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Be Kind

Alice Joyce Davidson

Just a little bit of kindness
Can go a long, long way,
Just a little bit of tenderness
Can brighten up a day.

Just a bit of praise where it's deserved
Can bring a happy glow,
Just a hand held out can give some hope
To someone feeling low.

A forgiving word, a handshake,
A pat upon the head,
Can take away a heavy heart
And bring a smile instead.

Just a little bit of kindness
Can go a long, long way
In reflecting the benevolence
God shows us every day! †

The Bluebird

Emily Huntington Miller

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

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

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

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

Books Fall Open*David McCord*

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

A Child's Prayer

From The Children's Book of Virtues

Lord, teach a little child to pray,
And then accept my prayer;
For thou canst hear the words I say,
For thou art everywhere.

A little sparrow cannot fall
Unnoticed, Lord, by thee;
And though I am so young and small,
Thou dost take care of me.

Teach me to do the thing that's right,
And when I sin, forgive;
And make it still my chief delight
To serve thee while I live. †

A Child's Thought of God

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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

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

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

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

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

Circus

Eleanor Farjeon

The band blares,
The naphtha flares,
The sawdust smells,
Showmen ring bells,
And oh! right into the circus ring
Comes such a lovely, lovely thing,
A milk-white pony with flying tress,
And a beautiful lady,
A beautiful lady,
A beautiful lady in a pink dress!
The red-and-white clown
For joy tumbles down.
Like a pink rose
Round she goes
On her tiptoes
With the pony under—
And then, oh, wonder!
The pony his milk-white tresses droops,
And the beautiful lady,
The beautiful lady,
Flies like a bird through the paper hoops!
The red-and-white clown for joy falls dead,
Then he waggles his feet and stands on his head,
And the little boys on the two penny seats
Scream with laughter and suck their sweets. †

The Creation

Cecil Frances Alexander

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures, great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings;

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly,
And order'd their estate.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun
The ripe fruits in the garden—
He made them everyone.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water
We gather every day;

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty
Who has made all things well! †

The Egg

Laura E. Richards

Oh! how shall I get it, how shall I get it—
A nice little new-laid egg?
My grandmamma told me to run to the barn-yard,
And see if just one I could beg.

“Mooly-cow, Mooly-cow, down in the meadow,
Have you any eggs, I pray?”
The mooly-cow stares as if I were crazy,
And solemnly stalks away.

“Oh, Doggie, Doggie, perhaps you may have it,
That nice little egg for me.”
But Doggie just wags his tail and capers,
And never an egg has he.

“Now, Dobbin, Dobbin, I’m sure you must have one,
Hid down in your manger there,”
But Dobbin lays back his ears and whinnies,
With “Come and look, if you dare!”

“Piggywig, Piggywig, grunting and squealing,
Are you crying ‘Fresh eggs for sale’?
No! Piggy, you’re very cold and unfeeling,
With that impudent quirk in your tail.”

“You wise old Gobbler, you look so knowing,
I’m sure you can find me an egg.
You stupid old thing! just say ‘Gobble-gobble.’
And balance yourself on one leg.”

Oh! how shall I get it, how shall I get it—
That little white egg so small?
I’ve asked every animal here in the barnyard,
And they won’t give me any at all.

But after I’d hunted until I was tired
I found—not one egg, but ten!
And you never could guess where they all were hidden—
Right under our old speckled hen! †

Every Time I Climb a Tree

David McCord

Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
I scrape a leg
Or skin a knee
And every time I climb a tree
I find some ants
Or dodge a bee
And get the ants
All over me.

And every time I climb a tree
Where have you been?
They say to me
But don't they know that I am free
Every time I climb a tree?
I like it best to spot a nest
That has an egg
Or maybe three.

And then I skin
The other leg
But every time I climb a tree
I see a lot of things to see
Swallows, rooftops and TV
And all the fields and farms there be
Every time I climb a tree.
Though climbing may be good for ants
It isn't awfully good for pants
But still it's pretty good for me
Every time I climb a tree. †

The Friendly Beasts

An old carol from France

Jesus our brother, kind and good,
Was humbly born in a stable rude;
The friendly beasts around Him stood,
Jesus our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried His Mother up hill and down;
I carried her safely to Bethlehem town,
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave Him my manger for His bed;
I gave Him my hay to pillow His head.
I," said the cow, all white and red.

