

Poetry – Grade 5

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The American Flag

Louise Adney

There's a flag that floats above us,
Wrought in red and white and blue—
A spangled flag of stars and stripes
Protecting me and you.

Sacrifices helped to make it
As men fought the long months through,
Nights of marching—days of fighting—
For the red and white and blue.

There is beauty in that emblem,
There is courage in it, too;
There is loyalty—there's valor—
In the red and white and blue.

In that flag which floats, unconquered
Over land and sea,
There's equality and freedom—
There is true democracy.

There is glory in that emblem,
Wrought in red and white and blue.
It's the stars and stripes forever
Guarding me and guarding you! ✨

Brighten the Corner Where you Are

Helen Steiner Rice

We cannot all be famous
Or listed in "Who's Who,"
But every person great or small
has important work to do,
For seldom do we realize
The importance of small deeds,
Or to what degree of greatness
unnoticed kindness leads—
For it's not the big celebrity
in a world of fame and praise.
But it's doing unpretentiously
in undistinguished ways,
The work that God assigned for us,
unimportant as it seems,
That makes our task outstanding
and bring reality to dreams—
So do not sit and idly wish
for wider, newer dimension,
Where you can put in practice
Your many good intentions—
But at the spot God placed you
begin at once to do
Little things to brighten up
the lives surrounding you,
For if everybody brightened up
the spot on which they're standing,
By being more considerate
And a little less demanding,
This dark cold world would very soon
eclipse the Evening Star,
If everybody brightened up
the corner where they are. ❀

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Alfred Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns!" he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldier knew
 Some one had blunder'd:
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabers bare,
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air
 Sab'ring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd:
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the saber-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered:
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came through the jaws of death
 Back from the mouth of hell,

All that was left of them—
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
Oh, the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade—
Noble six hundred! ❀

Clock-O'-Clay**John Clare*

In the cowslip pips I lie,
 Hidden from the buzzing fly,
 While green grass beneath me lies,
 Pearled with dew like fishes' eyes,
 Here I lie, a clock-o'-clay,
 Waiting for the time o' day.

While grassy forests quakes surprise,
 And the wild wind sobs and sighs,
 My gold home rocks as like to fall,
 On its pillars green and tall;
 When the pattering rain drives by
 Clock-o'-clay keeps warm and dry.

Day by day and night by night,
 All the week I hide from sight;
 In the cowslip pips I lie,
 In rain and dew still warm and dry;
 Day and night and night and day,
 Red, black-spotted clock-o'-clay.

My home shakes in wind and showers,
 Pale green pillar topped with flowers,
 Bending at the wild wind's breath,
 Till I touch the grass beneath;
 Here I live, lone clock-o'-clay,
 Watching for the time of day. ❀

**(a clock o' clay is a ladybug)*

The Concord Hymn

Ralph Waldo Emerson

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled.
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
A like the conqueror silent sleeps;
And time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone,
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee. ❁

Crossing the Bar*Alfred Tennyson*

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar. ❀

Drop a Pebble in the Water

James W. Foley

Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash, and it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples, circling on and on and on,
Spreading, spreading from the center, flowing on out to the sea.
And there is no way of telling where the end is going to be.

Drop a pebble in the water: in a minute you forget,
But there's little waves a-flowing and there's ripples circling yet,
And those little waves a-flowing to a great big wave have grown;
You've disturbed a mighty river just by dropping in a stone.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on.
They keep spreading, spreading, spreading from the center as they go,
And there is no way to stop them, once you've started them to flow.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute you forget;
But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet,
And perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of tears you've stirred,
And disturbed a life was happy 'ere you dropped that unkind word.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: just a flash and it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on,
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each splashing, dashing wave
Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind word you gave.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: in a minute you forget;
But there's gladness still a-swelling, and there's joy a-circling yet,
And you've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet music can be heard
Over miles and miles of water just by dropping one kind word. ❁

The Dying Christian to His Soul

Alexander Pope

Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, O quit this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark!--they whisper; angels say:---
"Sister spirit, come away!"
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws me breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears;
Heaven opens on my eye; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:---
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
"O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?" ❀

Excelsior*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

The shades of night were falling fast,
 As through an Alpine village passed
 A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
 A banner with the strange device
 Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
 Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
 And like a silver clarion rung
 The accents of that unknown tongue,
 Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
 Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
 Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
 And from his lips escaped a groan,
 Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
 "Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
 The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
 And loud that clarion voice replied
 Excelsior!

