

## The Peace of Wild Things

### Poetry Resources

#### After the Winter

By Claude McKay

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves  
And against the morning's white  
The shivering birds beneath the eaves  
Have sheltered for the night,  
We'll turn our faces southward, love,  
Toward the summer isle  
Where bamboos spire to shafted grove  
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill  
Where towers the cotton tree,  
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,  
And works the droning bee.  
And we will build a cottage there  
Beside an open glade,  
With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,  
And ferns that never fade.

#### The Rainbow

By Christina Rossetti

Boats sail on the rivers,  
And ships sail on the seas;  
But clouds that sail across the sky  
Are prettier than these.  
There are bridges on the rivers,  
As pretty as you please;  
But the bow that bridges heaven,  
And overtops the trees,  
And builds a road from earth to sky,  
Is prettier far than these.

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#### Winter Morning Poem

By Ogden Nash

Winter is the king of showmen,  
Turning tree stumps into snow men  
And houses into birthday cakes  
And spreading sugar over lakes.  
Smooth and clean and frosty white,  
The world looks good enough to bite.  
That's the season to be young,  
Catching snowflakes on your tongue!  
Snow is snowy when it's snowing.  
I'm sorry it's slushy when it's going.

#### 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,

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But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

### The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee

By N. Scott Momaday

I am a feather on the bright sky  
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain  
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water  
I am the shadow that follows a child  
I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows  
I am an eagle playing with the wind  
I am a cluster of bright beads  
I am the farthest star  
I am the cold of dawn  
I am the roaring of the rain  
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow  
I am the long track of the moon in a lake  
I am a flame of four colors  
I am a deer standing away in the dusk  
I am a field of sumac and the pomme blanche  
I am an angle of geese in the winter sky  
I am the hunger of a young wolf  
I am the whole dream of these things

You see, I am alive, I am alive  
I stand in good relation to the earth  
I stand in good relation to the gods  
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful  
I stand in good relation to the daughter of Tsen-tainte  
You see, I am alive, I am alive

### The Swing

By 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

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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!

Source: *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1999)

### Autumn

By Alexander Posey

In the dreamy silence  
Of the afternoon, a  
Cloth of gold is woven  
Over wood and prairie;  
And the jaybird, newly  
Fallen from the heaven,  
Scatters cordial greetings,  
And the air is filled with  
Scarlet leaves, that, dropping,  
Rise again, as ever,  
With a useless sigh for  
Rest—and it is Autumn.

### Marshlands

By Emily Pauline Johnson

A thin wet sky, that yellows at the rim,  
And meets with sun-lost lip the marsh's brim.

The pools low lying, dank with moss and mold,  
Glint through their mildews like large cups of gold.

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Among the wild rice in the still lagoon,  
In monotone the lizard shrills his tune.

The wild goose, homing, seeks a sheltering,  
Where rushes grow, and oozing lichens cling.

Late cranes with heavy wing, and lazy flight,  
Sail up the silence with the nearing night.

And like a spirit, swathed in some soft veil,  
Steals twilight and its shadows o'er the swale.

Hushed lie the sedges, and the vapors creep,  
Thick, grey and humid, while the marshes sleep.

Source: *She Wields a Pen: American Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (University of Iowa Press, 1997)

### The Moon

By Robert Louis Stevenson

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,  
On streets and fields and harbor quays,  
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;  
And flowers and children close their eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

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### Clouds

Anonymous

White sheep, white sheep,  
On a blue hill,  
When the wind stops,  
You all stand still.  
When the wind blows,  
You walk away slow.  
White sheep, white sheep,  
Where do you go?

### Caterpillar

Christina Rossetti

Brown and furry  
Caterpillar in a hurry,  
Take your walk  
To the shady leaf, or stalk,  
Or what not,  
Which may be the chosen spot.  
No toad spy you,  
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;  
Spin and die,  
To live again a butterfly.

### Fog

By Carl Sandburg

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.

It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches

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and then moves on.