"I," said the sheep with the curly horn,
"I gave Him my wool for a blanket warm.
He wore my coat on Christmas morn.
I," said the sheep with the curly horn.

"I," said the dove from the rafters high,
"I cooed Him to sleep so He would not cry,
I cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I.
I," said the dove from the rafters high.

And every beast, by some good spell,
In the stable dark was glad to tell,
Of the gift he gave Immanuel.
The gift he gave Immanuel. †

The Gift of Friendship

Helen Steiner Rice

Friendship is a priceless gift that cannot
be bought or sold
But its value is far greater than a
mountain made of gold.
For gold is cold and lifeless, it can neither
see nor hear,
And in the time of trouble, it is powerless
to cheer.
It has no ears to listen, no heart to
understand.
It cannot bring you comfort, or reach out
a helping hand.
So when you ask God for a gift, be
thankful if He sends
Not diamonds, pearls or riches, but the
love of real true friends. †

The Good Little Girl

A. A. Milne

It's funny how often they say to me, "Jane?"
 "Have you been a good girl?"
 "Have you been a good girl?"
 And when they have said it, they say it again,
 "Have you been a good girl?"
 "Have you been a good girl?"

I go to a party, I go out to tea,
 I go to an aunt for a week at the sea,
 I come back from school or from
 playing a game;

Wherever I come from, it's always the same:

"Well?
 Have you been a good girl, Jane?"

It's always the end of the loveliest day:
 "Have you been a good girl?"
 "Have you been a good girl?"

I went to the Zoo, and they waited to say:
 "Have you been a good girl?"
 "Have you been a good girl?"

Well, what did they think that I went there to do?
 And why should I want to be bad at the Zoo?
 And should I be likely to say if I had?

So that's why it's funny of Mummy and Dad,
 This asking and asking, in case I was bad,

"Well?
 Have you been a good girl, Jane?" †

Hide and Seek

Mimi Brodsky

I looked in the house.
I looked in the yard.
I looked near the swing.
I looked very hard.

I called your name
And peeked near the stair,
And searched the garage
I looked everywhere!

So, come out! Come out! Wherever you are—
I know you can't be very far.
Come out! Come out! Let's start all over.
It's no fun finding such a rover.

Aha! I see you! You can't fool me.
There you are behind the tree.
Oh, no! Don't say the game is ended.
I think Hide and Seek is splendid! †

Hiding

Dorothy Aldis

I'm hiding, I'm hiding;
And no one knows where,
For all they can see is my
Toes and my hair.

And I just heard my father
Say to my mother—
“But, darling, he must be
Somewhere or other;

Have you looked in the ink well?”
And Mother said, “Where?”
“In the INK well,” said Father. But
I was not there.

Then “Wait!” cried my mother
“I think that I see
Him under the carpet.” But
It was not me.

“Inside the mirror’s
A pretty good place,”
Said Father and looked but saw
Only his face.

“We’ve hunted,” sighed Mother,
“As hard as we could
And I AM so afraid that we’ve
Lost him for good.”

Then I laughed out aloud
And I wiggled my toes
And Father said— “Look, Dear
I wonder if those

Toes could be Benny’s.
There are ten of them. See?”
And they were so surprised to find
Out it was me! †

The Horse

William Shakespeare (from King Henry V)

I will not change my horse with any that treads . . .
When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk.
He trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it.
The basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipes of Hermes . . .
He's the color of nutmeg and of the heat of the ginger . . .
He is pure air and fire, and the dull elements
Of earth and water never appear in him,
But only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him . . .
It is the prince of palfreys. His neigh is like
The bidding of a monarch, and his countenance
Enforces homage. †

