

Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University

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імені Івана Франка**

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ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH CHILDREN'S POETRY

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`Anthology...` offers works that represent the characteristic features of English poetry for children. It is intended for literary experts, critics, teachers, students of philology, and everyone who is interested in the art of a poetic word.

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В «Антології...» запропоновано твори, які репрезентують характерні риси англійської поезії для дітей. Праця розрахована на викладачів, студентів-філологів, учителів-словесників, а також усіх, хто цікавиться мистецтвом поетичного слова.

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PREFACE

*‘If you can do one favour for your children,
expose them to poetry and encourage a love of it’*

Eva Moore

The benefits of poetry can’t be underestimated for kids. It can help with language development, encourages children to play and experiment with words.

But perhaps most important to all, poetry can help children see the world in a different way, listen to a diverse range of voices tackling a diverse range of subjects, and feel inspired and capable. This *‘Anthology of English Children’s Poetry’* has been compiled to assist teachers in finding suitable poems for this purpose. Some poems are classic, others are more contemporary – all of them are suitable for children to perform and read aloud. Learning to retell a poem from memory is challenging and with this in mind the selected poems have been chosen for their use of rhythm, rhyme and imagery.

‘Anthology...’ has been organised into two sections: *‘Poems for the Very Smallest Ones’* and *‘Poems for Those a Little Older’*. This ensures there is progression in content, style and length of poems but also flexibility for teachers to choose when they use the poems selected.

The sections are subdivided into categories of poems: *‘Rhymes and Jingles’*, *‘Country Boys’ Songs’*, *‘Christmas Poems’*, *‘Seasons and Weather’*, *‘Tastes and Preferences’*, *‘Familiar Objects’*, *‘Dream-land’*, *‘Fairy-land’*, *‘Various’*, etc. This variety captivates the mind and causes readers to reflect on their own childhood or other experiences they’ve had. There are connections that can be made, there are questions that can be asked and there are lots of motivation and inspiration that will be gained from such thought provoking, funny, stimulating and interesting verses.

‘Anthology of English Children’s Poetry’ gives sustained attention to the literary dimensions of children’s poetry from the past centuries to the present. While reasserting the importance of well-known voices, such as those of *W. Shakespeare, S. T. Coleridge, W. Wordsworth, W. Blake, R. L. Stevenson, J. Keats* we also reflect on the aesthetic significance of landmark works by less frequently celebrated figures such as *R. Herrick, E. Prentiss, N. Gale, J. Hogg, M. Howitt, Ann Taylor* and *Jane Taylor, etc.* *‘Anthology...’* demonstrates the formal and informal means through which children’s poetry, in theory and in practice, negotiates the complicated demands we have made of it through the ages.

‘Anthology of English Children’s Poetry’ also provides *‘Index of Authors’*, *‘Index of First Lines’*, and *‘Essential Children’s Collections of Poems’*.

It is quite clear, that this is not an exhaustive collection but a working document which is a guide to support teachers choosing poems to recite. Personal choice is really important, if you love a poem and you think it would work as a poem to learn by heart then use it. Your enthusiasm will come through your teaching and inspire children to learn the poem.

SECTION I

THE POWER OF POETRY IN THE CLASSROOM: CREATIVE TEACHING IDEAS

Great poetry invites readers to play with language and develop a deeper understanding of the human experience. This chapter will discuss the benefits of incorporating poetry in the classroom, and creative poetry activities for every age.

Benefits of Using Poetry in the Classroom

Everyone knows how important it is to provide a variety of text in the classroom. The versatility of poetry makes it a powerful resource in the process of teaching. There are many benefits to teaching poetry to children.

It increases vocabulary

Poetry helps children with increasing their vocabulary. Children of preschool and primary school age are bound to hear and say brand new words found in poetry. They are also more likely to remember the words and be interested in them, because of the rhythmic and rhyming patterns of the poetry.

It gives knowledge about different perspectives and feelings

There are all types of poetry for children written by different people from different cultures. Listening to different poems can help children learn about different types of people, likes, dislikes, as well as different feelings and emotions. Sometimes we don't know why a certain poem appeals to a particular child or group. But the musical and rhythmic nature of poetry seems to call to young children on an intuitive level.

It teaches foundational reading skills.

Since poems are short, it's easy to use an entire poem to focus on a specific reading skill. Young children pay attention to the words, sounds, and syllables while listening to poetry.

It is a great way to practice phonological awareness.

Poetry is a great way for aged children to practice the ability to notice and manipulate the sounds within words. While reading poetry together with your child, it's important to take some time to talk about words that sound the same at the end, or rhyme. Explain what rhyming means and point out the words that rhyme. Phonological awareness is a necessary skill needed for phonics, writing, and reading.

It motivates them to read.

The limited text of poetry can make reading more accessible for young English learners, or children who are struggling. There are countless types of poetry, making it easy to find a poem to appeal to nearly any interest.

It offers the opportunities to learn about rhyme, syllables, and segmenting.

These are components of phonological awareness, which has been identified as a key element of the science of reading. Repeated poetry readings promote building fluency – another component of the science of reading. To help children practice their speaking and listening skills, have children recite poems as a whole group before moving to small groups and partners.

It trains memorizing, reciting, and brain power

Poetry's musical and rhythmic quality stops children and makes them interested. Once they start listening to a poem, they feel like they must continue listening to it. This makes poetry easy to memorize and recite. This memorizing and reciting; knowing what words come next, helps with early literacy development. The musical quality of poems also helps children to recognize patterns, which can help prepare for logical thinking as well as math.

It inspires creative writing.

Poetry is subjective. It can be structured, like a haiku, or as simple as a collection of your favorite words. The rules of writing become more relaxed in different types of poems – which allows children to tap into their creativity.

It is accessible to all learners.

One key benefit of poetry is that it can easily be differentiated for all learning levels. Some children may be able to create poems with the use of sentence frames, while others may create theirs using open-ended prompts.

Activities for Creative Poetry Lessons

Poetry is an influential component of literacy. We've compiled a list of our favorite poetry writing exercises – many of which can be used at any grade level from elementary school to high school.

Match a Picture With a Poem

In this activity, children of any grade or skill level will learn how the relationship between images and poetry can help deepen their understanding of its meaning. They will also begin to understand that poetry is personal – your interpretation of its meaning will be unique to you and your experiences.

Begin by presenting your children with a poem. Next, ask your children to find an image that they feel represents the poem. Children could draw pictures, cut photos from magazines, or use free image sites. Depending on the level of your children, they can verbally explain or write an essay to elaborate on why the image represents the poem.

Open-Ended Discussions With a Poem of the Day

This low-prep activity is easy to incorporate into your classroom routines and can be adapted to any grade level. Simply provide children with a poem and ask them the following open-ended questions:

- What is happening in this poem?
- What do you read that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

These questions help children develop their comprehension skills through visual thinking strategies and can also serve as a springboard for meaningful discussion.

“Where I’m From” Poems

In this creative poetry lesson, children are encouraged to write poems describing who they are and where they’re from. This type of poem helps build community and access important identity work. Step-by-step instructions along with templates, rubrics, and mentor texts for this poetry writing exercise can be found on [WritingMindset.org](https://writingmindset.org).

