



*Rocky Mountain Classical
Christian Schools Speech Meet
Official Selections*

RMCSS speech and Bible selection requirements

Bible Selections

Students may choose a Bible passage of a suitable length according to the guidelines below. It is the responsibility of the student to **print off a copy** of the Bible passage in the **English Standard Version (ESV)** to turn in to their teacher.

Speech

Speech Meet selections have been expanded for **grades 2-10** to include a variety of speeches. A list of approved speeches is found below. You may also, of course, request an outside speech. It is up to you, the student, to choose an excerpt of the speech that is long enough for your grade level. Once you have chosen an excerpt, it is your responsibility to **print off** that excerpt to turn in to your teacher.

Requirement and Guidelines

Grade	Minimum Word Count of Speech Excerpt	Minimum Verse Count for Bible Passages	Minimum Lines for Poetry Selections
1st	<i>No speech selections for first grade</i>	5-10 verses	10-20 lines
2nd	100 or more	8-15 verses	15-25 lines
3rd	100 or more	10-15 verses	15-25 lines
4th	200 or more	12-18 verses	20-30 lines
5th	350 or more	14-20 verses	25-35 lines
6th	350 or more	16-22 verses	30-40 lines
7th	450 or more	18-24 verses	35-45 lines
8th	450 or more	20-26 verses	40-50 lines
9th-12th	550 or more	22-28 verses	45-55 lines

Speech possibilities

Political Speeches

Alexander the Great's victory speech, found [here](#)

Pericles' Funeral Oration from Thucydides, found [here](#)

Demosthenes - The Third Philippic, found [here](#)

Queen Elizabeth I, The Spanish Armada speech, found [here](#)

Winston Churchill, We Shall Fight on the Beaches, found [here](#)

William Wilberforce, Abolition Speech

American

Live your Life, Chief Tecumseh

Citizenship in the Republic, Teddy Roosevelt (Man in the Arena), found [here](#)

Reagan's Farewell Address to the American People

John F Kennedy, Inaugural Address

Martin Luther King Jr., I Have a Dream

Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address

Washington's Farewell Address 1796, found [here](#)

Patrick Henry, Give me Liberty or Give me Death

Theodore Roosevelt, Strength and Decency

Shakespeare:

Hamlet, "To be or not to be"

Macbeth, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow"

Julius Caesar, Marc Antony's speech "Friends, Romans, Countrymen"

As You Like It, Jaques, "The Seven Ages of Man"

Epics:

- Homer's *Iliad*, Book I, lines 1-50
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI, lines 462-520
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI, lines 556-600
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XVIII, lines 91-150
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXII, lines 157-199
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXII, lines 270-320
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXIV, lines 893-944
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XIII, lines 324-373
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XIV, lines 1-53
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XXIV, lines 1-48
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XXIV, lines 241-293
- *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, lines 1-75

Rocky Mountain Classical Christian Schools

Speech Meet Official Selections

Sixth Grade

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Sixth Grade: Poetry

anyone lived in a pretty how town

E.E. Cummings

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that no one loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and no one stooped to kiss his face)

busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

The Ballad of William Sycamore

Stephen Vincent Benét

MY FATHER, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.

My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor's grave
And a stream for her comforting neighbor.

And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a gosling's scion;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

And some remember a white, starched lap
And a ewer with silver handles;
But I remember a coonskin cap
And the smell of bayberry candles.

The cabin logs, with the bark still rough,
And my mother who laughed at trifles,
And the tall, lank visitors, brown as snuff,
With their long, straight squirrel-rifles.

I can hear them dance, like a foggy song,
Through the deepest one of my slumbers,
The fiddle squeaking the boots along
And my father calling the numbers.

The quick feet shaking the puncheon-floor,
And the fiddle squealing and squealing,
Till the dried herbs rattled above the door
And the dust went up to the ceiling.

There are children lucky from dawn till dusk,
But never a child so lucky!

For I cut my teeth on "Money Musk"
In the Bloody Ground of Kentucky!

When I grew as tall as the Indian corn,
My father had little to lend me,
But he gave me his great, old powder-horn
And his woodsman's skill to befriend me.

With a leather shirt to cover my back,
And a redskin nose to unravel
Each forest sign, I carried my pack
As far as a scout could travel.

Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife,
A girl like a Salem clipper!
A woman straight as a hunting-knife
With eyes as bright as the Dipper!

We cleared our camp where the buffalo
feed,
Unheard-of streams were our flagons;
And I sowed my sons like the apple-seed
On the trail of the Western wagons.

They were right, tight boys, never sulky or
slow,
A fruitful, a goodly muster.
The eldest died at the Alamo.
The youngest fell with Custer.

The letter that told it burned my hand.
Yet we smiled and said, "So be it!"
But I could not live when they fenced the
land,
For it broke my heart to see it.

I saddled a red, unbroken colt

And rode him into the day there;
And he threw me down like a thunderbolt
And rolled on my as I lay there.

The hunter's whistle hummed in my ear
As the city-men tried to move me,
And I died in my boots like a pioneer
With the whole wide sky above me.

Now I lie in the heart of the fat, black soil,
Like the seed of the prairie-thistle;
It has washed my bones with honey and oil
And picked them clean as a whistle.

And my youth returns, like the rains of
Spring,
And my sons, like the wild-geese flying;
And I lie and hear the meadow-lark sing
And have much content in my dying.

Go play with the towns you have built of
blocks,
The towns where you would have bound
me!
I sleep in my earth like a tired fox,
And my buffalo have found me.

The Bells

Edgar Allan Poe

Hear the sledges with the bells—

Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells

From the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells—

From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,

Golden bells!

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!

Through the balmy air of night

How they ring out their delight!

From the molten-golden notes,

And all in tune,

What a liquid ditty floats

To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats

On the moon!

Oh, from out the sounding cells,

What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!

How it swells!

How it dwells

On the Future! how it tells

Of the rapture that impels

To the swinging and the ringing

Of the bells, bells, bells,

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells—

To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling.
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!

