

# Poetry: Grade 4

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## April

*Ted Robinson*

So here we are in April, in showy, blowy April,  
In frowsy, blowsy April, the rowdy, dowdy time;  
In sippy, sloppy April, in wheezy, breezy April,  
In ringing, stinging April, with a singing, swinging rhyme!

The smiling sun of April on the violets is focal,  
The sudden showers of April seek the dandelions out;  
The tender airs of April make the local yokel vocal,  
And he raises rustic ditties with a most melodious shout.

So here we are in April, in tipsy, gypsy April,  
In showery, flowery April, the twinkly, sprinkly days;  
In tingly, jingly April, in highly wily April,  
In mighty, flighty April with its highty-tighty ways!

The duck is fond of April, and the clucking chickabiddy  
And other barnyard creatures have a try at caroling;  
There's something in the air to turn a stiddy kiddy giddy,  
And even I am forced to raise my croaking voice and sing. †

**The Brook***Alfred Tennyson*

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river;  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted sunbeams dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses.

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river;  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever. †

## A Child's Hymn

*Charles Dickens*

Hear my prayer, O heavenly Father,  
Ere I lay me down to sleep;  
Bid Thy angels, pure and holy,  
Round my bed their vigil keep.

My sins are heavy, but Thy mercy  
Far outweighs them, every one;  
Down before Thy cross I cast them,  
Trusting in Thy help alone.

Keep me through this night of peril  
Underneath its boundless shade;  
Take me to Thy rest, I pray Thee,  
When my pilgrimage is made.

None shall measure out Thy patience  
By the span of human thought;  
None shall bound the tender mercies  
Which Thy Holy Son has bought.

Pardon all my past transgressions,  
Give me strength for days to come;  
Guide and guard me with Thy blessing  
Till Thy angels bid me home. †

**Daniel Boone***Arthur Guiterman*

Daniel Boone at twenty-one  
Came with his tomahawk, knife, and gun  
Home from the French and Indian War  
To North Carolina and the Yadkin shore  
He married his maid with a golden band,  
Built his house and cleared his land;  
But the deep woods claimed their son again  
And he turned his face from the homes of men.  
Over the Blue Ridge, dark and lone,  
The Mountains of Iron, the Hills of Stone,  
Braving the Shawnee's jealous wrath,  
He made his way on the Warrior's Path.  
Alone he trod the shadowed trails;  
But he was lord of a thousand vales.  
As he roved Kentucky, far and near,  
Hunting the buffalo, elk, and deer.  
What joy to see, what joy to win  
So fair a land for his kith and kin,  
Of streams unstained and woods unhewn!  
"Elbow room!" laughed Daniel Boone. †

**Evening (In Words of One Syllable)***Thomas Miller*

The day is past, the sun is set,  
And the white stars are in the sky;  
While the long grass with dew is wet,  
And through the air the bats now fly.  
The lambs have now lain down to sleep,  
The birds have long since sought their nests;  
The air is still; and dark, and deep  
On the hill side the old wood rests.  
Yet of the dark I have no fear,  
But feel as safe as when 'tis light;  
For I know God is with me there,  
And He will guard me through the night.  
For God is by me when I pray,  
And when I close mine eyes to sleep,  
I know that He will with me stay,  
And will all night watch by me keep.  
For He who rules the stars and sea,  
Who makes the grass and trees to grow.  
Will look on a poor child like me,  
When on my knees I to Him bow.  
He holds all things in His right hand,  
The rich, the poor, the great, the small;  
When we sleep, or sit, or stand,  
He is with us, for He loves us all. †

## The Flag Goes By

*Henry H. Bennett*

Hats off! Along the street there comes  
blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,  
flash of color beneath the sky:  
Hats off! The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines  
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.  
Hats off! The colors before us fly;  
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea fights and land fights, grim and great,  
Fought to make and to save the State;  
Weary marches and sinking ships  
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;  
March of a strong land's swift increase;  
Equal justice, right and law,  
Stately honor and reverend awe:

Sign of a nation, great and strong  
To ward her people from foreign wrong:  
Pride and glory and honor-all  
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off! Along the street there comes  
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;  
And loyal hearts are beating high;  
Hats off! The flag is passing by! †

## Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild

*Charles Wesley*

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child;  
Pity my simplicity,  
Suffer me to come to Thee.

