

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.

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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.