

Third and Fourth Grade Poetry Selections

1. BED IN SUMMER

by Robert Louis Stevenson

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candlelight
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?

2. WHEN CHILDREN EAT

by Margaret Horst Yoder

A little pig will squeal and squeal
When it is hungry for a meal
It does not bow its head and pray,
For food that comes to it each day.
It gobbles down its food too fast,
Then settles in the mud at last

Now listen, dears, and you will know,
That children never should act so.
They should not whine, nor should they squeal
When they are hungry for a meal
With patience they should wait for meals,
And sing, instead of giving squeals.

And they should pray before they eat
To thank the Lord for bread and meat
Please, do not gobble down your food,
But eat like little children should.

3. WINTER'S BLESSINGS

Pretty little snowflakes

Falling to the ground;
Here is one, there is one,
Everywhere they're found

See them fall so gently
Through the frosty air,
Every little snowflake
Has its beauties rare.

Soon the ground is covered
With the pretty snow,
Then we see the snowbirds
Flying to and fro.

Happy little creatures —
Do not reap or sow,
Yet the Master feeds them,
Even in the snow.

4. I LIKE LITTLE PUSSY

by Jane Taylor

I like little Pussy, her coat is so warm;
And if I don't hurt her, she'll do me no harm.
So I'll not pull her tail, nor drive her away,
But Pussy and I very gently will play.

She shall sit by my side, and I'll give her some food;
And she'll love me because I am gentle and good
I'll pat little Pussy and then she will purr,
And thus show her thanks for my kindness to her.

I'll not pinch her ears, nor tread on her paw,
Lest I should provoke her to use her sharp claw;
I never will vex her, nor make her displeased,
For Pussy can't bear to be worried or teased.

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5. MERRY SUNSHINE

"Good morning, Merry Sunshine,
How did you wake so soon?
You've scared the little stars away
And shined away the moon."

"I saw you go to sleep last night
Before I ceased my playing;
How did you get 'way over there?
And where have you been staying?"

I never go to sleep, dear child,
I just go round to see
The little children of the east,
Who rise and watch for me."

"I waken all the birds and bees
And flowers on my way,
And now come back to see the child
Who stayed out late at play."

6. FIREFLIES

by Elizabeth Jenkins

I like the warm dark summer night,
When fireflies burn their golden light,
And flit so softly through the air,
Now up, now down, now over there!

They sparkle in my apple tree,
And from the grass they wink at me,
And turn their lights on one by one;
I think it would be lots of fun
If I could shine at evening, too,
Just as the little fireflies do.

But Mother tells me I can be
A little light for all to see,
A little candle clear and bright
That shines for Jesus day and night.

7. A BIRD'S LESSON

A little bird, with feathers brown,
Sat singing on a tree;
The song was very soft and low,
But sweet as it could be.

And all the people passing by
Looked up to see the bird
Whose singing was the sweetest
That ever they had heard.

But all the bright eyes looked in vain;
For birdie was so small,
And, with a modest dark brown coat,
He made no show at all.

"Dear Papa," little Gracie said,
"Where can this birdie be?
If I could only sing like that
I'd sit where folks could see."

"I hope my little girl will learn
A lesson from that bird;
And try to do what good she can —
Not to be seen nor heard."

"This birdie is content to sit
Unnoticed by the way,
And sweetly sing his Maker's praise,
From dawn to close of day."

"So live, my child, to do some good,
Let life be short or long;
Though people may forget your looks,
They'll not forget your song."

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8. SERVING JESUS

Children's hands can work for Jesus,
Glad to do His holy will;
Helping playmates, serving Mother,
They are serving Jesus still.

Let your hands be quick and true;
God will give them work to do.

Children's lips can move for Jesus,
Speaking gently all the while,
Making other people happy,
With a love-word and a smile.

Let your speech in kindness fall;
Jesus listens to it all.

Children's feet can run for Jesus,
And for Him sweet comfort take
To the hearts bowed low in sorrow,
Blessing all for His dear sake.