For every sound that floats
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.
 And the people—ah, the people—
 They that dwell up in the steeple,
 All alone,
 And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—
 They are neither man nor woman—
 They are neither brute nor human—
 They are Ghouls:
 And their king it is who tolls;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
 Rolls
 A pæan from the bells!
 And his merry bosom swells
 With the pæan of the bells!
 And he dances, and he yells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the pæan of the bells—
 Of the bells:
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the throbbing of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the sobbing of the bells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,
 In a happy Runic rhyme,
 To the rolling of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the tolling of the bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—
 Bells, bells, bells—
 To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

Beowulf, an excerpt

Translation by Seamus Heaney

In off the moors,
down through the mist bands
the God-cursed Grendel came greedily loping.
The bane of the race of men roamed forth, hunting
for a prey in the high hall.

Handsomely structured,
a sturdy frame braced with the best
of blacksmith's work inside and out.
No shielding elder believed
there was any power or person upon earth
capable of wrecking their horn-rigged hall.

Under the cloud-murk Grendel moved
towards it until it shone above him, a sheer keep
of fortified gold.

Spurned and joyless, he journeyed on ahead
and arrived at the bawn. The iron-braced door
turned on its hinge when his hands touched it.
Then his rage boiled over, he ripped open
the mouth of the building, maddening for blood, pacing
the length of the patterned floor
with his loathsome tread, while a baleful light,
flame more than light, flared
from his eyes. He saw many men in the mansion, sleeping,
a ranked company of kinsman and warriors
quartered together. And his glee was demonic,
picturing the mayhem:
Before morning he would rip
life from limb and devour them, feed on their flesh;
but his fate that night was due to change,
his days of ravening had come to an end.

For mighty and canny,
Hygelac's kinsman was keenly watching
for the first move the monster would make.
Nor did the creature keep him waiting

but struck suddenly and started in;
he grabbed and mauled a man on his bench,
bit into his bone-lappings, bolted down his blood
and gorged on him in lumps, leaving the body
utterly lifeless,
eaten up
hand and foot.

Venturing closer, his talon was raised to attack Beowulf
where he lay on the bed; he was bearing in
with open claw when the alert hero's
comeback and armlock forestalled him utterly.
The captain of evil discovered himself
in a handgrip harder than anything
he had ever encountered in any man
on the face of the earth. Every bone in his body
quailed and recoiled, but he could not escape.
He was desperate to flee to his den and hide
with the devil's litter, for in all his days
he had never been clamped or cornered like this.

Then Beowulf sprang to his feet
and got a firm hold. Fingers were bursting,
the monster back-tracking, the man overpowering.
The dread of the land was desperate to escape,
to take a roundabout road and flee
to his lair in the fens. The latching power
in his fingers weakened; it was the worst trip
the terror-monger had taken to Heorot.
And now the timbers trembled and sang,
a hall-session that harrowed every Dane inside the stockade.

Then an extraordinary wail arose, and bewildering fear
came over the Danes. Everyone felt it
who heard that cry as it echoed off the wall,
a God-cursed scream and strain of catastrophe.
The howl of the loser, the lament of the hell-serf
keening his wound.

Grendel:
overwhelmed and manacled tight
by Beowulf who of all men

was foremost
and strongest
in the days of this life.

The Blind Men and the Elephant

John Godfrey Sax

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“God bless me! But the Elephant
Is very like a wall!”

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried “Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me ‘tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!”

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake;
“I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a snake!”

The Fourth reached out an eager hand
And felt about the knee.
“What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,” quoth he,

‘Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!”

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: “E’en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!”

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
“I see,” quoth he, “the Elephant
Is very like a rope!”

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL.
So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
No one of them has seen!

The Builders

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care

Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.

Casey at the Bat

Ernest Lawrence Thayer

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day:
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play,
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,
A pall-like silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought, "If only Casey could but get a whack at that—
We'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat."

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
And the former was a hoodoo, while the latter was a cake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;
And when the dust had lifted, and men saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
It pounded on the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile lit Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
Defiance flashed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.

Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—
“That ain’t my style,” said Casey. “Strike one!” the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore;
“Kill him! Kill the umpire!” shouted someone on the stand;
And it’s likely they’d have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey’s visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the dun sphere flew;
But Casey still ignored it and the umpire said, “Strike two!”

“Fraud!” cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered “Fraud!”
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn’t let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey’s lip, his teeth are clenched in hate,
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate;
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey’s blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favoured land the sun is shining bright,
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,
But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.

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!

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 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!

The Country Mouse and the City Mouse

Richard Scrafton Sharpe

In a snug little cot lived a fat little mouse,
Who enjoyed, unmolested, the range of the house;
With plain food content, she would breakfast on cheese,
She dined upon bacon, and supped on grey peas.

A friend from the town to the cottage did stray,
And he said he was come a short visit to pay;
So the mouse spread her table as gay as you please,
And brought the nice bacon and charming grey peas.

The visitor frowned, and he thought to be witty:
Cried he, "You must know, I am come from the city,
Where we all should be shocked at provisions like these,
For we never eat bacon and horrid grey peas.

"To town come with me, I will give you a treat:
Some excellent food, most delightful to eat.
With me shall you feast just as long as you please;
Come, leave this fat bacon and shocking grey peas."

This kind invitation she could not refuse,
And the city mouse wished not a moment to lose;
Reluctant she quitted the fields and the trees,
The delicious fat bacon and charming grey peas.

They slyly crept under a gay parlor door,
Where a feast had been given the evening before;
And it must be confessed they on dainties did seize,
Far better than bacon, or even grey peas.

Here were custard and trifle, and cheesecakes good store,
Nice sweetmeats and jellies, and twenty things more;
All that art had invented the palate to please,
Except some fat bacon and smoking grey peas.

They were nicely regaling, when into the room
Came the dog and the cat, and the maid with a broom:

They jumped in a custard both up to their knees;
The country mouse sighed for her bacon and peas.

Cried she to her friend, "Get me safely away,
I can venture no longer in London to stay;
For if oft you receive interruptions like these,
Give me my nice bacon and charming grey peas."