Fain I would to Thee be brought,  
Dearest God, forbid it not;  
Give me, dearest God, a place  
In the Kingdom of Thy grace.

Put Thy hands upon my head,  
Let me in Thine arms be stayed,  
Let me lean upon Thy breast,  
Lull me, lull me, Lord to rest.

Hold me fast in Thine embrace,  
Let me see Thy smiling face,  
Give me, Lord, Thy blessings give,  
Pray for me, and I shall live.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee,  
Thou shalt my example be;  
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild,  
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art,  
Give me Thy obedient heart;  
Thou art pitiful and kind,  
Let me have Thy loving mind.

Let me, above all, fulfil  
God my heavenly Father's will,  
Never His good Spirit grieve;  
Only to His glory live.

Thou didst live to God alone,  
Thou didst never seek Thine own,  
Thou Thyself didst never please:  
God was all Thy happiness.

Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,  
In Thy gracious hands I am;  
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art,  
Live Thyself within my heart.

I shall then show forth Thy praise,  
Serve Thee all my happy days;  
Then the world shall always see  
Christ, the Holy Child, in me. †



## Good Night and Good Morning

*Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton*

A fair little girl sat under a tree,  
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;  
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,  
And said, "Dear work, good night! good night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,  
Crying, "Caw! Caw!" on their way to bed;  
She said, as she watched their curious flight,  
"Little black things, good night! good night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,  
The sheep's "Bleat! bleat!" came over the road;  
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,  
"Good little girl, good night! good night!"

She did not say to the sun, "Good night!"  
Though she saw him there like a ball of light,  
For she knew he had God's time to keep  
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head,  
The violets curtsied and went to bed;  
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,  
And said on her knees her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,  
She knew nothing more till again it was day;  
And all things said to the beautiful sun,  
"Good morning! good morning! our work is begun! †

**If I Were a Pilgrim Child***Rowena Bennett*

If I were a Pilgrim child,  
Dressed in white or gray,  
I should catch my turkey wild  
For Thanksgiving Day.  
I should pick my cranberries  
Fresh from out a bog,  
And make a table of a stump  
And sit upon a log.  
An Indian would be my guest  
And wear a crimson feather,  
And we should clasp our hands and say  
Thanksgiving grace together.  
But I was born in modern times  
And shall not have this joy.  
My cranberries will be delivered  
By the grocery boy.  
My turkey will be served upon  
A shining silver platter.  
It will not taste as wild game tastes  
Though it will be much fatter;  
And, oh, of all the guests that come  
Not one of them will wear  
Moccasins upon his feet  
Or feathers in his hair! †

## In Desert Places

*Sister Mary Madeleva*

God has a way of making flowers grow.  
He is both daring and direct about it.  
If you know half the flowers that I know,  
You do not doubt it.

He chooses some gray rock, austere and high,  
For garden-plot, trafficks with sun and weather;  
Then lifts an Indian paintbrush to the sky,  
Half flame, half feather.

In desert places it is quite the same;  
He delves at petal-plans, divinely, surely.  
Until a bud too shy to have a name  
Blossoms demurely.

He dares to sow the waste, to plow the rock.  
Though Eden knew His beauty and His power,  
He could not plant it in a yucca stalk,  
A cactus flower. †

## In Flanders Fields

*John McCrae*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
    In Flanders fields. †

## **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 daffodils. †

## The Kitten and the Falling Leaves

*William Wordsworth*

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

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

## Little Boy Blue

*Eugene Field*

The little toy dog is covered with dust,  
But sturdy and staunch he stands;  
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,  
And his musket molds in his hands.  
Time was when the little toy dog was new  
And the soldier was passing fair,  
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue  
Kissed them and put them there.

“Now, don’t you go till I come,” he said  
“And don’t you make any noise!”  
So toddling off to his trundle-bed  
He dreamed of the pretty toys.  
And as he was dreaming, an angel song  
Awakened our Little Boy Blue  
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,  
But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,  
Each in the same old place,  
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,  
The smile of a little face.  
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through  
In the dust of that little chair,  
What has become of our Little Boy Blue  
Since he kissed them and put them there. †

**The Lizard***Lydia Pender*

There on the sun-hot stone  
Why do you wait, alone  
And still, so still?  
Neck arched, head high, tense and alert, but still,  
Still as the stone?