Let your footsteps gladness bring,
Doing errands for the King.

9. THE WIND AND THE LEAVES

"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day,
"Come over the meadows with me and play.
Put on your dresses of red and gold,—
For summer is gone, and the days grow cold."

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering one and all.
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
Singing the soft little songs they knew.

Dancing and whirling, the little leaves went;
Winter had called them, and they were content;
Soon fast asleep in their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlet over their heads.

10. LITTLE THINGS

A raindrop is a little thing
Many make the showers;
Little moments flitting by,
Make up all the hours.

One little star at close of day
Faintly seems to twinkle,
Till at length the shining host,
All the blue besprinkle.

A smile is but a little thing
To the happy giver,
Yet can leave a blessed calm
On our life's rough river.

Gentle words are never lost,
Howe'er small they're seeming;
Sunny rays of love are they,
O'er our pathway gleaming.

11. TRY, TRY AGAIN

by T. H. Palmer

'Tis a lesson you should heed,
Try, try again;
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,
Try, try again;
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,
Try, try again;
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.

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12. WHO TAUGHT THE BIRDS?

by Jane Taylor

Who taught the bird to build her nest
Of softest wool, and hay, and moss?
Who taught her how to weave it best,
And lay the tiny twigs across?

Who taught the busy bee to fly
Among the sweetest herbs and flowers,
And lay her store of honey by,
Providing food for winter hours?

Who taught the little ant the way
Her narrow cell so well to bore
And through the pleasant summer day
To gather up her winter store?

'Twas God who taught them all the way,
And gave the little creatures skill;
He teaches children, when they pray,
To know and do His heavenly will.

13. WHAT ROBIN TOLD

How do robins build their nests?

Robin Redbreast told me.
First, a wisp of amber hay
In a pretty round they lay;
Then some shreds of downy floss,
Feathers, too, and bits of moss
Woven with a sweet, sweet song;
This way, that way, and around.
That's what Robin told me.

Where do robins build their nests?
Robin Redbreast told me.
Up among the leaves so deep,
Where the sunbeams scarcely creep;
Long before the winds are cold,
Long before the leaves are gold,
Bright-eyed stars will peep and see
Baby robins, one, two, three;
That's what Robin told me.

14. FRIENDS

by Abbie Farwell Brown

How good to lie a little while
And look up through the tree!
The sky is like a kind, big smile
Bent sweetly over me.

The sunshine flickers through the lace
Of leaves above my head;
And kisses me about the face,
Like Mother, before bed.

The wind comes stealing o'er the grass
To whisper pretty things;
And though I cannot see him pass,
I feel his careful wings.

And high above the clouds I **know**
That God is watching, too;
He loves me and He always sees,
Each little thing I do.

So many gentle friends are near,
Whom one can scarcely see,
A child should never feel a fear,
Wherever he may be.

15. BEING THANKFUL

God is love and kindness
To us all below;
On the just and unjust
Sendeth rain and snow.

Let us e'er be thankful
For His love to us.
He's so kind and faithful,
Giving blessings thus.

Let us ask the Saviour,
As we kneel to pray,
Help us to be thankful
More and more each day.

Thankful in the morning,
Thankful noon and night;
Thankful for the raindrops,
Thankful for the light.

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16. KIND AT HOME

I'd like for folks to say of me,
No matter where I roam,
"That child is nice and gentle—but
She's sweeter far at home."

"Her temper never does she lose,
She's patient as can be;
She always strives to spread content,
Among the family.

"She always tidies up her room;
And like a gentle maid,
She strives in countless little ways,
To be of some real aid.

"She welcomes, with a friendly smile,
The neighbors as them come;
She's quite a nice girl anywhere—
But sweeter far at home."

17. ON GUARD

Guard, my child, thy tongue,
That it speak no wrong:
Let no evil word pass o'er it;
Set the watch of truth before it,
That it speak no wrong;
Guard, my child, thy tongue.

Guard, my child, thine eyes;
Prying is not wise:
Let them look on what is right;
From all evil turn their sight
Prying is not wise:
Guard, my child, thine eyes.