Analyze Poetry With Color

This activity can be adapted for children at any grade level. Through the lesson, children will explore the relationship between color and feelings, our individual associations with colors, and how colors can be used to tell a story. The activity concludes with children creating a color analysis of a familiar poem along with an explanation of their reasoning for the colors they chose. Examples of how to incorporate a poetry analysis with color, along with templates for your classroom can be found on [TeachLivingPoets.com](https://teachlivingpoets.com).

Poetry March Madness

Just like the basketball competition, children will vote on poems to compete in a single-elimination, bracket-style challenge to determine a class “champion.” As children read new poems each day, they will incrementally build new skills like identifying themes, tone, literary techniques, and how to analyze poetry.

Incorporate higher-order thinking skills by having children write essays defending their poem selection. In the final elimination, hold a debate on the merits of the two poems that are left. For a detailed explanation of how to use this activity in the classroom, check out [Brian Sztabnik’s post on Much Ado About Teaching](#).

Create Found Poems

Some children might be intimidated by the idea of creating original poetry – enter the found poem. Found poems are created by piecing together phrases or lines from other sources, such as a newspaper or magazine.

Typically, found poems only use words from outside sources, however, the rules of poetry are very fluid.

Found poems include [blackout or erasure poetry](#), in which children take a passage and use words from the passage to create a poem. Rather than cutting out the words and piecing them together, children black out all of the words that they do not want to use.

From elementary to high school, found poems can encourage children to use their creative expression. They can also be used to strengthen their connections across the curriculum.

Consider providing children with a current event and have them create found poems based on the topic. Children could use primary resources to create found poems that have connections to historical topics or themes.

Write a Letter to a Poet

Each year, [the Dear Poet program](#), part of the Academy of American Poets, invites children to engage with living poets whose work has impacted them. After watching videos of award-winning poets reading their poems, children can write a letter to the poet of their choice. The poets respond to select letters, and their correspondences are published on Poets.org.

SECTION II

POEMS FOR THE VERY SMALLEST ONES

RHYMES AND JINGLES

We begin with some jingles and old rhymes; for rhymes and jingles must not be despised. They have rhyme, rhythm, melody, and joy; and it is well for beginners to know that these are all elements of poetry, so that they will turn to it with pleasant expectation.

MERRY ARE THE BELLS

Merry are the bells, and merry would they ring,
 Merry was myself, and merry could I sing;
 With a merry ding-dong, happy, gay, and free,
 And a merry sing-song, happy let us be!
 Waddle goes your gait, and hollow are your hose;
 Noddle goes your pate, and purple is your nose;
 Merry is your sing-song, happy, gay, and free;
 With a merry ding-dong, happy let us be!
 Merry have we met, and merry have we been;
 Merry let us part, and merry meet again;
 With our merry sing-song, happy, gay, and free,
 With a merry ding-dong, happy let us be!

SAFE IN BED

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
 Bless the bed that I lie on!
 Four corners to my bed,
 Five angels there lie spread;
 Two at my head,
 Two at my feet,
 One at my heart, my soul to keep.

JENNY WREN

Jenny Wren fell sick;
 Upon a merry time,
 In came Robin Redbreast,
 And brought her sops of wine.
 Eat well of the sop, Jenny,
 Drink well of the wine;
 Thank you Robin kindly,
 You shall be mine.
 Jenny she got well,
 And stood upon her feet,
 And told Robin plainly
 She loved him not a bit.
 Robin, being angry,
 Hopp'd on a twig,
 Saying, Out upon you,
 Fye upon you,
 Bold-faced jig!

CURLY LOCKS

Curly locks! Curly locks!
 Wilt thou be mine?
 Thou shalt not wash dishes
 Nor yet feed the swine.
 But sit on a cushion
 And sew a fine seam,
 And feed upon strawberries
 Sugar and cream.

PUSSY-CAT MEW

Pussy-cat Mew jumped over a coal,
 And in her best petticoat burnt a great hole.
 Pussy-cat Mew shall have no more milk
 Till she has mended her gown of silk.

DRAW A PAIL OF WATER

Draw a pail of water
 For my Lady's daughter.

Father's a King,
 Mother's a Queen,
 My two little sisters are dressed in green,
 Stamping marigolds and parsley.

I SAW A SHIP A-SAILING

I saw a ship a-sailing,
 A-sailing on the sea;
 And it was full of pretty things
 For baby and for me.
 There were sweetmeats in the cabin,
 And apples in the hold;
 The sails were made of silk,
 And the masts were made of gold.
 The four-and-twenty sailors
 That stood between the decks,
 Were four-and-twenty white mice,
 With chains about their necks.
 The captain was a duck,
 With a packet on his back;
 And when the ship began to move,
 The captain cried, "Quack, quack!"

THE NUT-TREE

I had a little nut-tree,
 Nothing would it bear
 But a silver nutmeg
 And a golden pear;
 The King of Spain's daughter
 She came to see me,
 And all because of my little nut-tree.
 I skipped over water,
 I danced over sea,
 And all the birds in the air couldn't catch me.

MY MAID MARY

My maid Mary she minds the dairy,
 While I go a-hoeing and a-mowing each morn;

Gaily run the reel and the little spinning-wheel,
 Whilst I am singing and mowing my corn.

THE WIND AND THE FISHERMAN

When the wind is in the East,
 'Tis neither good for man or beast;
 When the wind is in the North,
 The skilful fisher goes not forth;
 When the wind is in the South,
 It blows the bait in the fish's mouth;
 When the wind is in the West,
 Then 'tis at the very best.

BLOW, WIND, BLOW

Blow, wind, blow! and go, mill, go!
 That the miller may grind his corn;
 That the baker may take it and into rolls make it,
 And send us some hot in the morn.

ALL BUSY

The cock's on the house-top,
 Blowing his horn;
 The bull's in the barn,
 A-threshing of corn;
 The maids in the meadows
 Are making the hay,
 The ducks in the river
 Are swimming away.

WINTER HAS COME

Cold and raw
 The north wind doth blow
 Bleak in the morning early;
 All the hills are covered with snow,
 And winter's now come fairly.

POOR ROBIN

The north wind doth blow,

And we shall have snow,
 And what will poor Robin do then, poor thing?
 He'll sit in the barn,
 And keep himself warm,
 And hide his head under his wing, poor thing!

I HAVE A LITTLE SISTER

I have a little sister, they call her Peep, Peep,
 She wades the waters, deep, deep, deep;
 She climbs the mountains, high, high, high;
 Poor little creature, she has but one eye. (*A star.*)

IN MARBLE WALLS

In marble walls as white as milk,
 Lined with a skin as soft as silk,
 Within a fountain crystal-clear,
 A golden apple doth appear.
 No doors there are to this stronghold,
 Yet thieves break in and steal the gold. (*An egg.*)

FAMILIAR OBJECTS

Here are some poems about things with which we are all quite familiar: the Moon and the Stars that we see through our bedroom window; Pussy purring on the hearthrug, the spotted shell on the mantelpiece.

THE MOON (BY ELIZA LEE FOLLEN)

O, look at the moon!
 She is shining up there;
 O mother, she looks
 Like a lamp in the air.
 Last week she was smaller,
 And shaped like a bow;
 But now she's grown bigger,
 And round as an O.
 Pretmoon, pretty moon,

How you shine on the door,
 And make it all bright
 On my nursery floor!
 You shine on my playthings,
 And show me their place,
 And I love to look up
 At your pretty bright face.
 And there is a star
 Close by you, and maybe
 That small twinkling star
 Is your little baby.

THE STAR (BY ANN AND 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.

