



Poetry-By-Heart

2nd Grade Poetry Selections

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Alligator Pie

Dennis Lee

Alligator pie, alligator pie,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna die.
Give away the green grass, give away the sky,
But don't give away my alligator pie.

Alligator stew, alligator stew,
If I don't get some I don't know what I'll do.
Give away my furry hat, give away my shoe,
But don't give away my alligator stew.

Alligator soup, alligator soup,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna droop.
Give away my hockey stick, give away my hoop,
But don't give away my alligator soup.

Bed in Summer

Robert Louis 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?

Bedtime

Eleanor Farjeon

Five minutes, five minutes more, please!
Let me stay five minutes more!
Can't I just finish the castle
I'm building here on the floor?
Can't I just finish the story
I'm reading here in my book?
Can't I just finish this bead-chain —
It almost is finished, look!
Can't I just finish this game, please?
When a game's once begun
It's a pity never to find out
Whether you've lost or won.
Can't I just stay five minutes?
Well, can't I just stay just four?
Three minutes, then? two minutes?
Can't I stay one minute more?

Bilingual

By Alma Flor Ada

Because I speak Spanish
I can listen to my grandmother's stories
and say familia, madre, amor.
Because I speak English
I can learn from my teacher
And say I love school.
Because I am bilingual
I can read libros and books,
I have amigos and friends,
Enjoy canciones and songs,
Juegos and games
And have twice as much fun.
And someday,
Because I speak two languages,
I will be able to do twice as much
To help twice as many people
And be twice as good in what I do.

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Don't Ever Cross a Crocodile

Kaye Starbird

Don't ever cross a crocodile,
However few his faults.
Don't ever dare
A dancing bear
To teach you how to waltz.

Don't ever poke a rattlesnake
Who's sleeping in the sun
And say the poke
Was just a joke
And really all in fun.

Don't ever lure a lion close
With gifts of steak and suet.
Though lion-looks
Are nice in books
Don't ever, ever do it.

Eletelephony

Laura E. Richards

Once there was an elephant,
Who tried to use the telephant—
No!No! I mean an elephone
Who tried to use the telephone
(Dear me! I am not certain quite
That even now I've got it right.)

Howe'er it was, he got his trunk
Entangled in the telephunk;
The more he tried to get it free,
The louder buzzed the telephee—
(I fear I'd better drop the song
Of elephop and telephong.)

From "Frederick"

Leo Leoni

Who scatters snowflakes? Who melts the ice?
Who spoils the weather? Who makes it nice?
Who grows the four-leaf clovers in June?
Who dims the daylight? Who lights the moon?

Four little field mice who live in the sky.
Four little field mice ... like you and I.

One is the Springmouse who turns on the showers.
Then comes the Summer who paints in the flowers.
The Fallmouse is next with walnuts and wheat.
And Winter is last ... with little cold feet.

Aren't we lucky the seasons are four?
Think of a year with one less ... or one more!

Hide and Seek

Mimi Brodsky

I looked in the house.
I looked in the yard.
I looked near the swing.
I looked very hard.

I called your name
And peeked near the stair,
And searched the garage
I looked everywhere!

So, come out! Come out! Wherever you are—
I know you can't be very far.
Come out! Come out! Let's start all over.
It's no fun finding such a rover.

Aha! I see you! You can't fool me.
There you are behind the tree.
Oh, no! Don't say the game is ended.

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Hope is the Thing with Feathers

Emily Dickinson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

I Wish I Had a Dragon

Shel Silverstein

I wish I had a dragon
With diamond-studded scales,
With claws like silver sabers,
And Fangs like silver nails,
A dragon fierce and faithful,
Always ready by my side,
A dragon to defend me
Or take me for a ride.

I wish I had a dragon
With eyes of shining gold,
Who breathed a plume of fire
Whenever it was told,
A dragon so ferocious
It might frighten Frankenstein,
But not a lazy dragon
Who sleeps all day. . .like mine!

Keep a Poem in Your Pocket

Beatrice Schenk de Regniers

Keep a poem in your pocket
and a picture in your head
and you’ll never feel lonely
at night when you’re in bed.

The little poem will sing to you
and the little picture bring to you
a dozen dreams to dance to you
at night when you’re in bed.

So-
Keep a poem in your pocket
and a picture in your head
and you’ll never feel lonely
at night when you’re in bed.

The Little Whistler

Frances Frost

My mother whistled softly,
My father whistled bravely,
My brother whistled merrily,
And I tried all day long!
I blew my breath inwards,
I blew my breath outwards,
But all you heard was breath blowing
And not a bit of song!

But today I heard a bluebird,
A happy, young and new bird,
Whistling in the apple tree,
He’d just discovered how!
Then quick I blew my breath in,
And happy I blew my breath out,
And sudden I blew three wild notes—
And I can whistle now!

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My Cat, Mrs. Lick-A-Chin

John Ciardi

Some of the cats I know about
Spend a little time in and a lot of time out.
Or a lot of time out and a little time in.
But my cat, Mrs. Lick-a-chin,
Never knows where she wants to be.
If I let her in, she looks at me
And begins to sing that she wants to go out.
So I open the door, and she looks about And
begins to sing, "Please let me in!"

Poor silly Mrs. Lick-a-chin!

The thing about cats, as you may find,
Is that no one knows what they have in mind.
And I'll tell you something about that: No one
knows it less than my cat. †

Night Dreams

Barbara Vance

I'd like to think that I could fly,
To lift my feet and touch the sky,
To soar above, look down below,
And never know just where I'd go.

And if I could, oh what I'd see!
Earth would not be the same to me.

Oh, if the wind would carry two,
I'd hope that I could fly with you;
And hand-in-hand we'd chase the stars
And lock them up in pickle jars.

We'll laugh and smile, then set them free
To twinkle for eternity.

Spring

Karla Kuskin

I'm shouting
I'm singing
I'm swinging through trees
I'm winging sky-high
with the buzzing black bees.
I'm the sun
I'm the moon
I'm the dew on the rose.
I'm a rabbit
whose habit
is twitching his nose.
I'm lively
I'm lovely
I'm kicking my heels.
I'm crying "Come dance"
To the freshwater eels.
I'm racing through meadows
without any coat
I'm a gamboling lamb
I'm a light leaping goat
I'm a bud
I'm a bloom
I'm a dove on the wing.
I'm running on rooftops
and welcoming spring!

The Swing

Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown—
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

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The Things I Do

Karla Kuskin

I'm very good at climbing
I nearly climbed a tree
But just as I was almost up
I sort of skinned my knee.

I'm wonderful at walking
I almost walked a mile
But when I got around the block
I rested for a while.

I'm excellent at swimming
though I'm not very old
I almost swam the ocean once
But the water was too cold.

But what I'm really best at
Is skipping down the hall.
I'm very good at skipping
I'm wonderful at skipping.
I'm marvelous at skipping,
That is unless I fall.

Weather

Eve Merriam

Dot a dotdot...dot a dotdot
Spotting the windowpane.
Spack a spack speck...flick a flack fleck
Freckling the windowpane.

A spatter a scatter...a wetcat a clatter
A splatter a rumble outside.
Umbrella umbrella umbrella umbrella
Bumbershoot barrel of rain.

Slosh a galosh...slosh a galosh
Slither and slather a glide
A puddle a jump a puddle a jump
A puddle a jump puddle splosh
A juddle a pump aluddle a dump a
Puddmuddle jump in and slide!