanac published by Franklin, who adopted the pseudonym of "Poor Richard" or "Richard Saunders". The publication appeared continually from 1732 to 1758 and was a best seller for a pamphlet published in the American colonies; print runs reached 10,000 per year.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION
OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FROM THE PREAMBLE AND TEXT

When in the Course of human events,
it becomes necessary for one people
to dissolve the political bands
which have connected them with another,
and to assume among the powers of the earth,
the separate and equal station
to which the Laws of Nature
and of Nature's God entitle them,
a decent respect
to the opinions of mankind
requires that they should declare
the causes which impel them
to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are Life, Liberty
and the pursuit of Happiness.
That to secure these rights,
Governments are instituted among Men,
deriving their just powers
from the consent of the governed,
That whenever any Form of Government
becomes destructive of these ends,
it is the Right of the People
to alter or to abolish it,
and to institute new Government,
laying its foundation on such principles
and organizing its powers in such form,
as to them shall seem most likely
to effect their Safety and Happiness.

We, therefore,
the Representatives of the united States of America,
in General Congress, Assembled,
appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world
for the rectitude of our intentions,
do, in the Name,
and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies,
solemnly publish and declare,
That these United Colonies are,
and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States;
that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown,
and that all political connection between them
and the State of Great Britain,
is and ought to be totally dissolved;
and that as Free and Independent States,
they have full Power to levy War,
conclude Peace,
contract Alliances,
establish Commerce,
and to do all other Acts and Things
which Independent States may of right do.

And for the support of this Declaration,
with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence,
we mutually pledge to each other
our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

THE TEN AMENDMENTS IN RHYME (THE BILL OF RIGHTS)

CARL BRIDGMAN

Amendment #1

Religion is a special right I give to everyone,
But not a right for Congress to establish only one.
I give to all the right to speak and even to assemble,
And you can even send complaints and make our congress tremble.

Amendment #2

To many, it's a real cool thing to keep and own a gun,
To others, it's a tool for evil, when the evil's done.
And still today, I give this right for good, that's understood;
Protection, hunting, shooting sports, all these are very good.

Amendment #3

My right's a bit unusual and not too often seen,
 But here I give it anyway in case there is a need.
 Whenever there is peace or war in our great country fair,
 Your homes shall be protected from a soldier living there.

Amendment #4

Now here's a right that makes us feel secure with many features:
 We have the right to be secure from search or even seizures.
 Search warrants are required as well as having real good cause,
 Without them even cops can be accused of breaking laws.

Amendment #5

In this amendment you're assured that you are fairly tried
 Of any major crime to which you may be clearly tied;
 And if you own some land for which the public has a need,
 Just compensation must be paid to you to own your deed.

Amendment #6

About a crime for which you're held it must be understood;
 You have the right to speedy trial; this is for your own good.
 You have the right to counsel who will stand up for your side.
 Accusers, they must be there too, to look you in the eye.

Amendment #7

At common law sometimes you're sued for things of little cost,
 And often it is best for us to take that little loss.
 But value more than twenty dollars triggers something new;
 'Cause now the right to trial by jury can be used by you.

Amendment #8

Some things in laws and judgments leave a lot to be desired,
 'Cause some opinions vary as the judgments they require.
 For instance, now you have a right to bail, but not excessive,
 But ideas of excessive for some Judges are impressive.

Amendment #9

Within this Bill, so wonderful, with lawful rights displayed,
 There's one more thing that's needed here, and this one thing I say;
 You must not think that this is all our rights herein fulfilled;
 There's right of life and liberty and happiness as well.

Amendment #10

The constitution makes it clear, the powers of the Fed.
 All others are now delegated to our states instead.
 The last four words are critical to this great Bill of Rights,
 "Or to the people," when they're read, makes everything alright.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

WALT WHITMAN

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
 For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.
 The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

ALABAMA

KHÉ-THA-Á-HI (EAGLE WING)

My brethren,
 among the legends of my people
 it is told how a chief,
 leading the remnant of his people,
 crossed a great river,
 and striking his tipi-stake upon the ground,
 exclaimed, "A-la-bá-ma!"
 This in our language means
 "Here we may rest!"