KITTY (BY MRS E. PRENTISS)

Once there was a little kitty
 Whiter than snow;
 In a barn she used to frolic,

Long time ago.
 In the barn a little mousie
 Ran to and fro;
 For she heard the kitty coming,
 Long time ago.
 Two eyes had little kitty,
 Black as a sloe;
 And they spied the little mousie,
 Long time ago.
 Four paws had little kitty,
 Paws soft as dough,
 And they caught the little mousie,
 Long time ago.
 Nine teeth had little kitty,
 All in a row;
 And they bit the little mousie,
 Long time ago.
 When the teeth bit little mousie,
 Little mouse cried "Oh!"
 But she got away from kitty,
 Long time ago.

KITTY: HOW TO TREAT HER

I like little Pussy, her coat is so warm,
 And if I don't hurt her she'll do me no harm;
 So I'll not pull her tail, nor drive her away,
 But Pussy and I very gently will play.

KITTY: WHAT SHE THINKS OF HERSELF (BY W. B. RANDS)

I am the Cat of Cats. I am
 The everlasting cat!
 Cunning, and old, and sleek as jam,
 The everlasting cat!
 I hunt the vermin in the night
 The everlasting cat!
 For I see best without the light
 The everlasting cat!

THE SEA SHELL (*BY AMY LOWELL*)

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
 Sing me a song, O please!
 A song of ships and sailor-men,
 Of parrots and tropical trees;
 Of islands lost in the Spanish Main
 Which no man ever may see again,
 Of fishes and corals under the waves,
 And sea-horses stabled in great green caves
 Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
 Sing me a song, O please!

COUNTRY BOYS' SONGS**THE CUCKOO**

The cuckoo's a bonny bird,
 She sings as she flies;
 She brings us good tidings,
 And tells us no lies.
 She sucks little birds' eggs,
 To make her voice clear,
 And never cries Cuckoo
 Till the spring of the year.

THE BIRD-SCARER'S SONG

We've ploughed our land, we've sown our seed,
 We've made all neat and gay;
 Then take a bit and leave a bit,
 Away, birds, away!

CRADLE SONG

Sleep, baby, sleep,
 Our cottage vale is deep;
 The little lamb is on the green,
 With woolly fleece so soft and clean,
 Sleep, baby, sleep!
 Sleep, baby, sleep,

Down where the woodbines creep;
Be always like the lamb so mild,
A kind and sweet and gentle child,
Sleep, baby, sleep!

GOOD NIGHT! (*by ANN AND JANE TAYLOR*)

Little baby, lay your head
On your pretty cradle-bed;
Shut your eye-peeps, now the day
And the light are gone away;
All the clothes are tucked in tight;
Little baby dear, good night.
Yes, my darling, well I know
How the bitter wind doth blow;
And the winter's snow and rain
Patter on the window-pane:
But they cannot come in here,
To my little baby dear.
For the window shutteth fast,
Till the stormy night is past;
And the curtains warm are spread
Round about her cradle-bed:
So till morning shineth bright
Little baby dear, good night!

SECTION III

POEMS FOR THOSE A LITTLE OLDER

FLOWERS

Here three Poets treat the same flower each from his own distinct and delightful point of view. To the first it appeals as the flower of courage, the brave early comer; to the second it is the early goer, the flower of a too swift departure – though daffodils really bloom for a fairly long time, as flowers go; the third is grateful for an imperishable recollection.

TO DAFFODILS (BY ROBERT HERRICK)

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
 As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon.
 Stay, stay
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the evensong;
 And, having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along.
 We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything.
 We die
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away
 Like to the summer's rain;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.

DAFFODILS (BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH)

I wander'd 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 stretch'd 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
 Outdid 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 daffodils.

SEASONS AND WEATHER

THE MONTHS (BY 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,
 Stirs 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 FOUR SWEET MONTHS (BY ROBERT HERRICK)

First, April, she with mellow showers
 Opens the way for early flowers;
 Then after her comes smiling May,
 In a more sweet and rich array;
 Next enters June, and brings us more
 Gems than those two that went before:
 Then, lastly, July comes and she
 More wealth brings in than all those three.

GLAD DAY (BY W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON)

Here's another day, dear,
 Here's the sun again
 Peeping in his pleasant way
 Through the window pane.
 Rise and let him in, dear,
 Hail him "hip hurray!"
 Now the fun will all begin.
 Here's another day!
 Down the coppice path, dear,
 Through the dewy glade,
 (When the Morning took her bath
 What a splash she made!)

Up the wet wood-way, dear,
 Under dripping green
 Run to meet another day,
 Brightest ever seen.
 Mushrooms in the field, dear,
 Show their silver gleam.
 What a dainty crop they yield
 Firm as clouted cream,
 Cool as balls of snow, dear,
 Sweet and fresh and round!
 Ere the early dew can go
 We must clear the ground.
 Such a lot to do, dear,
 Such a lot to see!
 How we ever can get through
 Fairly puzzles me.
 Hurry up and out, dear,
 Then – away! away!
 In and out and round about,
 Here's another day!

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES (BY MARY HOWITT)

Buttercups and daisies –
 O the pretty flowers!
 Coming ere the spring-time,
 To tell of sunny hours.
 When the trees are leafless;
 When the fields are bare;
 Buttercups and daisies
 Spring up here and there.
 Welcome, yellow buttercups!
 Welcome, daisies white!
 Ye are in my spirit
 Vision'd, a delight!
 Coming ere the spring-time,
 Of sunny hours to tell –
 Speaking to our hearts of Him
 Who doeth all things well.

THE MERRY MONTH OF MARCH (BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH)

The cock is crowing,
 The stream is flowing,
 The small birds twitter,
 The lake doth glitter,
 The green field sleeps in the sun;
 The oldest and youngest
 Are at work with the strongest;
 The cattle are grazing,
 Their heads never raising;
 There are forty feeding like one!
 Like an army defeated
 The snow hath retreated,
 And now doth fare ill
 On the top of the bare hill;
 The Plough-boy is whooping anon, anon.
 There's joy in the mountains;
 There's life in the fountains;
 Small clouds are sailing,
 Blue sky prevailing;
 The rain is over and gone!

WHAT THE BIRDS SAY (BY S. T. COLERIDGE)

Do you know what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
 The linnet and thrush say "I love and I love!"
 In the winter they're silent – the wind is so strong;
 What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
 But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
 And singing, and loving, all come back together.
 But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
 The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
 That he sings, and he sings, and for ever sings he –
 "I love my love, and my love loves me!"

SPRING'S PROCESSION (BY SYDNEY DOBELL)

First came the primrose,
 On the bank high,

Like a maiden looking forth
 From the window of a tower
 When the battle rolls below,
 So look'd she,
 And saw the storms go by.
 Then came the wind-flower
 In the valley left behind,
 As a wounded maiden, pale
 With purple streaks of woe,
 When the battle has roll'd by
 Wanders to and fro,
 So tottered she,
 Dishevell'd in the wind.
 Then came the daisies,
 On the first of May,
 Like a banner'd show's advance
 While the crowd runs by the way,
 With ten thousand flowers about them
 They came trooping through the fields.
 As a happy people come,
 So came they,
 As a happy people come
 When the war has roll'd away,
 With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
 And all make holiday.
 Then came the cowslip,
 Like a dancer in the fair,
 She spread her little mat of green,
 And on it danced she.
 With a fillet bound about her brow,
 A fillet round her happy brow,
 A golden fillet round her brow,
 And rubies in her hair.