Still is your delicate head,  
Like the head of an arrow;  
Still is your delicate throat,  
Rounded and narrow;  
Still is your delicate back,  
Patterned in silver and black,  
And bright with the burnished sheen that the gum-tips share.  
Even your delicate feet  
Are still, still as the heat,  
With a stillness alive, and awake, and intensely aware.

Why do I catch my breath,  
Held by your spell?  
Listening, waiting - for what?  
Will you not tell?  
More alive in your quiet than ever the locust can be,  
Shrilling his clamorous song from shimmering tree;  
More alive in your motionless grace, as the slow minutes die,  
Than the scurrying ants that go hurrying busily by.  
I know, if my shadow but fall by your feet on the stone,  
In the wink of an eye,  
Let me try –  
Ah!  
He's gone! †



**Mary***Mary O'Neill*

When Jesus was a boy did he  
Swing on the gates of Galilee,  
Bring home foundling pups and kittens,  
Scuff his sandals, lose his mittens,  
Weight his pockets with a treasure  
Adult eyes can never measure,  
Scratch his hands and stub his toes  
On rocky hills where cactus grows,  
Set stones and quills and bits of thread  
On the windowsill beside his bed  
So that on waking he could see  
All yesterday's bright prophecy?  
Did he play tag with the boys next door,  
Tease for sweets in the grocery store,  
Whittle and smooth a spinning top  
In his father's carpenter shop,  
Run like wind to sail his kite,  
Smile and sigh in his sleep at night,  
Laugh with you in long-lost springs  
About a thousand small, endearing things?  
Is he the one that said that you  
Should always dye your dresses blue?  
With eyes bright as cinnamon silk,  
Red lips ringed with a mist of milk  
Did he ... lifting his earthen cup  
Say: "Just wait until I grow up"? †

## My Cat Geoffrey

Christopher Smart

For I will consider my Cat Geoffrey.  
 For he is the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him.  
 For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.  
 For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.  
 For then he leaps up to catch the musk, which is the blessing of God upon his prayer.  
 For he rolls upon prank to work it in.  
 For having done duty and received blessing he begins to consider himself.  
 For this he performs in ten degrees.  
 For first he looks upon his forepaws to see if they are clean.  
 For secondly he kicks up behind to clear away there.  
 For thirdly he works it upon stretch with the forepaws extended.  
 For fourthly he sharpens his paws by wood.  
 For fifthly he washes himself.  
 For sixthly he rolls upon wash.  
 For seventhly he fleas himself, that he may not be interrupted upon the beat.  
 For eighthly he rubs himself against a post.  
 For ninthly he looks up for his instructions.  
 For tenthly he goes in quest of food.  
 For having considered God and himself he will consider his neighbor.  
 For if he meets another cat he will kiss her in kindness.  
 For when he takes his prey he plays with it to give it a chance.  
 For one mouse in seven escapes by his dallying.  
 For when his day's work is done his business more properly begins.  
 For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary.  
 For he counteracts the powers of darkness by his electrical skin and glaring eyes.  
 For he counteracts the Devil, who is death, by brisking about the life.  
 For in his morning orisons he loves the sun and the sun loves him.  
 For he is of the tribe of Tiger.  
 For the Cherub Cat is a term of the Angel Tiger.  
 For he has the subtlety and hissing of a serpent, which in goodness he suppresses.  
 For he will not do destruction, if he is well-fed, neither will he spit without provocation.  
 For he purrs in thankfulness, when God tells him he's a good Cat. †

## **My Heart's in the Highlands**

*Robert Burns*

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;  
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, Farewell to the North,  
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth;  
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove.  
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;  
Farewell to the straths\* and green valleys below;  
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;  
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;  
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,  
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe,  
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go. †

\*low grasslands along a river valley (a Scottish word)

## My Wise Old Grandpapa

*Wilbur G. Howcroft*

When I was but a little chap  
My Grandpapa said to me,  
“You’ll need to know your manners, son,  
When you go out to tea.

“Remove the shells from hard-boiled eggs,  
Make sure your hat’s on straight,  
Pour lots of honey on your peas  
To keep them on the plate.

“Blow daintily upon your tea  
To cool it to your taste,  
And always pick bones thoroughly,  
With due regard for waste.

“Be heedful of your partners’ needs,  
Attend their every wish;  
When passing jelly, cream or jam,  
Make sure they’re in the dish.

“When eating figs or coconuts,  
To show you are refined,  
Genteely gnaw the centers out  
And throw away the rind.