#### **Afternoon on a Hill**

Edna St. Vincent Millay

I will be the gladdest thing  
Under the sun!  
I will touch a hundred flowers  
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
With quiet eyes,  
Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
Up from the town,  
I will mark which must be mine,  
And then start down!

#### **An Autumn Greeting**

Anonymous

"Come," said the Wind to the Leaves one day.  
"Come over the meadow and we will play.  
Put on your dresses of red and gold.  
For summer is gone and the days grow cold."

#### **A Child's Calendar**

**November**

by John Updike

The stripped and shapely  
Maple grieves  
The ghosts of her  
Departed leaves.

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The ground is hard,  
As hard as stone.  
The year is old,  
The birds are flown.

And yet the world,  
In its distress,  
Displays a certain  
Loveliness---

### **Daffodowndilly**

by A.A. Milne

She wore her yellow sun-bonnet,  
She wore her greenest gown;  
She turned to the south wind  
And curtsied up and down.  
She turned to the sunlight  
And shook her yellow head,  
And whispered to her neighbor:  
"Winter is dead."

### **Kite Days**

by Mark Sawyer

A kite, a sky, and a good firm breeze,  
And acres of ground away from trees,  
And one hundred yards of clean, strong string --  
O boy, O boy! I call that Spring!

### **April Is a Dog's Dream**

By Marilyn Singer

april is a dog's dream  
the soft grass is growing  
the sweet breeze is blowing  
the air all full of singing feels just right  
so no excuses now  
we're going to the park  
to chase and charge and chew  
and I will make you see



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what spring is all about

#### **Peering Up From Mud**

##### **The Glass Frogs**

By Margarita Engle

you can't see us  
not like those golden frogs  
flashing their beauty  
because we're not here  
pretend we're not here  
you can't eat us  
we'd taste like clear air  
we're transparent  
invisible

until night when stars pass through us  
moonlight flows into us  
we start to sing  
we need to sing  
we love to sing  
sing  
sing  
sing

#### **Moon**

By Amy E. Sklansky

Marvelous  
Opaque  
Orb.  
Night-light  
for the world.

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### Nature Knows Its Math

By Joan Graham

*Divide*  
the year  
into seasons,  
four,  
*subtract*  
the snow then  
*add*  
some more  
green,  
a bud,  
a breeze,  
a whispering  
behind  
the trees,  
and here  
beneath the  
rain-scrubbed  
sky  
orange poppies  
*multiply.*

Joan Bransfield Graham, "Nature Knows Its Math" from *Marvelous Math*. Copyright © 1997 by Joan Bransfield Graham. Reprinted by permission of Joan Bransfield Graham.

### Budding Scholars

By April Halprin Wayland

Welcome, Flowers.  
Write your name on a name tag.  
Find a seat.

Raise your leaf if you've taken a class here before.  
Let's go around the room.  
Call out your colors.

I see someone's petal has fallen—  
please pick it up and put it in your desk  
where it belongs.

Sprinklers at recess,  
fertilizer for lunch,  
and you may snack on the sun throughout the day.

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Excuse me . . .  
what's that in your mouth?  
A bee?

Did you  
bring enough  
for everyone?

April Halprin Wayland, "Budding Scholars" from *Sharing the Seasons: A Book of Poems*. Copyright © 2010 by April Halprin Wayland. Reprinted by permission of April Halprin Wayland.

### Earth Day

By Jane Yolen

I am the Earth  
And the Earth is me.  
Each blade of grass,  
Each honey tree,  
Each bit of mud,  
And stick and stone  
Is blood and muscle,  
Skin and bone.

And just as I  
Need every bit  
Of me to make  
My body fit,  
So Earth needs  
Grass and stone and tree  
And things that grow here  
Naturally.

That's why we  
Celebrate this day.  
That's why across  
The world we say:  
As long as life,  
As dear, as free,  
I am the Earth  
And the Earth is me.

