

POE TREE



Dear poetry explorer.

We had a wonderful time creating this compilation, and we thank you for embarking on this journey.

We have divided the poems by the age a child might be able to understand and enjoy them. However, these are only suggested ages, so please feel free to wander around and explore. A 'living poetry' activity follows every poem. These are not comprehension exercises, because, come on! We're not as boring as text books ;)!

This is also a work in progress, and we would love to hear your feedback and suggestions.

Poetically yours,

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*Park your cars, toss your shoes.
Become a child, shake off your blues!*

Step into our wonderland - barefooted!

The sails are unfurled, the wings are spread.
Bring your heart and leave your head.

The philosopher is wearing the clown's hat,
The king is conversing with the wizard's cat!

Let's churn the sky, let's stir the ocean,
We're ready with our poetic potion.

It's about swishing fish and soaring wings.
It's about dragons, shells and colourful things.

This is play, this is magic, this is verse,
Put it on a computer or carry it in your purse.

Take it slowly sip by sip,
Drink deep, don't let the secret slip!

Flip the pages and begin with the book,
Then pluck it from a tree and hang it on a hook.

You can sing it together, you can say it alone.
It will whisper to you when the words have gone.

Why Poetry?

We understand the need for Mathematics for numbers are everywhere, we understand the need for science for gadgets run our lives, we understand the need for language for we communicate through words. But why poetry? We can easily press the delete button when it comes to poems, from our lives, our education and our computers. Yet it is there. Why? Why should poetry be there in our lives and the lives of our children?

Poems make you see what you would have missed

Poetry teaches you to observe people and the things around with a keener eye, like a scientist.

A poem is like a still photograph. It holds a moment for you, it freezes in a word-frame the fleeting treasures before our eyes and our hearts. A poem is about noticing things. The flutter of a wing or leaf, the nod of a branch or head, the unshed tear all have a place in a poem. So do emotions strong and subtle. Poems hold a picture of moments, people, thought, emotions which we would otherwise not have looked at closely. It brings the rabbit out of his burrow and nibble at the words like carrots. The insects seem to have a language and government, faces talk. The world becomes more alive, wider and much more beautiful!

Poetry connects you to great minds

Poetry has been the chosen medium of expression of many great men. It has been a treasure house of lofty thoughts. A poem is often a rainbow bridge to a radiant world of higher consciousness. It holds the mind and pulls it up, or quietens it so that enter a space of silent knowing. A poem makes you more sensitive and aware to the deeper aspects of life. It is a hand shake with great minds that walked upon the earth and used the medium poetry to convey messages that mattered to them. A poem becomes a bridge to a subtler and finer world.

Poetry fires imagination

A poem is different from prose. It is not a complete statement or a description, it doesn't say everything. It is an invitation to discover, explore and imagination. It drops clues, hints, so you have to do your own walking to reach at the meaning. Sometimes you are one giving it a meaning. It is a journey and you step forward using the poetic map, you often create your own path. In creating it, you often discover things about yourself and the world around. A poem awakens the crucial faculty of imagination. The world changes, so do you.

Poetry empowers you

Inspirational poetry Inspirational poetry, especially which is learnt in childhood affects the emotional fabric of the individual. A verse that inspires confidence in times that are grey can often change the course of one's life. Along with the deep emotional possibilities that poetry brings, there are several obvious benefits. The gifts of language that come from poetry are obvious, the phrases, analogies, metaphors, unique expressions linger in the memory and enrich the language of the one who's learnt the poem. Those who read and learn poetry habitually have a greater ability of expressing themselves beautifully and clearly. It uplifts language and expression from basic level communication to an art.

Poetry makes you kind

Poetry awakens and sensitizes you. It gives you the gift of looking at details and understanding emotions, creating in you the capacity to empathise and imagine. Poetry reveals secrets of the human heart, in ways a common life may not. It opens you a deeper understanding of human nature. To truly understand the human elements in poetry you identify with aspects of characters or the emotions expressed, thereby deepening the experience of being human. The heart is made more refined through sensitive poems.

How does one make a poem come alive?

How do you make a poem come alive? How do you share its secrets, its message, its power? How does one *experience* a poem? Experiencing a poem is different from understanding it at a mental level, making it a mere tool for vocabulary building, embellishment or garnishing essays. We are talking about the essence of poetry, about connecting the reader (especially if s/he is a child) to its essential treasures and touching the space from where the poem came into being.

A poem is a capsule of opportunities. We'll share a few ideas how we've been doing this...

