

AGE 8

I FORGOT by *Finola Akister*

I said I'd do my homework
(There was an awful lot),
But I forgot.

I said I'd write a thank-you note
For the present from Auntie Dot,
But I forgot.

I should have been quite sorry,
And I was, but not a lot,
'Cause I forgot,

Now I'm being good as gold,
So Mum won't be upset.
Tomorrow is my birthday.
I do hope she won't forget.

OR

TO A MAGGOT IN AN APPLE by *Julie O'Calloghan*

You lie there like a baby,
Frail and soft and curled,
I'm sorry that I broke in
To your safe white world.
I really didn't mean to,
Just blame my appetite
For laying bare your cradle
And letting in the light.
One question then I'll leave you
To slumber in the bin –
I'm feeling rather queasy,
Er...did you have a twin?

I TRIED TO DO MY HOMEWORK by Kenn Nesbitt

I tried to do my homework
but a show was on TV.
A song was on the radio.
A friend was texting me.
My email chimed, and so, of course,
I had to look at that.
It linked me to a video
of someone's silly cat.
I watched a dozen videos,
and then I played a game.
I almost didn't hear her
when my mother called my name.
I looked up at the clock
and it was time to go to bed.
I didn't get my homework done;
just other stuff instead.
I hope my teacher listens
to the cause of my inaction.
It's really not my fault the world
is just one big distraction.

OR

THE GERBIL by Tony Bradman

'Can we have a gerbil, Mum?'
'We can't,' is what Mum said.
'I'm sorry, love,' she added,
'I'm having a baby, instead.'

'I'd rather have a gerbil, Mum,
I'd like a pet,' I said.
But what I'll get is a baby,
With a face all screaming and red.

'I'll tell you what,' said Mother,
'I'll tell you what we'll do.
If you help me with the baby,
You can have a gerbil, too.'

I got the gerbil I wanted,
And I help Mum every day.
The baby isn't too bad –
But the gerbil's quieter, I'd say.

SORRY by Michael Rosen

You know you said I could do some cooking
And you know you said you wouldn't be looking
'cos I wanted to give you a nice surprise
and make a few cakes, make a few pies.
But you said, 'OK'. You did say, 'Yes'.
Well, I'm really sorry, but there's a bit of a mess.
I mean to say, in about an hour
You can use quite a lot of flour
So don't get angry when you come in the door
But most of the flour is on the floor.
The rolling pin seems to be covered in dirt
And milk has soaked right through my shirt
A bit of butter has stuck to the chair
Though most of it seems to be in my hair
Yes, I can guess just what you think.
And the raisins. I forgot. They're in the sink.
So, I'm really sorry, but I didn't finish the cakes.
Like you say... we all make mistakes.

OR

MY GRANDPA by Kenn Nesbitt

I'll tell you a bit of my grandpa.
I think he's a thousand years old.
He must keep his hands in the freezer;
I've never felt ice cubes that cold.

The hair growing off of his earlobes
is more than the hair on his head.
His eyes are all baggy and bloodshot.
His nose is the same shade of red.

His voice is like rickety floorboards.
It crackles and groans when he speaks.
Whenever he bends down to hug me
it sounds like his skeleton creaks.

He says that his memory is failing.
He thinks that he's losing his mind.
He's always misplacing his glasses;
without them he's legally blind.

My mom says his hearing is normal.
I kind of believe her, but then
whenever I tell him "I love you,"
he asks me to say it again.

WASH THE DOG by Colin Thiele

"Wash the dog," Mum says,
"He smells like last year's cheese."

I'd rather wash the cheese.

Wrestling a hairy earthquake is no joke:
convulsions and contortions in the tub,
shampoo escaping in rivers,
and the whole backyard a sea of suds
like coastal foam from a cyclone;
then a Niagara of water to rinse him –
a small flood flowing under the fence
and around the neighbour's barbeque.

They don't like standing in dog's bathwater.
But that's not the end of it, not with our dog.
He gets inside and shakes himself
like an automatic sprinkler system
in a great final mess –
all over Mum's new dress.

OR

MY TEACHER TOOK MY IPOD by Kenn Nesbitt

My teacher took my iPod.
She said they had a rule:
I couldn't bring it into class
or even to the school.

She said she would return it;
I'd have it back that day.
But then she tried my headphones on
and gave a click on "Play."

She looked a little startled,
but after just awhile,
she made sure we were occupied
and cracked a wicked smile.

Her body started swaying.
Her toes began to tap.
She started grooving in her seat
and rocking to the rap.

My teacher said she changed her mind.
She thinks it's now okay
to bring my iPod into class.
She takes it every day.

GLAD TO MEET YOU by Janeen Brian

An actress, while filming in wild Zanzibar,
Jumped into a pot, "At last! Here's a spa!"
As natives danced round in a circular greeting,
She chatted to them while the water was heating.

"Oh! Carrots and beans. So good for the skin.
What lovely, fresh vegetables you're piling in.
You're stirring it too, that's ever so kind.
I'm getting quite hungry. Say, have you dined".

"My, something around here smells very good.
What's that you say? You're collecting more wood?
I fancy for lunch a tasty meat stew,
Thickened with gravy. Oh, you'd like some too?"
"I say, chaps, this water is getting too hot!
My face has gone pink and so has my bot.
I think I'll just leave and get myself lunch.
Hey!

What!

Eek!!

Cripes!!!

Munch!!!!!"

OR

THE LETTUCE SEED by Bill Scott

There was a teeming crowd of us,
Sisters, every one,
Spread out on a wide tin tray
Drying in the sun.

Someone planted me one day.
I shot out tiny roots,
Pushed my leaves above the ground
Among the other shoots.