Kindness to Animals

From The Book of Virtues

Little children, never give
Pain to things that feel and live;
Let the gentle robin come
For the crumbs you save at home;
As his meat you throw along
He'll repay you with a song.
Never hurt the timid hare
Peeping from her green grass lair,
Let her come and sport and play
On the lawn at close of day.
The little lark goes soaring high
To the bright windows of the sky,
Singing as if 'twere always spring,
And fluttering on an untired wing—
Oh! let him sing his happy song,
Nor do these gentle creatures wrong. †

The Library

Barbara A. Huff

It looks like any building
When you pass it on the street,
Made of stone and glass and marble,
Made of iron and concrete.
But once inside you can ride
A camel or a train,
Visit Rome, Siam, or Nome,
Feel a hurricane,
Meet a king, learn to sing,
How to bake a pie,
Go to sea, plant a tree,
Find how airplanes fly,
Train a horse, and of course
Have all the dogs you'd like,
See the moon, a sandy dune,
Or catch a whopping pike.
Everything that books can bring
You'll find inside those walls.
A world is there for you to share
When adventure calls.

You cannot tell its magic
By the way the building looks,
But there's wonderment within it,
The wonderment of books. †

Little White Lily

George MacDonald

Little White Lily
 Sat by a stone,
 Drooping and waiting
 Till the sun shone.
 Little White Lily
 Sunshine has fed;
 Little White Lily
 Is lifting her head.

Little White Lily
 Said: "It is good
 Little White Lily's
 Clothing and food."
 Little White Lily
 Dressed like a bride!
 Shining with whiteness,
 And crownèd beside!

Little White Lily
 Drooping with pain,
 Waiting and waiting
 For the wet rain.
 Little White Lily
 Holdeth her cup;
 Rain is fast falling
 And filling it up.

Little White Lily
 Said: "Good again,
 When I am thirsty
 To have the nice rain.
 Now I am stronger,
 Now I am cool;
 Heat cannot burn me,
 My veins are so full."

Little White Lily
 Smells very sweet;
 On her head sunshine,
 Rain at her feet.
 Thanks to the sunshine,
 Thanks to the rain,
 Little White Lily
 Is happy again. †

Mice in the Hay

Leslie Norris

out of the lamplight
 whispering worshipping
 the mice in the hay

timid eye pearl-bright
 whispering worshipping
 whisking quick and away

they were there that night
 whispering worshipping
 smaller than snowflakes are

quietly made their way
 whispering worshipping
 close to the manger

yes, they were afraid
 whispering worshipping
 as the journey was made

from a dark corner
 whispering worshipping
 scuttling together

But He smiled to see them
 whispering worshipping
 there in the lamplight

stretched out His hand to them
 they saw the baby king
 hurried back out of sight
 whispering worshipping †

Minnie and Winnie

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Minnie and Winnie
slept in a shell.
Sleep little ladies!
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wandered about.

Sleep little ladies!
Wake not soon!
Echo on echo
Die to the moon.

Two bright stars
Peep'd into the shell
What are they dreaming of?
Who can tell?

Started a green linnet
out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft! †

A Mortifying Mistake

Anna Maria Pratt

I studied my tables over and over,
and backward and forward too;
But I couldn't remember six times nine,
and I didn't know what to do,
Till my sister told me to play with my
doll, and not to bother my head.
"If you call her 'Fifty-four' for a
while, you'll learn it by hear," she said
So I took my favorite, Mary Ann
(though I thought 'twas a dreadful shame
To give such a perfectly lovely child
such a perfectly horrid name),
And I called her my dear little "Fifty-four"
a hundred time, till I knew
The answer of six times nine as well
as the answer to two times two.
Next day Elizabeth Wiggleworth,
who always acts so proud,
Said, "Six times nine is fifty-two,"
and I nearly laughed aloud!
But I wished I hadn't when teacher said,
"Now, Dorothy, tell if you can."
For I thought of my doll, and 'sakes alive!—
I answered "Mary Ann!" †

My Dog

Marchette Chute

His nose is short and scrubby;
His ears hang rather low;
And he always brings the stick back,
No matter how far you throw.

He gets spanked rather often
For things he shouldn't do
Like lying-on-beds, and barking,
And eating up shoes when they're new.

He always wants to be going
Where he isn't supposed to go.
He tracks up the house when it's snowing
Oh, puppy, I love you so.