Making it natural

Take advantage of the setting. Everything can be poetic. A 'welcome' poem could be hung at the door, a poem on food could be in the kitchen pasted on the box of spices, a poem on books could (should!) be in the library. A poem need not be confined to the black and white pages of a book. A poem on the Jasmine flowers would be beautiful in a jasmine groove. The nature poets have to be found in the garden, perhaps a small laminated poem on the garden gate, or tied to a bamboo near the rose bush. It will live there and the fragrance will seep into the words as the child reads it.

Time it well

There is a season and time for all learning and absorption. Often in school, teachers are stifled with a very strict and rigid syllabus and there's little time to improvise and 'pick' a slice of literature for an occasion, season or time. A space needs to be created for poems to harmonise and beat with the pulse of the time and mood, in and out of school. If the country is burning with controversies, teenagers who are aware of current events may respond more readily to a poem that resonates with the time. Poems should welcome seasons, should dance with nature, should support human exploration, within and without.

Imagine and empathize

A poem can take one on a journey, it can give the gift of a perspective. A new way of looking. The blade of grass becomes special, it is a 'handkerchief of the lord'. The inner world of the child expands. The quality of imagination which is so alive in a child gets a direction and a sanction. Giving an empathy exercise (imagination you are the ant in the grass, the shoe that can think and feel) that leads to a poem or flows from a poem holds power. Imagination and empathy make one a more sensitive and aware human being.

Poems for creative experience

A poem is both a destination and a journey. To appreciate a poem for itself is complete. However, there is so much more to it. It can be a catalyst to a potential sleeping in a child. The exercises that follow poems (especially in this blog) stretch beyond the realm of words - a series of activities springing from the ideas expressed in a poem. They can make a collage, sketch, photograph and use craft material as a visual expression of the poetic space. Here, the purpose is to use the poem to facilitate a wider range of experiences that can help the child to grow in a variety of ways.

Poems for more poems

The most natural exercises that can be done after reading a poem, is to follow it up with the writing of another poem. The rhyme scheme, theme, character, setting, an image or simply a phrase from the poem can be used to inspire another poem. A child can write on 'leisure' while using the images that represent leisure in her/his life. An animal in a poem can be imagined to be in a different setting. The idea is to take inspiration from the poem and to travel on a poetic road on your own after that.

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Poems for 7-8 year olds



Bed in the summer
By R L Stevenson

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

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

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



Image from 'The Hawks Perch', expressionist children's books.
<http://thehawksp perch.wordpress.com/about/>. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Listen to some lovely little girls sing this poem. Click [here](#).

Can you bake a poem? Try to create a poem on how it would feel to have cake for breakfast, lunch and dinner. If you could, what words would you use as ingredients? Sit (perhaps with a grown up) and write these words down on colourful pieces of paper. Use any words that you like. Now arrange these ingredients the way you wish and come up with a lovely poem 😊

When flowers wake each morning
By Kenn Nesbitt

When flowers wake each morning
they don't have to make their beds.
And lettuce leaves aren't told to comb
the hair upon their heads.

You'd never tell asparagus
it shouldn't play with spears.
You'd never ask a stalk of corn
to wash behind its ears.

A mushroom doesn't have to
clean its room, and you'll agree
a tree won't have to study hard
to learn geometry.

I guess it should be obvious
from listening to my rant.
I'm tired of being a person;
I would rather be a plant.



*Poem and image taken from Kenn Nesbitt's official site, Kenn Nesbitt's Poetry for Kids.
Please visit <http://www.poetry4kids.com/> for more.
Link to this particular poem: [Click here](#)
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Living Poetry

Try this fun activity. Ask a grown up to take you for a walk. Take your notebook and pencils with you. Write down something about all the living things you see around you using adjectives, for example: a caring pink bird, or an adventurous insect. Then, pick your favourite thing from your list. Now, write a poem about it with colourful pens and put it up where everyone can read it ☺

Merry Sunshine
Author Unknown

Good morning, merry sunshine,
How did you wake so soon?
You've scared the little stars away,
And shone away the moon.
I watched you go to sleep last night,
Before I stopped my play,
How did you get way over there,
And, pray, where did you stay?

I never go to sleep, dear,
I just go 'round to see
My little children of the East,
Who rise to watch for me.
I waken all the birds and bees,
And flowers on my way,
Then last of all, the little child
Who stayed out late to play.



Image sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Can you catch sunshine in a bottle? Try!

Write a poem about what you did, and if it worked ☺

February Twilight
By 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.