The Cross Was His Own

Author Unknown

They borrowed a bed to lay His head,
The Christ the Lord came down;
They borrowed a donkey in the mountain pass
For Him to ride to town.

But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
were His own.

He borrowed the bread when the crowd he fed
On the grassy mountain side;
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which He satisfied.

But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
were His own.

He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude;
He borrowed the nest in which to rest.

He had never a home as crude;
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
were His own.

He borrowed a room on the way to the tomb.
The passover lamb to eat.
They borrowed a cave, for Him a grave,
They borrowed a winding sheet.

But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
were His own.

The thorns on His head were worn in my stead.
For me the Savior died.

For guilt of my sin the nails drove in
When Him they crucified.

Though the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
were His own.

They rightly were mine—instead.

Daniel Boone

Arthur Guiterman

Daniel Boone at twenty-one
Came with his tomahawk, knife, and gun
Home from the French and Indian War
To North Carolina and the Yadkin shore.
He married his maid with a golden band,
Built his house and cleared his land;
But the deep woods claimed their son again
And he turned his face from the homes of men.

Over the Blue Ridge, dark and lone,
The Mountains of Iron, the Hills of Stone,
Braving the Shawnee's jealous wrath,
He made his way on the Warrior's Path.
Alone he trod the shadowed trails;
But he was lord of a thousand vales
As he roved Kentucky, far and near,
Hunting the buffalo, elk, and deer.
What joy to see, what joy to win
So fair a land for his kith and kin,
Of streams unstained and woods unhewn!
"Elbow room!" laughed Daniel Boone.

On the Wilderness Road that his axmen
made
The settlers flocked to the first stockade;
The deerskin shirts and the coonskin caps
Filed through the glens and the mountain
gaps;
And hearts were high in the fateful spring
When the land said "Nay!" to the stubborn
king.
While the men of the East of farm and town
Strove with the troops of the British Crown,
Daniel Boone from a surge of hate
Guarded a nation's westward gate.

Down in the fort in a wave of flame
The Shawnee horde and the Mingo came,
And the stout logs shook in a storm of lead;
But Boone stood firm and the savage fled.
Peace! And the settlers flocked anew,
The farm lands spread, the town lands grew;
But Daniel Boone was ill at ease
When he saw the smoke in his forest trees.
"There'll be no game in the country soon.
Elbow room!" cried Daniel Boone.

Straight as a pine at sixty-five—
Time enough for a man to thrive—
He launched his bateau on Ohio's breast
And his heart was glad as he oared it west;
There was kindly folk and his own true blood
Where great Missouri rolls his flood;
New woods, new streams, and room to
spare,
And Daniel Boone found comfort there.
Yet far he ranged toward the sunset still,
Where the Kansas runs and the Smoky Hill,
And the prairies toss, by the south wind
blown;
And he killed his bear on the Yellowstone.
But ever he dreamed of new domains
With vaster woods and wider plains;
Ever he dreamed of a world-to-be
Where there are no bounds and the soul is
free.
At fourscore-five, still stout and hale,
He heard a call to a farther trail;
So he turned his face where the stars are
strewn;
"Elbow room!" sighed Daniel Boone.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

George Gordon Byron

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

The Dreams

Eugene Field

Two dreams came down to earth one night
From the realm of mist and dew;
One was a dream of the old, old days,
And one was a dream of the new.
One was a dream of a shady lane
That led to the pickerel pond
Where the willows and rushes bowed
themselves
To the brown old hills beyond.
And the people that peopled the old-time
dream
Were pleasant and fair to see,
And the dreamer he walked with them again
As often of old walked he.
Oh, cool was the wind in the shady lane
That tangled his curly hair!
Oh, sweet was the music the robins made
To the springtime everywhere!
Was it the dew the dream had brought
From yonder midnight skies,
Or was it tears from the dear, dead years
That lay in the dreamer's eyes?
The other dream ran fast and free,
As the moon benignly shed
Her golden grace on the smiling face
In the little trundle-bed.
For 'twas a dream of times to come
Of the glorious noon of day
Of the summer
that follows the careless spring
When the child is done with play.

And 'twas a dream of the busy world
Where valorous deeds are done;
Of battles fought in the cause of right,
And of victories nobly won.
It breathed no breath of the dear old home
And the quiet joys of youth;
It gave no glimpse of the good old friends
Or the old-time faith and truth.
But 'twas a dream of youthful hopes,
And fast and free it ran,
And it told to a little sleeping child
Of a boy become a man!
These were the dreams that came one night
To earth from yonder sky;
There were the dreams two dreamers
dreamed
My little boy and I.
And in our hearts my boy and I
Were glad that it was so;
He loved to dream of days to come,
And I of long ago.
So from our dreams my boy and I
Unwillingly awoke,
But neither of his precious dream
Unto the other spoke.
Yet of the love we bore those dreams
Gave each his tender sign;
For there was triumph in his eyes—
And there were tears in mine!

The Dying Father

Les Cox

The doctors shook their heads and said,
 "All hope for him is past ...
'Twill be a miracle if he
 Another day will last!"

The gray-haired man had read their lips.
 Then asked to see his wife;
He told her, "Dear, call all the kids,
 While I'm still blessed with life."
With family then around his bed,
 So anxious and forlorn,
He hugged and told them, one by one,
 "I'll see you in the mom."

The last to see him was his son
 Who was his "pride and joy";
With tears that filled his eyes he said:
 "Good-bye, my darling boy!"

His son replied, "Dear dad, why did
 You say these words to me
Won't I meet you when comes the morn—
 I'm in your family?"

His father then replied, "Dear son,
 The Devil's way you've trod ...
And where I'm going you can't come,
 Unless you trust in God!...

So many tears I've shed for you—
 Oft times I couldn't sleep;
For like my Savior I so love
 His lost and dying sheep!"

This son was filled with deepest grief,
 Then hugged his dying dad,
And said, "Could Jesus love someone
 Who's been so mean and bad?"

His father said, "Oh yes, He can—
 Just bow your head and pray!"