“If you should accidentally gulp  
Some coffee while it’s hot,  
Just raise the lid politely and  
Replace it in the pot.” †

## A Night With A Wolf

*Bayard Taylor*

High on the lonely mountain  
Where the wild men watched and waited;  
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,  
And I on my path belated.

The rain and the night together  
Came down, and the wind came after,  
Bending the props of the pine tree roof  
And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,  
Stunned and bruised and blinded;  
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,  
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining,  
Crouching I sought to hide me;  
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,  
And a wolf lay down beside me.

His wet fur pressed against me;  
Each of us warmed the other;  
Each of us felt in the stormy dark  
That beast and man were brother.

And when the falling forest  
No longer crashed in warning,  
Each of us went from our hiding place  
Forth in the wild wet morning. †

**Old Ironsides**

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
    Long has it waved on high,  
And many an eye has danced to see  
    That banner in the sky;  
Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
    And burst the cannon's roar;—  
The meteor of the ocean air  
    Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
    Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood  
    And waves were white below.  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
    Or know the conquered knee;  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
    The eagle of the sea!

O, better that her shattered hulk  
    Should sink beneath the wave;  
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
    And there should be her grave;  
Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
    Set every threadbare sail,  
And give her to the god of storms,  
    The lightning and the gale! †

## Once by the Ocean

*Robert Frost*

The shattered water made a misty din.  
Great waves looked over others coming in,  
And thought of doing something to the shore  
That water never did to land before.

The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,  
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.  
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if  
The shore was lucky in being backed by cliff,

The cliff in being backed by continent;  
It looked as if a night of dark intent  
Was coming, and not only a night, an age.  
Someone had better be prepared for rage.

There would be more than ocean-water broken  
Before God's last Put out the light was spoken. †

## Ozymandias

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

I met a traveller 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.' †



## The Prayer of Cyrus Brown

*Sam Walter Foss*

“The proper way for a man to pray,”  
Said Deacon Lemuel Keyes,  
“And the only proper attitude  
Is down upon his knees.”

“Nay, I should say the way to pray,”  
Said Reverend Doctor Wise  
“Is standing straight with outstretched arms  
And rapt and upturned eyes.”

“Oh, no, no, no,” said Elder Snow,  
“Such posture is too proud.  
A man should pray with eyes fast closed  
And head contritely bowed.”

“It seems to me his hands should be  
Austerely clasped in front.  
With both thumbs pointing toward the ground,”  
Said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

“Las’year I fell in Hodgkin’s well  
Head first,” said Cyrus Brown,

“With both my heels a-stickin’ up,  
My head a-p’inting down,”

“An’ I make a prayer right then an’ there  
Best prayer I ever said,  
The prayingest prayer I ever prayed,  
A-standing on my head.” †

## The Secret of Happiness

*Helen Steiner Rice*

Everybody, everywhere, seeks happiness

—it's true

But finding it and keeping it

seems difficult to do,

Difficult because we think

that happiness is found

Only in the places where

wealth and fame abound,

And so we go on searching

in "palaces of pleasure"

Seeking recognition

and monetary treasure,

Unaware that happiness

is just a state of mind

Within the reach of everyone

who takes time to be kind—

For in making others happy,

we will be happy, too,

For the happiness you give away

returns to shine on you. †

## The Sheep

*Ann and Jane Taylor*

"Lazy sheep, pray tell me why  
In the pleasant fields you lie,  
Eating grass, and daisies white,  
From the morning till the night?"

Everything can something do,  
But what kind of use are you?"  
"Nay, my little master, nay,  
Do not serve me so, I pray;

Don't you see the wool that grows  
On my back, to make you clothes?  
Cold, and very cold, you'd be  
If you had not wool from me.

True, it seems a pleasant thing,  
To nip the daisies in the spring;  
But many chilly nights I pass  
On the cold and dewy grass,

Or pick a scanty dinner, where  
All the common's brown and bare.  
Then the farmer comes at last,  
When the merry spring is past,

And cuts my woolly coat away,  
To warm you in the winter's day:  
Little master, this is why  
In the pleasant fields I lie." †

## Sneezles

A. A. Milne

Christopher Robin  
 Had wheezles  
 And sneezles,  
 They bundled him  
 Into  
 His bed.  
 They gave him what goes  
 With a cold in the nose,  
 And some more for a cold  
 In the head.  
 They wondered  
 If wheezles  
 Could turn  
 Into measles,  
 If sneezles  
 Would turn  
 Into mumps;  
 They examined his chest  
 For a rash,  
 And the rest  
 Of his body for swelling and lumps.