But he saw not the future.
 The white man came:
 he and his people could not rest there;
 they were driven out,
 and in a dark swamp
 they were thrust down into the slime and killed.
 The word he so sadly spoke
 has given a name to one of the white man's states.
 There is no spot under those stars
 that now begin to smile upon us,
 where the Indian can plant his foot
 and sigh "A-la-bá-ma."

FROM INDIAN NAMES

LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY

Ye say they all have passed away,
 That noble race and brave,
 That their light canoes have vanished
 From off the crested wave;
 That 'mid the forests where they roamed,
 There rings no hunter shout;
 But their name is on your waters,
 Ye may not wash it out.

'Tis where Ontario's billow
 Like ocean's surge is curled,
 Where strong Niagara's thunders wake
 The echo of the world,
 Where red Missouri bringeth
 Rich tribute from the West,
 And Rappahannock sweetly sleeps
 On green Virginia's breast.

Ye say their conelike cabins,
 That clustered o'er the vale,
 Have fled away like withered leaves
 Before the autumn gale,
 But their memory liveth on your hills,
 Their baptism on your shore,
 Your everlasting rivers speak
 Their dialect of yore.

Old Massachusetts wears it,
 Within her lordly crown,
 And broad Ohio bears it
 Amid his young renown;
 Connecticut hath wreathed it
 Where her quiet foliage waves;
 And bold Kentucky breathed it hoarse
 Through all her ancient caves.

Wachusset hides its lingering voice
 Within his rocky heart,
 And Allegheny graves its tone
 Throughout his lofty chart;
 Monadnock, on his forehead hoar,
 Doth seal the sacred trust;
 Your mountains build their monument,
 Though ye destroy their dust.

THE NEW COLOSSUS

EMMA LAZARUS

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
 With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

In 1882 Emma Lazarus was asked to donate an original poem to the fundraising effort to build a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. She initially declined, stating she could not write a poem about a statue. At the time, she was involved in aiding refugees to New York. These refugees lived in conditions that the wealthy

Lazarus had never experienced. She saw a way to express her empathy for these refugees in terms of the statue. “The New Colossus”, was written in 1883. A bronze tablet that bears the text of her most famous poem is in the Statue of Liberty Museum in the base below the pedestal.

SYMPATHY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!

 When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;

 When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing

 Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
 And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

 When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
 But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Paul Laurence Dunbar, the son of former slaves from Ohio, wrote his first poem at age six and gave his first public recital at nine. Dunbar's first published work came in a newspaper put out by his high school acquaintances Wilbur and Orville Wright, who owned a printing press. The Wright brothers later invested in the Dayton Tattler, a newspaper aimed at the black community, edited and published by Dunbar.

Oak and Ivy, his first collection, was published in 1892. Though his book was received well locally, Dunbar still had to work as an

elevator operator to help pay off his debt to his publisher. He sold his book for a dollar to people who rode the elevator.

As more people came in contact with his work, however, his reputation spread. In 1893, he was invited to recite at the World's Fair, where he met Frederick Douglass, the renowned abolitionist who rose from slavery to political and literary prominence in America. Douglass praised Dunbar as one of the most promising young men in America.

THE DESTROYER OF WORLDS

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

We waited until the blast had passed,
 walked out of the shelter and then it was extremely solemn.
 We knew the world would not be the same.
 A few people laughed, a few people cried.
 Most people were silent.
 I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita:
 Vishnu is trying to persuade the prince that he should do his duty,
 and to impress him he takes on his multi-armed form and says,
 “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”

I suppose we all thought that, one way or another.

In 1942, Oppenheimer became director of the Manhattan Project, the top-secret effort to develop an atomic bomb, located at Los Alamos, New Mexico. His words were spoken moments after the test detonation at Alamogordo on July 16, 1945.

Oppenheimer later grew concerned about the atomic bomb's destructive potential, and strongly advocated civilian control of atomic

energy and opposed development of the hydrogen bomb. In 1954, he was suspended as a chief advisor from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission during the Red Scare.