Then Jesus came into his heart,
 And joy was great that day!
And though death took him, heaven left

A smile none could erase;
"Safe in the fold!" was written on
That blessed father's face!

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 faulchion 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!

Hiawatha's Childhood

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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.
Beat 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!"

Many things Nokomis taught him
Of the stars that shine in heaven;
Showed him ishkoodah, the comet,
Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses,
Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits,
Warriors with their plumes and war-clubs
Flaring far away to northward
In the frosty nights of winter;
Showed the broad white road in heaven,
Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,
Running straight across the heavens,
Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.

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 fire-fly 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 fire-fly,
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!"

Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water,
Saw the flecks and shadows on it,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?"
And good Nokomis answered:

"Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her;
'Tis her body that you see there."

Saw the rainbow in the heaven,
In the eastern sky the rainbow,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered:

"'Tis the heaven of flowers you see there;
All the wild-flowers of the forest,
All the lilies of the prairie,

When on earth they fade and perish,
Blossom in that heaven above us."
When he heard the owls at midnight,
Hooting, laughing in the forest,
"What is that?" he cried in terror;

"What is that," he said, "Nokomis?"

And the good Nokomis answered;

"That is but the owl and owlet,

Talking in their native language,

Talking, scolding at each other."

Then the little Hiawatha

Learned their names and all their secrets,

How they built their nests in summer,

Where they hid themselves in winter,

Talked with them whene'er he met them,

Called them "Hiawatha's Chickens."

Of all beasts he learned the language,

Learned their names and all their secrets,

How the beavers built their lodges,

Where the squirrels hid their acorns,

How the reindeer ran so swiftly,

Why the rabbit was so timid,

Talked with them whene'er he met them,

Called them "Hiawatha's Brothers."

The House with Nobody in It

Joyce Kilmer

Whenever I walk to Suffron along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

The house on the road to Suffron needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should do, a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffron along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken heart.

How Do You Tackle Your Work?

Edgar A. Guest

How do you tackle your work each day?
Are you scared of the job you find?
Do you grapple the task that comes your way
With a confident, easy mind?
Do you stand right up to the work ahead
Or fearfully pause to view it?
Do you start to toil with a sense of dread
Or feel that you're going to do it?

You can do as much as you think you can,
But you'll never accomplish more;
If you're afraid of yourself, young man,
There's little for you in store.
For failure comes from the inside first,
It's there if we only knew it,
And you can win, though you face the worst,
If you feel that you're going to do it.

Success! It's found in the soul of you,
And not in the realm of luck!
The world will furnish the work to do,
But you must provide the pluck.
You can do whatever you think you can,
It's all in the way you view it.
It's all in the start that you make, young man:
You must feel that you're going to do it.

How do you tackle your work each day?
With confidence clear, or dread?
What to yourself do you stop and say
When a new task lies ahead?
What is the thought that is in your mind?
Is fear ever running through it?
If so, just tackle the next you find
By thinking you're going to do it.

The Fish

Elizabeth Bishop

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth.
He didn't fight.
He hadn't fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,
and its pattern of darker brown
was like wallpaper:
shapes like full-blown roses
stained and lost through age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
fine rosettes of lime,
and infested
with tiny white sea-lice,
and underneath two or three
rags of green weed hung down.
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
- the frightening gills,
fresh and crisp with blood,
that can cut so badly I thought of the coarse
white flesh
packed in like feathers,
the big bones and the little bones,
the dramatic reds and blacks
of his shiny entrails,
and the pink swim-bladder
like a big peony.
I looked into his eyes
which were far larger than mine
but shallower, and yellowed,
the irises backed and packed
with tarnished tinfoil

seen through the lenses
of old scratched isinglass.
They shifted a little, but not
to return my stare.
- It was more like the tipping
of an object toward the light.
I admired his sullen face,
the mechanism of his jaw,
and then I saw
that from his lower lip
- if you could call it a lip
grim, wet, and weaponlike,
hung five old pieces of fish-line,
or four and a wire leader
with the swivel still attached,
with all their five big hooks
grown firmly in his mouth.
A green line, frayed at the end
where he broke it, two heavier lines,
and a fine black thread
still crimped from the strain and snap
when it broke and he got away.
Like medals with their ribbons
frayed and wavering,
a five-haired beard of wisdom
trailing from his aching jaw.
I stared and stared
and victory filled up
the little rented boat,
from the pool of bilge
where oil had spread a rainbow
around the rusted engine
to the bailer rusted orange,
the sun-cracked thwarts,
the oarlocks on their strings,
the gunnels- until everything
was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
And I let the fish go.

If

Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give away to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream and not make dreams your master;
If you can think and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop to build 'em up with wornout tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which say to them: "Hold on!"
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

If Jesus Came to Your House

Author Unknown

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two,
 If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
 And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best—
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there,
 That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare!
But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door,
 With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,
 Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard—
 And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
 Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder-if the Savior spent a day or two with you—
 Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?
 Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
 And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read,
 And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go,
 Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
 Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
 If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.

In Times Like These

Helen Steiner Rice

We read the headlines daily
and listen to the news,
We shake our heads despairingly
and glumly sing the blues—
We are restless and dissatisfied
and we do not feel secure,
We are vaguely discontented
with the things we must endure ...

This violent age we live in
is filled with nameless fears
As we listen to the newscasts
that come daily to our ears,
And we view the threatening future
with sad sobriety
As we're surrounded daily
by increased anxiety ...

How can we find security
or stand on solid ground
When there's violence and dissension
and confusion all around;
Where can we go for refuge
from the rising tides of hate,
Where can we find a haven
to escape this shameful fate...

So instead of reading headlines
that disturb the heart and mind,
Let us open up the BIBLE
and in doing so we'll find
That this age is no different
from the millions gone before,
But in every hour of crisis
God has opened up a door
For all who seek His guidance
and trust His all-wise plan,
For God provides protection
beyond that devised by man...

