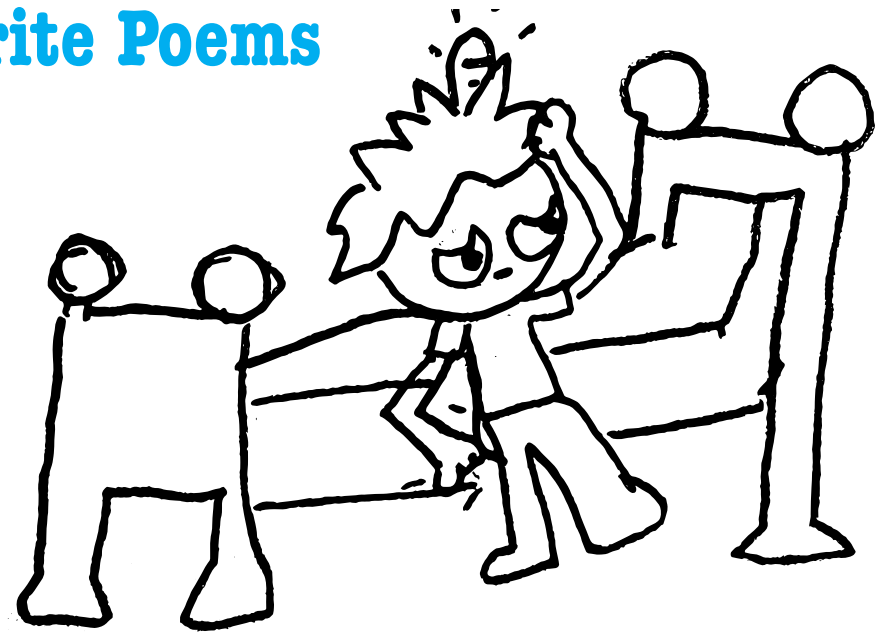
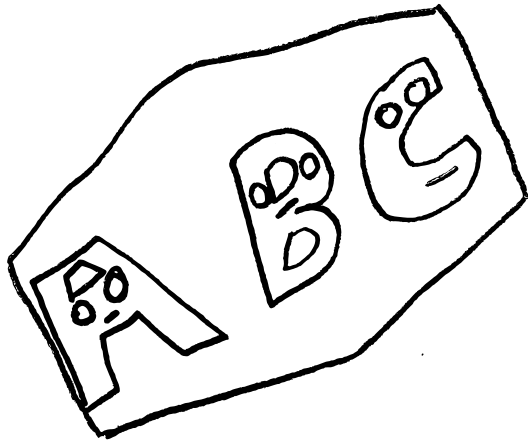


P is for Poetry

My Family's Favourite Poems



**Edited and Illustrated
By Ben Poznanski**

Homework! Oh, Homework!

by Jack Prelutsky



Homework! Oh, Homework!
I hate you! You stink!
I wish I could wash you away in the sink,
if only a bomb
would explode you to bits.

Homework! Oh, homework!
You're giving me fits.
I'd rather take baths
with a man-eating shark,
or wrestle a lion
alone in the dark,
eat spinach and liver,
pet ten porcupines,
than tackle the homework,
my teacher assigns.

Homework! Oh, homework!
you're last on my list,
I simple can't see
why you even exist,
if you just disappeared
it would tickle me pink.
Homework! Oh, homework!
I hate you! You stink!

- Suggested by me



Bouncing Ben

by John Foster

Bouncing Ben bounced on the bed,
Bounced to the ceiling and banged his head.

Bouncing Ben landed on the floor.
Bouncing Ben with his bottom sore.

Bouncing Ben lying on his bed,
A bump on his bottom and a lump on his head.

- Suggested by me



Daddy Fell Into The Pond

by Alfred Noyes

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,
And then there seemed to be nothing beyond,
Then
Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone's face grew merry and bright,
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.
"Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!
He's crawling out of the duckweed!" Click!

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,
And doubled up, shaking silently,
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft,
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.
Oh, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond
When
Daddy Fell into the pond!