Image sourced from commons.wikimedia.org via Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Look at the night sky, and stare at the stars. Stand quietly and look. If they were talking to you, what would they say?

**Work while you work
By M.A Stodart**



Work while you work,
Play while you play,
This is the way
To be happy each day.



All that you do,
Do with your might,
Things done by half
Are never done right.



Living poetry

Make a list of all the things you enjoy doing in the playground. Make a similar list for home.

Now, pick your favourite thing to do from these lists – something you love to do for a long time.

Talk about this with your friends. Find out what their favourite things to do at home and in the playground are. Then, write a poem about it together.

Images from:

- a. *Toolbox – myweb.bloomu.edu*
- b. *Toybox – rainpow.com*
- c. *Reading girl – raisinglittlesaints.blogspot.com*

All sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Cloud Watching
By Gareth Lancaster

There's a rhino,
There's a hippo,
And a super eight-winged bat!
There's a lion,
And a monkey,
In a giant bowler hat!

There's a castle,
With a dragon,
And the knight who's come to slay!
There's an octopus,
With shoes on,
And he's holding a bouquet!

There's a man,
With untied laces,
Who's just fallen in a pond!
And a wizard,
In galoshes,
Trying to mend his broken wand!

There's a boy,
Who's doing nothing,
Gazing up at cloudy skies.
Yes it's me,
I should be busy,
I've got school work to revise!



Image from parentsareimportant.com (July 14 2011 post by Karen Kinsel). Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

What if you could use clouds as kites and fly away? Where would you go, and whom would you take? Write a poem about it. Also, draw a cloud and hide something in it. A secret shape, or word. Then ask your friends or a grown up to look for it.

Poems for 8-10 year olds



Puppy and I

By A A Milne

I met a Man as I went walking;
We got talking,
Man and I.
"Where are you going to, Man?" I said
(I said to the Man as he went by).
"Down to the village, to get some bread.
Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met a horse as I went walking;
We got talking,
Horse and I.
"Where are you going to, Horse, today?"
(I said to the Horse as he went by).
"Down to the village to get some hay.
Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met a Woman as I went walking;
We got talking,
Woman and I.
"Where are you going to, Woman, so early?"
(I said to the Woman as she went by).
"Down to the village to get some barley.
Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met some Rabbits as I went walking;
We got talking,
Rabbits and I.
"Where are you going in your brown fur coats?"
(I said to the Rabbits as they went by).
"Down to the village to get some oats.
Will you come with us?" "No, not I."

I met a Puppy as I went walking;
We got talking,
Puppy and I.
"Where are you going this nice fine day?"
(I said to the Puppy as he went by).
"Up to the hills to roll and play."
"I'll come with you, Puppy," said I.

Living poetry

Organise a gathering of pets in your class or neighbourhood. Introduce them to one another, and discuss what you like doing most with your pet. Ask a lot of questions, and get to know other animals. You can also talk about what your pet might feel for you. Take a photo of yourself with your pet.

**A Small Dragon
By Brian Patten**

I've found a small dragon in the woodshed.
Think it must have come from deep inside a forest
because it's damp and green and leaves
are still reflecting in its eyes.

I fed it on many things, tried grass,
the roots of stars, hazel-nut and dandelion,
but it stared up at me as if to say, I need
foods you can't provide.

It made a nest among the coal,
not unlike a bird's but larger, it
is out of place here
and is quite silent.

If you believed in it
I would come hurrying to your house
to let you share my wonder,
but I want instead to see
if you yourself will pass this way.



Image from www.dragoart.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Imagine a frog or a butterfly having a birthday party. Who would they invite? What would they do? What presents would they get? Write a poem about this.

Pure Imagination
By Roald Dahl

Come with me and you'll be
In a world of pure imagination
Take a look and you'll see
Into your imagination

We'll begin with a spin
Trav'ling in the world of my creation
What we'll see will defy
Explanation

If you want to view paradise
Simply look around and view it
Anything you want to, do it
Want to change the world, there's nothing to it

There is no life I know
To compare with pure imagination
Living there, you'll be free
If you truly wish to be

There is no life I know
To compare with pure imagination
Living there, you'll be free
If you truly wish to be



Image from thekeplermission.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Watch Willy Wonka from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory sing this song [here](#).

We have all read fairy tales. Can you make one up on your own about why the moon grows and then disappears? Or about how the sea became salty? Write one, and enact it for others. Make your own dialogues and costumes! Take all the help you need from your friends or grown ups.