"O stay," the maiden said, "and rest
 Thy weary head upon this breast!"
 A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
 but still he answered with a sigh,
 Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
 Beware the awful avalanche!"
 This was the peasant's last Good-night,
 A voice replied, far up the height,
 Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
 The pious monks of Saint Bernard
 Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
 A voice cried through the startled air
 Excelsior!

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
 Half-buried in the snow was found,
 Still grasping in his hand of ice
 That banner with the strange device
 Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,

Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior! ✨

Fear

Martha Snell Nicholson

How strange that we who are the sons of God
Should be familiar with the face of fear,
So sure that every cloud will bring a storm,
So fearful lest tomorrow be not clear.

We shrink from woes which never come to pass,
Mere phantoms, with no substance and no strength;
But even if they had, would not our Lord provide
His strength to meet the need of each day's length?

Children of God, with quaking, craven hearts
Consumed by the corrosive power of dread!...
And yet He holds us in His hallowed hand,
And counts the very hairs upon our head.

What strong firm bulwarks He has built around
The daily lives of those He holds so dear:
The blessed Holy Spirit in our hearts,
His guardian angels ever hovering near

Lest we should dash our feet against a stone.
The unseen hosts of God camp round about.
We dwell there safely in His secret place,
And still we tremble, wracked with fear and doubt!

O child of God, it is so safe, so sweet,
To trust the One who never knew defeat! ❀

The First Snow

Robert Freeman Bound

We waited for hours,
As children all will,
After Father had told us
The news with a thrill:

'Twas the oddest sensation
When we'd gaze at the sky;
We seemed to be falling,
But we didn't know why.

Next morning the light
Reflected from snow
Made shimmering patterns
With walls all aglow;

From lowering clouds
And a temperature fall,
The first snow of winter
Would come with a squall.

Then early that evening
The first flakes descended;
And when we retired
The fall hadn't ended

We looked from our beds
At a white, silent scene
Of tall, pearly trees
And the buildings between.

And our happy, old dog,
With great barking leaps,
Was chasing a rabbit
Through high, snowy heaps.

Oh, the wonderful joy
To be young and know
The thrill of a child
At winter's first snow. ❄

The Flying Squirrel

Mary E. Burt

Of all the woodland creatures,
 The quaintest little sprite
 Is the dainty flying squirrel
 In vest of shining white,
 In coat of silver gray,
 And vest of shining white.

His furry Quaker jacket
 Is trimmed with stripe of black;
 A furry plume to match it
 Is curling o'er his back;
 New curved with every motion,
 His plume curls o'er his back.

No little new-born baby
 Has pinker feet than he;
 Each tiny toe is cushioned
 With velvet cushions three;
 Three wee, pink, velvet cushions
 Almost too small to see.

Who said, "The foot of baby
 Might tempt an angel's kiss"?
 I know a score of school-boys
 Who put their lips to this,—
 This wee foot of the squirrel,
 And left a loving kiss.

The tiny thief has hidden
 My candy and my plum;
 Ah, there he comes unbidden
 To gently nip my thumb,—
 Down in his home (my pocket)
 He gently nips my thumb.

How strange the food he covets,
 The restless, restless wight;—
 Fred's old stuffed armadillo
 He found a tempting bite,
 Fred's old stuffed armadillo,
 With ears a perfect fright.

The Lady Ruth's great bureau,
 Each foot a dragon's paw!
 The midget ate the nails from
 His famous antique claw.
 Oh, what a cruel beastie
 To hurt a dragon's claw!

To autographic copies
 Upon my choicest shelf,—

To every dainty volume
The rogue has helped himself.
My books! Oh dear! No matter!
The rogue has helped himself.