And we learn that each TOMORROW
is not ours to understand,
But lies safely in the keeping
of the great Creator's Hand,
And to have the steadfast knowledge
that WE NEVER WALK ALONE
And to rest in the assurance
that our EVERY NEED IS KNOWN
Will help dispel our worries,
our anxieties and care,
For doubt and fear are vanquished
in THE PEACEFULNESS OF PRAYER

The Lost Purse

Edgar A. Guest

I remember the excitement and the terrible alarm
That worried everybody when William broke his arm;
An' how frantic Pa and Ma got only j es' the other day
When they couldn't find the baby 'coz he'd up and
walked away; But I'm sure there's no excitement that our house
has ever shook Like the times Ma can't remember where she's put
her pocketbook.

When the laundry man is standin' at the door an'wants his pay
Ma hurries to get it, an' the fun starts right away.
She hustles to the sideboard, 'coz she knows exactly where
She can put her hand right on it, but alas! it isn't there.
She tries the parlor table an' she goes upstairs to look,
An' once more she can't remember where she put her pocketbook.

She tells us that she had it just a half an hour ago,
An' now she cannot find it though she's hunted high and low;
She's searched the kitchen cupboard an' the bureau drawers upstairs,
An' it's not behind the sofa nor beneath the parlor chairs.
She makes us kids get busy searching every little nook,
An' this time say she's certain that she's lost her pocketbook.

She calls Pa at the office an' he laughs I guess, for then
She always mumbles something 'bout the heartlessness of men.
She calls to mind a peddler who came to the kitchen door,
An' she's certain from his whiskers an'the shabby clothes he wore
An' his dirty shirt an' collar that he must have been a crook,
An' she's positive that feller came and got her pocketbook.

But at last she allus finds it in some queer an' funny spot,
Where she'd put it in a hurry, an'had somehow clean forgot;
An' she heaves a sigh of gladness, an' she says, "Well, I declare,
I would take an oath this minute that I never put it there."
An' we're peaceable an' quiet till next time Ma goes to look
An' finds she can't remember where she put her pocketbook.

Ma and the Auto

Edgar A. Guest

Before we take an auto ride Pa says to Ma: "My dear,
Now just remember I don't need suggestions from the rear.
If you will just sit still back there and hold in check your fright,
I'll take you where you want to go and get you back all right.
Remember that my hearing's good and also I'm not blind,
And I can drive this car without suggestions from behind."

Ma promises that she'll keep still, then off we gayly start,
But soon she notices ahead a peddler and his cart.
"You'd better toot your horn," says she, "to let him know we're near;
He might turn out!" and Pa replies: "just shriek at him, my dear."
And then he adds: "Some day, so me guy will make a lot of dough
By putting horns on tonneau seats for women-folks to blow!

A little farther on Ma cries: "He signaled for a turn!"
And Pa says: "Did he?" in a tone that's hot enough to burn.
"Oh, there's a boy on roller skates!" cries Ma. "Now do go slow.
I'm sure he doesn't see our car." And Pa says: "I dunno,
I think I don't need glasses yet, but really it may be
That I am blind and cannot see what's right in front of me."

If Pa should speed the car a bit some rigs to hurry past
Ma whispers: "Do be careful now. You're driving much too fast."
And all the time she's pointing out the dangers of the street
And keeps him posted on the roads where trolley cars he'll meet.
Last night when we got safely home, Pa sighed and said: "My dear,
I'm sure we've all enjoyed the drive you gave us from the rear!"

Mending Wall

Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass
abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a
stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I
mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them
made,
But at spring mending-time we find them
there.

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to
each.

And some are loaves and some so nearly
balls

We have to use a spell to make them
balance:

'Stay where you are until our backs are
turned!'

We wear our fingers rough with handling
them.

Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good
neighbors'.

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows?

But here there are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.' I could say '.Elves' to
him,

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage
armed.

He moves in darkness as it seems to me
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good
neighbors."

Mother's Glasses

Edgar A. Guest

I've told about the times that Ma can't find her pocketbook
And how we have to hustle round for it to help her look,
But there's another care we know that often comes our way,
I guess it happens easily a dozen times a day.
It starts when first the postman through the door a letter passes,
And Ma says: "Goodness gracious me! Wherever are my glasses?"

We hunt 'em on the mantelpiece an' by the kitchen sink,
Until Ma says: "Now, children, stop, an' give me time to think
Just when it was I used 'em last an' just exactly where.
Yes, now I know—the dining room. I'm sure you'll find 'em there."
We even look behind the clock, we busy boys an' lasses,
Until somebody runs across Ma's missing pair of glasses.

We've found 'em in the Bible, an' we've found 'em in the flour,
We've found 'em in the sugar bowl, an' once we looked an hour
Before we came across 'em in the padding of her chair;
An' many a time we've found 'em in the topknot of her hair,
It's a search that ruins order an' the home completely wrecks,
For there's no place where you may not find poor Ma's elusive specs.

But we're mighty glad, I tell you, that the duty's ours to do,
An' we hope to hunt those glasses till our time of life is through;
It's a little bit of service that is joyous in its thrill,
It's a task that calls us daily an' we hope it always will.
Rich or poor, the saddest mortals of all the joyless masses
Are the ones who have no mother dear to lose her reading glasses.

Mother's Ugly Hands

Mary Mason

When Jean was just a little girl
She used to play for hours
With Tinker-Cat or Peter-Dog,
Or help Mom with her flowers.
But then sometimes her mom would stop
The work she had to do
To read to Jean or play with her;
And as God planned, Jean grew.
But then one day she realized
Her mom was not the same
As those of other little girls;
And Jean grew up with shame,
For Mother's hands were ugly hands,
Misformed and scarred and red.
And somehow love for Mother changed
To selfishness and dread.
Somehow she never asked her mom
How those scars came to be,
Too busy with the selfish fear
That other eyes might see.
But then one time Jean's grandma came
With suitcase packed to stay,
And it was at her grandma's feet
The truth came out one day.
"When you were just a tiny thing,
About the age of two
One day your clothing caught on fire,
Though how we never knew;
Your mother said she scarcely felt
The searing tongues of flame,

As with her hands she fought the fire.
And that is how she came
To have the scars you hate so much;
She did it all for you.
You were not burned as bad as she,
And so you never knew."
"Oh, Grandma, I am so ashamed!"
And Jean began to weep.
"To think my mother loved me so!"
That night she couldn't sleep
And made her way to Mother's room
And in a rush of tears
Received forgiveness for the hate
She harbored all those years.
That's how it is with Mother love;
Of death it's unafraid.
So very much like dying love
On Calvary's hill portrayed.
Our Jesus too, bears ugly marks
Of suffering and of pain.
He did it all for you and me,
But it was not in vain.
For, as we view His suffering,
We, too, must cry, "Forgive!"
For only through His dying love
Are we prepared to live.
I'm thankful, God, for Mother love
Which bravely fought the fire,
And for my Jesus' dying love
Which—that love did inspire.

