



# Poetry-By-Heart

1st Grade Poetry Selections

### **About the Teeth of Sharks**

John Ciardi

The thing about a shark is –teeth,  
One row above, one row beneath.

Now take a close look. Do you find  
It has another row behind?

Still closer—here, I'll hold your hat:  
Has it a third row behind that?

Now look in and . . . Look out! Oh my,  
I'll never know now! Well, goodbye.

### **Animals, Too**

Margaret E. Singleton

Animals have feelings, too:  
They need love, just as people do.  
Animals have only cries  
And wagging tails and hopeful eyes  
To say they're hungry, hurt, or scared,  
Or how they wish that someone cared.  
Helping animals sick or sad  
Makes you and me feel strong and glad.

### **At the Zoo**

William Makepeace Thackeray

First I saw the white bear, then I saw the black;  
Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back;  
Then I saw the grey wolf, with mutton in his maw;  
Then I saw the wombat waddle in the straw;  
Then I saw the elephant a-waving of his trunk;  
Then I saw the monkeys- mercy, how unpleasantly  
they-smelt!

### **Catch a Little Rhyme**

Eve Merriam

Once upon a time  
I caught a little rhyme.

I set it on the floor  
But it ran right out the door.

I chased it on my bicycle  
But it melted to an icicle.

I scooped it up in my hat  
But it turned into a cat.

I caught it by the tail  
But it stretched into a whale.

I followed it in a boat  
But it changed into a goat.

When I fed it tin and paper  
It became a tall skyscraper.

Then it grew into a kite  
And flew far out of sight.

### **Dino Thought**

Jane Yolen

Oh dinosaur, oh dinosaur,  
There are no dinos any more.  
The skies are clear of pterodact,  
(A very sorry dino fact.)  
No more velociraptor gnashes,  
No more allosaurus crashes.  
No more pounding thunder feet  
Of Rex on his revolting beat.  
Oh dinosaur, oh dinosaur,  
There are no dinos any more.

### **I Sat Down on a Seesaw**

Kenn Nesbitt

I sat down on a seesaw  
To see what I could see,  
But all I saw was seesaw  
Rising up in front of me.

I couldn't see the treetops.  
I couldn't see the sky.  
I couldn't see the far-off fields.  
I sat and wondered why.

I couldn't see the swingset,  
Or even see the slide.  
I guess I need someone to  
Sit down on the other side.

### **My Dog**

Marchette Chute

His nose is short and scrubby;  
His ears hang rather low;  
And he always brings the stick back,  
No matter how far you throw.

He gets spanked rather often  
For things he shouldn't do,  
Like lying-on-beds, and barking,  
And eating up shoes when they're new.

He always wants to be going  
Where he isn't supposed to go.  
He tracks up the house when it's snowing—  
Oh puppy, I love you so.

### **My Favorite Word**

Lucia and James L. Hymes, Jr.

There is one word—  
My favorite—  
The very, very best.  
It isn't No or Maybe,  
It's Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, YES!

"Yes, yes, you may," and  
"Yes, of course," and  
"Yes, please help yourself."  
And when I want a piece of cake,  
"Why, yes. It's on the shelf."

Some candy? "Yes."  
A cookie? "Yes."  
A movie? "Yes, we'll go."

I love it when they say my word:  
Yes, Yes, Yes! (Not No.)

### **O Dandelion**

Anonymous

"O dandelion, yellow as gold,  
What do you do all day?"

"I just wait here in the tall green grass  
Till the children come to play."

"O dandelion, yellow as gold,  
What do you do all night?"

"I wait and wait till the cool dews fall  
And my hair grows long and white."

"And what do you do when your hair is white  
And the children come to play?"

"They take me up in their dimpled hands  
And blow my hair away!"

**Open a Book**

Jane Baskwill

Open a book  
And you will find,  
People and places of every kind;  
Open a book  
And you can be,  
Anything you want to be;  
Open a book  
And you can share,  
Wondrous words you find in there  
Open a book  
And I will too,  
You read to me,  
And I'll read to you!

**The Poet Tree**

Shel Silverstein

Underneath the poet tree,  
Come and rest awhile with me,  
And watch the way the word-web  
weaves  
Between the shady story leaves.  
The branches of the poet tree  
Reach from the mountains to the sea.  
So come and dream, or come and  
climb –  
Just don't get hit by falling rhymes.

**The Secret Song**

Margaret Wise Brown

Who saw the petals  
drop from the rose?  
I, said the spider,  
But nobody knows.

Who saw the sunset  
flash on a bird?  
I, said the fish,  
But nobody heard.

Who saw the frog  
come over the sea?  
I, said the sea pigeon,  
Only me.

Who saw the first  
green light of the sun?  
I, said the night owl,  
The only one.

Who saw the moss  
creep over the stone?  
I, said the gray fox,  
All alone.

**The Smile**

Anonymous author

I had an extra smile  
When I left the house today  
I thought I'd give it to someone  
I passed along the way.

I tried to give the smile away  
But incredibly  
Each time I gave it to someone  
They'd give it back to me.

So now I have a bunch of smiles,  
What am I to do?  
I think I'll keep a couple  
And then give the rest to you!

### **Toad by the Road**

Joanne Ryder

I'm only a toad  
By the side of the road,  
Watching the world go by.  
Some hustle and hurry.  
Some bustle and scurry.  
Some wiggle, flicker or fly.  
They come and they go  
On their way to and fro.  
But I'd rather sit and sing.  
It's a glorious day,  
So I'm happy to stay  
And savor the songs of spring.

### **To Catch a Fish**

Eloise Greenfield

It takes more than a wish  
to catch a fish  
you take the hook  
you add the bait  
you concentrate  
and then you wait  
you wait you wait  
but not a bite  
the fish don't have  
an appetite  
so tell them what  
good bait you've got  
and how your bait  
can hit the spot  
this works a whole  
lot better than  
a wish  
if you really  
want to catch  
a fish

### **The Voice**

Shel Silverstein

There is a voice inside of you  
That whispers all day long,  
"I feel that this is right for me,  
I know that *this* is wrong."  
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend  
Or wise man can decide  
What's right for you- just listen to  
The voice that speaks inside.

### **When you can Read**

Bobbi Katz

When you can read, then you can go  
From Kalamazoo to Idaho—  
Or read directions that explain  
Just how to build a model plane—  
Or bake a cake or cook a stew-  
The words will tell you what to do!  
When you read, then you can play  
A brand new game the proper way—  
Or get a letter from a friend  
And read it. . .to the very end.

### **Who Has Seen the Wind?**

Christina Rosetti

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you.  
But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I.  
But when the trees bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.