THE COUNTRY FAITH (BY NORMAN GALE)

Here in the country's heart
 Where the grass is green,
 Life is the same sweet life

As it e'er hath been
 Trust in a God still lives,
 And the bell at morn
 Floats with a thought of God
 O'er the rising corn.
 God comes down in the rain,
 And the crop grows tall –
 This is the country faith,
 And the best of all.

TASTES AND PREFERENCES

A WISH (BY SAMUEL ROGERS)

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
 A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
 A willow brook, that turns a mill,
 With many a fall shall linger near.
 The swallow oft beneath my thatch
 Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
 Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch
 And share my meal, a welcome guest.
 Around my ivied porch shall spring
 Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
 And Lucy at her wheel shall sing
 In russet gown and apron blue.
 The village church among the trees,
 Where first our marriage vows were given,
 With merry peals shall swell the breeze,
 And point with taper spire to Heaven.

WISHING (BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM)

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

Nay – stay! I wish I were an Elm-tree,
 A great lofty Elm-tree, with green leaves gay!
 The winds would set them dancing,
 The sun and moonshine glance in,
 The birds would house among the boughs,
 And sweetly sing!
 O – no! I wish I were a Robin,
 A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go;
 Through forest, field, or garden,
 And ask no leave or pardon,
 Till Winter comes with icy thumbs
 To ruffle up our wing!
 Well – tell! Where should I fly to,
 Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
 Before a day was over,
 Home comes the rover,
 For Mother’s kiss, – sweeter this
 Than any other thing!

BUNCHES OF GRAPES (BY WALTER RAMAL)

“Bunches of grapes,” says Timothy;
 “Pomegranates pink,” says Elaine;
 “A junket of cream and a cranberry tart
 For me,” says Jane.
 “Love-in-a-mist,” says Timothy;
 “Primroses pale,” says Elaine;
 “A nosegay of pinks and mignonette
 For me,” says Jane.
 “Chariots of gold,” says Timothy;
 “Silvery wings,” says Elaine;
 “A bumpity ride in a waggon of hay
 For me,” says Jane.

SIX HONEST SERVING MEN (BY RUDYARD KIPLING)

I keep six honest serving-men
 They taught me all I knew;
 Their names are What and Why and When
 And How and Where and Who.

I send them over land and sea,
 I send them east and west;
 But after they have worked for me,
 I give them all a rest.
 I let them rest from nine till five,
 For I am busy then,
 As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
 For they are hungry men.
 But different folk have different views;
 I know a person small
 She keeps ten million serving-men,
 Who get no rest at all!
 She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,
 From the second she opens her eyes
 One million How's, two million Where's,
 And seven million Whys!

CONTENTMENT (BY EUGENE FIELD)

Once on a time an old red hen
 Went strutting round with pompous clucks,
 For she had little babies ten,
 A part of which were tiny ducks.
 "Tis very rare that hens," said she,
 "Have baby ducks as well as chicks –
 But I possess, as you can see,
 Of chickens four and ducklings six!"
 A season later, this old hen
 Appeared, still cackling of her luck,
 For, though she boasted babies ten,
 Not one among them was a duck!
 "Tis well," she murmured, brooding o'er
 The little chicks of fleecy down,
 "My babies now will stay ashore,
 And, consequently, cannot drown!"
 The following spring the old red hen
 Clucked just as proudly as of yore –
 But lo! her babes were ducklings ten,
 Instead of chickens as before!

“’Tis better,” said the old red hen,
 As she surveyed her waddling brood;
 “A little water now and then
 Will surely do my darlings good!”
 But oh! alas, how very sad!
 When gentle spring rolled round again,
 The eggs eventuated bad,
 And childless was the old red hen!
 Yet patiently she bore her woe,
 And still she wore a cheerful air,
 And said: “’Tis best these things are so,
 For babies are a dreadful care!”
 I half suspect that many men,
 And many, many women too,
 Could learn a lesson from the hen
 With plumage of vermilion hue.
 She ne’er presumed to take offence
 At any fate that might befall,
 But meekly bowed to Providence –
 She was contented – that was all!

TOYS AND PLAY, IN-DOORS AND OUT

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS (BY R. L. STEVENSON)

At evening when the lamp is lit,
 Around the fire my parents sit;
 They sit at home and talk and sing,
 And do not play at anything.
 Now, with my little gun, I crawl
 All in the dark along the wall,
 And follow round the forest track
 Away behind the sofa back.
 There, in the night, where none can spy,
 All in my hunter’s camp I lie,
 And play at books that I have read
 Till it is time to go to bed.
 These are the hills, these are the woods,

These are my starry solitudes;
 And there the river by whose brink
 The roaring lions come to drink.
 I see the others far away
 As if in firelit camp they lay,
 And I, like to an Indian scout,
 Around their party prowled about.
 So, when my nurse comes in for me,
 Home I return across the sea,
 And go to bed with backward looks
 At my dear land of Story-books.

WHAT ALL THE WORLD IS MADE OF (BY ROBERT SOUTHEY)

What are little babies made of, made of?
 What are little babies made of?
 Diapers and crumbs and sucking their thumbs;
 That's what little babies are made of?
 What are little boys made of, made of?
 What are little boys made of?
 Snips and snails and puppy-dog tails;
 That's what little boys are made of.
 What are little girls made of, made of?
 What are little girls made of?
 Sugar and spice and everything nice;
 That's what little girls are made of.
 What are young men made of, made of?
 What are young men made of?
 Sighs and leers and crocodile tears;
 That's what young men are made of.
 What are young women made of, made of?
 What are young women made of?
 Rings and jings and other fine things;
 That's what young women are made of.
 What are our sailors made of, made of?
 What are our sailors made of?
 Pitch and tar, pig-tail and scar;
 That's what our sailors are made of.
 What are our soldiers made of, made of?

What are our soldiers made of?
 Pipeclay and drill, the foeman to kill;
 That's what our soldiers are made of.
 What are our nurses made of, made of?
 What are our nurses made of?
 Bushes and thorns and old cow's horns;
 That's what our nurses are made of.
 What are our fathers made of, made of?
 What are our fathers made of?
 Pipes and smoke and collars choke;
 That's what our fathers are made of.
 What are our mothers made of, made of?
 What are our mothers made of?
 Ribbons and laces and sweet pretty faces;
 That's what our mothers are made of.
 What are old men made of, made of?
 What are old men made of?
 Slippers that flop and a bald-headed top;
 That's what old men are made of.
 What are old women made of, made of?
 What are old women made of?
 Reels, and jeels, and old spinning wheels;
 That's what old women are made of?
 What are all folks made of, made of?
 What are all folks made of?
 Fighting a spot and loving a lot,
 That's what all folks are made of.

SAND CASTLES (BY W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON)

Build me a castle of sand
 Down by the sea.
 Here on the edge of the strand
 Build it for me.
 How shall a foeman invade,
 Where may he land,
 While we can raise with our spade
 Castles of sand?
 Turrets upleap and aspire,

Battlements rise
 Sweeping the sea with their fire,
 Storming the skies.
 Pile that a monarch might own,
 Mightily plann'd!
 I can't sit here on a throne,
 This is too grand.
 Build me a cottage of sand
 Up on the hill;
 Snug in a cleft it must stand
 Sunny and still.
 Plant it with ragwort and ling,
 Bramble and bine:
 Castles I'll leave to the King,
 This shall be mine.
 Storm-clouds drive over the land,
 High flies the spray;
 Gone are our houses of sand,
 Vanished away!
 Look at the damage you've done,
 Sea-wave and rain!
 "Nay, we but give you your fun
 Over again."