They sent for some doctors  
 In sneezles  
 And wheezles  
 To tell them what ought  
 To be done.  
 All sorts and conditions  
 Of famous physicians  
 Came hurrying round  
 At a run.  
 They all made a note  
 Of the state of his throat,  
 They asked if he suffered from thirst;  
 They asked if the sneezles  
 Came *after* the wheezles,  
 Or if the first sneeze  
 Came first.  
 They said, "If you teazle  
 A sneeze  
 Or wheeze,  
 A measle  
 May easily grow.  
 But humor or pleazle  
 The wheeze  
 Or sneeze,  
 The measle  
 Will certainly go.

They expounded the reazles  
 For sneezles

And wheezles,  
The manner of measles  
When new.  
They said, "If he freezles  
In draughts and in breezles,  
The PHTHEEZLES

May even ensue."  
Christopher Robin  
Got up in the morning,  
The sneezles had vanished away.  
And the look in his eye  
Seemed to say to the sky,  
*"Now, how to amuse them today?"* †

**Somebody's Mother**

*Mary Dow Brine*

The woman was old and ragged and gray  
And bent with the chill of the winter's day.

The street was wet with a recent snow  
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long  
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by  
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,  
Glad in the freedom of "school let out,"

Came the boys like a flock of sheep,  
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray  
Hastened the children on their way.

Nor offered a helping hand to her—  
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses's feet  
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came the merry troop,  
The happiest laddie of all the group;

He paused beside her and whispered low,  
"I'll help you cross, if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong arm  
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,  
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,  
His young heart happy and well content.

"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,  
For all she's aged and poor and slow,

"And I hope some fellow will lend a hand  
To help my mother you understand,

"If ever she's poor and old and gray,  
When her own dear boy is far away."

And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head  
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was "God be kind to the noble boy,  
Who is somebody's son, and pride and joy!" †

## Song of Life

*Charles Mackay*

A traveller on a dusty road  
 Strewed acorns on the lea;  
 And one took root and sprouted up,  
 And grew into a tree.  
 Love sought its shade at evening-time,  
 To breathe its early vows;  
 And Age was pleased, in heights of noon,  
 To bask beneath its boughs.  
 The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,  
 The birds sweet music bore—  
 It stood a glory in its place,  
 A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way  
 Amid the grass and fern;  
 A passing stranger scooped a well  
 Where weary men might turn.  
 He walled it in, and hung with care  
 A ladle on the brink;  
 He thought not of the deed he did,  
 But judged that Toil might drink.  
 He passed again; and lo! the well,  
 By summer never dried,  
 Had cooled ten thousand parchéd tongues,  
 And saved a life beside.

A nameless man, amid the crowd  
 That thronged the daily mart,  
 Let fall a word of hope and love,  
 Unstudied from the heart,  
 A whisper on the tumult thrown,  
 A transitory breath,  
 It raised a brother from the dust,  
 It saved a soul from death.  
 O germ! O fount! O word of love!  
 O thought at random cast!  
 Ye were but little at the first,  
 But mighty at the last. †



## The Snow

*Emily Dickinson*

It sifts from leaden sieves,  
It powders all the wood,  
It fills with alabaster wool  
The wrinkles of the road.

It makes an even face  
Of mountain and of plain, —  
Unbroken forehead from the east  
Unto the east again.

It reaches to the fence,  
It wraps it, rail by rail,  
Till it is lost in fleeces;  
It flings a crystal veil

On stump and stack and stem, —  
The summer's empty room,  
Acres of seams where harvests were,  
Recordless, but for them.

It ruffles wrists of posts,  
As ankles of a queen, —  
Then stills its artisans like ghosts,  
Denying they have been. †

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

*Robert Frost*

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep. †

**Sunrise**

*Charles Erskine Scott Wood*

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,  
Slips to his rocky fastnesses,  
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,  
And from the castellated cliffs,  
Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day.  
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.

The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation-ditches.  
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.  
All shy things, breathless, watch  
The thin white skirts of dawn,  
The dancer of the sky,  
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side  
Emptying her crystal chalice....  
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top  
His exultant whip above a silver world. †

**Sweet and Low**

*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 †

**Trees**

*Grace Oakes Burton*

To me trees are the loveliest things,  
Their friendly arms always outspread;  
Sometimes in them I see bright wings,  
A nest, and then a young bird's head.

