



Poetry-By-Heart

4th Grade Poetry Selections

4th Grade Speech Meet Poetry Selections

The Brook

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,
with here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silver water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

Every Time I Climb a Tree

David McCord

Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
I scrape a leg
Or skin a knee
And every time I climb a tree
I find some ants
Or dodge a bee
And get the ants
All over me.

And every time I climb a tree
Where have you been?
They say to me
But don't they know that I am free
Every time I climb a tree?

I like it best
To spot a nest
That has an egg
Or maybe three.

And then I skin
The other leg
But every time I climb a tree
I see a lot of things to see
Swallows rooftops and TV
And all the fields and farms there be
Every time I climb a tree
Though climbing may be good for ants
It isn't awfully good for pants
But still it's pretty good for me
Every time I climb a tree.

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Homework Stew

Kenn Nesbitt

I cooked my math book in a broth
and stirred it to a steaming froth.
I threw in papers—pencils, too—
to make a pot of homework stew.

I turned the flame up nice and hot
and tossed my binder in the pot.
I sprinkled in my book report
with colored markers by the quart.

Despite its putrid, noxious gas,
I proudly took my stew to class.
And though the smell was so grotesque,
I set it on my teacher's desk.

My teacher said, "You're quite a chef.
But, still, you're going to get an F.
I didn't ask for 'homework stew,'
I said, 'Tomorrow, homework's due.'"

I Dream A World

Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

Leisure

William Henry Davies

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

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The Library

By Barbara A. Huff

It looks like any building
When you pass it on the street,
Made of stone and glass and marble,
Made of iron and concrete.
But once inside you can ride
A camel or a train,
Visit Rome, Siam, or Nome,
Feel a hurricane,
Meet a king, learn to sing,
How to bake a pie,
Go to sea, plant a tree,
Find how airplanes fly,
Train a horse, and of course
Have all the dogs you'd like,
See the moon, a sandy dune,
Or catch a whopping pike.
Everything that books can bring
You'll find inside those walls.
A world is there for you to share
When adventure calls.
You cannot tell its magic
By the way the building looks,
But there's wonderment within it,
The wonderment of books.

from Life Doesn't Frighten Me

Maya Angelou

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn't frighten me at all

Bad dogs barking loud
Big ghosts in a cloud
Life doesn't frighten me at all

Mean old Mother Goose
Lions on the loose
They don't frighten me at all

Dragons breathing flame
On my counterpane
That doesn't frighten me at all.

I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won't cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

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Nature is

Jack Prelutsky

Nature is the endless sky,
The sun of golden light,
A cloud that floats serenely by,
The silver moon of night.

Nature is a sandy dune,
A tall and stately tree,
The waters of a clear lagoon,
The billows on the sea.

Nature is a gentle rain
and winds that howl and blow
A thunderstorm, a hurricane,
A silent field of snow.

Nature is a tranquil breeze
And pebbles on a shore.
Nature's each and all of these
And infinitely more.

No Man Is an Island

John Donne

No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of
thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind;
and therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls;
it tolls for thee.

The Rainy Day

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

Remember

Matt Goodfellow

when shadows creep across your mind
and smiles are thin and tight
when you do what you believe in
but question if it's right
when you focus not on what you've got
but all the things you lack
there may be rain at the front of the house
but sunshine round the back

when you can't remember where you found
the words you used to say
when your heartbeat is the music
that you listen to each day
when you turn away from talent
in case you lose the knack
there may be rain at the front of the house
but sunshine round the back

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Recess! Oh, Recess!

Darren Sardelli

Recess! Oh, Recess!
We love you! You rule!
You keep us away
from the teachers in school.
Your swings are refreshing.
Your slides are the best.
You give us a break
from a really hard test.

Recess! Oh, Recess!
We want you to know,
you're sweeter than syrup,
you're special like snow.
You don't assign homework.
You make the day fun.
You let us play kickball
and run in the sun.

Recess! Oh, Recess!
You're first on our list.
We'd be in despair
if you didn't exist.
We're happy we have you.
You're awesome and cool.
Recess! Oh, Recess!
We love you! You rule!

The Secret of Happiness

Helen Steiner Rice

Everybody, everywhere, seeks happiness
—it's true
But finding it and keeping it
seems difficult to do,
Difficult because we think
that happiness is found
Only in the places where
wealth and fame abound,
And so we go on searching
in "palaces of pleasure"
Seeking recognition
and monetary treasure,
Unaware that happiness
is just a state of mind
Within the reach of everyone
who takes time to be kind—
For in making others happy,
we will be happy, too,
For the happiness you give away
returns to shine on you. †

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Try, Try Again

TH Palmer

'Tis a lesson you should heed,
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again;
Then your courage should appear,
For if you will persevere,
You will conquer, never fear
Try, try again;
Once or twice, though you should fail,
If you would at last prevail,
Try, try again;
If we strive, 'tis no disgrace
Though we do not win the race;
What should you do in the case?
Try, try again
If you find your task is hard,
Time will bring you your reward,
Try, try again
All that other folks can do,
Why, with patience, should not you?
Only keep this rule in view:
Try, try again.

The Violet

Jane Taylor

Down in a green and shady bed,
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its color bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet thus it was content to bloom,
In modest tint arrayed;
And there diffused a sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

From The World We Make

by Alfred Grant Walton

We make the world in which we live
By what we gather and what we give,
By our daily deeds and the things we say,
By what we keep or we cast away.

We make our world by the beauty we see
In a skylark's song or a lilac tree,
In a butterfly's wing, in the pale moon's rise,
And the wonder that lingers in midnight skies.

We make our world by the life we lead,
By the friends we have, by the books we read,
By the pity we show in the hour of care,
By the loads we lift and the love we share.