RING O' ROSES (BY W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON)

Hush a while, my darling, for the long day closes,
 Nodding into slumber on the blue hill's crest.
 See the little clouds play Ring a ring o' roses,
 Planting Fairy gardens in the red-rose West.
 Greet him for us, cloudlets, say we're not forgetting
 Golden gifts of sunshine, merry hours of play.
 Ring a ring o' roses round the sweet sun's setting,
 Spread a bed of roses for the dear dead day.
 Hush-a-bye, my little one, the dear day dozes,
 Doffed his crown of kingship and his fair flag furled,
 While the earth and sky play Ring a ring o' roses,
 Ring a ring o' roses round the rose-red world.

DREAM-LAND**WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD** (BY EUGENE FIELD)

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe –
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew.
“Where are you going, and what do you wish?”
The old moon asked the three.
“We have come to fish for the herring fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!”
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.
The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring fish
That lived in that beautiful sea –
“Now cast your nets wherever you wish –
Never afeared are we”:
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.
All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam –
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail it seemed
As if it could not be,
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea –
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,

Blynken,
 And Nod.
 Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
 And Nod is a little head,
 And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
 Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
 So shut your eyes while mother sings
 Of wonderful sights that be,
 And you shall see the beautiful things
 As you rock in the misty sea,
 Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:
 Wynken,
 Blynken,
 And Nod.

THE DRUMMER-BOY AND THE SHEPHERDESS (BY W. B. RANDS)

Drummer-boy, drummer-boy, where is your drum?
 And why do you weep, sitting here on your thumb?
 The soldiers are out, and the fifes we can hear;
 But where is the drum of the young grenadier?
 "My dear little drum it was stolen away
 Whilst I was asleep on a sunshiny day;
 It was all through the drone of a big bumblebee,
 And sheep and a shepherdess under a tree."
 Shepherdess, shepherdess, where is your crook?
 And why is your little lamb over the brook?
 It bleats for its dam, and dog Tray is not by,
 So why do you stand with a tear in your eye?
 "My dear little crook it was stolen away
 Whilst I dreamt a dream on a morning in May;
 It was all through the drone of a big bumblebee,
 And a drum and a drummer-boy under a tree."

THE LAND OF DREAMS (BY WILLIAM BLAKE)

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

O what land is the land of dreams?
 What are its mountains and what are its streams?"

"O father! I saw my mother there,
 Among the lilies by waters fair."

"Dear child! I also by pleasant streams
 Have wandered all night in the land of dreams,
 But, though calm and warm the waters wide
 I could not get to the other side."

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

SWEET AND LOW (BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON)

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.
 Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

CRADLE SONG (BY SIR WALTER SCOTT)

O hush thee, my baby, thy sire was a knight,
 Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
 The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
 They all are belonging, dear baby, to thee.
 O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
 It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;

Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
 Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
 O hush thee, my baby, the time will soon come,
 When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
 Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
 For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

MOTHER AND I (BY EUGENE FIELD)

O Mother-My-Love, if you'll give me your hand,
 And go where I ask you to wander,
 I will lead you away to a beautiful land –
 The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.
 We'll walk in a sweet-posy garden out there,
 Where moonlight and starlight are streaming,
 And the flowers and the birds are filling the air
 With the fragrance and music of dreaming.
 There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,
 No questions or cares to perplex you;
 There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,
 Nor patching of stockings to vex you.
 For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream,
 And sing you asleep when you're weary,
 And no one shall know of our beautiful dream
 But you and your own little dearie.
 And when I am tired I'll nestle my head
 In the bosom that's sooth'd me so often,
 And the wide-awake stars shall sing in my stead
 A song which our dreaming shall soften.
 So Mother-My-Love, let me take your dear hand,
 And away through the starlight we'll wander –
 Away through the mist to the beautiful land –
 The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder!

FAIRY-LAND

THE FAIRIES (BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM)

Up the airy mountain,
 Down the rushy glen,

We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!
Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.
High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and grey
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.
They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
 Through the mosses bare,
 They have planted thorn-trees
 For pleasure here and there.
 Is any man so daring
 As dig one up in spite,
 He shall find their sharpest thorns
 In his bed at night.
 Up the airy mountain,
 Down the rushy glen,
 We daren't go a-hunting
 For fear of little men;
 Wee folk, good folk,
 Trooping all together,
 Green jacket, red cap,
 And white owl's feather!

SHAKESPEARE'S FAIRIES (BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE)

Some of them, –

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
 And ye that on the sands with printless foot
 Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
 When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that
 By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make
 Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
 Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
 To hear the solemn curfew....

They Dance and Play, –

Come unto these yellow sands,
 And then take hands:
 Courtsied when you have, and kiss'd, –
 The wild waves whist, –
 Foot it featly here and there;
 And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.
 Hark, hark!
Bow, wow,
 The watch-dogs bark:
Bow, wow,

Hark, hark! I hear
 The strain of strutting chanticleer
 Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow!

Ariel Sings, –

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
 In a cowslip's bell I lie;
 There I couch when owls do cry.
 On the bat's back I do fly
 After summer merrily.
 Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

A Busy One

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

They Sing Their Queen to Sleep, –

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong;
 Come not near our fairy queen.
 Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
 Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
 Beetles black, approach not near;
 Worm nor snail, do no offence.
 Philomel, with melody,
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
 Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby.

THE LAVENDER BEDS (BY W. B. RANDS)

The garden was pleasant with old-fashioned flowers,
 The sunflowers and hollyhocks stood up like towers;
 There were dark turncap lilies and jessamine rare,
 And sweet thyme and marjoram scented the air.
 The moon made the sun-dial tell the time wrong;
 'Twas too late in the year for the nightingale's song;
 The box-trees were clipped, and the alleys were straight,
 Till you came to the shrubbery hard by the gate.
 The fairies stepped out of the lavender beds,
 With mob-caps, or wigs, on their quaint little heads;
 My lord had a sword and my lady a fan;
 The music struck up and the dancing began.
 I watched them go through with a grave minuet;
 Wherever they footed the dew was not wet;
 They bowed and they curtsied, the brave and the fair;
 And laughter like chirping of crickets was there.
 Then all on a sudden a church clock struck loud:
 A flutter, a shiver, was seen in the crowd,
 The cock crew, the wind woke, the trees tossed their heads,
 And the fairy folk hid in the lavender beds.

FAREWELL TO THE FAIRIES (BY RICHARD CORBET)

Farewell rewards and fairies,
 Good housewives now may say,
 For now foul sluts in dairies

Do fare as well as they.
And though they sweep their hearths no less
Than maids were wont to do,
Yet who of late, for cleanliness,
Finds sixpence in her shoe?
At morning and at evening both,
You merry were and glad,
So little care of sleep or sloth
Those pretty ladies had.
When Tom came home from labour,
Or Cis to milking rose,
Then merrily went their tabor,
And nimbly went their toes.
Witness those rings and roundelays
Of theirs, which yet remain,
Were footed in Queen Mary's days
On many a grassy plain;
But since of late Elizabeth,
And later, James came in,
They never danced on any heath
As when the time hath been.
By which we note the fairies
Were of the old profession,
Their songs were Ave-Maries,
Their dances were procession:
But now, alas! they all are dead,
Or gone beyond the seas;
Or farther for religion fled,
Or else they take their ease.
A tell-tale in their company
They never could endure,
And whoso kept not secretly
Their mirth, was punished sure;
It was a just and Christian deed
To pinch such black and blue:
O how the commonwealth doth need
Such justices as you!