Jane Yolen, "Earth Day" from *The Three Bears Holiday Rhyme Book*. Copyright © 1995 by Jane Yolen. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

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### Forest Walk

By Kristine O'Connell George

I'm practicing my  
I-belong-here  
no-twig-snap  
no-leaf-rustle  
no-branch-crack  
see-all, know-all  
float-like-fog  
like-smoke  
pine-needle-soft  
forest walk.

No one will know I'm coming.  
No one will know when I'm gone.

Kristine O'Connell George, "Forest Walk" from *Toasting Marshmallows, Camping Poems*. Copyright © 2001 by Kristine O'Connell George. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.  
Source: *Toasting Marshmallows, Camping Poems* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001)

### Grass

By Joyce Kilmer

I grow in places  
others can't,  
  
where wind is high  
and water scant.  
  
I drink the rain,  
I eat the sun;  
  
before the prairie winds  
I run.  
  
I see, I sprout,  
I grow, I creep,  
  
and in the ice  
and snow, I sleep.  
  
On steppe or veld  
or pampas dry,  
  
beneath the grand,

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enormous sky,

I make my humble,  
bladed bed.

And where there's level ground,

I spread.

Joyce Sidman, "Grass" from *Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors*. Copyright © 2010 by Joyce Sidman. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

### Universe

By Steven Schnur

Up beyond the  
Night sky, an  
Indigo darkness like  
Velvet  
Embraces the farthest  
Reaches of the mind,  
Sun, moon, stars,  
Everything.

Steven Schnur, "Universe" from *Autumn: An Alphabet Acrostic*. Copyright © 1997 by Steven Schnur. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

### Autumn's Way

By Charles Ghigna

In their yellow-most goings,  
leaves of maple  
ride breezes to the ground.  
You can hear their sound  
each autumn afternoon  
as the crisp air cuts  
through the trees  
and hurries us along  
the golden sidewalks  
home.

Charles Ghigna, "Autumn's Way" from *A Fury of Motion*. Copyright © 2003 by Charles Ghigna. Reprinted by permission of Highlights for Children/Boyd's Mills Press.

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### Color

By Christina Rossetti

What is pink? a rose is pink  
By a fountain's brink.  
What is red? a poppy's red  
In its barley bed.  
What is blue? the sky is blue  
Where the clouds float thro'.  
What is white? a swan is white  
Sailing in the light.  
What is yellow? pears are yellow,  
Rich and ripe and mellow.  
What is green? the grass is green,  
With small flowers between.  
What is violet? clouds are violet  
In the summer twilight.  
What is orange? Why, an orange,  
Just an orange!

Source: *The Golden Book of Poetry* (1947)

### Dust of Snow

By Robert Frost

The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart  
A change of mood  
And saved some part  
Of a day I had rued.

### Fish

By Mary Ann Hoberman

Look at them flit  
Lickety-split  
Wiggling  
Swiggling  
Swerving

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Curving  
Hurrying  
Scurrying  
Chasing  
Racing  
Whizzing  
Whisking  
Flying  
Frisking  
Tearing around  
With a leap and a bound  
But none of them making the tiniest  
          tiniest  
          tiniest  
          tiniest  
          tiniest  
          sound

Mary Ann Hoberman, "Fish" from *The Llama Who Had No Pajama: 100 Favorite Poems*. Copyright © 1959 and renewed 1987 by Mary Ann Hoberman. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Inc.

### I'm Fond of Frogs

By Jack Prelutsky

I'm fond of frogs, and every day  
I treat them with affection.  
I join them at the **FROG CAFE**—  
We love the Croaking Section.

Text © 2000 Jack Prelutsky. Used by Permission of HarperCollins Publishers. Source: *It's Raining Pigs and Noodles* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2000)

### If You Catch a Firefly

By Lilian Moore

If you catch a firefly  
          and keep it in a jar  
You may find that  
          you have lost  
A tiny star.

If you let it go then,  
          back into the night,

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You may see it  
    once again  
Star bright.

Lilian Moore, "If You Catch a Firefly" from *I Feel the Same Way* (New York: Atheneum, 1967). Copyright © 1967 by Lilian Moore. All Rights Renewed and Reserved. Used by permission of Marian Reiner.