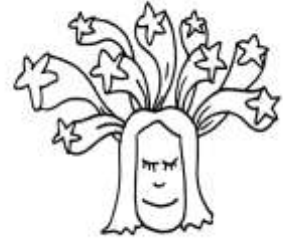


More Randomness By Tei Mickey

Must finish homework.
Bio, hard maths, German...
Oh Look! Butterfly..

Math By Rhonda Osheim

Numbers, symbols, lines,
Words, thinking, looking,
Wondering.
Problems, homework, symbols,
Clogged in my head.
Taking up space,
Not knowing when to pull it out in the future.



Cleaning my closet By Christina Beeler

As I clean my closet,
I find:
3 homework assignments,
10 rubber bands
5 dirty socks (where is the sixth?)
8 unhung shirts
9 pairs of pants
6 magazines
1 pair of glasses
3 unpaid tickets
1 broken camera
and the reason it's all in the closet.



Living poetry

If you could give a grown up, any grown up (parents, grandparents, neighbours) some homework, what would you have them do?

Images from:

- a. Boy with butterflies – www.mycutegraphics.com (black white boy catching butterflies)
- b. Boy cleaning closet – Toonclips

Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.



Rain in summer
By Henry 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!

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks;
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

(Excerpt from the original poem)

Living poetry

What is the most interesting thing you've done in the rain? Write a poem about it.

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 flavour what he eats
A little hippopotomustard.

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

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



Image from www.clipartsfree.net. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Replace the last word of every line of this poem with another word, and make a whole new poem.

The mountain and the squirrel
By Ralph Waldo Emerson

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter
“Little prig.”
Bun replied,
“You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry:
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.”



Image from www.flickrriver.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

This poem makes us think. What does it make you think of? What are the questions that came to your mind?

Can you write a ‘question poem’? A poem made only of questions? Make someone answer it.

The contents of my desk
By Kenn Nesbitt

A nail.
A nickel.
A snail.
A pickle.
A twisted-up
slinky.
A ring for
my pinky.
A blackened
banana.
A love note
from Hannah.
My doodles
of rockets.
The lint from
my pockets.
A fork-like
utensil.
But sorry...
no pencil.



Poem and image taken from Kenn Nesbitt's official site, Kenn Nesbitt's Poetry for Kids.

Please visit <http://www.poetry4kids.com/> for more.

Link to this particular poem: [Click here](#)

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Living poetry

Think of a fun way to recite this poem as a group. You can give it a tune, you can add more lines, and you can get as creative as you want. Then, record a video of your singing this poem.. What's better, you can also go to kids who are younger than you and teach them the tune to this poem. They will have fun singing this too!

How to eat a poem
By Eve Merriam

Read this poem out to the child without saying what it is about. Discuss anything and everything this could be about. Let them guess and be amazed.

Don't be polite.
Bite in.
Pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice that
may run down your chin.
It is ready and ripe now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon
or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core
or stem
or rind
or pit
or seed
or skin
to throw away



*Image from an online collaborative community -
<http://bw1.pds.org/groups/poetrystudentwork/wiki/leefa/>. Sourced from Google Images in
October, 2013.*

Living poetry

Imagine you were a fruit. What fruit would you be? What would you taste like, and when would you bloom? Who would eat you? Imagine, and write a poem about it.

Poems for 10-12 year olds



Looth Tooth
By Arden Davidson

I've got a looth tooth
that wigglth and jigglth and wriggllth.

I move it around
but it never comth out of my mouth.

I pull it, I yank it,
I twirl it, I thpank it,
but it jutht never theems
to want to come out
of ith houth.

I'd call the Tooth Fairy,
but she'th kinda thcary,
Tho I thtill cannot them to be free
of thith wiggly looth tooth,
that to tell you the truth,
ith makin' a thap outa me.

I'm going to give it
one thuper thtrong yank,
cuth I really could uthe thome money.
Great Scott! It's out! At last, it's out!
But now I'm talking funny.



Image from www.themercadoproject.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Write a magical story about your broken tooth.

Arrow and the song
By Henry Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.



Image from <http://reading.wordzila.com/grade-9-reading-lesson-9-poetry-the-arrow-and-the-song/2/>. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Think of an action of yours that had a deep impact on someone else. How do you think it made the other person feel? Write about it.

Leisure
By WH Davies

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.



Image from etc.usf.edu. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

When was the last time you stared at something? Do you remember what it felt like? Take someone you love for a walk to a new place, and take time to gaze at a tree or a flower or a building in silence. How did you feel? Write a short poem about it.