DIRGE ON THE DEATH OF OBERON, THE FAIRY KING (BY G. THORNBURY)

Toll the lilies' silver bells!
 Oberon, the King, is dead!
 In her grief the crimson rose
 All her velvet leaves has shed.
 Toll the lilies' silver bells!
 Oberon is dead and gone!
 He who looked an emperor
 When his glow-worm crown was on.
 Toll the lilies' silver bells!
 Slay the dragonfly, his steed;
 Dig his grave within the ring
 Of the mushrooms in the mead.

*(But he wasn't dead really. It was all a mistake.
 So they didn't slay the dragonfly after all.)*

TWO SONGS**A BOY'S SONG** (BY JAMES HOGG)

Where the pools are bright and deep,
 Where the grey trout lies asleep,
 Up the river and over the lea,
 That's the way for Billy and me.
 Where the blackbird sings the latest,
 Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
 Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
 That's the way for Billy and me.
 Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
 Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
 There to track the homeward bee,
 That's the way for Billy and me.
 Where the hazel bank is steepest,
 Where the shadow falls the deepest,
 Where the clustering nuts fall free,
 That's the way for Billy and me.
 Why the boys should drive away
 Little sweet maidens from the play,

Or love to banter and fight so well,
 That's the thing I never could tell.
 But this I know, I love to play
 Through the meadow, among the hay;
 Up the water and over the lea,
 That's the way for Billy and me.

A GIRL'S SONG (BY THOMAS MOORE)

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
 And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
 In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream
 To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.
 That bower and its music I never forget,
 But oft when alone in the bloom of the year,
 I think – is the nightingale singing there yet?
 Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemeer?
 No, the roses soon withered that hung o'er the wave,
 But some blossoms were gathered, while freshly they shone,
 And a dew was distilled from their flowers, that gave
 All the fragrance of summer, when summer was gone.
 Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
 An essence that breathes of it many a year;
 Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to my eyes,
 Is that bower on the banks of the calm Bendemeer!

FUR AND FEATHER

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER (BY WILLIAM BLAKE)

A Robin Redbreast in a cage
 Puts all Heaven in a rage.
 A skylark wounded on the wing
 Doth make a cherub cease to sing.
 He who shall hurt the little wren
 Shall never be beloved by men.

THE KNIGHT OF BETHLEHEM (BY H. N. MAUGHAM)

There was a Knight of Bethlehem,
 Whose wealth was tears and sorrows;

His men-at-arms were little lambs,
 His trumpeters were sparrows.
 His castle was a wooden cross,
 On which he hung so high;
 His helmet was a crown of thorns,
 Whose crest did touch the sky.

THE LAMB (BY WILLIAM BLAKE)

Little Lamb, who made thee?
 Dost thou know who made thee?
 Gave thee life, and bade 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 callèd 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 TIGER (BY WILLIAM BLAKE)

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
 In the forest of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Framed thy fearful symmetry?
 In what distant deeps or skies
 Burned that fire within thine eyes?
 On what wings dared he aspire?
 What the hand dared seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 When thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand formed thy dread feet?
 What the hammer, what the chain,
 Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
 What the anvil? What dread grasp
 Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?
 When the stars threw down their spears,
 And water'd heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile His work to see?
 Did He who made the lamb make thee?

I HAD A DOVE (BY JOHN KEATS)

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

ROBIN REDBREAST (BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM)

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

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
 The leaves come down in hosts;
 The trees are Indian princes,
 But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
 The leathery pears and apples
 Hang russet on the bough;
 It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
 'Twill soon be Winter now.
 Robin, Robin Redbreast,
 O Robin dear!
 And what will this poor Robin do?
 For pinching days are near.
 The fireside for the cricket,
 The wheatstack for the mouse,
 When trembling night-winds whistle
 And moan all round the house.
 The frosty ways like iron,
 The branches plumed with snow, –
 Alas! in winter dead and dark,
 Where can poor Robin go?
 Robin, Robin Redbreast,
 O Robin dear!
 And a crumb of bread for Robin,
 His little heart to cheer.

BLACK BUNNY (BY W. B. RANDS)

It was a black Bunny, with white in its head,
 Alive when the children went cosy to bed –
 O early next morning that Bunny was dead!
 When Bunny's young master awoke up from sleep,
 To look at the creature young master did creep,
 And saw that this black one lay all of a heap.
 "O Bunny, what ails you? What does it import
 That you lean on one side, with your breath coming short?
 For I never before saw a thing of the sort!"
 They took him so gently up out of his hutch,
 They made him a sick-bed, they loved him so much;
 They wrapped him up warm; they said, Poor thing, and such;

But all to no purpose. Black Bunny he died,
 And rolled over limp on his little black side;
 The grown-up spectators looked awkward and sighed.
 While, as for those others in that congregation,
 You heard voices lifted in sore lamentation;
 But three-year-old Baby desired explanation:
 At least, so it seemed. Then they buried their dead
 In a nice quiet place, with a flag at his head;
 "Poor Bunny!" – in large print – was what the flag said.
 Now, as they were shovelling the earth in the hole,
 Little Baby burst out, "I *don't* like it!" – poor soul!
 And bitterly wept. So the dead had his dole.
 That evening, as Babe she was cuddling to bed,
 "The Bunny will come back again," Baby said,
 "And be a *white* bunny, and never be dead!"

THE COW (BY ANN AND JANE TAYLOR)

Thank you, pretty cow, that made
 Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
 Every day, and every night,
 Warm, and fresh, and sweet, and white.
 Do not chew the hemlock rank,
 Growing on the weedy bank;
 But the yellow cowslips eat,
 They will make it very sweet.
 Where the purple violet grows,
 Where the bubbling water flows,
 Where the grass is fresh and fine,
 Pretty cow, go there and dine.

THE SKYLARK (BY JAMES HOGG)

Bird of the wilderness,
 Blythesome and cumberless,
 Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
 Emblem of happiness,
 Blest is thy dwelling-place –
 O to abide in the desert with thee!
 Wild is thy lay and loud

Far in the downy cloud,
 Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
 Where, on thy dewy wing,
 Where art thou journeying?
 Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.
 O'er fell and fountain sheen,
 O'er moor and mountain green,
 O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
 Over the cloudlet dim,
 Over the rainbow's rim,
 Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!
 Then, when the gloaming comes,
 Low in the heather blooms,
 Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
 Emblem of happiness,
 Blest is thy dwelling-place –
 O to abide in the desert with thee!

CHRISTMAS POEMS

Here one would like to have begun with some of the old-time carols. But carols, somehow, seem to demand certain accompaniments – snow and frost, starlight and lantern-light, a mingling of Church bells, and above all their own simple haunting music. In cold print they do not appeal to us to the same extent. But the poems that follow are in the true carol-spirit.