Guard, my child, thine ear,
Wicked words will sear.
Let no evil word come in,
That may cause thy soul to sin;
Wicked words will sear
Guard, my child, thine ear.

18. PLEASE, THANK YOU, AND PARDON ME

Please, thank you, and pardon me,
Are such nice words to say
To Teacher and to little friends
For what they do each day.

"Please, I need some crayons now."
"I thank you, if I may."
And, "Pardon me, I did not hear.
What is that you say?"

Please, thank you, and pardon me,
Are such nice words to say.
Try them once and try them twice,
You'll like to talk that way.

19. WHERE GO THE BOATS?

by Robert Louis Stevenson
Dark brown is the river,
Golden is the sand,
It flows along forever,
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating —
Where will all come home?

On goes the river,
And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore.

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20. THE LITTLE BUSY BEE

by Isaac Watts

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flow'r!

How skillfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

In works of labour or of skill,
I would be busy, too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthy play
Let my first years be passed,
That I may give for ev'ry day,
Some good account at last.

21. TWO SEEDS

I hid a selfish little thought,
To think and think about.
I did not know it would be caught
Or ever be found out;
But it was like a little seed,
And it began to sprout!
It grew into a little weed,
And blossomed in a pout!

I hid another little thought,
'Twas pleasant, sweet, and kind;
So if this time it should be caught,
I knew I shouldn't mind.
I thought about it, hour by hour;
'Twas growing all the while,
It blossomed in a lovely flower,
A happy little smile!

22. DON'T GIVE UP

by Phoebe Gary

If you've tried and have not won,
Never stop for crying;
All that's good and great is done
Just by patient trying.

Though young birds, in flying, fall,
Still their wings grow stronger,
And the next time they can keep
Up a little longer.

Though the sturdy oak has known
Many a wind that bowed her,
She has ris'n again and grown
Loftier and prouder.

If by easy work you beat,
Who the more will prize you?
Gaining victory from defeat,
That's the test that tries you.

23. PRAYER

I know not by what methods rare;
But this I know: God answers prayer.
I know that He has given His Word,
Which tells me prayer is always heard
And will be answered, soon or late;
And so I pray and calmly wait.

I know not if the blessing sought
Will come in just the way I thought,
But leave my prayer with Him alone
Whose will is wiser than my own,
Assured that He will grant my quest
Or send some answer far more blest.

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24. GOD IS LIKE THIS

by Rowena Bennet

I cannot see the wind at all
Or hold it in my hand;
And yet I know there is a wind
Because it swirls the sand.
I know there is a wondrous wind,
Because I glimpse its power
Whenever it bends low a tree
Or sways the smallest flower.

And God is very much like this,
Invisible as air,
I cannot touch or see Him, yet
I know that He is there
Because I glimpse His wondrous works
And goodness everywhere.

25. WHICH LOVED BEST?

by Joy Allison (Mary A. Cragin)

"I love you, Mother," said little John;
Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on,
And he was off to the garden swing,
And left her the water and wood to bring.

"I love you, Mother," said rosy Nell —
"I love you better than tongue can tell;"
Then she teased and pouted full half the day
Till her mother rejoiced when she went to play.

"I love you, Mother," said little Fan;
"Today I'll help you all I can;
How glad I am that school doesn't keep!"
So she rocked the babe till it fell asleep.

Then, stepping softly, she fetched the broom,
And swept the floor and tidied the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and happy as child could be.

"I love you, Mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed;
How do you think that mother guessed
Which of them really loved her best?

26. THE GOLDEN KEYS

A bunch of golden keys is mine
To make each day with gladness shine.

"Good morning," that's the golden key
That unlocks every day for me.

When evening comes, "Good night," I say,
And close the door of each glad day.

When at the table, "If you please,"
I take from off my bunch of keys.

When friends give anything to me,
I use the little, "Thank you," key.

"Excuse me," "Beg your pardon," too,
When by mistake some harm I do.

Or if unkindly harm I've given,
With I'm sorry," I shall be forgiven.