A decade later, President John F. Kennedy awarded (and Lyndon B. Johnson presented) Oppenheimer the Enrico Fermi Award as a gesture of political rehabilitation.

FROM THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1961

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge—and more.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation”—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Inspiration

SALUTATION TO THE DAWN

Look to this day:
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence.
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendor of achievement
Are but experiences of time.

For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision;
And today well-lived, makes
Yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day;
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn!

HYMN TO OSIRIS

I have come home.

I have entered humanhood, bound to rocks and
plants, men and women, rivers and sky.

I shall be with you in this and other worlds.

When the cat arches in the doorway, think of me.
I have sometimes been like that.

When two men meet each other in the street, I am
there speaking to you.

When you look up, know I am there—sun and
moon—pouring my love around you.

All these things I am; portents, images, signs.

Though apart, I am part of you.

One of the million things in the universe, I am the
universe, too.

You think I disguise myself as rivers and trees
simply to confuse you?

Whatever I am, woman, cat or lotus, the same god
breathes in every body.

You and I together are a single creation.

Neither death nor spite nor fear nor ignorance
stops my love for you...

FROM THE HOLY LONGING

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Distance does not make you falter now,
arriving in magic,
flying,
and finally,
insane for the light,
you are the butterfly and you are gone.

And so long as you haven't experienced this:
to die and so to grow,
you are only a troubled guest on the dark earth.

OUR BIRTH IS BUT A SLEEP AND A FORGETTING

FROM ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

JOHN DONNE

No man is an island entire of itself;
 every man is a piece of the continent,
 a part of the main;
 if a clod be washed away by the sea,
 Europe is the less,
 as well as if a promontory were,
 as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were;
 any man's death diminishes me,
 because I am involved in mankind.
 And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
 it tolls for thee.

FROM SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

WALT WHITMAN

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
 Healthy, free, the world before me,
 The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good fortune;
 Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
 Strong and content, I travel the open road.

The earth—that is sufficient;
 I do not want the constellations any nearer;
 I know they are very well where they are;
 I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

INVICTUS

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll.
 I am the master of my fate:
 I am the captain of my soul.

Invictus is Latin for “undefeated.” Henley fell victim to tuberculosis of the bone at the age of twelve and his left leg was amputated below the knee. A few years later, the disease progressed to his right foot, threatening his other leg. The pioneering surgeon Joseph Lister saved his foot

and Henley wrote “Invictus” from a hospital bed while recovering.

While incarcerated on Robben Island prison, Nelson Mandela recited the poem to other prisoners and was empowered by its message of self mastery.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

ROBERT FROST

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS

RICHARD RIVE

Where the rainbow ends
There's going to be a place, brother,
Where the world can sing all sorts of songs,
And we're going to sing together, brother,
You and I, though you're white, and I'm not.
It's going to be a sad song, brother,
Because we don't know the tune,
And it's a difficult tune to learn.
But we can learn, brother, you and I.
There's no such tune as a black tune.
There's no such tune as a white tune.
There's only music, brother,
And it's music we're going to sing
Where the rainbow ends.

Narrative Poems

THIS IS THE KEY OF THE KINGDOM

This is the Key of the Kingdom;
 In that Kingdom is a city;
 In that city is a town;
 In that town there is a street;
 In that street there winds a lane;
 In that lane there is a yard;
 In that yard there is a house;
 In that house there waits a room;
 In that room an empty bed;
 And on that bed a basket—
 A Basket of Sweet Flowers,
 Of Flowers, of Flowers,
 A Basket of Sweet Flowers.

Flowers in a Basket,
 Basket on the bed,
 Bed in the chamber,
 Chamber in the house,
 House in the weedy yard,
 Yard in the winding lane,
 Lane in the broad street,
 Street in the high town,
 Town in the city,
 City in the Kingdom—
 This is the Key of the Kingdom,
 Of the Kingdom this is the Key.

A BALLAD OF JOHN SILVER*JOHN MASEFIELD*

We were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long and lissome hull,
And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones and the skull;
We'd a big black Jolly Roger flapping grimly at the fore,
And we sailed the Spanish Water in the happy days of yore.