He sits and begs, he gives a paw,
He is, as you can see,
The finest dog you ever saw,
And he belongs to me.

He follows everywhere I go
And even when I swim.
I laugh because he thinks, you know,
That I belong to him.

But still no matter what we do
We never have a fuss;
And so I guess it must be true
That we belong to us. †

The Owl*Alfred Tennyson*

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.
When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits. †

The Sermons We See

Edgar A. Guest

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done.
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live. †

The Snail

Charles Lamb

The frugal snail, with forecast of repose,
Carries his house with him where'er he goes;
Peeps out — and if there comes a shower of rain,
Retreats to his small domicile again,
Touch but a tip of him, a horn — 'tis well —
He curls up in his sanctuary shell,
He's his own landlord, his own tenant; stay
Long as he will, he dreads no Quarter Day.
Himself he boards and lodges; both invites
And feasts himself; sleeps with himself o'nights.
He spares the upholsterer trouble to procure
Chattels; himself is his own furniture,
And his sole riches. Whereso'er he roam —
Knock when you will — he's sure to be at home. †

The Snake

Emily Dickinson

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him, — did you not,
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash
Unbraiding in the sun, —
When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone. †

Something Told the Wild Geese

Rachel Field

Something told the wild geese
It was time to go.
Though the fields lay golden
Something whispered--"Snow."

Leaves were green and stirring,
Berries, luster-glossed,
But beneath warm feathers
Something cautioned – "Frost."

All the sagging orchards
Steamed with amber spice,
But each wild breast stiffened
At remembered ice.

Something told the wild geese
It was time to fly—
Summer sun was on their wings,
Winter in their cry. †

Spring

Karla Kuskin

I'm shouting
I'm singing
I'm swinging through trees
I'm winging sky high
With the buzzing black bees.
I'm the sun
I'm the moon
I'm the dew on the rose.
I'm a rabbit
Whose habit
Is twitching his nose.
I'm lively
I'm lovely
I'm kicking my heels.
I'm crying "Come dance"
To the freshwater eels.
I'm racing through meadows
Without any coat
I'm a gamboling lamb
I'm a light leaping goat
I'm a bud
I'm a bloom
I'm a dove on the wing.
I'm running on rooftops
And welcoming spring! †

The Story of Flying Robert

From the German of Heinrich Hoffman

When the rain comes tumbling down
In the country or the town,
All good little girls and boys
Stay at home and mind their toys.
Robert thought, "No, when it pours,
It is better out of doors."
Rain it did, and in a minute
Bob was in it
Here you see him, silly fellow,
Underneath his red umbrella.

What a wind! Oh! how it whistles
Through the trees and flowers and thistles!
It had caught his red umbrella;
Now look at him, silly fellow,
Up he flies
To the skies.
No one heard his screams and cries,
Through the clouds the rude wind bore him,
And his hat flew on before him.
Soon they got to such a height,
They were nearly out of sight!
And the hat went up so high,
That it really touched the sky.

No one ever yet could tell
Where they stopped or where they fell:
Only, this one thing is plain,
Bob was never seen again! †

Three Words of Strength

Friedrich Von Schiller

There are three lessons I would write—
Three words, as with a burning pen,
In tracing of eternal light,
Upon the heart of men.

Have hope! though clouds environ round,
And gladness hides her face in scorn,
Put thou the shadow from thy brow,
No night but hath its morn.

Have faith! where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm's disport, the tempest's mirth---
Know this: God rules the hosts of heaven,
The inhabitants of earth.

Have love! not love alone for one,
But man as man thy brother call,
And scatter, like the circling sun,
Thy charities on all.

Thus grave these lessons on thy soul,
Hope, faith, and love; and thou shalt find
Strength when life's surges rudest roll,
Light when thou else wert blind. †

Tiger-Cat Tim

Edith H. Newlin

Timothy Tim was a very small cat
Who looked like a tiger the size of a rat.
There were little black stripes running all over him,
With just enough white on his feet for a trim
On Tiger-Cat Tim.

Timothy Tim had a little pink tongue
That was spoon, comb, and washcloth all made into one.
He lapped up his milk, washed and combed all his fur,
And then he sat down in the sunshine to purr.
Full little Tim!