On a golden ring these keys I'll bind
This is its motto, "Be ye kind."

I'll often use each golden key,
And then a happy child I'll be.

26. WHO LIKES THE RAIN?

by Clara Doty Bates

"I," said the duck, "I call it fun,
For I have my little red rubbers on.
They make a cunning three-toed track
In the soft cool mud. Quack! Quack!"

"I," cried the dandelion, "I,
My roots are thirsty, my buds are dry."
And she lifted her little yellow head
Out of her green and grassy bed.

"I hope 'twill pour! I hope 'twill pour!"
Croaked the tree toad at this gray bark door.
"For with a broad leaf for a roof
I am perfectly weather-proof."

Sang the brook, "I welcome every drop;
Come, come, dear rain drops, never stop
Till a great river you make of me,
Then I will carry you to the sea."

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27. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

by Mildred Plew Meigs

Remember he was poor and country-bred;
His face was lined; he walked with awkward gait.
Smart people laughed at him sometimes and said,
"How can so very plain a man be great?"

Remember he was humble, used to toil.
Strong arms he had to build a shack, a fence,
Long legs to tramp the woods, to plow the soil,
A head chuck full of backwoods common sense.

Remember all he ever had he earned
He walked in time through stately White House doors;
But all he knew of men and life he learned
In little backwoods cabins, country stores.

Remember that his eyes could light with fun;
That wisdom, courage, set his name apart;
But when the rest is duly said and done,
Remember that men loved him for his heart.

28. FOREIGN CHILDREN

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,
Little frosty Eskimo,
Little Turk or Japanese,
O! don't you wish that you were me?

You have seen the scarlet trees
And the lions over seas;
You have eaten ostrich eggs,
And turned the turtles off their legs.
Such a life is very fine,
But it's not as nice as mine:
You must often, as you trod,
Have wearied not to be abroad
You have curious things to eat,
I am fed on proper meat;
You must dwell beyond the foam,
But I am safe and live at home.

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,
Little frosty Eskimo,
Little Turk or Japanese,
O! don't you wish that you were me?

29. MY DOG

by Marchette Chute

His nose is short and scrubby;
His ears hang rather low
And he always brings a 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 suppose to go.
He tracks up the house when it's snowing -
Oh, puppy, I love you so.

30. BUTTERFLY

by William Jay Smith

Of living creatures most I prize
Black-spotted yellow Butterflies
Sailing softly through the skies.

Whisking light from each sunbeam,
Gliding over field and stream —
Like fans unfolding in a dream,

Like fans of gold lace flickering
Before a drowsy elfin king
For whom the thrush and linnet sing —
Soft and beautiful and bright
As hands that move to touch the light
When Mother leans to say good night.

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31. HABITS OF THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

by Arthur Guiterman

The hippopotamus is strong
And huge of head and broad of bustle;
The limbs on which he rolls along
Are big with hippopotomuscle.

He does not greatly care for sweets
Like ice cream, apple pie, or custard,
But takes to flavor what he eats
A little hippopotomustard.

The hippopotamus is true
To all his principles, and just;
He always tries his best to do
The things one hippopotamust.

He never rides in trucks or trams,
In taxicabs or omnibuses,
And so keeps out of traffic jams
And other hippopotomusses.

32. WHEN MOTHER READS ALOUD

When Mother reads aloud, the past
Seems real as every day,
I hear the tramp of armies vast,
I see the spears and lances cast,
I join the trilling fray;
Brave knights and ladies fair and proud
I meet when Mother reads aloud.

When Mother reads aloud, far lands
Seem very near and true;
I cross the desert's gleaming sands,
Or hunt the jungle's prowling bands,
Or sail the ocean blue.
Far heights, whose peaks the cold mists shroud,
I scale, when Mother reads aloud.

When Mother reads aloud, I long
For noble deeds to do –
To help the right, redress the wrong;
It seems so easy to be strong,
So simple to be true.
Oh, thick and fast the visions crowd
My eyes, when Mother reads aloud.