We'd a long brass gun amidships, like a well-conducted ship,
We had each a brace of pistols and a cutlass at the hip;
It's a point which tells against us, and a fact to be deplored,
But we chased the goodly merchant-men and laid their ships aboard.

Then the dead men fouled the scuppers and the wounded filled the chains,
And the paint-work all was spatter-dashed with other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted, she was scuttled till she sank,
And the pale survivors left us by the medium of the plank.

O! then it was (while standing by the taffrail on the poop)
We could hear the drowning folk lament the absent chicken-coop;
Then, having washed the blood away, we'd little else to do
Than to dance a quiet hornpipe as the old salts taught us to.

O! the fiddle on the fo'c's'le, and the slapping naked soles,
And the genial "Down the middle, Jake, and curtsey when she rolls!"
With the silver seas around us and the pale moon overhead,
And the look-out not a-looking and his pipe-bowl glowing red.

Ah! the pig-tailed, quidding pirates and the pretty pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop-to by the naughty Board of Trade;
The schooners and the merry crews are laid away to rest,
A little south the sunset in the Islands of the Blest.

FROM THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

ROBERT BROWNING

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladle's,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing.

YUSSOUF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

A stranger came one night to Yussouf's tent,
 Saying, "Behold one outcast and in dread,
 Against whose life the bow of power is bent,
 Who flies, and hath not where to lay his head;
 I come to thee for shelter and for food,
 To Yussouf, called through all our tribes 'The Good.'"

"This tent is mine," said Yussouf, "but no more
 Than it is God's; come in and be at peace;
 Freely shalt thou partake of all my store
 As I of His who buildeth over these
 Our tents his glorious roof of night and day,
 And at whose door none ever yet heard Nay."

So Yussouf entertained his guest that night,
 And, waking him ere day, said: "Here is gold;
 My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight;
 Depart before the prying day grow bold."
 As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
 So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

That inward light the stranger's face made grand,
 Which shines from all self-conquest; kneeling low,
 He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's hand,
 Sobbing: "O Sheik, I cannot leave thee so;
 I will repay thee; all this thou hast done
 Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!"

"Take thrice the gold," said Yussouf "for with thee
 Into the desert, never to return,
 My one black thought shall ride away from me;
 First-born, for whom by day and night I yearn,
 Balanced and just are all of God's decrees;
 Thou art avenged, my first-born, sleep in peace!"

Numbers and Grammar

ONE IS THE SUN

One is the Sun who shines above,
Two is the prince when he finds his love,
The king, the queen, and their child are three,
Four are the winds that blow to me,
Five am I with my limbs and head,
Six is the honeycomb sweetening bread,
Seven are the stars that cross the sky,
Eight are the hours asleep I lie.

NUMBER POEM

The bright-eyed stars do in the number rest,
And every man is by the numbers blest:
By one when upright on the earth he stands,
By two when lovingly he lifts his hands,
By three when he awakes, or dreams, or sleeps,
By four when every year its seasons keeps,
By five when opens out the summer's rose,
By six when Gabriel's snow-white lily blows,
By seven when every week its days do bring,
Thus do the numbers through the great world ring.

ONE, TWO,
BUCKLE MY SHOE

TRADITIONAL

One, two,
Buckle my shoe;
Three, four,
Knock at the door;
Five, six,
Pick up sticks;
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight:
Nine, ten,
A big fat hen;
Eleven, twelve,
Dig and delve;
Thirteen, fourteen,
Maids a-courting;
Fifteen, sixteen,
Maids in the kitchen;
Seventeen, eighteen,
Maids a-waiting;
Nineteen, twenty,
My plate's empty.

FIVE LITTLE BROTHERS

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

Five little brothers set out together
To journey the livelong day,
In a curious carriage made of leather
They hurried away, away!
One big brother, and three quite small,
And one wee fellow, no size at all.

The carriage was dark and none too roomy,
And they could not move about;
The five little brothers grew very gloomy,
And the wee one began to pout;
Till the biggest one whispered, "What do you say?
Let's leave the carriage and run away!"