And yet, my little squirrel,
Your taste is not so bad;
You've swallowed Caird completely
And psychologic Ladd.
Rosmini you've digested,
And Kant in rags you've clad.

Gnaw on, my elfish rodent!
Lay all the sages low!
My pretty lace and ribbons,
They're yours for weal or woe!
My pocket-book's in tatters
Because you like it so. ❀

Grandpapa's Spectacles

Author Unknown

Grandpapa's spectacles cannot be found;
He has searched all the rooms, high and low, 'round and 'round;
Now he calls to the young ones, and what does he say?
"Ten cents for the child who will find them today."

Then Henry and Nelly and Edward all ran,
And a most thorough hunt for the glasses began,
And dear little Nell, in her generous way,
Said: "I'll look for them, Grandpa, without any pay."

All through the big Bible she searches with care
That lies on the table by Grandpapa's chair.
They feel in his pockets, they peep in his hat,
They pull out the sofa, they shake out the mat.

Then down on all fours, like two good natured bears,
Go Henry and Ed under tables and chairs,
'Til, quite out of breath, Ed is heard to declare
He believes that those glasses are not anywhere.

But Nelly, who, leaning on Grandpapa's knee,
Was thinking most earnestly where they could be,
Looked suddenly up in the kind, faded eyes,
And her own shining brown ones grew big with surprise.

She clapped both her hands—all her dimples came out—
She turned to the boys with a bright roguish shout:
"You may leave off your looking, both Henry and Ed,
For there are the glasses on Grandpapa's head!" ❀

I Know Something Good about You

Author Unknown

Wouldn't this world be better
If the folks we meet would say—
"I know something good about you!"
And treat us just that way?
Wouldn't it be fine and dandy
If each handclasp, fond and true,
Carried with it this assurance"—
"I know something good about you!"
Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If the good that's in us all
Were the only thing about us
That folks bothered to recall?
Wouldn't life be lots more happy
If we praised the good we see?
For there's such a lot of goodness
In the worst of you and me!
Wouldn't it be nice to practice
That fine way of thinking, too?
You know something good about me;
I know something good about you. ❁

In The Carpenter Shop

Author Unknown

I wish I had been His apprentice
To see Him each morning at seven,
As He tossed His gray tunic about Him,
The Master of earth and of heaven;

When He lifted the lid of His work-chest
And opened His carpenter's kit,
And looked at His chisels and augers,
And took the bright tools out of it;

When He gazed at the rising sun tinting
The dew on the opening flowers,
And He smiled at the thought of His Father
Whose love floods this fair world of ours.

When He fastened the apron about Him,
And put on His workingman's cap,
And grasped the smooth haft of His hammer
To give the bent woodwork a tap,

Saying, "Lad, let us finish this ox yoke.
The farmer must finish his crop."
Oh, I wish I had been His apprentice
And worked in the Nazareth shop. ❁

Jarrangulli

Roland Robinson

Hear that tree-lizard singin' out,
Jarrangulli
He's singin' out for rain.
He's in a hole up in that tree.
He wants the rain to fill that hole right up
an' cover him with rain.
That water will last him till
the drought comes on again.

It's comin' dry when he sings out,
Jarranguli
Soon as ever he sings out,
Jarrangulli,
he's sure to bring the rain.
That feller, he's the real rain-lizard.
He's just the same as them black cockatoos,
they're the fellers for the rain.

He's deadly poison. He's
Jarranguli.
He'll bite you sure enough.
You climb that tree an' put your hand
over that hole, he'll bite you sure enough.
He's black an' painted with white stripes.
Jarrangulli
He's singin' out for rain. ❀

Johnny Appleseed

Rosemary and Stephen V. Bené

Of Jonathan Chapman
Two things are known
That he loved apples,
That he walked alone.

At seventy-odd
He was gnarled as could be.
But ruddy and sound
As a good apple tree.

For fifty years over
Of harvest and dew,
He planted his apples
Where no apples grew.