- Suggested by my mum



Old Woman Of The Roads

by Padraic Colum

O, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped up sods against the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!
To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!
I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!
I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!
Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!
And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house - a house of my own
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

- Suggested by my Granny



Stopping by Woods On A Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

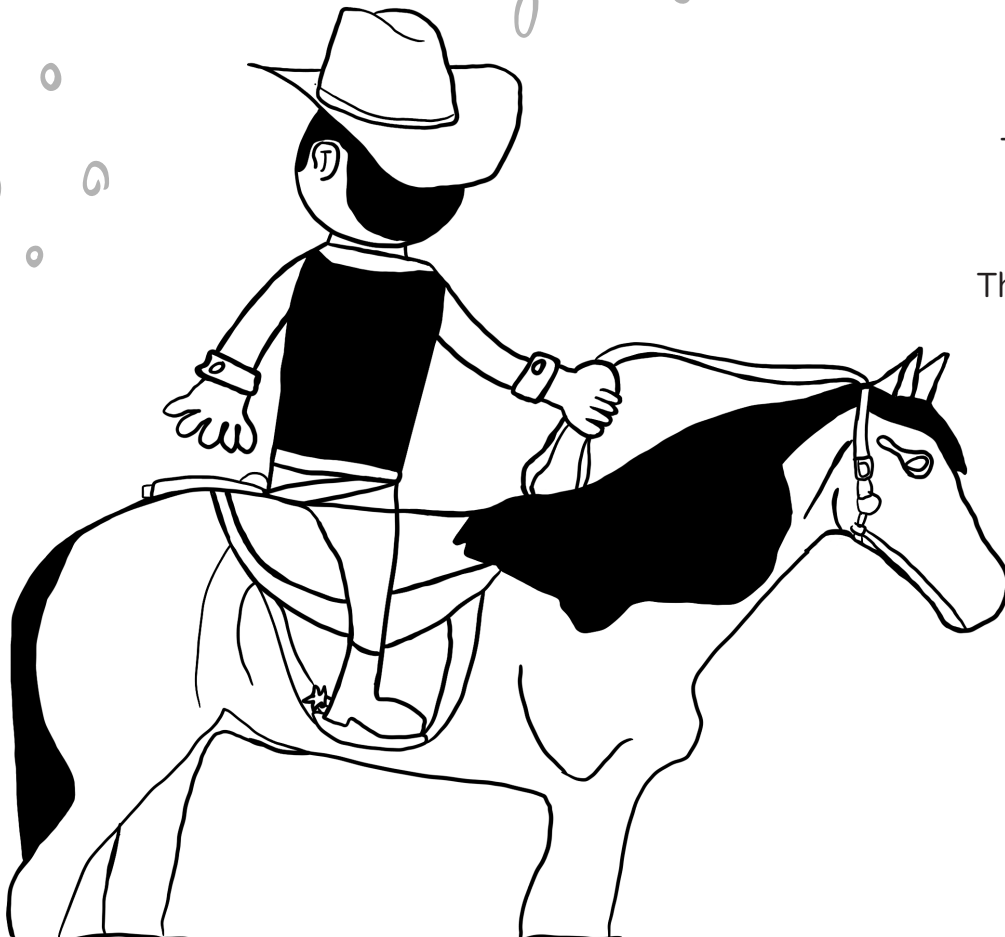
Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

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.

- Suggested by my sister Lucie



The Chief Defect of Henry King

by Hilaire Belloc

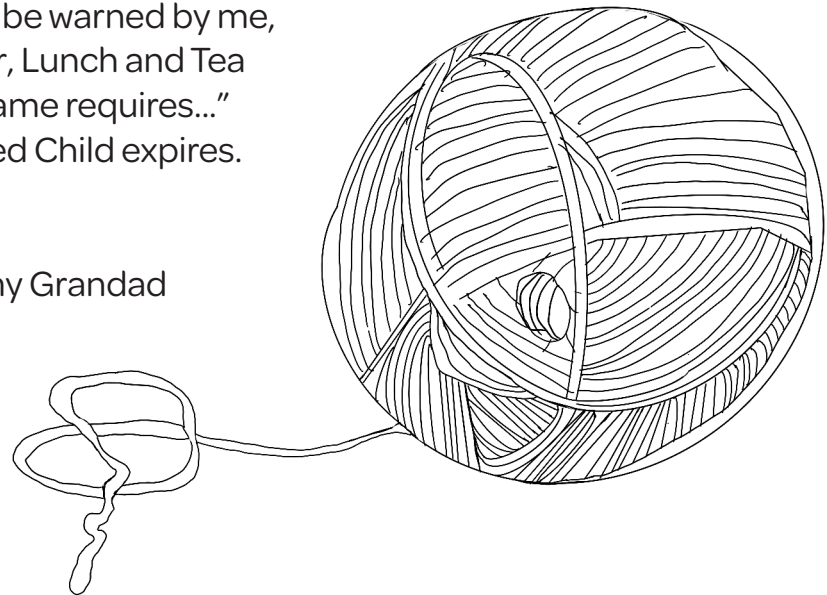
The Chief Defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of String.
At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly Knots inside.