Timothy Tim had a queer little way
Of always pretending at things in his play.
He caught pretend mice in the grass and sand,
And fought pretend cats when he played with your hand,
Fierce little Tim!

He drank all his milk, and he grew and grew.
He ate all his meat and his vegetables too.
He grew very big and he grew very fat,
And now he's a lazy old, sleepy old cat,
Timothy Tim! †

To a Snowflake*Francis Thompson*

What heart could have thought you? --
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor? --
"God was my shaper.
Passing surmised,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,
To lust of His mind --
Thou could'st not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost." †

A Tragedy

Doris Webb

This is the short, sweet sorrowful tale
Of Jessica Jenkins Jones;
She planted a packet of seeds with pride
While her dog looked on with his head
on the side
And thought, "She's burying bones."

When Jessica left, he dug like mad
In search of the luscious bones,
So Jessica's garden it doesn't grow,
And Jessica's dog is cross, and so
Is Jessica Jenkins Jones. †

Try, Try Again*T. H. Palmer*

'Tis a lesson you should heed,
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again;

Then your courage should appear,
For if you will persevere,
You will conquer, never fear
Try, try again;

Once or twice, though you should fail,
If you would at last prevail,
Try, try again;

If we strive, 'tis no disgrace
Though we do not win the race;
What should you do in the case?
Try, try again

If you find your task is hard,
Time will bring you your reward,
Try, try again

All that other folks can do,
Why, with patience, should not you?
Only keep this rule in view:
Try, try again. †

The Tyger

William Blake

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And What shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? †

Us Two

A. A. Milne

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
 There's always Pooh and Me.
 Whatever I do, he wants to do.
 "Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
 "Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
 Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
 "Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
 ("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)
 "I think it ought to be twenty-two."
 "Just what I *think* myself," said Pooh,
 "It wasn't an easy sum to do,
 But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
 "That's what it is," said Pooh.

"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
 "Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
 We crossed the river and found a few
 "Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
 "As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
 That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
 "That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
 "That's right," said Pooh to Me.
 "I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh.
 And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
 Silly old dragons!" and off they flew.
 "I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he.
 "I'm *never* afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
 There's always Pooh and Me.
 "What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
 "If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
 It isn't much fun for One, but Two
 Can stick together," says Pooh, says he.
 "That's how it is," says Pooh. †

What Have We Done Today?

Nixon Waterman

We shall do much in the years to come
But what have we done today?

We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give today?

We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,

We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,

We shall speak the words of love and cheer,
But what did we speak today?

We shall be so kind in the after while,
But have we been today?

We shall bring to each lonely life a smile
But what have we brought today?

We shall give to truth a grander birth,

And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,

We shall feed the hungering souls of earth.
But whom have we fed today?

We shall reap such joys in the by-and-by,
But what have we sown today?

We shall build us mansions in the sky,
But what have we built today?

'Tis sweet in the idle dreams to bask;

But here and now, do we our task?

Yet, this is the thing our souls must ask,
What have we done today? †

The Wind

Robert Louis Stevenson

I saw you toss the kites on high

And blow the birds about the sky;

And all around I heard you pass,

Like ladies' skirts across the grass—

 O wind, a-blowing all day long

 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,

But always you yourself you hid.

I felt you push, I heard you call,

I could not see yourself at all

 O wind, a-blowing all day long,

 O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,

O blower, are you young or old?

Are you a beast of field and tree

Or just a stronger child than me?

 O wind, a-blowing all day long,

 O wind, that sings so loud a song. †

A Wrecker or a Builder

Edgar A. Guest

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I said to the foreman,
“Are these men skilled,
And the ones you’d hire
If you had to build?”

He gave a laugh and said, “No, indeed,
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do.”

And I thought to myself,
As I went my way,
“Which of these roles
Am I trying to play?”

Am I shaping my life
To a well-made plan
Patiently doing the
Best that I can?

Am I doing my work
With the utmost care,
Measuring life
By the rule and square?

Or am I a wrecker
Who wrecks the town
Content with the labor
Of tearing down?” †