33. HIDING

by 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 was
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!

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34. METHUSELAH

Methuselah ate what he found on his plate,
And never, as people do now,
Did he note the amount of the calorie count;
He ate it because it was chow.
He wasn't disturbed as at dinner he sat,
Devouring a roast or a pie,
To think it was lacking in granular fat
Or a couple of vitamins shy.
He cheerfully chewed each species of food,
Unmindful of troubles or fears
Lest his health might be hurt
By some fancy dessert;
And he lived over nine hundred years.

35. THE ANIMAL STORE

by Rachel Field

If I had a hundred dollars to spend,
Or maybe a little more,
I'd hurry as fast as my legs would go
Straight to the animal store.

I wouldn't say, "How much for this or that?"
"What kind of a dog is he?"
I'd buy as many as rolled an eye,
Or wagged a tail at me!

I'd take the hound with the drooping ears
That sits by himself alone
Cockers and Cairns and wobbly pups
For to be my very own.

I might buy a parrot all red and green,
And the monkey I saw before,
If I had a hundred dollars to spend,
Or maybe a little more.

36. THE REASON FOR THE PELICAN

by John Ciardi

The Reason for the pelican
Is difficult to see;
His beak is clearly larger
Than there's any need to be.

It's not to bail a boat with —
He doesn't own a boat
Yet everywhere he takes himself
He has that beak to tote.

It's not to keep his wife in —
His wife has got one, too.
It's not a scoop for eating soup.
It's not an extra shoe.

It isn't quite for anything.
And yet you realize
It's really quite a splendid beak
In quite a splendid size.

38. TREES

by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

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39. WHICH WASHINGTON

by Eve Merriam

There are many Washingtons:
Across the narrow beach we fit,
Which one do you like best?
The rich man with his powdered wig
and silk brocaded vest?

The sportsman from Virginia
Riding with his hounds,
Sounding a silver trumpet
On the green resplendent grounds?

The President with his tricorne hat
And polished leather boots,
With scarlet capes and ruffled shirts
And fine brass-buttoned suits?

Or the patchwork man with ragged feet,
Freezing at Valley Forge,
Richer in courage than all of them –
Though all of them were George.

40. SONG FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

by Gail Brooke Burket

I live in a land
Where the people are free
And joy is a birthright
Belonging to me.
Love shelters my home
Like a wide-branching tree.
The doors of the church
Are open to me.
The schools unlock treasure
With truth for a key.
A whole world of wonder
Is waiting for me.
I live in a land
Where the people are free;
The future shines golden
For children like me.

41. THE SANDPIPER

Celia Thaxter

Across the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I;
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,-
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry;
He starts not at my fitful song,
Or flash of fluttering drapery
He has no thought of any wrong;
He scans me with a fearless eye.
Staunch friends are we, well tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

42. WINDOW BOXES

Eleanor Farjeon

A window box of pansies
Is such a happy thing.
A window box of wallflowers
Is a garden for a king.
A window box of roses
Makes everyone stand still
Who sees a garden growing
On a window sill.

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43. HIAWATHA'S CHILDHOOD

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis,
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them;
Bright before it beat the water,
Bright the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea Water.

There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Rocked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews;
Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
“Hush! the naked bear will hear thee!”

Lulled him into slumber, singing,
“Ewa-yea! my little owlet!
Who is this that lights the wigwam?
With his great eyes lights the wigwam?
Ewa-yea! my little owlet!”

At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,
Heard the lapping of the waters,
Sounds of music, words of wonder;
“Minne-wawa!” said the pine-trees,
“Mudway-aushka!” said the water.

Saw the firefly, Wah-wah-taysee,
Flitting through the dusk of evening,
With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes;
And he sang the song of children
Sang the song Nokomis taught him:
“Wah-wah-taysee, little firefly,
Little, flitting, white-fire insect,
Little, dancing, white-fire creature,
Light me with your little candle,
Ere upon my bed I lay me.
Ere in sleep I close my eyelids!”

44. THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And I will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there I will keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

Third and Fourth Grade Poetry Selections

45. LITTLE BY LITTLE

Anonymous

“Little by little,” an acorn said,
As it slowly sank in its mossy bed,
“I am improving every day,
Hidden deep in the earth away.”

Little by little, each day it grew;
Little by little, it sipped the dew;
Downward it sent out a thread-like root;
Up in the air sprung a tiny shoot.

Day after day, and year after year,
Little by little the leaves appear;
And the slender branches spread far and wide,
Till the mighty oak is the forest’s pride.

Far down in the depths of the dark blue sea,
An insect train works ceaselessly.
Grain by grain, they are building well,
Each one alone in its little cell.

Moment by moment, and day by day,
Never stopping to rest or to play,
Rocks upon rocks, they are reaching high,
Till the top looks out on the sunny sky.

The gentle wind and the balmy air,
Little by little, bring verdure there;
Till the summer sunbeams gayly smile
On the buds and the flowers of the coral isle.

“Little by little,” said a thoughtful boy,
“Moment by moment, I’ll well employ,
Learning a little every day,
And not spending all my time in play.
And still this rule in my mind shall dwell,
Whatever, I do, I will do it well.

“Little by little, I’ll learn to know
The treasured wisdom of long ago;
And one of these days, perhaps, we’ll see
That the world will be the better for me”;
And do you not think that this simple plan
Made him a wise and useful man?

46. RAIN IN SUMMER

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard’s tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain.

47. OVERHEARD IN AN ORCHARD

Elizabeth Cheney

Said the Robin to the Sparrow:
“I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.”

Said the Sparrow to the Robin:
“Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me.”

48. FEBRUARY TWILIGHT

Sara Teasdale

I stood beside a hill
Smooth with new-laid snow;
A single star looked out
From the cold evening glow.

There was no other creature
That saw what I could see –
I stood and watched the evening star
As long as it watched me.

Third and Fourth Grade Poetry Selections

49. THE DUEL

Eugene Field

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Not one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(*I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!*)

The gingham dog went "bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied "mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(*Now mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!*)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfulest way you ever saw –
And, oh! How the gingham and calico flew!
(*Don't fancy I exaggerate –
I got my news from the Chinese plate!*)

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(*The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know.*)

50. THE OWL AND THE PUSSY CAT

Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussy cat 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 a 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.

51. WORK WHILE YOU WORK

M. A. Stodart

Work while you work,
Play while you play;
One thing each time,
That is the way.
All that you do,
Do with your might;
Things done by halves
Are not done right.

Third and Fourth Grade Poetry Selections

52. MY SHADOW

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

53. WASHINGTON

Nancy Byrd Turner

He played by the river when he was young,
He raced with rabbits along the hills,
He fished for minnows, and climbed and swung,
And hooted back at the whippoorwills.
Strong and slender and tall he grew-
And then, one morning, the bugles blew.

Over the hills the summons came,
Over the river's shining rim.
He said that the bugles called his name,
He knew that his country needed him,
And he answered, "Coming!" and marched away
For many a night and many a day.

Perhaps when the marches were hot and long
He'd think of the river flowing by
Or, camping under the winter sky,
Would hear the whippoorwill's far-off song.
Boy or soldier, in peace or strife,
He loved America all his life!

54. OUR FLAG

Author Unknown

You may call it an old piece of bunting;
You may call it an old tattered rag;
But thousands have died for its honor
And shed their best blood for the flag.

You may call it an old piece of bunting;
You may call it an old tattered rag;
But Freedom has made it majestic,
And Time has ennobled Our Flag.

Third and Fourth Grade Poetry Selections

55. KEEP A POEM IN YOUR POCKET

Beatrice Schenk de Regniers

Keep a poem in your pocket
and a picture in your head
and you'll never feel lonely
at night when you're in bed.

The little poem will sing to you
the little picture bring to you
a dozen dreams to dance to you
at night when you're in bed.

So-

Keep a picture in your pocket
and a poem in your head
and you'll never feel lonely
at night when you're in bed.