The Champa Flower
By Rabindranath Tagore

Supposing I became a *champa* flower, just for fun, and
grew on a branch high up that tree, and shook in the wind with
laughter and danced upon the newly budded leaves, would you know
me, mother?

You would call, "Baby, where are you?" and I should laugh to
myself and keep quite quiet.

I should slyly open my petals and watch you at your work.

When after your bath, with wet hair spread on your shoulders, you
walked through the shadow of the *champa* tree to the
little court where you say your prayers, you would notice the
scent of the flower, but not know that it came from me.

Living poetry

Write a poem comparing your mother to a champa flower and give it to her, wrapped around
a champa flower.



The first jasmines
By Rabindranath Tagore

Ah, these jasmines, these white jasmines!
I seem to remember the first day when I filled my hands with
these jasmines, these white jasmines.
I have loved the sunlight, the sky and the green earth;
I have heard the liquid murmur of the river thorough the
darkness of midnight;
Autumn sunsets have come to me at the bend of a road in the
lonely waste, like a bride raising her veil to accept her lover.
Yet my memory is still sweet with the first white jasmines
that I held in my hands when I was a child.
Many a glad day has come in my life, and I have laughed with
merrymakers on festival nights.
On grey mornings of rain I have crooned many an idle song.
I have worn round my neck the evening wreath of bakulas woven
by the hand of love.
Yet my heart is sweet with the memory of the first fresh
jasmines that filled my hands when I was a child.



Image from www.artmajeur.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

What do you think is the one thing from your childhood that you won't forget, even when you grow up? Write a poem about that incident.
Grown ups, sit with the child and tell them of an unforgettable memory from your own childhood. Have a nice and long conversation about this.

Motibil
By Rabindranath Tagore
Translated from Bengali by Kumud Biswas

Motibil is its name
It is big and deep cackling ducks drift along
Along its muddy verge
Herons stand gazing on
Kites fly above in the sky
Below kingfishers suddenly dive.

Here and there lands rise
They are covered with grass
In some places run winding streams
There are paddy fields too
In water half-submerged
In the sun how lovely they look!

Riding dinghies
The ploughman reaps his crops
In the evening he goes back home
Singing songs.
With his buffalos the cowboy swims
And crosses the stream
The fisherman catches fish with nets
Tied to bamboo frames.

The clouds go gliding in the sky
The weeds go floating along the stream

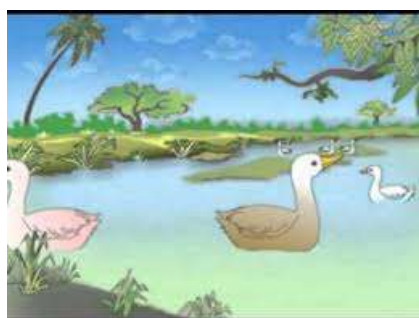


Image from youtube.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Imagine you are a squirrel living in a large city. You miss your buddies in the woods, and finding nuts is a big challenge. You scurry here and there, and discover many things about the big city using your keen eyesight and sense of smell. Write a poem about how you feel, and what you discover about a big city and its people.

Macavity: The Mystery Cat By TS Eliot

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw—
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
For when they reach the scene of crime—Macavity's not there!

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime—Macavity's not there!
You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air—
But I tell you once and once again, Macavity's not there!

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.
His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.
You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square—
But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not there!

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity's not there!

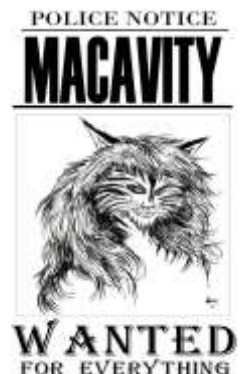
And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—Macavity's not there!
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
It must have been Macavity!—but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumb;
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T THERE !
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

Living poetry

Enact this poem with a few of your friends. You could also make it a musical production. Use some musical instruments.

Image from swintonfitzwilliam.org. Sources from Google Images in October 2013.



Stew Much

By Sukumar Ray

Translated from Bengali by Satyajit Ray

A duck once met a porcupine; they formed a corporation
Which called itself a Porcuduck (a beastly conjugation!).
A stork to a turtle said, 'Let's put my head upon your torso;
We, who are so pretty now, as Stortle would be more so!'
The lizard with the parrot's head thought: taking to the chilli
After years of eating worms is absolutely silly.
A prancing goat - one wonders why - was driven by a need
To bequeath its upper portion to a crawling centipede.
The giraffe with grasshopper's limbs reflected: Why should I
Go for walks in grassy fields, now that I can fly?
The nice contented cow will doubtless get a frightful shock
On finding that its lower limbs belong to a fighting cock.
It's obvious the Whalephant is not a happy notion:
The head goes for the jungle, while the tail turns to the ocean,
The lion's lack of horns distressed him greatly, so
He teamed up with a deer - now watch his antlers grow!