Physicians of the Utmost Fame
Were called at once; but when they came
They answered, as they took their Fees,
“There is no cure for this disease.

“Henry will very soon be dead.”
His Parents stood about his Bed
Lamenting his Untimely Death,
When Henry, with his latest Breath,

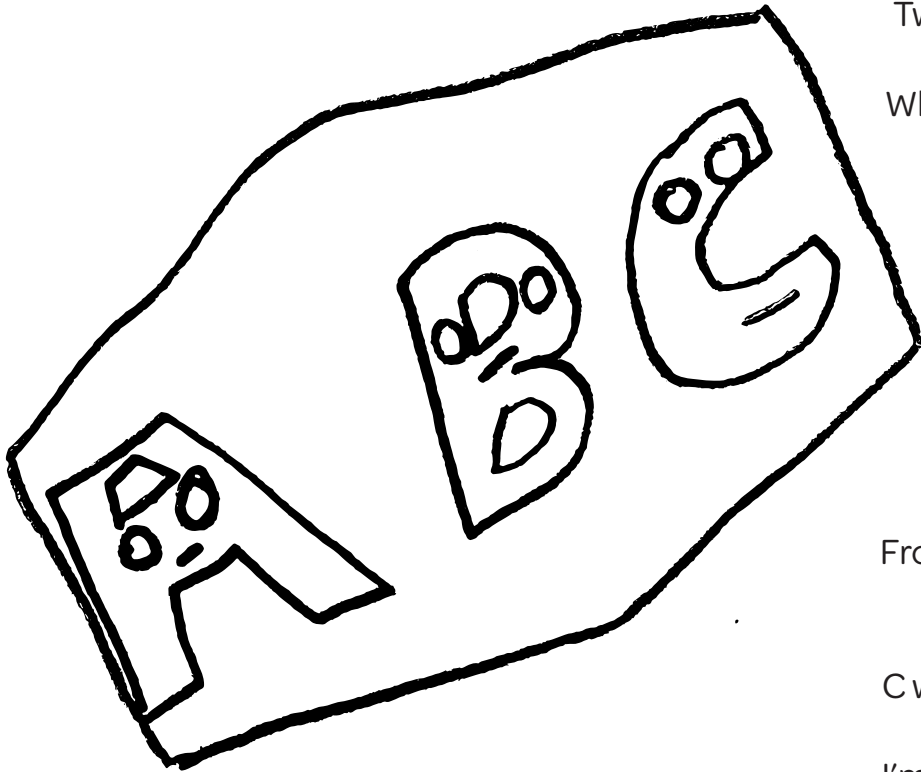
Cried - “Oh, my Friends, be warned by me,
That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch and Tea
Are all the Human Frame requires...”
With that the Wretched Child expires.

- Suggested by my Grandad



The ABC

by Spike Milligan



Twas midnight in the schoolroom
And every desk was shut
When suddenly from the alphabet
Was heard a loud "Tut-Tut!"

Said A to B, "I don't like C;
His manners are a lack.
For all I ever see of C
Is a semi-circular back!"

"I disagree," said D to B,
"I've never found C so.
From where I stand he seems to be
An uncompleted O."

C was vexed, "I'm much perplexed,
You criticise my shape.
I'm made like that, to help spell Cat
And Cow and Cool and Cape."

"He's right" said E; said F, "Whoopee!"
Said G, "'lp, 'lp, 'ooray!"
"You're dropping me," roared H to G.
"Don't do it please I pray."

"Out of my way," LL said to K.
"I'll make poor I look ILL."
To stop this stunt J stood in front,
And presto! ILL was JILL.