The winds of the prairie
Might blow through his rags,
But he carried his seeds
In the best deerskin bags.

From old Ashtabula
To frontier Fort Wayne
He planted and pruned
And he planted again.

He had not a hat
To encumber his head.
He wore a tin pan
On his white hair instead.

He nested with owl,
And with bear cub and 'possum,
And knew all his orchards,
Root, tendril and blossom.

A fine old man,
As ripe as a pippin,
His heart still light,
And his step still skipping.

The stalking Indian,
The beast in its lair
Did no hurt
While he was there.

For they could tell,
As wild things can
That Jonathan Chapman
Was God's own man.

Why did he do it?

We do not know.
He wished that apples
Might root and grow.

He has no statue
He has no tomb.
He has his apple trees
Still in bloom.

Consider, consider,
Think well upon
The marvelous story
Of Appleseed John. ❁

Manners

Elizabeth Bishop

My grandfather said to me
as we sat on the wagon seat,
"Be sure to remember to always
speak to everyone you meet."

We met a stranger on foot.
My grandfather's whip tapped his hat.
"Good day, sir. Good day. A fine day."
And I said it and bowed where I sat.

Then we overtook a boy we knew
with his big pet crow on his shoulder.
"Always offer everyone a ride;
don't forget that when you get older,"

my grandfather said. So Willy
climbed up with us, but the crow
gave a "Caw!" and flew off. I was worried.
How would he know where to go?

But he flew a little way at a time
from fence post to fence post, ahead;
and when Willy whistled he answered.
"A fine bird," my grandfather said,

"and he's well brought up. See, he answers
nicely when he's spoken to.
Man or beast, that's good manners.
Be sure that you both always do."

When automobiles went by,
the dust hid the people's faces,
but we shouted, "Good day! Good day!
Fine day!" at the top of our voices.

When we came to Hustler Hill,
he said that the mare was tired,
so we all got down and walked,
as our good manners required. ❁

My Kingdom

Louisa May Alcott

A little kingdom I possess
Where thoughts and feelings dwell.
And very hard I find the task
Of governing it well;
For passion tempts and troubles me,
A wayward will misleads,
And selfishness its shadow casts
On all my words and deeds.
How can I learn to rule myself,
To be the child I should,
Honest and brave, nor ever tire
Of trying to be good?
How can I keep a sunny soul
To shine along life's way?
How can I tune my little heart
To sweetly sing all day?
Dear Father, help me with the love
That casteth out my fear,
Teach me to lean on Thee, and feel
That Thou are very near,
That no temptation is unseen,
No childish grief too small,
Since Thou, with patience infinite,
Doth soothe and comfort all.
I do not ask for any crown
But that which all may win,
Nor seek to conquer any world,
Except the one within.
Be Thou my guide until I find,
Led by a tender hand,
Thy happy kingdom in myself,
And dare to take command. ❀

O Captain! My Captain!

Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 This arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 But I, with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead. ❁

The Pearl

Ernestine Cobern Beyer

Among the fish that swim and swish beneath the stormy sea
There lived a little oyster, and most melancholy, he!
Inside his clammy cloister, weeping sadly was the oyster.
And this made him even moister than an oyster ought to be!

His brother-fish said "Pooh and pish. He isn't worth a pin!"
"Poor fish" they often called him with a patronizing grin.
And it has to be admitted that the teasing title fitted,
For the oyster, humble-witted, didn't own a single "fin!"

In sad distress he would, I guess, have lived his life in vain
If something had not happened, to the oyster's happy gain:
One morning, something nicked him. Some gritty sand had pricked him!
To wall it up, its victim built a pearl around the pain!

Thus did he do what we can, too, if we but have the wit:
He turned bad luck to good-and yet his shell remained a fit.
He'd say, when he was feted, that his pearl was overrated;
"Shucks!" he often shyly stated; "It just took a little grit!" ❁

Perils of a Public Speaker

Edgar A. Guest

A public speaker's lot is not an easy one to bear,

There's many a slip 'twixt thought and lip which takes him unaware,
For the ablest chap will meet a trap he never dreamed was there.
From year to year uncounted queer and startling things have sprung

All unforeseen, where I have been, to trip my halting tongue;

I've stood in state, compelled to wait, while parents spanked their young.
But last July, I'll vow that I met my extremest fate,
In church I stood, with all the good, a moment to orate,

With one brave swoop I looped the loop with their collection plate.