The Naming Of Cats

T. S. Eliot

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES.
First of all, there's the name that the family use daily,
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo or James,
Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill Bailey--
All of them sensible everyday names.
There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the dames:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter--
But all of them sensible everyday names.
But I tell you, a cat needs a name that's particular,
A name that's peculiar, and more dignified,
Else how can he keep up his tail perpendicular,
Or spread out his whiskers, or cherish his pride?
Of names of this kind, I can give you a quorum,
Such as Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Coricopat,
Such as Bombalurina, or else JellylorumNames that never belong to more than one cat.
But above and beyond there's still one name left over,
And that is the name that you never will guess;
The name that no human research can discover--
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess.
When you notice a cat in profound meditation,
The reason, I tell you, is always the same:
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation
Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:
His ineffable effable
Effanineffable
Deep and inscrutable singular Name.

Nathan Hale

Francis Miles Finch

To drumbeat, and heartbeat,
A soldier marches by;
There is color in his cheek,
There is courage in his eye,
Yet to drumbeat and heartbeat
In a moment he must die.
By the starlight and moonlight,
He seeks the Briton's camp;
He hears the rustling flag,
And the armed sentry's tramp;
And the starlight and moonlight
His silent wanderings lamp.
With slow tread and still tread,
He scans the tented line;
And he counts the battery guns,
By the gaunt and shadowy pine;
And his slow tread and still tread
Gives no warning sign.
The dark wave, the plumed wave,
It meets his eager glance;
And it sparkles 'neath the stars,
Like the glimmer of a lance
A dark wave, a plumed wave,
On an emerald expanse.
A sharp clang, a steel clang,
And terror in the sound!
For the sentry, falcon-eyed,
In the camp a spy hath found;
With a sharp clang, a steel clang,
The patriot is bound.
With calm brow, and steady brow,
He listens to his doom;
In his look there is no fear,
Nor a shadow-trace of gloom;
But with calm brow and steady brow,
He robes him for the tomb.
In the long night, the still night

He kneels upon the sod;
And the brutal guards withhold
E'en the solemn Word of God!
In the long night, the still night,
He walks where Christ hath trod.
'Neath the blue morn, the sunny morn,
He dies upon the tree;
And he mourns that he can lose
But one life for Liberty;
And in the blue morn, the sunny morn,
His spirit wings are free.
But his last words, his message-words,
They burn, lest friendly eye
Should read how proud and calm
A patriot could die,
With his last words, his dying words,
A soldier's battle cry.
From the Fame-leaf and Angel-leaf,
From monument and urn,
The sad of earth, the glad of heaven,
His tragic fate shall learn;
But on Fame-leaf and Angel-leaf
The name of HALE shall burn!

Partridge Time

Edgar A. Guest

When Pa came home last night he had a package in his hand;
“Now Ma,” said he, “I’ve something here which you will say is grand.
A friend of mine got home today from hunting in the woods,
He’s been away a week or two, and got back with the goods.
He had a corking string of birds-I wish you could have seen ‘em!”

“If you’ve brought any partridge home,” said Ma, “you’ll have to clean ‘em.”
“Now listen, Ma,” said Pa to her, “these birds are mighty rare.
I know a lot of men who’d pay a heap to get a pair.
But it’s against the law to sell this splendid sort of game,
And if you bought ‘em you would have to use a different name.

It isn’t every couple has a pair to eat between ‘em.”
“If you got any partridge there,” says Ma, “you’ll have to clean ‘em.”
“Whenever kings want something fine, it’s partridge that they eat,
and millionaires prefer ‘em, too, to any sort of meat.
About us everywhere tonight are folks who’d think it fine
If on a brace of partridge they could just sit down to dine.
They’ve got a turkey skinned to death; they’re sweeter than a chicken.”
“If that’s what you’ve brought home,” says Ma, “you’ll have to do the pickin’.”

And then Pa took off the paper and showed Ma what he had.
“There, look at those two beauties! Don’t they start you feelin’ glad?”
An’ ain’t your mouth a’waterin’ to think how fine they’ll be
When you’ve cooked ‘em up for dinner, one for you an’ one for me?”
But Ma just turned her nose up high, and said, when she had seen ‘em,
“You’ll never live to eat ‘em if you wait for me to clean ‘em.”

Peace Hymn of the Republic

Henry van Dyke

O Lord, our God, Thy mighty hand
 Hath made our country free;
From all her broad and happy land
 May praise arise to Thee.
Fulfill the promise of her youth,
 Her liberty defend;
By law and order, love and truth,
 America befriend!
The strength of every state increase
 In Union's golden chain;
Her thousand cities fill with peace,
 Her million fields with grain.
The virtues of her mingled blood
 In one new people blend;
By unity and brotherhood
 America befriend!
O suffer not her feet to stray;
 But guide her untaught might,
That she may walk in peaceful day,
 And lead the world in light.
Bring down the proud, lift up the poor,
 Unequal ways amend;
By justice, nation-wide and sure.
 America befriend!
Through all the waiting land proclaim
 Thy gospel of good-will;
And may the music of Thy name
 In every bosom thrill.
O'er hill and vale, from sea to sea,
 Thy holy reign extend;
By faith and hope and charity,
 America befriend!

A Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!-
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,

Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, how'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

The Real Successes

Edgar A. Guest

You think that the failures are many,
You think the successes are few,
But you judge by the rule of the penny,
And not by the good that men do.
You judge men by standards of treasure
That merely obtain upon earth,
When the brother you're snubbing may measure
Full-length to God's standard of worth.