So out they scampered, the five together,
 And off and away they sped—
 When somebody found the carriage of leather,
 Oh, my, how she shook her head!
 'Twas her little boy's shoe, as everyone knows,
 And the five little brothers were five little toes.

DANCING ON THE SHORE

TRADITIONAL

Ten little children, dancing on the shore.
 The queen waved a royal wand, and out went four.

Six little children, dancing merrily
 The queen waved a royal wand, and out went three.

Three little children, danced as children do;
 The queen waved a royal wand and out went two.

One little maiden, dancing just for fun;
 The queen waved a royal wand, and out went one.

NUMBER RHYME

JOAN MARCUS

*We dance around the fir tree
 in every kind of weather,
 Twelve little gnomes dancing all together.
 We dance around the fir tree
 in every kind of weather,
 Twelve little gnomes dancing all together.*

Two big groups of six are we,
 Two big groups of six.
 Two big groups of six are we,
 Two big groups of six.

We dance around the fir tree...

Three little groups of four are we,
 Three little groups of four.
 Three little groups of four are we,
 Three little groups of four.

We dance around the fir tree...

Four little groups of three are we,
 Four little groups of three.
 Four little groups of three are we,
 Four little groups of three.

We dance around the fir tree...

Six little groups of two are we,
 Six little groups of two.
 Six little groups of two are we,
 Six little groups of two.

We dance around the fir tree...

THE NUMBER TWELVE

Twelve children together are we
 Merry and bright as you can see,
 Twelve children hand in hand
 In one circle here we stand.

Each with a partner, hand in hand,
 Six pairs now before us stand.
Twelve is six lots of two.

Into two rings now we run
 Six in a ring, quickly done.
Twelve is two lots of six.

Into four rings now we run
 Three in a ring, quickly done.
Twelve is four lots of three.

Wait and we will show you more:
 Three rings now in each is four.
Twelve is three lots of four.

*(Then all the children dance back
 into one circle.)*

Twelve children together are we
 Merry and bright as you can see,
 Twelve children hand in hand
 In one circle here we stand.

A MATHEMATICS POEM

MICHAEL MOTTERAM

A circle has lots of possibilities;
There are many directions to go.
But with a line that is straight
There can only be this way or that!
If you live from the center of a circle
 you will find your life all about you.
But should you live on a railway track
 you can only go forward or back!

EUCLID

VACHEL LINDSAY

Old Euclid drew a circle
On a sand-beach long ago.
He bounded and enclosed it
With angles thus and so.
His set of solemn greybeards
Nodded and argued much
Of arc and circumference,
Diameter and such.
A silent child stood by them
From morning until noon
Because they drew such charming
Round pictures of the moon.

UNKNOWN

Is it where the Geometer draws his base,
And elegant quadrics float through space,
Where the circular points are the open door,
And conics osculate ever more?

THE PARTS OF SPEECH VERSES

*VIRGINIA FIELD BIRDSALL**The Verb*

I am a verb, I like to act,
To walk, to run, to dance; it's a fact.
To plow, to build, to work, to strive,
I like to feel that I'm alive!
But sometimes I just say, "I am,"
And act as meek as a little lamb.

The Noun

I am a noun; I give names to things,
To persons, from beggars to royal kings;
To animals also, great and small;
To flowers and trees that grow so tall,
To things like tables and chairs and sticks,
To houses and stone, concrete and bricks;
And to things you can't see or hear or feel,
Like goodness and truth and honor and zeal!
I like to be quiet; I don't run about,
I just sit still and let others shout.

The Pronoun

I am a pronoun; it isn't quite fair,
I'm only about when the noun isn't there!
Sometimes I'm "I" and sometimes I'm "you,"
Or "he," "she," or "it," or "they" or "them," too;
I change my form when it suits my whim,
Then she becomes her and he becomes him.

The Articles

The articles small are we;
We like to make ourselves known:
Fat A, an and the; but none of us three
Can stand for a minute alone.
Three small articles are we
And we keep nouns company.