I did not know it stood below and just within my reach,
My only thought was what I ought to mention in my speech.
I flicked my hand. You understand, that gesture was a peach!

Direct and straight I caught that plate beneath its velvet chin,

The nickels flew as nickels do, the dimes went rolling in
The furnace pipe. Oh, cruel swipe, which started such a din!
That goodly coin went down to join perdition's blazing coals,

While much concerned I stood and learned how far a quarter rolls.

I lost the speech, designed to reach those panting, thirsty souls.
With one fell crash, I knocked that cash right back from whence it came;
The parson sighed, the warden cried, my cheeks grew red with shame.

The children fought for dimes. They thought it was a scrambling game.

At times I've had some moments sad, some cruel pranks of fate,
But never quite so grim a plight, I venture now to state,
As when in church, from off its perch, I knocked that money plate. ❁

Pilgrim Song – Then and Now

George Lunt

Over the mountain wave
See where they come;
Storm cloud and wintry wind
Welcome them home;
Yet, where the sounding gale
Howls to the sea,
There their song peals along
Deep seated and free
“Pilgrims and wanderers,
Hither we come;
Where the free dare to be—
This is our home!”

Dim grew the finest path;
Onward they trod;
Firm beat their noble hearts,
Trusting in God;
Gray men and blooming maids,
High rose their song
Hear it sweep, clear and deep,
Ever along—
“Pilgrim and wanderers,
Hither we come;
Where the free dare to be—
This is our home!”

Green be their mossy graves!
Ours be their fame,
While their song peals along
Ever the same;
“Pilgrims and wanderers,
Hither we come;
Where the free dare to be—
This is our home!” ❁

The Potter

Norman P. Woodruff

Today as I watched the potter
He molded a beautiful vase.
As he picked up the clay to shape it,
Each particle fell into place.
It seemed as if he crushed it and pressed it
Every flaw had dissolved in his hands;
And soon he had fashioned a vessel,
Exactly as first he had planned.

Then I saw him open an oven
And the vessel was placed in the heat.
The surface began to harden;
To glisten and shine as a sheet.
So often we're placed in the furnace,
We're tried and crushed to pure gold.
As a potter turns out his vessel,
So our lives are shaped I am told.

Now I thought as I saw him in action,
How God molds our lives every day,
How He irons out all our defects
And works every blemish away.
Then I prayed, "Oh, may I be pliant,
That I may be easily bent,
That I may fit into the pattern,
Of the mission for which I am sent." ❁

The Pup*Edgar A. Guest*

He tore the curtains yesterday,
 And scratched the paper on the wall;
Ma's boots, too, have gone astray—
 She says she left them in the hall;
He tugged the tablecloth and broke
 A fancy saucer and a cup;
Though Bud and I think it a joke
 Ma scolds a lot about the pup.
The sofa pillows are a sight,
 The rugs are looking somewhat frayed,
And there is ruin, left and right
 That little Boston bull has made.
He slept on Buddy's counterpane—
 Ma found him there when she woke up.
I think it needless to explain
 She scolds a lot about the pup.
And yet he comes and licks her hand
 And sometimes climbs into her lap
And there, Bud lets me understand,
 He very often takes his nap.
And Bud and I have learned to know
 She wouldn't give the rascal up:
She's really fond of him, although
 she scolds a lot about the pup. ❀

The Red Sea

Martha Snell Nicholson

When the children of Israel crossed the sea
It comforts my heart to know
That there must have been many timorous ones
Who faltered and feared to go;

Feared the ribbon of road which stretched
Ahead like a narrow track
With the waves piled high on either side,
And nothing to hold them back—

Nothing to hold them back but a hand
They could neither see nor feel.
Their God seemed distant and far away,
And only the peril real.