CHRISTMAS EVE (BY JOHN DAVIDSON)

In holly hedges starving birds
 Silently mourn the setting year;
 Upright like silver-plated swords
 The flags stand in the frozen mere.
 The mistletoe we still adore
 Upon the twisted hawthorn grows:
 In antique gardens hellebore
 Puts forth its blushing Christmas rose.
 Shrivell'd and purple, cheek by jowl,
 The hips and haws hang drearily;

Roll'd in a ball the sulky owl
 Creeps far into his hollow tree.
 In abbeys and cathedrals dim
 The birth of Christ is acted o'er;
 The kings of Cologne worship him,
 Balthazar, Jasper, Melchior.
 The shepherds in the field at night
 Beheld an angel glory-clad,
 And shrank away with sore affright.
 "Be not afraid," the angel bade.
 "I bring good news to king and clown,
 To you here crouching on the sward;
 For there is born in David's town
 A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
 "Behold the babe is swathed, and laid
 Within a manger." Straight there stood
 Beside the angel all arrayed
 A heavenly multitude.
 "Glory to God," they sang; "and peace,
 Good pleasure among men."
 The wondrous message of release!
 Glory to God again!
 Hush! Hark! the waits, far up the street!
 A distant, ghostly charm unfolds,
 Of magic music wild and sweet,
 Anomes and clarigolds.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (BY ROBERT HERRICK)

What sweeter music can we bring
 Than a carol, for to sing
 The birth of this our heavenly King?
 Awake the voice! awake the string!
 Heart, ear, and eye, and everything!
 Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
 And give the honour to this day,
 That sees December turned to May.
 If we may ask the reason, say,
 The why and wherefore all things here

Seem like the spring-time of the year?
 Why does the chilling winter's morn
 Smile, like a field beset with corn?
 Or smell, like to a mead new-shorn,
 Thus, on the sudden?
 Come and see
 The cause, why things thus fragrant be.
 'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
 Gives light and lustre, public mirth,
 To heaven, and the under-earth.
 We see Him come, and know Him ours,
 Who with His sunshine and His showers
 Turns all the patient ground to flowers.
 The darling of the world is come,
 And fit it is we find a room
 To welcome Him. The nobler part
 Of all the house here, is the heart,
 Which we will give Him; and bequeath
 This holly, and this ivy wreath,
 To do Him honour; who's our King,
 And Lord of all this revelling.

A CHILD'S PRESENT TO HIS CHILD-SAVIOUR (BY ROBERT HERRICK)

Go, pretty child, and bear this flower
 Unto thy little Saviour;
 And tell Him, by that bud now blown,
 He is the Rose of Sharon known;
 When thou hast said so, stick it there
 Upon his bib, or stomacher;
 And tell Him, for good handsel too,
 That thou hast brought a whistle new,
 Made of a clean straight oaten reed,
 To charm his cries at time of need.
 Tell Him, for coral thou hast none;
 But if thou hadst, He should have one;
 But poor thou art, and known to be
 Even as moneyless, as He.
 Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss

From those mellifluous lips of His,
Then never take a second on,
To spoil the first impression.

THE PEACE-GIVER (BY A. C. SWINBURNE)

Thou whose birth on earth
Angels sang to men,
While thy stars made mirth,
Saviour, at thy birth.
This day born again;
As this night was bright
With thy cradle-ray,
Very light of light,
Turn the wild world's night
To thy perfect day.
Thou the Word and Lord
In all time and space
Heard, beheld, adored,
With all ages poured
Forth before thy face,
Lord, what worth in earth
Drew thee down to die?
What therein was worth,
Lord, thy death and birth?
What beneath thy sky?
Thou whose face gives grace
As the sun's doth heat,
Let thy sunbright face
Lighten time and space
Here beneath thy feet.
Bid our peace increase,
Thou that madest morn;
Bid oppression cease;
Bid the night be peace;
Bid the day be born.

MOM IS MAKING CHRISTMAS (BY ROBERT HERRICK)

Cookies baking in the kitchen,
The smell floats through the air;
Mom is making Christmas
with her usual merry flair
The house she gaily decorated,
Each gift she stiched with love,
And we'll gather around the Christmas tree
for an evening of old-fashioned fun
This evening she'll sing a carol for us
With her angel's voice.
Yes, Mom is making Christmas,
A true reason to rejoice.

THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS CAROLLERS (BY JAMES HOGG)

We are a band of carollers,
We march through frost and snow,
But care not for the weather
As on our way we go.
At every hall or cottage
That stands upon our way,
We stop to give the people
Best wishes for the day.
We pray a merry Christmas,
Made bright by Christmas cheer,
With peace, and hope, and gladness
And all they may hold dear.
And for all those that happen
To pass us on our way
We have a smile, and wish them
A merry Christmas-day.

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ESSENTIAL CHILDREN'S COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

With the latest survey showing that around one in five children regularly read poetry outside of school, the desire is definitely there, so we've rounded up the best children's poetry books to nurture that love of books.

To make our selection we took into consideration how accessible the language was, the themes each book covered, originality and how engaged they were. As well as this, we considered the poets included in each anthology – in particular, we were looking for an inclusive range of voices, and plenty of contemporary poets, etc.

'The Folio Book of Children's Poetry' introduced by Penelope Lively, published by The Folio Society

This anthology is one of those books that just feels special. From the strokeable cloth-bound cover to the gorgeous illustrations, it's quite honestly a joy to look at and hold.

Visual appeal aside, this book absolutely delivers on fun, inspiring and engaging content that had our young tester excited to find out which poems were coming next. Booker Prize-winning author Penelope Lively introduces a wonderful collection of poems from old favourites including Seamus Heaney and William Blake, with classics like Sara Coleridge's 'The Garden Year' and T.S Eliot's 'Macavity: The Mystery Cat' both proving very popular with our five-year-old. There are over 80 poems to choose from, and we think there's definitely something for all ages of children, right up to early teens.

Enjoyable to read and something that will look beautiful on your bookshelf, this is the ideal introduction to the world of poetry. A beautiful keepsake that would make an excellent new baby present for families to enjoy together for years to come.

‘Poems Aloud’ by Joseph Coelho, published by Wide Eyed

If anyone is going to convince a child that poetry is cool, it’s award-winning children’s author, playwright and performance poet, Joseph Coelho. In this lively collection, he encourages kids to read aloud and perform the poems, whether it’s alone, with friends or to an audience, offering tips and advice throughout. The biggest rule of all? That poetry is fun and ultimately there are no rules! This was certainly something our independent readers aged 7 and up could get on board with.

Everything from the bold and colourful illustrations to the “red chilli” scale (signalling which of the poems might include some tricky words or complicated themes), is designed with kids in mind and, as a result, it was a book our testers revisited again and again.

There’s a good mix of short poems for younger children to begin with and longer ones for older kids to get their teeth into. If you want to show your children how fun poetry can be, this book is the one for you.

‘Wonder’ by Ana Sampson, published by Pan Macmillan

This book is inspired by and themed around some of the treasures that have been displayed at the London museum over the years, and it’s as awe-inspiring and thoughtful as you’d hope. Curated by author Ana Sampson, the book is split into chapters covering everything from space and earth to mammals and dinosaurs, all with serious kid appeal. Each chapter begins with a bit of detail about the various exhibits in the museum, and the book is scattered with photographs of objects or illustrations from the archives.

The book is a celebration of our planet and the natural world, and there’s plenty here to inspire children to do all that they can to keep it safe.

