

## Grade 1

### Cat

BY MARILYN SINGER

I prefer  
warm fur,  
a perfect fire  
to lie beside,  
a cozy lap  
where I can nap,  
an empty chair  
when she's not there.  
I want heat  
    on my feet  
    on my nose  
    on my hide.  
No cat I remember  
dislikes December  
    inside.

## **At the Sea-Side**

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

When I was down beside the sea  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.  
My holes were empty like a cup.  
In every hole the sea came up  
Till it could come no more.

## Grade 2

### My Shadow

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—  
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.  
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

## **Bed in Summer**

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer, quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

## Grade 3

### My Doggy Ate My Essay

BY DARREN SARDELLI

My doggy ate my essay.  
He picked up all my mail.  
He cleaned my dirty closet  
and dusted with his tail.

He straightened out my posters  
and swept my wooden floor.  
My parents almost fainted  
when he fixed my bedroom door.

I did not try to stop him.  
He made my windows shine.  
My room looked like a palace,  
and my dresser smelled like pine.

He fluffed up every pillow.  
He folded all my clothes.  
He even cleaned my fish tank  
with a toothbrush and a hose.

I thought it was amazing  
to see him use a broom.  
I'm glad he ate my essay  
on "How to Clean My Room."

## On Quiet Feet

BY NIKKI GRIMES

When my dad walks  
into a room,  
or down  
the street,  
he inches  
up on me  
silent  
as shadow,  
and I don't know  
he's there  
until I feel  
his hug.  
Sometimes  
when he is  
near  
I might even  
hear  
his heart beat—  
but never  
his quiet  
feet.

## **Grade 4**

### **Clarinet**

BY CHERA HAMMONS

Apart, we are two quiet things:  
a person and an instrument.  
I in my body,  
the clarinet in its case.

We are like good friends.  
The clarinet takes nothing away from me.  
It lets me borrow its notes.

If I loan it my breath,  
I can speak with its sweet voice.  
Together, we will make a world  
full of song.

## **The Last Word**

BY NIKKI GRIMES

I am a door of metaphor  
waiting to be opened.  
You'll find no lock, no key.  
All are free to enter, at will.  
Simply step over the threshold.  
Remember to dress for travel, though.  
Visitors have been known  
to get carried away.



## Nowhere Else to Go

BY LINDA SUE PARK

Turn off the lights.  
Wear another layer.  
(Sounds like a dad.)  
(Sounds like a mom.)

You say hand-me-down.  
I say retro.

Walk.  
Bike.  
Walk some more.  
Recycle.

(See what I did there,  
bike—*recycle*?)

Your name in Sharpie  
on a good water bottle.  
Backpack. New habits.  
*No thanks, don't need a bag.*

What else.  
Oh yeah.

Tell ten friends  
who can tell ten friends  
who can tell ten friends ...  
Make enough noise,

maybe the grown-ups  
will finally hear

the scream in the title.

## **Recess! Oh, Recess!**

BY DARREN SARDELLI

Recess! Oh, Recess!  
We love you! You rule!  
You keep us away  
from the teachers in school.  
Your swings are refreshing.  
Your slides are the best.  
You give us a break  
from a really hard test.

Recess! Oh, Recess!  
We want you to know,  
you're sweeter than syrup,  
you're special like snow.  
You don't assign homework.  
You make the day fun.  
You let us play kickball  
and run in the sun.

Recess! Oh, Recess!  
You're first on our list.  
We'd be in despair  
if you didn't exist.  
We're happy we have you.  
You're awesome and cool.  
Recess! Oh, Recess!  
We love you! You rule!

## Grade 5

### Whenever you see a tree

BY PADMA VENKATRAMAN

Think  
how many long years  
this tree waited as a seed  
for an animal or bird or wind or rain  
to maybe carry it to maybe the right spot  
where again it waited months for seasons to change  
until time and temperature were fine enough to coax it  
to swell and burst its hard shell so it could send slender roots  
to clutch at grains of soil and let tender shoots reach toward the sun  
Think how many decades or centuries it thickened and climbed and grew  
taller and deeper never knowing if it would find enough water or light  
or when conditions would be right so it could keep on spreading leaves  
adding blossoms and dancing

Next time  
you see  
a tree  
think  
how  
much  
hope  
it holds

## Gathering Leaves

BY ROBERT FROST

Spades take up leaves  
No better than spoons,  
And bags full of leaves  
Are light as balloons.

I make a great noise  
Of rustling all day  
Like rabbit and deer  
Running away.

But the mountains I raise  
Elude my embrace,  
Flowing over my arms  
And into my face.

I may load and unload  
Again and again  
Till I fill the whole shed,  
And what have I then?

Next to nothing for weight,  
And since they grew duller  
From contact with earth,  
Next to nothing for color.

Next to nothing for use,  
But a crop is a crop,  
And who's to say where  
The harvest shall stop?