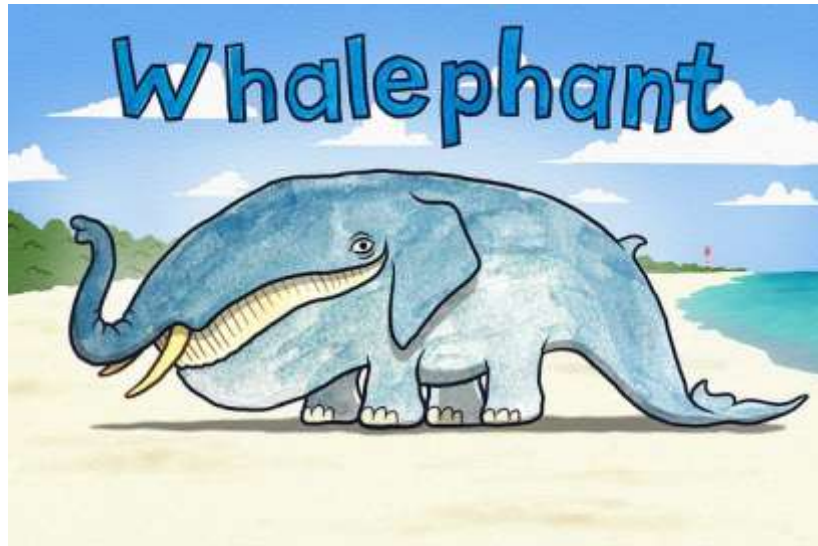
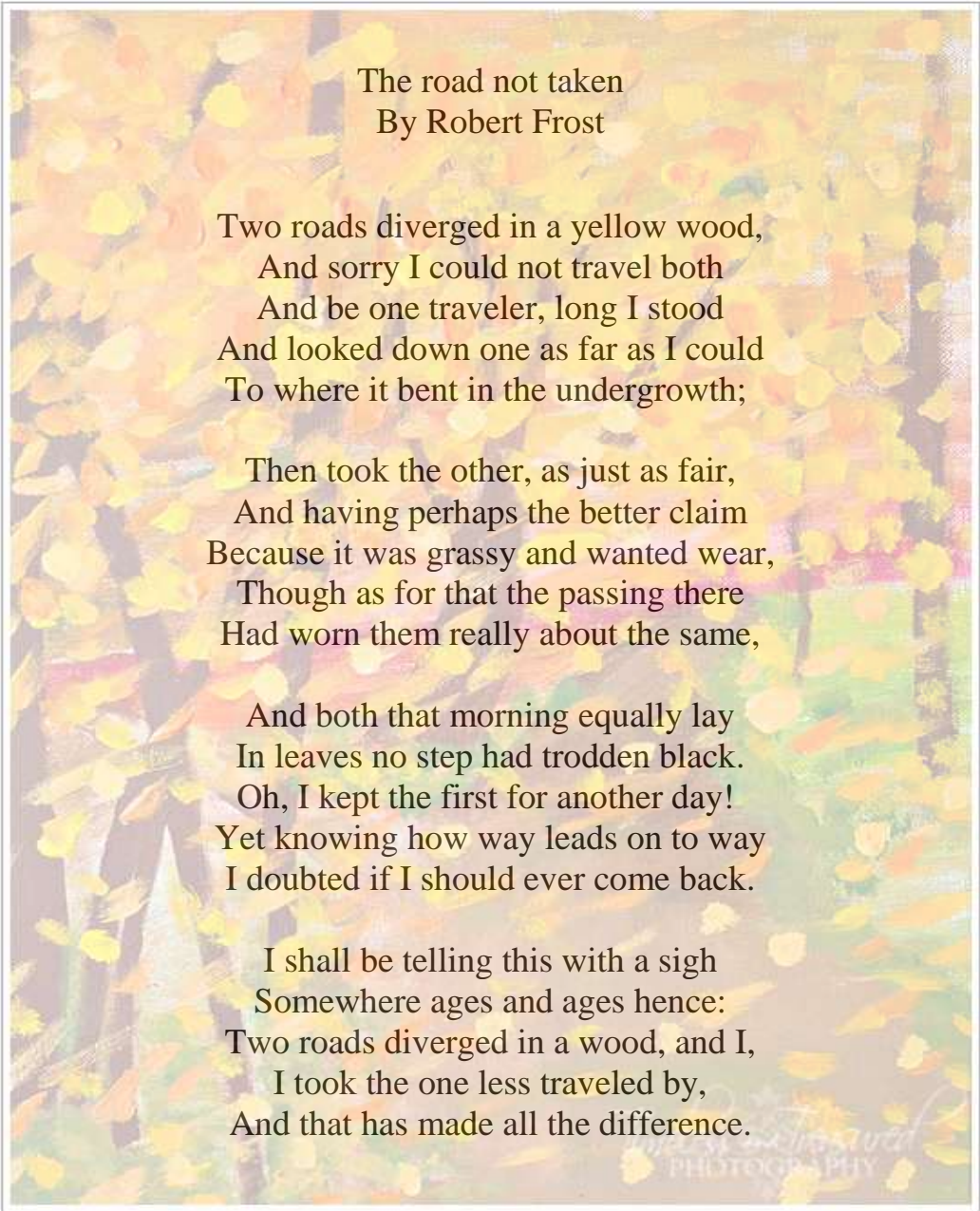