"U know," said V, "that W
Is twice the age of me.
For as a Roman V is five
I'm half as young as he."

X and Y yawned sleepily,
"Look at the time!" they said.
"Let's all get off to beddy byes."
They did, then "Z-z-z."

- Suggested by my Uncle Patrick

When I Was One

by A. A. Milne

When I was one,
I just begun.
When I was two,
I was nearly new.
When I was three,
I was hardly me.
When I was four,
I was not much more.
When I was five,
I was just alive.
But now I'm six,
I'm as clever as clever.
So I think I'll be six now,
forever and ever!

- Suggested by my Aunty Gabrielle



Smiling Is Infectious

by Jez Alborough

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

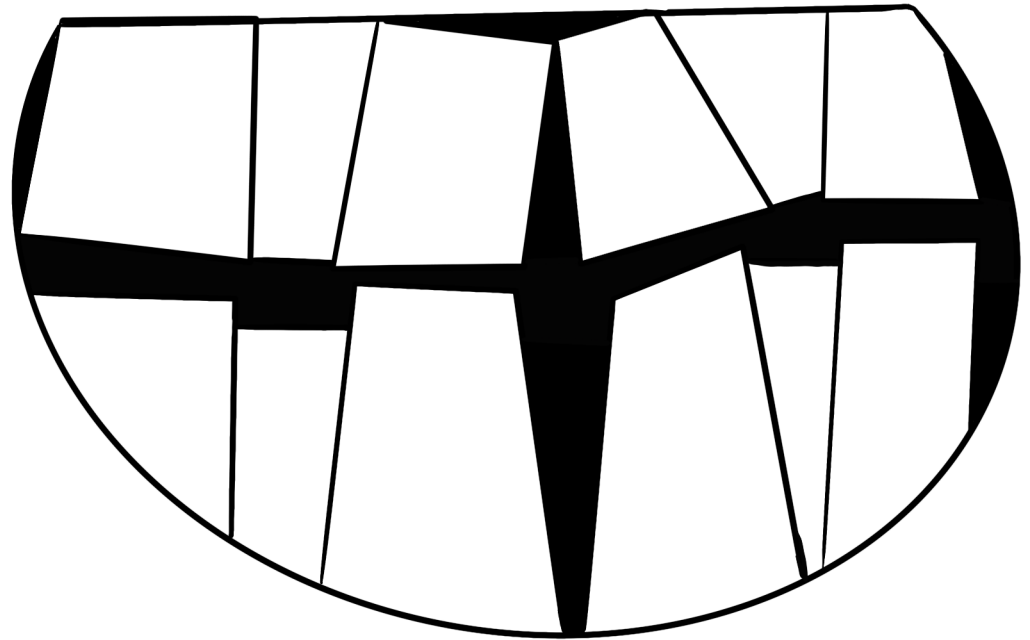
I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.

A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.

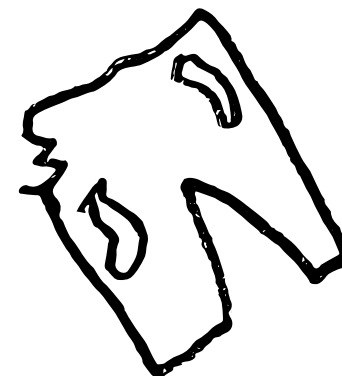
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!



- Suggested by my Aunty Geraldine

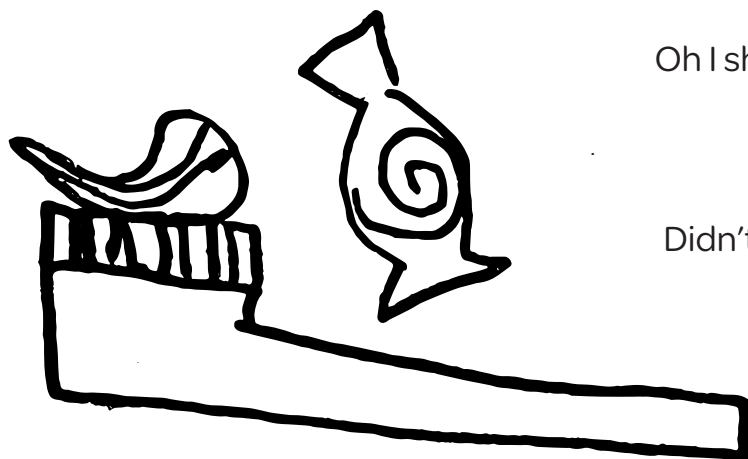
OH, I WISH I'D LOOKED AFTER MY TEETH

by Pam Ayres



Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth,
And spotted the perils beneath,
All the toffees I chewed,
And the sweet sticky food,
Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth.