## My Lemonade Stand

BY REBECCA KAI DOTLICH

Cookies for sale!  
And cake! One dime!  
That's what it says  
on my cardboard sign.  
I pile cookies on a plate.  
I eat just one  
and then, I wait . . .  
I taste the cake  
(one tiny slice)  
I squeeze the lemons  
and stir the ice;  
I count and stack  
the paper cups . . .  
fresh lemonade  
is coming up!  
I count the bruises  
on my knee . . .  
won't somebody buy something,  
*please?*

## Grade 6

### Romance

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.  
I will make a palace fit for you and me  
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

## Consolation

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Though he, that ever kind and true,  
Kept stoutly step by step with you,  
Your whole long, gusty lifetime through,  
Be gone a while before,  
Be now a moment gone before,  
Yet, doubt not, soon the seasons shall restore  
Your friend to you.

He has but turned the corner — still  
He pushes on with right good will,  
Through mire and marsh, by heugh and hill,  
That self-same arduous way —  
That self-same upland, hopeful way,  
That you and he through many a doubtful day  
Attempted still.

He is not dead, this friend — not dead,  
But in the path we mortals tread  
Got some few, trifling steps ahead  
And nearer to the end;  
So that you too, once past the bend,  
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend  
You fancy dead.

## **Nothing Gold Can Stay**

BY ROBERT FROST

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.



## Grade 7

### Where The Picnic Was

By Thomas Hardy

Where we made the fire,  
In the summer time,  
Of branch and briar  
On the hill to the sea  
I slowly climb  
Through winter mire,  
And scan and trace  
The forsaken place  
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,  
And the grass is gray,  
But the spot still shows  
As a burnt circle eye,  
And stick-ends, charred,  
Still strew the sward  
Whereon I stand,  
Last relic of the band  
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here  
Just as last year,  
And the sea breathes brine  
From its strange straight line  
Up hither, the same  
As when we four came.  
- But two have wandered far  
From this grassy rise  
Into urban roar  
Where no picnics are,  
And one has shut her eyes  
For evermore.

## April Moon

By Walter De La Mare

Roses are sweet to smell and see,  
And lilies on the stem;  
But rarer, stranger buds there be,  
And she was like to them.

The little moon that April brings,  
More lovely shade than light,  
That, setting, silvers lonely hills  
Upon the verge of night -

Close to the world of my poor heart  
So stole she, still and clear;  
Now that she's gone, O dark, and dark,  
The solitude, the fear.

## **The Robin Makes a Laughing Sound**

BY SALLIE WOLF

The robin makes a laughing sound.  
It makes me stop and look around  
to see just what the robin sees—  
fresh new leaves on twigs of trees,  
a strong, high branch on which to rest,  
a safe dry ledge to hold its nest.  
The robin makes a laughing sound.  
I stop. I always look around.

## **Grade 8**

### **The Passionate Shepherd to His Love**

BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove,  
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,  
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow Rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,  
With Coral clasps and Amber studs:  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds' Swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.

## Ballad of Reading Gaol – Oscar wilde

He did not wear his scarlet coat,  
For blood and wine are red,  
And blood and wine were on his hands  
When they found him with the dead,  
The poor dead woman whom he loved,  
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men  
In a suit of shabby grey;  
A cricket cap was on his head,  
And his step seemed light and gay;  
But I never saw a man who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every drifting cloud that went  
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,  
Within another ring,  
And was wondering if the man had done  
A great or little thing,  
When a voice behind me whispered low,  
'THAT FELLOW'S GOT TO SWING.'

Dear Christ! the very prison walls  
Suddenly seemed to reel,  
And the sky above my head became  
Like a casque of scorching steel;  
And, though I was a soul in pain,  
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought  
Quickened his step, and why  
He looked upon the garish day  
With such a wistful eye;  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.

## **A Character**

By William Wordsworth

I marvel how Nature could ever find space  
For so many strange contrasts in one human face:  
There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and bloom  
And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and gloom.

There's weakness, and strength both redundant and vain;  
Such strength as, if ever affliction and pain  
Could pierce through a temper that's soft to disease,  
Would be rational peace, a philosopher's ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails or succeeds,  
And attention full ten times as much as there needs;  
Pride where there's no envy, there's so much of joy;  
And mildness, and spirit both forward and coy.

There's freedom, and sometimes a diffident stare  
Of shame scarcely seeming to know that she's there,  
There's virtue, the title it surely may claim,  
Yet wants heaven knows what to be worthy the name.

This picture from nature may seem to depart,  
Yet the Man would at once run away with your heart;  
And I for five centuries right gladly would be  
Such an odd such a kind happy creature as he.



## Ode to My Shoes

BY FRANCISCO X. ALARCÓN

my shoes  
rest  
all night  
under my bed

tired  
they stretch  
and loosen  
their laces

wide open  
they fall asleep  
and dream  
of walking

they revisit  
the places  
they went to  
during the day

and wake up  
cheerful  
relaxed  
so soft

## **An Irish Airman foresees his Death**

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

I know that I shall meet my fate  
Somewhere among the clouds above;  
Those that I fight I do not hate,  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
No likely end could bring them loss  
Or leave them happier than before.  
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,  
A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
A waste of breath the years behind  
In balance with this life, this death.

## **Blackberry-Picking**

BY SEAMUS HEANEY

*for Philip Hobsbaum*

Late August, given heavy rain and sun  
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.  
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot  
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.  
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet  
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it  
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for  
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger  
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots  
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.  
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills  
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,  
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered  
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned  
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered  
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.  
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,  
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.  
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush  
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.  
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair  
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.  
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.