

POEMS & RHYMES

Sometimes there is nothing quite so delightful as a poem - especially if it brings back memories of another time, another place - a long ago childhood. And the wee hours of the morning may be one of those times when we delight in remembering an old favorite...

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN AND NOD

By Eugene Field

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

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

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT

By Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussycat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat:
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar, "O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are, You are, you are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"
Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! Too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong tree grows,
And there in the wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose, his nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.
"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling Your ring?"
Said the Piggy, "I will."
"So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon, the moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

THREE BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

A CHILD'S THOUGHT

At seven, when I go to bed, I find such pictures in my head;
Castles with dragons prowling round,
Gardens where magic fruits are found;
Fair ladies prisoned in a tower,
Or lost in an enchanted bower;
While gallant horsemen ride by streams,
That border all this land of dreams
I find, so clearly in my head
At seven, when I go to bed.

BED IN SUMMER

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?

MY SHADOW

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 sleepyhead,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

TO SLEEP

By Kenneth Koch

Great comrade woman of existence, brava sleep!
How many times I've come to get you
And you weren't there!
Now I have a woman friend who helps me find you
But in those days
When my life was lonely and illicit
When it didn't seem to matter
If I was up or not, or at what hour,
Then sleep you were a tyrant
And a woman that I followed
From week to week from town to town
Not stalking but walking
In earnest pursuit of you, sleep,
Until happily you passed out or I fell down.
Now that I think of you
I feel fond.
But what are you really?
Are you some exiguous palm frond
Capitulated by merriment back out of and into existence?
Were you always the goblet from which a few inspired ones
Drank that liquer that offered them their sublimest poems?
Will you offer them equally to me, sleep,
Or have you already done so?
Will you be more than fair?

This morning I feel
As the gondolier advances like a rope's continually pulled-at knot
That you may be, and I think with gratitude
Of what we together still might do.
(Originally printed in The New Yorker.)

TREE SHADOWS (By ?...)

All hushed the trees are waiting
On tiptoe for the sight
Of moonrise shedding splendor
Across the dusk of night.
Ah, now the moon is risen
And lo, without a sound
the trees all write their welcome
Far along the ground.

THE MAN IN THE MOON

The man in the moon
Looked out of the moon,
And this is what he said:
"Tis time now that I'm getting up,
All children went to bed."

GOOD NIGHT

By Thomas Hood

Here's a Body -
There's a Bed
There's a pillow -
Here's a Head
There's a Curtin -
Here's a Light
There's a puff and so Good Night.

GOOD NIGHT (Oiche Mhaith)

Anonymous Writer

This charming little poem was found in a Dublin hotel.
Sleep sweet within this room, where'ere thou art.
And let not dreams of yesterday disturb thy heart;

Nor let tomorrow, with its fear of coming ill.
Thy maker is thy changeless friend,
God's love surrounds thee still.
The stars are watching overhead,
Put out each earthborne light.
Sleep sweet, Good night,
Good night.

TWO PSALMS

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Lord is my Shepherd;
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will
fear no evil;
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil,
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

PSALM 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved;
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper;
the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil;
He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and forevermore.
(Amen.)

Citations:

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