I wish I'd been that much more willin'
When I had more tooth there than fillin'
To pass up gobstoppers,
From respect to me choppers
And to buy something else with me shillin'.



When I think of the lollies I licked,
And the liquorice allsorts I picked,
Sherbet dabs, big and little,
All that hard peanut brittle,
My conscience gets horribly pricked.

My Mother, she told me no end,
"If you got a tooth, you got a friend"
I was young then, and careless,
My toothbrush was hairless,
I never had much time to spend.

Oh I showed them the toothpaste all right,
I flashed it about late at night,
But up-and-down brushin'
And pokin' and fussin'
Didn't seem worth the time... I could bite!

If I'd known I was paving the way,
To cavities, caps and decay,
The murder of fillin's
Injections and drillin's
I'd have thrown all me sherbet away.

So I lay in the old dentist's chair,
And I gaze up his nose in despair,
And his drill it do whine,
In these molars of mine,
"Two amalgum," he'll say, "for in there."
How I laughed at my Mother's false teeth,
As they foamed in the waters beneath,
But now comes the reckonin'
It's me they are beckonin'
Oh, I wish I'd looked after me teeth.

- Suggested by my Uncle Niall

Don't Quit

by John Greenleaf Whittier

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure comes about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell just how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

- Suggested by my Aunty Gabrielle





Macavity: The Mystery Cat

by T. S. Eliot

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw—
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
For when they reach the scene of crime—Macavity's not there!

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime—Macavity's not there!
You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air—
But I tell you once and once again, Macavity's not there!

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.
His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.

You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square—
But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not there!

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair—
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity's not there!

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—Macavity's not there!
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
'It must have been Macavity!'—but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs;
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

- Suggested by my Aunty Maresa

The Raven and the Fox

by Jean de La Fontaine

Perched on a lofty oak,
Sir Raven held a lunch of cheese;
Sir Fox, who smelt it in the breeze,
Thus to the holder spoke:
“Ha! how do you do, Sir Raven?
Well, your coat, sir, is a brave one!
So black and glossy, on my word, sir,
With voice to match, you were a bird, sir,
Well fit to be the Phoenix of these days.”
Sir Raven, overset with praise,
Must show how musical his croak.
Down fell the luncheon from the oak;
Which snatching up, Sir Fox thus spoke:
“The flatterer, my good sir,
Aye lives on his listener;
Which lesson, if you please,
Is doubtless worth the cheese.”
A bit too late, Sir Raven swore
The rogue should never cheat him more.

- Suggested by my Dad

Mr. Squirrel

by V. M. Julian

I saw a brown squirrel to-day in the wood,
He ran here and there just as fast as he could;
I think he was looking for nuts for his store,
He'd found quite a lot, but he still wanted more.

He can't find much food once the winter is here,
He hides all his nuts in a hole somewhere near,
Then settles himself for a long winter sleep,
Coming out now and then for a nut and a peep.

His long bushy tail keeps him cosy and warm,
His nest's far away from the wind and the storm.
But when Springtime comes back, I think that, maybe,
He'll be waiting again in the woodland for me

- Suggested by my sister Annie

The Ballad of Father Gilligan

by William Butler Yeats

THE old priest, Peter Gilligan,
Was weary night and day;
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die";
And after cried he, "God forgive!
My body spake, not I!"

He knelt, and leaning on the chair
He prayed and fell asleep,
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind,
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp
When the moths come once more,
The old priest, Peter Gilligan,
Stood upright on the floor.

"Mavrone, mavrone! the man has died,
While I slept on the chair."
He roused his horse out of its sleep,
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door:
"Father! you come again."

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.
"He died an hour ago."
The old priest, Peter Gilligan,
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone, he turned and died
As merry as a bird."
The old priest, Peter Gilligan,
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need.

"He who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in His care,
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair."

- Suggested by my Mum