Yet the fearful ones were as safe as the brave,
For the mercy of God is wide.
Craven and fearless, He leads them all
Dry shod to the other side.

And I think of the needless terror and pain
We bring to our own Red Sea.
Strengthen Thy timorous ones, dear Lord,
And help us to trust in Thee! ❀

The Road Not Taken*Robert Frost*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference. ❁

The Star-Spangled Banner

Francis Scott Key

O! say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
 What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
 O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming!
 And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
 Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
 O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
 O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
 Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
 What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
 As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
 Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
 In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
 'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave
 O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
 That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
 A home and a country should leave us no more?
 Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps, pollution.
 No refuge could save the hireling and slave
 From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
 O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
 Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
 Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
 Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
 Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just,
 And this be our motto—"*In God is our trust*":
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
 O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave. ❀

Thy Will Be Done*Helen Steiner Rice*

Do you want what you want when you want it?
Do you pray and expect a reply?
And when it's not instantly answered,
Do you feel that God passed you by?
Well, prayers that are prayed in this manner
Are really not prayers at all,
For you can't go to God in a hurry
And expect Him to answer your call ...
For prayers are not meant for obtaining
What we selfishly wish to acquire,
For God in His wisdom refuses
The things that we wrongly desire.
Don't pray for freedom from trouble,
Or ask that life's trials pass you by,

Instead pray for strength and for courage
To meet life's "dark hours" and not cry
That God was not there when you called Him,
And He turned a deaf ear to your prayer
And just when you needed Him most,
He left you alone in despair ...
Wake up! You are missing completely
The reason and purpose for prayer,
Which is really to keep us contented
That God holds us safe in His care.
And God only answers our pleadings
When He knows that our wants fill a need,
And whenever "our will" becomes "His will"
There is no prayer that God does not heed. ❁

The Touch of the Master's Hand

Myra Welch

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good folks?" he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
"A dollar, one dollar"—then "Two! Only two!
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
And going for three"—But no,
From the room far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;

Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosened strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,
And going, and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not understand
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply.
"The touch of the master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.

A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
A game — and he travels on;
He's "going" once and "going" twice—
He's "going" and almost "gone!"

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand. ❀

The Trial of Derek Drew

Allan Ahlberg

The charges:

Derek Drew:

For leaving his reading book at home.
 For scribbling his handwriting practice.
 For swinging on the pegs in the cloakroom.
 For sabotaging the girls' skipping.
 For doing disgusting things with his dinner.

Also charged

Mrs. Alice Drew (nee Alice Jukes):
 For giving birth to Derek Drew.
 Mr. Dennis Drew:
 For aiding and abetting Mrs. Drew.
 Mrs. Muriel Drew and Mr. Donald Drew;
 For giving birth to Dennis Drew, etc.
 Mrs. Jane Jukes and Mr. Paul Jukes:
 For giving birth to Alice Jukes, etc.
 Previous generations of the Drew and Juke families:
 for being born, etc., etc.

Witnesses

'He's always forgetting his book.' Mrs. Pine.
 'He can write neatly, if he wants to.' Ditto.
 'I seen him on the pegs, Miss!'
 'And me!' 'And me!' Friends of the accused.
 'He just kept jumpin' in the rope!' Eight third grade girls.
 In Miss Hodge's class.
 'It was disgusting!' Mrs. Foot (dinner lady).

For the defense

'I was never in the cloakroom!' Derek Drew.

Mitigating circumstances

This boy is ten years old.
 He asks for 386 other charges to be taken into consideration.
 'He's not like this at home,' his mother says.

The verdict:

Guilty.

The sentence:

Life!
 And do his handwriting again. ❁

Up to the Ceiling*Edgar A. Guest*

Up to the ceiling
 And down to the floor,
 Hear him now squealing
 And calling for more.
 Laughing and shouting,
 "Away up!" he cries.
 Who could be doubting
 The love in his eyes.
 Heigho! my baby!
 And heigho! my son!
 Up to the ceiling
 Is wonderful fun.