I love the trees when morning dew  
Like prisms hang, or diamonds rare;  
I love them in the noontide too;  
They shield me from the sun's warm glare.

I love them in the autumn when  
They deck themselves in gay attire;  
They flaunt their colors proudly then,  
And blaze as with a living fire.

I love them when the breezes blow  
The dancing, trembling, painted leaves;  
I love them when the fleecy snow  
Among their branches magic weaves.

When in the mellow moonlight glow,  
As sentinels I see them stand,  
I hear their voices soft and low;  
They tell me tales of fairyland. †

**The Violet***Jane Taylor*

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

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

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

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

## **When Grandpa Was a Boy**

*Dorothy Walters*

So many things were different  
When Grandpa was a boy.  
He never saw a movie  
And he seldom had a toy.

He never soared aloft in planes;  
No radio had he;  
An auto was unusual,  
A downright novelty.

He walked three miles to school each day,  
And wrote upon a slate.  
And lots of things I daily eat,  
Young Grandpa never ate.

Yet he is always telling me  
About the "good old days,"  
And how he'd not exchange his youth  
For all our modern ways.

He's sure he fished with greater luck  
Along his special streams;  
And hazelnuts were bigger  
In Grandpa's day, it seems.

I wonder, when I'm Grandpa's age,  
If I will then enjoy  
The thought that things were better,  
When I was just a boy. †

**Who Knows a Mountain?***Ethel Romig Fuller*

Who knows a mountain?

One who has gone

To worship its beauty

In the dawn;

One who has slept

On its breast at night;

One who has measured

His strength to its height;

One who has followed

Its longest trail.

And laughed in the face

Of its fiercest gale;

One who has scaled its peaks,

And has trod

Its cloud-swept summits

Alone with God. †



**The Wind***E. Rendall*

Why does the wind so want to be  
Here in my little room with me?  
He's all the world to blow about,  
But just because I keep him out  
He cannot be a moment still,  
But frets upon my window-sill.  
And sometimes brings a noisy rain  
To help him batter at the pane.  
He rattles, rattles at the lock  
And lifts the latch and stirs the key—  
Then waits a moment breathlessly,  
And soon, more fiercely than before,  
He shakes my little trembling door,  
And though "Come in, Come in!" I say,  
He neither comes nor goes away.

Barefoot across the chilly floor  
I run and open wide the door;  
He rushes in and back again  
He goes to batter door and pane,  
Pleased to have blown my candle out.  
He's all the world to blow about,  
Why does he want so much to be  
Here in my little room with me? †

**Winter Fun***Edna Jaques*

Over the hills we go coasting down,  
Then across the lake like a mirror round;  
On the smooth white slope we start, from above,  
Then down we go as swift as a dove.

Out in the yard right by our gate  
The big, white snowman we like to make.  
We shape it with snow, white and clean;  
With fir moss for a beard  
It's just the thing.  
A carrot for a nose and apples for eyes,  
It makes him look so very wise.  
Down on the pond there is everyone  
Skating together; oh, what fun!  
A figure eight, a tug of war,  
There's a bonfire blazing on the shore.

We'll warm our hands before we run;  
There's hot chocolate waiting for everyone.  
We'll sing together for good cheer;  
It's the merriest, happiest time of the year. †

## Woodman, Spare That Tree!

*George Pope Morris*

Woodman, spare that tree!  
 Touch not a single bough!  
 In youth it sheltered me,  
 And I'll protect it now.  
 'Twas my forefather's hand  
 That placed it near his cot;  
 There, woodman, let it stand,  
 Thy ax shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,  
 Whose glory and renown  
 Are spread o'er land and sea—  
 And wouldst thou hew it down?  
 Woodman, forbear thy stroke!  
 Cut not its earth-bound ties;  
 Oh, spare that agèd oak  
 Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,  
 I sought its grateful shade;  
 In all their gushing joy  
 Here, too, my sisters played.  
 My mother kissed me here;  
 My father pressed my hand—  
 Forgive this foolish tear,  
 But let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling,  
 Close as thy bark, old friend!  
 Here shall the wild-bird sing,  
 And still thy branches bend.  
 Old tree! the storm still brave!  
 And, woodman, leave the spot;  
 While I've a hand to save,  
 Thy ax shall harm it not. †