The Adjectives

We are the adjectives; artists, too,
We stick to the nouns as your skin sticks to you.
I call the man great or good or sad.
I call the beast large or fierce or bad.
I paint the grass green and the flowers gay.
We dance through the world in our colorful way.

The Adverbs

We are the adverbs! We're lots of fun
 Telling how, when or where the action is done;
 Whether neatly, or carelessly, promptly or not,
 We have you children right on the spot.
 You act bravely and honestly, wisely and well,
 Or falsely and foolishly, adverbs will tell.
 Either now or later or sometimes or never,
 Immediately, presently, soon or forever,
 Either here or there or somewhere around,
 Along with the verb the adverb is found.
 But sometimes we go with the adjectives, too,
 When the sun's very bright and the sky's very blue.
 Or with other adverbs we sometimes mate,
 When you walk very slowly and come very late.

The Preposition

A preposition small am I,
 But others are not half so spry!
 I'm up the mountain, down the glen,
 Through the city, among the men,
 Under the river, over the sea,
 Or up in the tree-tops! There you'll find me.
 I'm with and of and from and by,
 Pointing always, low or high.

The Conjunction

I am the word that joins: conjunction,
 I have a plain but useful function.
 What would you do without your and?
 Your or? Your if? I'm in demand,
 Because, unless your work you do,
 You're negligent and lazy, too!

The Interjection

I'm the interjection wild,
 Dear to almost every child.
 Oh! how lovely! Ouch! Take care!
 Alas! Hurrah! Hello! Beware!
 Oh! how noble! Look! red light!
 My! you gave me such a fright!

Shakespeare

PUCK'S BLESSING

FROM *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

Through the house give glimmering light
 By the dead and drowsy fire;
 Every elf and fairy sprite
 Hop as light as bird from brier;
 And this ditty after me
 Sing, and dance it trippingly.

First, rehearse your song by rote,
 To each word a warbling note;
 Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
 Will we sing, and bless this place.

AUBADE

CLOTEN FROM *CYMBELINE*

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 every thing that pretty is,
 My lady sweet, arise:
 Arise, arise.

An aubade is a poem or song of or about lovers separating at dawn. It has also been defined as "a song or instrumental composition concern-

ing, accompanying, or evoking daybreak". In the strictest sense of the term, an aubade is a song from a door or window to a sleeping woman.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

PRINCE HAMLET FROM HAMLET

To be or not to be—that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And, by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

FROM ANTONY'S FUNERAL ORATION

ANTONY FROM JULIUS CAESAR

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

Afterword

TO A POET A THOUSAND YEARS HENCE

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

I who am dead a thousand years,
 And wrote this sweet archaic song,
 Send you my words for messengers
 The way I shall not pass along.

I care not if you bridge the seas,
 Or ride secure the cruel sky,
 Or build consummate palaces
 Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
 And statues and a bright-eyed love,
 And foolish thoughts of good and ill,
 And prayers to them who sit above?

How shall we conquer? Like a wind
 That falls at eve our fancies blow,
 And old Moeonides the blind
 Said it three thousand years ago.

O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,
 Student of our sweet English tongue,
 Read out my words at night, alone:
 I was a poet, I was young.

Since I can never see your face,
 And never shake you by the hand,
 I send my soul through time and space
 To greet you. You will understand.

Acknowledgments

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David Kennedy has taught in Waldorf schools for over twenty years. He studied education and trained to be a teacher at Emerson College in Forest Row, England. David founded WaldorfToday.com, the world's largest weekly newsletter for Waldorf education.

Front cover art: "Michaelmas," needle-felted wool tapestry, David Kennedy. "I was a first grade teacher in Bethesda, Maryland, only miles from the Pentagon, and was teaching on the morning of 9/11. I made this felt shortly after those events. St. Michael protects the town from the menacing dragon which would destroy that which is good."

Back cover art: Detail from "Madonna, Rainbow Bridge," needle-felted wool tapestry, David Kennedy.

Cover photographs of "Michaelmas" and "Madonna, Rainbow Bridge" by Bronwyn Fargo. www.bronwynfargo.com.

Front and back cover book design by Geri Shonka. gshonka@hotmail.com.

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Notes