Bigger than daddy
 And bigger than mother;
 Only a laddie,
 But bigger than brother.
 Laughing and shouting,
 And squirming and wriggling,
 Cheeks fairly glowing,
 Now cooing and giggling!
 Down to the cellar,
 Then quick as a dart
 Up to the ceiling
 Brings joy to the heart.

Gone is the hurry,
 The anguish and sting,
 The heartache and worry
 That business cares bring;
 Gone is the hustle,
 The clamor for gold,
 Who could be doubting
 The rush and the bustle
 The day's affairs hold.
 Peace comes to the battered
 Old heart of his dad,
 When "up to the ceiling"
 He plays with his lad. ✨

Warren's Address to the American Soldiers*John Pierpont*

Stand! the ground's your own, my braves!
Will ye give it up to slaves?
Will ye look for greener graves?
 Hope ye mercy still?
What's the mercy despots feel?
Hear it in that battle-peal!
Read it on yon bristling steel!
 Ask it,—ye who will.

Fear ye foes who kill for hire?
Will ye to your homes retire?
Look behind you! they're afire!
 And, before you, see
Who have done it!—From the vale
On they come!—And will ye quail?—
Leaden rain and iron hail
 Let their welcome be!

In the God of battles trust!
Die we may,—and die we must;
But, O, where can dust to dust
 Be consigned so well,
As where Heaven its dews shall shed
On the martyred patriot's bed,
And the rocks shall raise their head,
 Of his deeds to tell! ❁

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer*Walt Whitman*

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. ❀

The Wind and the Moon

George Macdonald

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

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

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

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

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.
 "One puff
 More's enough
 To blow her to snuff!
 One good puff more where the last was bred,
 And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go the thread."

He blew a great blast, and the thread was gone
 In the air
 Nowhere
 Was a moonbeam bare;
 Far off and harmless the shy stars shone—
 Sure and certain the Moon was gone!

The Wind he took to his revels once more;
 On down,
 In town,
 Like a merry-mad clown,
 He leaped and hallooed with whistle and roar—
 "What's that?" The glimmering thread once more!

He flew in a rage—he danced and blew;
 But in vain

Was the pain
Of his bursting brain;
For still the broader the Moon-scrap grew,
The broader he swelled his big cheeks and blew.

Slowly she grew—till she filled the night,
And shone
On her throne
In the sky alone,
A matchless, wonderful silvery light,
Radiant and lovely, the queen of the night.

Said the Wind: "What a marvel of power am I
With my breath,
Good faith!
I blew her to death—
First blew her away right out of the sky—
Then blew her in; what strength have I!"

But the Moon she knew nothing about the affair;
For high
In the sky,
With her one white eye,
Motionless, miles above the air,
She had never heard the great Wind blare. ❁

The World We Make*Alfred Grant Walton*

We make the world in which we live
By what we gather and what we give
By our daily deeds and the things we say,
By what we keep or we cast away.

We make our world by the beauty we see
In a skylark's song or a lilac tree,
In a butterfly's wing, in the pale moon's rise,
And the wonder that lingers in midnight skies.

We make our world by the life we lead,
By the friends we have, by the books we read,
By the pity we show in the hour of care,
By the loads we lift and the love we share.

We make our world by the goals we pursue,
By the heights we seek and the higher view,
By hopes and dreams that reach the sun
And a will to fight till the heights are won.

What is the place in which we dwell,
A hut or a palace, a heaven or hell
We gather and scatter, we take and we give,
We make our world—and there we live. ❁

The World's Bible*Annie Johnson Flint*

Christ has no hands but our hands
 To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
 To lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongue
 To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
 To bring them to His side.
We are the only Bible
 The careless world will read;
We are the sinner's gospel,
 We are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message,
 Given in deed and word;
What if the type is crooked?
 What if the print is blurred?
What if our hands are busy
 With other work than His?
What if our feet are walking
 Where sin's allurements is?
What if our tongues are speaking
 Of things His lips would spurn.
How can we hope to help Him
 And hasten His return? ❀