The failures are not in the ditches,
The failures are not in the ranks,
They have missed the acquirement of riches,
Their fortunes are not in the banks.
Their virtues are never paraded,
Their worth is not always in view,
But they're fighting their battles unaided,
And fighting them honestly, too.

There are failures today in high places
The failures aren't all in the low;
There are rich men with scorn in their faces
Whose homes are but castles of woe.
The homes that are happy are many,
And numberless fathers are true;
And this is the standard, if any,
By which we must judge what men do.

Wherever loved ones are awaiting
The toiler to kiss and caress,
Though in Bradstreet's he hasn't a rating,
He still is a splendid success.
If the dear ones who gather about him
And know what he's striving to do
Have never a reason to doubt him,
Is he less successful than you?

You think that the failures are many,

You judge by men's profits in gold;
You judge by the rule of the penny-In
this true success isn't told.
This falsely man's story is telling,
For wealth often brings on distress,
But wherever love brightens a dwelling,
There lives, rich or poor, a success.

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 an 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,
Nor 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 tonight,
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will bum so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, through wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

Sheridan's Ride

Thomas Buchanan Read

UP from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war,
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good, broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need;
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,
The dust, like smoke from the cannon's mouth;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed, and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road

Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind,
And the steed, like a barque fed with furnace ire,
Swept on, with his wild eyes full of fire.
But lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops;
What was done? what to do? a glance told him both,
Then, striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say,
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester, down to save the day!"

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldier's Temple of Fame;
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
"Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!"

The Singer's Revenge

Edgar A. Guest

It was a singer of renown who did a desperate thing,
For all who asked him out to dine requested him to sing.
This imposition on his art they couldn't seem to see.
For friendship's sake they thought he ought to work without a fee.

And so he planned a dinner, too, of fish and fowl and wine
And asked his friends of high degree to come with him to dine.
His banker and his tailor came, his doctor, too, was there,
Likewise a leading plumber who'd become a millionaire.

The singer fed his guests and smiled, a gracious host was he;
With every course he ladled out delicious flattery,
And when at last the meal was done, he tossed his man a wink,
"Good friends," said he, "I've artists here you'll all enjoy, I think.

"I've trousers needing buttons, Mr. Tailor, if you please,
Will you oblige us all tonight by sewing some on these?
I've several pairs all handy-by, now let your needle jerk;
My guests will be delighted to behold you as you work.

"Now, doctor, just a moment, pray, I cannot sing a note;
I asked you here because I thought you'd like to spray my throat;
I know that during business hours for this you charge a fee,
But surely you'll be glad to serve my friends, tonight, and me?"

The plumber then was asked if he would mend a pipe or two;
A very simple thing, of course, to urge a friend to do;
But reddest grew the banker's face and reddest grew his neck,
Requested in his dinner clothes to cash a good sized check.

His guests astounded looked at him. Said they: "We are surprised!
To ask us here to work for you is surely ill-advised.
'Tis most improper, impolite!" The singer shrieked in glee:
"My friends, I've only treated you as you have treated me."

Song

Celia Thaxter

We sail toward evening's lonely star
That trembles in the tender blue;
One single cloud, a dusky bar,
Burnt with dull carmine through and through,
Slow smouldering in the summer sky,
Lies low along the fading west.
How sweet to watch its splendors die,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed!

The soft breeze freshens, leaps the spray
To kiss our cheeks, with sudden cheer;
Upon the dark edge of the bay
Lighthouses kindle, far and near,
And through the warm deeps of the sky
Steal faint star-clusters, while we rest
In deep refreshment, thou and I,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed.

How like a dream are earth and heaven,
Star-beam and darkness, sky and sea;
Thy face, pale in the shadowy even,
Thy quiet eyes that gaze on me!
O realize the moment's charm,
Thou dearest! we are at life's best,
Folded in God's encircling arm,
Wave-cradled thus and wind-caressed.

The Spider and the Fly

Mary Howitt

“Will you walk into my parlor?” said the Spider to the Fly,
‘Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlor is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there.”
“Oh no, no,” said the little Fly, “to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come down again.”

“I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?” said the Spider to the Fly.
“There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck you in!”
“Oh no, no,” said the little Fly, “for I’ve often heard it said,
They never, never wake up again, who sleep upon your bed!”

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, “Dear friend, what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that’s nice;
I’m sure you’re very welcome—will you please to take a slice?”
“Oh no, no,” said the little Fly, “kind sir, that cannot be,
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not wish to see.”

“Sweet creature,” said Spider, “you’re witty and you’re wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you’ll step in a moment dear, you shall behold yourself.”
“I thank you gentle sir,” she said, “for what you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I’ll call another day.”

The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again;
So he wove a subtle web, in a little comer sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing:
“Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple—there’s a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead.”

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again!

Spring (from *In Memoriam*)

Alfred Lord Tennyson

DIP down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year, delaying long:
Thou dost expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

Now fades the last long streak of snow;
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the sea-mew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly

The Story of Albrecht Dürer

Helen Steiner Rice

As you read this poem
Perhaps you'd like to know
That this story really happened
Many centuries ago
When two talented young artists
Were struggling hard to earn
Just enough to live on
So both of them might learn
How to be great artists
And leave behind a name
That many centuries later
Would still retain its fame,
But in their dire necessity
For the warmth of food and fire,
One of the artists sacrificed
His dream and heart's desire
So he might earn a living
And provide enough to eat
'Til both of them were back again
Securely on their feet ...
But months and years of grueling toil
Destroyed the craftsman's touch,
And scarred and stiffened were the hands
That held promise of so much,
He could no longer hold a brush
The way he used to do,

And the dream he once had cherished,
No longer could come true ...
So uncomplainingly he lived
With his friend who had succeeded
Who now could purchase all the things
They once had so much needed. .
But the famous ALBRECHT DÜRER,
The friend we're speaking of,
Was always conscious that he owed
A debt of thanks and love
To one who sacrificed his skill
So that Dürer might succeed,
But how can anyone repay
A sacrificial deed,
But when he saw these hands in prayer
He decided he would paint
A picture for the world to see
Of this "unheralded saint" ...
So down through countless ages
And in many, many lands
All men could see the beauty
In these toilworn PRAYING HANDS ...
And seeing, they would recognize
That behind FAME and SUCCESS
Somebody sacrificed a dream
For another's happiness.