‘You’re Gonna Wanna Hear This’ by Nik Gill, published by Pan Macmillan`

Poet and writer Nik Gill believes that `poetry is not a luxury, certainly not in the world we live in today. It is a war cry – a battle

song. And you're gonna wanna hear this'. Nik brings together a collection of contemporary, rallying, compelling and empowering poems, telling stories that deserve to be heard. These inclusive works are vital reads for teens.

In author's words, this is "a manifesto for compassion and how important it is in a world that is ever more divided." Buy for your teenager, buy for yourself – basically buy a copy for everyone you know and introduce them to the incredible talent of voices that urgently need to be heard.

'At the Height of the Moon: A Book of Bedtime Poetry and Art' edited by Alison Baverstock, Matt Cunningham and Annette Roeder, published by Prestel

This book is a collection of beautiful artworks and poetry to be read at bedtime. Dreamy prose like 'Golden Slumbers' by Thomas Dekker sits alongside paintings to help tell a story – in this case, a musical angel by Rosso Fiorentino – and we can vouch for its magical, sleep-inducing powers, as reading this book to our five-year-old each night has worked a treat!

Many of the poems are by well-known names such as Walt Whitman, William Shakespeare and Maya Angelou, while the artwork is provided by favourites such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Henri Rousseau. The pictures and words work so well together, especially as children so often want something visual when it comes to bedtime stories, and it's a clever way to introduce them to the world of poetry and art at the same time. This is a relaxing anthology that would appeal to six years and up, depending on which poems you read and they read.

'A Poem for Every Day of the Year' edited by Allie Esiri, published by Pan Macmillan

The idea of having a poem to read each day really appealed to the children, who loved racing through the book to find the poem to match the right date. Each work has been perfectly chosen to represent the season, or themed to a special day. Of course, there's a festive

choice for Christmas Day, and clever selections for everything from April Fool's Day to Mother's Day, but there are also other important dates in the calendar, that are marked with thoughtful choices.

Suitable for all age groups, it's a good choice for the whole family with everything from classics like Lewis Carroll's 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' and 'Remember' by Christina Rossetti, to more contemporary choices like 'Crab-Apples' by Imtiaz Dharker and Michaela Morgan's 'Malala'.

'If You Go Down to the Woods Today' by Rachel Piercey, published by Magic Cat Publishing

Toddlers and pre-schoolers love rhyme, and this charming book goes to show it's never too early to nurture a love of poetry. Packed with delightful illustrations, this sweet book takes you on a journey through the seasons at Brown Bear Woods, focusing on the key events or rites of passage in a child's day. Touching on things like going to school, swimming lessons and picnics, each poem is short and easy-to-read – a must when you're trying to hold a young child's attention!

As well as a poem, each occasion is richly illustrated with woodland characters and, as an extra bit of fun, has a checklist of things to spot in the picture. Our five-year-old loved pointing these out to their little sister and they both were completely captivated with the poems. It's a simple introduction to poetry, perfectly aimed at young children, that will be loved and enjoyed for a long time.

'Poems to Save the World With' by Chris Riddell, published by Pan Macmillan

Former UK Children's Laureate and popular children's author and artist, Chris Riddell has curated this inspiring anthology to "ignite your inner activist and provide comfort in uncertain times."

Classic work by William Wordsworth and Rudyard Kipling sit alongside contemporary prose by Anne Sexton and Emily Berry, with Riddell's compelling illustrations adding a real energetic force to the

words. It feels like a very modern collection, tackling themes around the planet, the government, the pandemic and kindness, and our young teens were hooked.

Great poetry has the power to galvanise, inspire and soothe – this anthology does it all.

‘You Don’t Have to be Everything: Poems for Girls becoming Themselves’ edited by Diana Whitney, published by Workman Publishing

Every teenage girl needs this honest, powerful and supportive collection of poetry. Featuring work by a stellar line-up of diverse poets including Amanda Gorman, Maya Angelou and Melody Lee, it’s a rallying call to girls to embrace self-acceptance as they navigate the tricky coming-of-age years.

As Diana Whitney explains in her introduction, “I wanted to collect the voices I wish I’d heard when I was a teen,” and this anthology certainly delivers. The poems are incredibly relevant and can help provide some reassurance to girls who are trying to navigate growing up in these times. Contemporary poetry at its best.

‘Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright! – Animal Poems for Every Day of the Year’ by Fiona Waters and Britta Teckentrup, published by Nosy Crow

This gorgeous anthology will enchant young readers. The book’s title is taken from “The Tiger”, William Blake’s classic poem, and features an animal poem for every day of the year. Exquisitely illustrated, it features old favourites by Gerard Manley Hopkins and Ted Hughes and more recent poems like Carol Ann Duffy’s ‘The Wasp’ and ‘Crab Dance’ by Grace Nichols. If you’re an animal lover or a parent looking to share rhymes and verse with your children, this hefty tome will get you off to a flying start.

**`Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child`s Book of Poems`
published by NVR Company**

This is a collection of poems for children illustrated by Caldecott Medal artists. They are divided into theme sections, each illustrated by a different artist - weather, spooky poems, story poems, animals, spirits, nonsense poems, haiku poems, and thoughts and feelings. The poems range from ancient to contemporary and poets include Robert Louis Stevenson, Emily Dickinson, Edward Lear and Ogden Nash. You'll find biographical notes about the authors and indexes to the poems by title, first line, and author. Any collector of beautiful children's books – young or not so young – will sing a song of glee while leafing through this excellent collection.

`A Child's Book of Poems` by Emily Raw, published by Magic Cat Publishing

William Blake, Kate Greenaway, Emily Dickinson: the writers in this charming anthology of 200 poems, which was first published in 1969, are among literature's most beloved. Appealing illustrations depict children of all races sweetly interacting, as well as an engagingly rendered menagerie of animals and the natural world in all its wonderment.

Among the verses that children will love are Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's `Christmas Bells`, Lewis Carroll's `The Melancholy Pig`, and Eugene Fields' `Wynken, Blynken, and Nod`, along with proverbs, limericks, nursery rhymes, and folk songs.

`The Random House Book of Poetry for Children` by Prelutsky Jack, published by Random House

The book showcases nearly 600 short poems from classic and contemporary poets. These poems are grouped into fourteen categories, which include food, nonsense, goblins, animals, and seasons, with an emphasis on fun and humor that encompasses playground chants, anonymous rhymes, as well as scary and silly

verse. The poems in this book are a great way of starting conversations around important world events, especially as each poem came with a little bit of detail about the poet and (if relevant) the occasion. Illustrator provides funny and touching illustrations to unify the collection.

POETRY WEBSITES

These websites feature diverse poetry collections as well as teaching resources for interactive poetry activities. As a reminder, be sure to preview any poems or sites before you share them with children.

Poetry4Kids

This site features the work of Kenn Nesbitt, named the Children's Poet Laureate by the Poetry Foundation in 2013.

The Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation contains over 46,000 poems to provide young readers with a comprehensive selection.

Young Black Poets

In this New York Times feature, ten teenage poets share their work in powerful videos.

Youth Speaks Poetry

This YouTube channel features videos from Brave New Voices, a spoken-word poetry festival.

There's a Poem for That

Videos of contemporary and classical poems are paired with animation on this Ted-Ed YouTube channel.

American Life in Poetry

American Life in Poetry offers a wide range of poems that are categorized by theme as well as geographical area.

The New York Times

This New York Times column features a new poem every week, allowing the reader to explore a variety of topics and authors.

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