

**Rabbiting by RF Brissenden**

Nobody lives in the valley any more:  
The fox cries and the granite boulder cracks  
Unheard in the frosty night; and the long light  
Of yellow afternoons washes unseen  
Across grey stone and rim-barked tree to spill  
Down red eroded gullies. Sometimes a boy  
In autumn breaks the quiet with a shot  
And then forgets his rabbit as he stands  
Listening to the distant calls of birds  
Drift back into that pool of windless air.  
Belts of dead thistles, higher than his face,  
Stand razor-spiked between him and the stone  
Chimney and the rumbled roofless walls  
Of clay that glow clear orange in the flat  
Late sun. If now he turns and pushes through  
The thistles he will find beyond the house  
A vagrant orchard. On the broken trees  
Or rotting in the grass there may be fruit—  
Apples, bitter quinces, woody pears,  
Sweet nectarines pecked to pieces by the birds,  
And pale soft loquats. On one tree he knows  
Small plums in dusky blue tight bunches hang  
Along the branches silver now against  
The fading sky. Under his finger they will feel  
Heavy, alive and hard; the skin become  
Black-purple beneath its bloom. And as he bites  
Into the tart clean flesh he wonders why  
Sour fruit should taste so good and who they were  
Who built the house and planted all the trees.

**Sea-Fever by John Masefield**

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

**OR**

**What Did You Do at School Today? by James Carter**

Nothing.

*Nothing?*

Well, nothing much.

*You did nothing much all day long?*

Well . . . alright Mum, if you really want to know,  
I had 4 lessons  
and 45 minutes of playtime  
in which I went around with 3 friends.  
For lunch I had 22 baked beans,  
2 fishfingers, a 1/4 of a bread roll  
and 1 banana.  
I fed Nibbles, the class hamster,  
2 sunflower seeds.  
I wrote 1 poem.  
I got 7/10 for a spelling test.  
I did 16 fairly tricky maths questions.  
And I learnt 5 very interesting things  
about the Ancient Egyptians, including  
how they used to remove the brains  
of their dead with a hook - MUM.  
DO YOU EVER LISTEN TO A WORD I SAY?

*Oh sorry darling, what was that?*

I said I removed my teacher's brain today!

*What? Oh well done, you!  
What would you like for tea?*

**The Mystery Box by Monty Edwards**

My lunch for school's a mystery box and here's the reason why:  
I cannot guess just what's inside, however hard I try.  
There's something different every day: Mum treats it as a game.  
The only thing I'm sure about: no day will be the same.

If Monday's roll has Vegemite, then Tuesday's might have jam.  
A sandwich made for Wednesday's lunch might well be beef or ham.  
On Thursday then, a salad wrap could be the big surprise,  
But one school lunch on Friday something shocking met my eyes:

My mystery box was oozing with a greenish-yellow trickle!  
There must have been a mix-up with Dad's favourite: cheese and pickle!  
While Dad enjoyed my peanut paste spread on his bread with honey,  
My sandwich had an awful taste. Don't laugh. It wasn't funny!

**OR**

**Grandpa's Farm by Jenny Erlanger**

My Grandpa rang this morning.  
He's just bought a farm, he said  
and so I've started dreaming  
of the fun that lies ahead.  
I see myself with bottles  
helping feed the baby lambs,  
I'm saddling up the ponies,  
catching yabbies in the dams.  
I glimpse a pretty orchard  
filled with trees for me to climb –  
the apples smell delicious  
so it must be picking time.  
I hear a rooster crowing  
as it struts amongst the chooks  
near a cosy little cottage  
like the ones in picture books...  
But now the vision's fading  
thanks to what I've just been told.  
My dreams of country living  
I may have to put on hold.  
I won't be catching yabbies,  
won't be riding through the scrub.  
My Grandpa's little farm is...  
just some worms inside a tub!

**Scissors by Allan Ahlberg**

Nobody leave the room.  
Everyone listen to me.  
We had ten-pairs of scissors  
At half-past two,  
And now there's only three.  
Seven pairs of scissors,  
Disappeared from sight.  
Not one of you leaves  
Till we find them.  
We can stop here all night!  
Scissors don't lose themselves,  
Melt away, or explode.  
Scissors have not got  
Legs of their own  
To go running off up the road.  
We really need those scissors,  
That's what makes me mad.  
If it was seven pairs  
Of children we'd lost,  
It wouldn't be so bad.  
I don't want to hear excuses.  
Don't anyone speak.  
Just ransack this room  
Till we find them,  
Or we'll stop here... all week!