Thanksgiving

Edgar A. Guest

For strength to face the battle's might,
For men that dare to die for right,
 For hearts above the lure of gold
 And fortune's soft and pleasant way,
For courage of our days of old,
 Great God of All, we kneel and pray.
We thank Thee for our splendid youth.
Who fight for liberty and truth,
 Within whose breasts there glows anew
 The glory of the altar fires
Which our heroic fathers knew—
 God make them worthy of their sires!
We thank Thee for our mothers fair
Who through the sorrows they must bear
 Still smile, and give their hearts to woe,
 Yet bravely heed the day's command—
That mothers, yet to be, may know
 A free and glorious motherland.
Oh, God, we thank Thee for the skies
Where our flag now in glory flies!
 We thank Thee that no love of gain
 Is leading us, but that we fight
To keep our banner free from stain
 And that we die for what is right.
Oh, God, we thank Thee that we may
Lift up our eyes to Thee today;
 We thank Thee we can face this test
 With honor and spotless name,
And that we serve a world distressed
 Unselfishly and free from shame.

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.

To the Humble

Edgar A. Guest

If all the flowers were roses,
 If never daisies grew,
If no old-fashioned posies
 Drank in the morning dew,
Then man might have some reason
 To whimper and complain,
And speak these words of treason,
 That all our toil is vain.
If all the stars were Saturns
 That twinkle in the night,
Of equal size and patterns,
 And equally as bright,
Then men in humble places,
 With humble work to do,
With frowns upon their faces
 Might trudge their journey through.
But humble stars and posies
 Still do their best, although
They're planets not, nor roses,
 To cheer the world below.
And those old-fashioned daisies
 Delight the soul of man;
They're here, and this their praise is
 They work the Master's plan.
Though humble be your labor,
 And modest be your sphere,
Come, envy not your neighbor
 Whose light shines brighter here.
Does God forget the daisies
 Because the roses bloom?
Shall you not win His praises
 By toiling at your loom?
Have you, the toiler humble,
 Just reason to complain,
To shirk your task and grumble
 And think that it is vain
Because you see a brother

With greater work to do?
No fame of his can smother
The merit that's in you.

Vacation Time

Edgar A. Guest

Vacation time! How glad it seemed
When as a boy I sat and dreamed
Above my school books, of the fun
That I should claim when toil was done;
And, oh, how oft my youthful eye
Went wandering with the patch of sky
That drifted by the window panes
O'er pleasant fields and dusty lanes,
Where I would race and romp and shout
The very moment school was out.
My artful little fingers then
Feigned labor with the ink and pen,
But heart and mind were far away,
Engaged in some glad bit of play.

The last two weeks dragged slowly by;
Time hadn't then learned how to fly.
It seemed the clock upon the wall
From hour to hour could only crawl,
And when the teacher called my name,
Unto my cheeks the crimson came,
For I could give no answer clear
To questions that I didn't hear.

"Wool gathering, were you?" oft she said
And smiled to see me blushing red.
Her voice had roused me from a dream
Where I was fishing in a stream,
And, if I now recall it right,
Just at the time I had a bite.

And now my youngsters dream of play
In just the very selfsame way;
And they complain that time is slow
And that the term will never go.
Their little minds with plans are filled
For joyous hours they soon will build,
And it is vain for me to say,
That have grown old and wise and gray,

That time is swift, and joy is brief;
They'll put no faith in such belief
To youthful hearts that long for play
Time is a laggard on the way.
'Twas, oh, so slow to me back then
Ere I had learned the ways of men!

Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night

Walt Whitman

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night;
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day,
One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look I shall never forget,
One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the ground,
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle,
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made my way,
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your body son of
responding laughter, (never again on earth responding,)
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate night-wind,
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battlefield spreading,
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night,
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed,
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning my chin in my hands,
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you dearest comrade - not a tear, not a
word,
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole,
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely meet again,)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd,
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully under feet,
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I
deposited,
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-field dim,
Vigil for boy of responding laughter, (never again on earth responding,)
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd,
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

The Village Blacksmith

Henry W. Longfellow

Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn 'til night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hands he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

When Pa Comes Home

Edgar A. Guest

When Pa comes home, I'm at the door,
An' then he grabs me off the floor
An' throws me up an' catches me
When I come down, an' then, says he:
"Well, how'd you get along to-day?
An' were you good, an' did you play,
An' keep right out of mamma's way?
An' how'd you get that awful bump
Above your eye? My, what a lump!
An' who spilled jelly on your shirt?

An' where'd you ever find the dirt
That's on your hands? And my! Oh, my!
I guess those eyes have had a cry,
They look so red. What was it, pray?
What has been happening here today?"

An' then he drops his coat an' hat
Upon a chair, an' says: "What's that?
Who knocked that engine on its back
An' stepped upon that piece of track?"
An' then he takes me on his knee
An' says: "What's this that now I see?
Whatever can the matter be?
Who strewed those toys upon the floor,
An' left those things behind the door?
Who upset all those parlor chairs
An' threw those blocks upon the stairs?
I guess a cyclone called today
While I was workin' far away.
Who was it worried mamma so?
It can't be anyone I know."
An' then I laugh an' say: "It's me!
Me did most ever'thing you see.
Me got this bump the time me tripped.
An' here is where the jelly slipped
Right off my bread upon my shirt,

An' when me tumbled down it hurt.

That's how me got all over dirt.

Me threw those building blocks downstairs,

An' me upset the parlor chairs, '

'Coz when you're playin' train you've got

To move things 'round an awful lot."

An' then my Pa he kisses me

An' bounces me upon his knee

An' says: "Well, well, my little lad,

What glorious fun you must have had!"