

Age 7 & under

My Dog Is Not Like Other Dogs by Kenn Nesbitt

My dog is not like other dogs
He doesn't care to walk.
He doesn't bark
He doesn't howl
He goes.....'tick, tock, tick, tock.

He 'beeps' each day at half-past nine
At noon.....he starts to chime!
I have a STRONG suspicion
My dog can TELL THE TIME!

Another dog might run...or play...
Or smother me with licking
But MY dog...
... just annoys me
With his 'beeping' and his 'ticking'!

Should you decide to buy a dog.
Consider my remarks.....
When looking for a watch-dog.
Get yourself the kind that 'barks!'

OR

Thick Green Slime by Bill Scott

Greasy eels slide in it
bullfrogs hide in it
old fish died in it,
thick green slime.

Cane toads call in it
rotten logs sprawl in it
people fall in it,
thick green slime.

Guinea pigs bog in it
fingernails clog in it
there's a dead dog in it,
thick green slime.

Mosquitoes sting in it
leeches cling in it
sandflies sting in it,
thick green slime.

Look where Bertie is
Look where Gertie is
Filthy dirty is
thick green slime.

Age 8 to 10

The Shepherd by Mary Gilmore

Old Sam Smith
Lived by himself so long,
He thought three people
A 'furruble throng'.

But he loved 'Old Shep',
Who could open and shut
The hide-hinged door
Of his old bark hut;

And he loved the trees,
The sun and the sky,
And the sound of the wind,
Though he couldn't tell why.

But besides all these,
He loved, to the full,
The smell of the sheep,
And the greasy wool.

So they buried him out
(For at last he died)
Out, all alone,
On a bleak hill side,

And there's never a sound
But the bleat of the sheep,
As they nibble the mound
That marks his sleep.

Tom the Rooster by Marco Gliori

Upon our farm at Junabee
we used to sleep quite peacefully,
'til Tom the Rooster, each new day
at 4 a.m. would crow away!

He had a fancy, cosy pen.
He fussed and doted on each hen.
His life was great there is no doubt
he had so much to crow about.

He'd crow before us kids got up
to milk the cows and feed the pup.
He'd crow before my folks awoke.
(They lay there wishing that he'd choke!)

But Tom the Rooster, early riser –
he suddenly grew much, much, wiser
when our smart mum placed by the tree
her sharpest axe for Tom to see.

Now... being old and sensible
Tom knew he was dispensable,
so he shut up and stayed alive
and now sleeps in... 'til half past five!

OR

Age 11 to 13

Mrs. Goanna's Lament by Pixie O' Harris

Oh, they make a to-do
Of the white cockatoo,
And the great wedge-tailed eagle,
Especially back view.
But they hardly have more
Than a 'how-do-you-do?'
For a creature like me – a Goanna.

They take off their hat
To a dumpy wombat,
And they'll put in glass cases
The spotted wild cat.
But for me – well, oh, no,
There is nothing like that.
I'm an ill-used, unnoticed Goanna.

And I don't think it's fair
Just to notice the bear,
To feed him on dainties
And treat him with care,
When as for poor me-
Well, they give me the air,
'Oh, it's you – howdy-do!' a Goanna!

OR

Grandpa and the Martian by Bill Scott

The Martian oozed up our garden path
and rang the front door bell;
his scales were blue, his teeth were green,
he had a horrible smell.

"What do you want?" asked Grandpa.
"You'd better not come inside,
you'd ruin all the carpets and
the scatter rugs besides."

The Martian lowered his spacesuit
to the ground with a rattling clank.
"Have you got any second-hand chewing
gum
to mend my oxygen tank?"

"I'm losing all my pressure through
this rusty little leak
and I need to plug it as quick as I can,"
he said with a plaintive squeak.

Grandpa ran to the bedroom.
From under the reading lamp
he grabbed some of last night's chewing gum
that was sticky still, and damp.

He handed it to the Martian
who took it with a shout
and plastered it over the leaky bit
where the gas was whistling out.

Then Captain Chook, the Martian,
went safely home to Mars,
where the little moons spin like humming tops
among the silent stars.

Now Grandpa often tells the tale
while sipping at his rum;
how he saved the expedition
with some second-hand chewing gum.

Age 14 to 18

Trouble on the Selection by Henry Lawson

You lazy boy, you're here at last,
You must be wooden-legged;
Now, are you sure the gate is fast
And all the sliprails pegged?
Are all the milkers at the yard,
The calves all in the pen?
We don't want Poley's calf to suck
His mother dry again.

And did you mend the broken rail
And make it firm and neat?
I s'pose you want that brindle steer
All night among the wheat!
If he should find the lucerne patch,
He'll stuff his belly full,
And eat till he gets 'blown 'on it
And busts, like Ryan's bull.

Old Spot is lost? You'll drive me mad,
You will, upon my soul!
She might be in the boggy swamps
Or down a digger's hole.
You needn't talk, you never looked;
You'd find her if you'd choose,
Instead of poking 'possum logs
And hunting kangaroos.

How came your boots as wet as muck?
You tried to drown the ants!
Why don't you take your bluchers off?
Good Lord, he's tore his pants!
Your father's coming home tonight;
You'll catch it hot, you'll see.
Now go and wash your filthy face
And come and get your tea.

OR

A Bushranger by Kenneth Slessor

Jacky Jacky gallops on a horse like a swallow
Where the carbines bark and the blackboys
hollo.
When the traps give chase (may the Devil
take his power!)
He can ride then miles in a quarter of an hour.

Take a horse and follow, and you'll hurt no
feelings;
He can fly down waterfalls and jump through
ceilings,
He can shoot off hats, for to have a bit of fun,
With a bulldog bigger than a buffalo-gun.

Honeyed and profound is his conversation
When he bails up Mails on Long Tom Station,
In a flyaway coat with black cravat,
A snow-white collar and a cabbage-tree hat.

Flowers in his button-hole and pearls in his
pocket,
He comes like a ghost and he goes like a
rocket,
With a lightfoot heel on a blood-mare's flank
And a bagful of notes from the Joint Stock
Bank.

Many pretty ladies he could witch out of
marriage,
Though he prig but a kiss in a bigwig's
carriage;
For the cock of an eye or the lift of his reins,
They would run barefoot through Patrick's
Plains