**OR**

**The Schoolkids' Rap by John Foster**

Miss was at the blackboard writing with the chalk,  
When suddenly she stopped in the middle of her talk.  
She snapped her fingers – snap! snap! snap!  
Pay attention children and I'll teach you how to rap.

She picked up a pencil, she started to tap.  
All together children, now clap! clap! clap!  
Just get the rhythm, just get the beat.  
Drum it with your fingers, stamp it with your feet.

That's right, children, keep in time.  
Now we've got the rhythm, all we need is the rhyme.  
This school is cool, Miss Grace is ace.  
Strut your stuff with a smile on your face.

Snap those fingers, tap those toes.

**Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost**

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

**OR**

**The River by Valerie Bloom**

The River's a wanderer,  
A nomad, a tramp,  
He never chooses one place To set up his camp.  
The River's a winder,  
Through valley and hill  
He twists and he turns,  
He just cannot be still.  
The River's a hoarder  
And he buries down deep  
Those little treasures  
That he wants to keep.  
The River's a baby,  
He gurgles and hums,  
And sounds like he's happily  
Sucking his thumbs.  
The River's a singer,  
As he dances along,  
The countryside echoes  
The notes of his song.  
The River's a monster,  
Hungry and vexed,  
He's goggled up trees  
And he'll swallow you next.

**from The Princess: Sweet and Low by Alfred Lord Tennyson**

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
    Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
    Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
    Blow him again to me;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
    Under the silver moon:  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

**OR**

**Corrections by Roger Stevens**

Teacher said,  
Leave out the the,  
two too's one too too many  
and and after the comma  
should go after the any.

The the, the too  
and move the and  
and that should make it flow.  
Not that that, that that's fine –  
but this that, that could go.

I said,  
The the, the too, the and –  
I would agree with you.  
But I'm very fond of that –  
this that and that that too.

Which that is that?  
Is that this that?  
Asked teacher with a grin.  
Okay but take that last in out  
And leave that last out in.

**Shoebox World by Mary Serenc**

You need a shoebox nothing more,  
Then cut out a little door.  
Inside the box is just the space,  
For you to make a special place.  
Is it a tiny teddy's home?  
Or a world where dinosaurs like to roam?  
Does it hide treasure or a golden key?  
A pirate's world for all to see?  
Is it a space adventure with moon and stars?  
With rockets racing off to Mars?  
Or you could make it a miniature zoo,  
With monkeys, lions and tigers too.  
Put the lid on and open the door  
Let's see the world that you adore.

**OR**

**There's a Possum on My Roof by Jeanie Axton**

There's a possum on my roof  
and he's not eating cake  
He is stomping up and down  
keeping me awake  
There's a possum on my roof  
learning the highland fling  
He is happily enjoying it  
but it's not my sort of thing  
There a possum on my roof  
tapping out a beat  
He finds it pretty handy  
having thumbs on both his feet  
There's a possum on my roof  
I wish he would go home  
Up to his branch in the tree  
and leave me quietly alone

**Thoughts of a 'Velcro Dog' by Kate O'Neill**

A wonder dog, an under dog,  
an over dog, a rover dog.  
A round about and through dog.  
I'll-find-a-way-that's-new dog.  
I really think it's time you knew-  
If I'm your dog I'll be with you.  
There's simply nothing you can do-  
If you go out I'm coming too.

**OR**

**I Made Myself a Snowball by Shel Silverstein**

I made myself a snowball  
As perfect as could be.  
I thought I'd keep it as a pet  
And let it sleep with me.  
I made it some pajamas  
And a pillow for its head.  
Then last night it ran away,  
But first it wet the bed.

**Cats by Eleanor Farjeon**

Cats sleep  
anywhere,  
any table,  
any chair,  
top of piano,  
Window-ledge,  
In the middle,  
On the edge,  
Open drawer,  
Empty shoe,  
Anybody's  
Lap will do,  
Fitted in a  
Cardboard box,  
In the cupboard  
With your frocks -  
Anywhere!  
They don't care!  
Cats sleep  
Anywhere.

**OR**

**The Slippery Slide by Toni Newell**

I'm the old slippery slide,  
King of the playground,  
All the kids slide down me,  
As squeals and laughter sound.  
Many things have been replaced,  
However, I'm still there,  
And lots of little bottoms,  
Still slide down without a care.