Image from flickr.com. Sourced from Google Images in October, 2013.

Living poetry

Invent an animal 'conjugation' of your own, and draw it. If you feel like it, write a poem on how that animal might spend its day.



The road not taken
By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*Image from Timeless and Treasured Photography, timelessandtreasured.blogspot.com
Sourced from Google Images in October 2013.*

Living poetry

Translate this poem in another language. Take the help of a grown up if you need. Explain the poem to them, and learn as many new words you can in the process.

Sympathy
By Rabindranath Tagore

If I were only a little puppy, not your baby, mother dear, would
you say "No" to me if I tried to eat from your dish?
Would you drive me off, saying to me, "Get away, you naughty
little puppy?"

Then go, mother, go! I will never come to you when you call
me, and never let you feed me any more.

If I were only a little green parrot, and not your baby,
mother dear, would you keep me chained lest I should fly away?
Would you shake your finger at me and say, "What an ungrateful
wretch of a bird! It is gnawing at its chain day and night?"

The go, mother, go! I will run away into the woods; I will
never let you take me in your arms again.



Image from artistrising.com. Sourced from Google images in October 2013.

Living poetry

Draw something under the tree in the picture above that expresses your feeling after having read this poem.

The Muddlehead

By Ogden Nash

I knew a man from Petushkee
As muddleheaded as could be.

He always got mixed up with clothes;
He wore his mittens on his toes,
Forgot his collar in his haste,
And tied his tie around his waist.

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

They told him as he went about:
"You've got u'r coat on inside out!"
And when they saw his hat, they said:
"You've put a saucepan on your head!"

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

At lunch he scratched a piece of bread,
And spread some butter on his head.
He put his walking stick to bed,
And he stood in the rack instead.

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

He walked upto a tram one day
And climbed in very sprightly;
Conductor thought that he would pay,
Instead he said politely:

"Parding your beggon,
Kister Monductor,
I'm off for a week's vacation;
I stop you to beg your cramway tar
As soon as we reach the station."
Conductor got a fright
And didn't sleep that nite.

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

He rushed into the first café:
"A railway ticket please, One way."
And at the ticket office said:
"A slice of tea and a cup of bread."

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

He passed the man collecting the fares,
And entered a carriage awaiting repairs,
That stood on a siding, all by itself.
Half of his luggage, he put on a shelf,
The rest on the floor, his coat on his lap
And settled himself for a bit of a nap.

All at once he raised his head,
"I must have been asleep"- he said.
"Hey, what stop is this?" he cried
"Petushkee," a voice replied.

Once again he closed his eyes
And dreamt he was in Paradise.
When he woke, he looked about,
Raised the window and leaned out.

"I've seen this place before, I believe,
Is it Kharkov or is it Kiev?
Tell me where I am," he cried.
"In Petushkee", a voice replied.

And so again he settled down
And dreamt the world was upside down
When he woke, he looked about,
Raised the window and looked out.

"I seem to know this station too,

Is it Nalchik or Baku?
Tell me what its called," he cried.
"Petushkee' a voice replied.

Up he jumped: "It's a crime!
I've been riding all this time,
And here I am where I began!
That's no way to treat a man!"

What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee

Poems for 12-13 year olds



Love is...
By Adrien Henri

Love is...