The sun shone out, the rain fell down,
I grew and swelled and grew
Till like a round green soccer ball
I drank the morning dew.

I was so proud when just today
A woman came to greet me.
She plucked me up, she took a knife,
And now she's going to EEEEEEEEEEEEE - - -

AGE 13

COACH by Eleanor Farjeon

There was a yellow pumpkin
Born on a pumpkin-patch,
As clumsy as a 'potamus,
As coarse as cottage-thatch.
It longed to be a gooseberry,
A greengage, or a grape,
It longed to give another scent
And have another shape.
The roses looked askance at it,
The lilies looked away –
'This thing is neither fruit of flower!'
Their glances seemed to say.

One shiny night of midsummer,
When even fairies poach,
A good one waved her wand and said,
'O Pumpkin! Be a coach!'
A coach of gold! A coach of glass!
A coach with satin lined!
If you should seek a thousand years,
Such you would not find.
The Princess in her crystal shoes
Eager for the dance
Stepped inside the pumpkin-coach
And rolled to her romance.

The roses reached out after it,
The lilies looked its way –
'O that we were pumpkins too!'
Their glances seemed to say.

OR

FOOD FIGHT by Kenn Nesbitt

We'd never seen the teachers
in a state of such distress.
The principal was yelling
that the lunchroom was a mess.

It started off so innocent
when someone threw a bun,
but all the other kids decided
they should join the fun.

It instantly turned into
an enormous lunchroom feud,
as students started hurling
all their halfway-eaten food.

A glob went whizzing through the air,
impacting on the wall.
Another chunk went sailing out
the doorway to the hall.

The food was splattered everywhere—
the ceilings, walls, and doors.
A sloppy, gloppy mess was on
the tables and the floors.

And so our good custodian
ran out to grab his mop.
It took him half the afternoon
to clean up all the slop.

The teachers even used some words
we're not supposed to mention.
And that's how all the kids and teachers
wound up in detention.

AGE 14

PEGASUS by Eleanor Farjeon

From the blood of Medusa
Pegasus sprang,
His hoof upon heaven
Like melody rang,
His whinny was sweeter
Than Orpheus' lyre,
The wing on his shoulder
Was brighter than fire.

His tail was a fountain,
His nostrils were caves,
His mane and his forelock
Were musical waves,
He neighed like a trumpet,
He cooed like a dove,
He was stronger than terror
And swifter than love.

He could not be captured,
He could not be bought,
His running was rhythm,
His standing was thought;
With one eye on sorrow
And one eye on mirth,
He galloped in heaven
And gambolled on earth.

And only the poet
With wings to his brain
Can mount him and ride him
Without any rein,
The stallion of heaven
The steed of the skies,
The horse of the singer
Who sings as he flies.

OR

JABBERWOCKY by Lewis Carroll

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun the frumious
Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and
through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

AGE 15

SILENCE by Sally Carr

Silence ... is listening.
The sudden awareness
of beauty and life.
The seeing beyond the range of vision.
The gossip of busy birds, the
movement of leaves, the wind blowing,
rain falling, the sun burning.
Silence is the release of the senses
to absorb the beauty of nature, a
time to rest and pause from the
pace of living.
Silence is a time to meditate, reiterate
and decide.
Silence, is watching the clouds,
and floating with them.
The movement of waves, the gull
flying, the forsaken fisherman
on a lonely beach.
Silence ... is a gift of peace;
an inward music that dwells.
A stillness more alive in its
quiteness ...
The mist shifting, the
dawn dawning and night creeping,
the spider's construction of his web ...
An interval with life.
Silence ... is our question and His reply.
Silence ... is praying.

LEAF SHADOWS *i. m. my mother*

When I think of you resting
in that sunny sitting room
it is always late afternoon.
Leaf shadows from the garden
are moving on the wall
and on a table near you
stands a pot of white azalea.
Light is spread on the polished floor,
motes hang in the air.
A chink of tea-cups pushed aside
and we fall silent.
That time of many conversations
is long gone.
We tried hard to shed reserve,
you dying,
I still hoping you were not.

Now that I lie in convalescent ease
remote from household noise,
leaf shadows on my wall
bring back the time –
the quiet room,
the white flowers,
you so soon to leave us.

OR

CHAMPIONSHIP Age 15 to 18

THE WATTLE TREE by Mena Kashmiri Abdullah

When I was small I heard a tale about a wattle tree,
It was blind Mahommed Alam who told the tale to me
As, lost in childish wonderment, I leaned against his knee.

The moon, in time of legend, was flirting with the sun,
But he did not always see her for the high-born one would run,
Gathering up her cloud-veils, to her daytime resting-place,
When she felt his eye upon her and saw his beaming face.

The sun, with love and misery, grew delicate and dim
And the trees, who were his comrades, were very sad for him.
They said, "The moon is frivolous so we must try to find
A way to help our brother. She is thoughtless and unkind".

So one night when in the heavens the moon was shining gay,
And she saw the sun approaching and turned to run away,
A gaunt old tree stretched forth an arm and caught her floating train -
She pulled and struggled angrily but it was all in vain,

For the gaunt tree held her firmly and nearer drew the sun,
While all the world stood motionless and watched to see the fun.
But the moon pulled hard so suddenly she tore herself away,
She ran behind a cloud-bank and, Bismillah! It was day!

And when the sun arrived too late, and heard her hidden mirth
He rained in grief and hopelessness gold tears upon the earth.
The trees in silent sympathy put up their arms to him
And caught his tears forever on each uplifted limb.

Oh, from that far day of childhood two memories I prize;
Gold wattle spread all glorious against blue Australian skies,
And old Mahommed Alam with the gentle sightless eyes.