Love is feeling cold in the back of vans

Love is a fanclub with only two fans

Love is walking holding paintstained hands

Love is.

Love is fish and chips on winter nights

Love is blankets full of strange delights

Love is when you don't put out the light

Love is

Love is the presents in Christmas shops

Love is when you're feeling Top of the Pops

Love is what happens when the music stops.

(an excerpt from the original poem)



A Desktop wallpaper from wallpaperswide.com. Sourced from Google images in October 2013.

Living poetry

Who knows love? What would you ask them? Go and interview them.

**All that is gold does not glitter
By JRR Tolkien**

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.



Living poetry

How would you explain this poem to your younger sibling or a younger friend? By drawing a picture, by enacting it, or talking about it. Now, go do it.

You can't be that **By Brian Patten**

I told them
When I grow up
I'm not going to be a scientist
Or someone who reads the news on TV
No, a million birds will fly through me.
I AM GOING TO BE A TREE!

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I told them
When I grow up
I'm not going to be an airline pilot,
A dancer, a lawyer or an MC.
No, huge whales will swim in me.
I AM GOING TO BE AN OCEAN!

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I told them:
I am not going to be a DJ,
A computer programmer, a musician or a beautician.
No, streams will flow through me, I'll be the home of the eagles;
I'll be full of nooks, crannies, valleys and fountains.
I AM GOING TO BE A RANGE OF MOUNTAINS!

They said,
You can't be that. No, you can't be that.

I asked them:
Just what do you think I am?
*Just a child, they said,
And children always become
At least one of the things
We want them to be.*

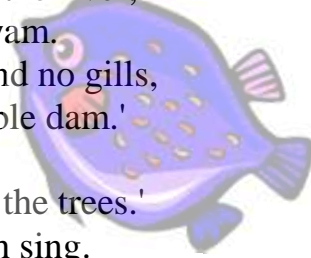
They do not understand me.
I'll be a stable if I want, smelling of fresh hay,
I'll be a lost glade in which unicorns still play.
They do not realise I can fulfil any ambition.
They do not realise that among them
walks a magician.

Living poetry

Write a story about what would happen if the moon decided to be a dancer for a day.

The newcomer
By Brian Patten

'There's something new in the river,'
The fish said as it swam.
'It's got no scales, no fins and no gills,
And ignores the impassable dam.'

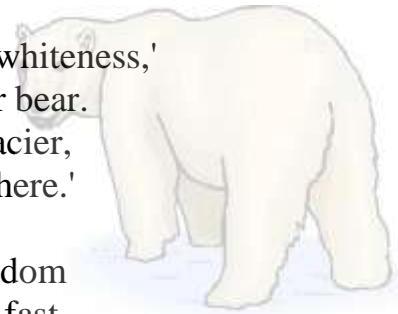


'There's something new in the trees.'
I heard a bloated thrush sing.
'It's got no beak, no claws, and no feathers,
And not even the ghost of a wing.'



'There's something new in the warren,'
Said the rabbit to the doe.
'It's got no fur, no eyes and no paws,
Yet digs further than we dare go.'

'There's something new in the whiteness,'
Said the snow-bright polar bear.
'I saw its shadow on a glacier,
But it left no pawmarks there.'



Through the animal kingdom
The news was spreading fast.
No beak, no claws, no feather,
No scales, no fur, no gills,
It lives in the trees and the water,
In the soil and the snow and the hills,
And it kills and it kills and it kills.

Living poetry

Who, or what, does the author think 'kills and kills and kills'? Design and organise a debate around this poem. What issue would you debate about?

Images from:

a. Fish – freewebs.com. Sourced from Google images in October 2013.

b. Tree – How to – Spring Fall Summer Winter from www.sarahbrydenbrown.com. Sourced from Google images in October 2013.

c. Polar bear – www.picgifs.com. Sourced from Google images in October 2013.

A suspended blue ocean
By Hafiz

The sky
Is a suspended blue ocean.
The stars are the fish
That swim.

The planets are the white whales
I sometimes hitch a ride on,

And the sun and all light
Have forever fused themselves

Into my heart and upon
My skin.

There is only one rule
On this Wild Playground,

For every sign Hafiz has ever seen
Reads the same.

They all say,

"Have fun, my dear; my dear, have fun,
In the Beloved's Divine
Game,

O, in the Beloved's
Wonderful Game."



Living poetry

Interview people of all ages and ask about how they have fun. Write a poem that would persuade anyone to get up and have fun.