

Classic Poetry Series

A.A. Milne

- poems -

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At the Zoo

There are lions and roaring tigers,
and enormous camels and things,
There are biffalo-buffalo-bisons,
and a great big bear with wings.
There's a sort of a tiny potamus,
and a tiny nosserus too -
But I gave buns to the elephant
when I went down to the Zoo!

There are badgers and bidgers and bodgers,
and a Super-in-tendent's House,
There are masses of goats, and a Polar,
and different kinds of mouse,
And I think there's a sort of a something
which is called a wallaboo -
But I gave buns to the elephant
when I went down to the Zoo!

If you try to talk to the bison,
he never quite understands;
You can't shake hands with a mingo -
he doesn't like shaking hands.
And lions and roaring tigers
hate saying, "How do you do?" -
But I give buns to the elephant
when I go down to the Zoo!

A.A. Milne

Brownie

In a corner of the bedroom is a great big curtain,
Someone lives behind it, but I don't know who;
I think it is a Brownie, but I'm not quite certain.
(Nanny isn't certain, too.)

I looked behind the curtain, but he went so quickly -
Brownies never wait to say, "How do you do?"
They wriggle off at once because they're all so tickly
(Nanny says they're tickly too.)

A.A. Milne

Buckingham Palace

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
Alice is marrying one of the guard.
"A soldier's life is terrible hard,"
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
We saw a guard in a sentry-box.
"One of the sergeants looks after their socks,"
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
We looked for the King, but he never came.
"Well, God take care of him, all the same,"
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
They've great big parties inside the grounds.
"I wouldn't be King for a hundred pounds,"
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
A face looked out, but it wasn't the King's.
"He's much too busy a-signing things,"
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.
"Do you think the King knows all about me?"
"Sure to, dear, but it's time for tea,"
Says Alice.

A.A. Milne

Come Out with Me

There's sun on the river and sun on the hill . . .
You can hear the sea if you stand quite still!
There's eight new puppies at Roundabout Farm-
And I saw an old sailor with only one arm!

But everyone says, "Run along!"
(Run along, run along!)
All of them say, "Run along! I'm busy as can be."
Every one says, "Run along,
There's a little darling!"
If I'm a little darling, why don't they run with me?

There's wind on the river and wind on the hill . . .
There's a dark dead water-wheel under the mill!
I saw a fly which had just been drowned-
And I know where a rabbit goes into the ground!

But everyone says, "Run along!"
(Run along, run along!)
All of them say, "Yes, dear," and never notice me.
Every one says, "Run along,
There's a little darling!"
If I'm a little darling, why won't they come and see?

A.A. Milne

Disobedience

James James
Morrison Morrison
Weatherby George Dupree
Took great
Care of his Mother,
Though he was only three.
James James Said to his Mother,
"Mother," he said, said he;
"You must never go down
to the end of the town,
if you don't go down with me."

James James
Morrison's Mother
Put on a golden gown.
James James Morrison's Mother
Drove to the end of the town.
James James Morrison's Mother
Said to herself, said she:
"I can get right down
to the end of the town
and be back in time for tea."

King John
Put up a notice,
"LOST or STOLEN or STRAYED!
JAMES JAMES MORRISON'S MOTHER
SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MISLAID.
LAST SEEN
WANDERING VAGUELY:
QUITE OF HER OWN ACCORD,
SHE TRIED TO GET DOWN
TO THE END OF THE TOWN -
FORTY SHILLINGS REWARD!"

James James
Morrison Morrison
(Commonly known as Jim)
Told his
Other relations
Not to go blaming him.
James James
Said to his Mother,
"Mother," he said, said he:
"You must never go down to the end of the town
without consulting me."

James James
Morrison's mother
Hasn't been heard of since.
King John said he was sorry,
So did the Queen and Prince.

King John
(Somebody told me)
Said to a man he knew:
If people go down to the end of the town, well,
what can anyone do?"

(Now then, very softly)
J.J.
M.M.
W.G.Du P.
Took great
C/O his M*****
Though he was only 3.
J.J. said to his M*****
"M*****," he said, said he:
"You-must-never-go-down-to-the-end-of-the-town-
if-you-don't-go-down-with-ME!"

A.A. Milne

Happiness

John had
Great Big
Waterproof
Boots on;
John had a
Great Big
Waterproof
Hat;
John had a
Great Big
Waterproof
Mackintosh --
And that
(Said John)
Is
That.

A.A. Milne

Hoppity

Christopher Robin goes
Hoppity, hoppity,
Hoppity, hoppity, hop.
Whenever I tell him
Politely to stop it, he
Says he can't possibly stop.

If he stopped hopping,
He couldn't go anywhere,
Poor little Christopher
Couldn't go anywhere...
That's why he always goes
Hoppity, hoppity,
Hoppity,
Hoppity,
Hop.

A.A. Milne

If I Were King

I often wish I were a King,
And then I could do anything.

If only I were King of Spain,
I'd take my hat off in the rain.

If only I were King of France,
I wouldn't brush my hair for aunts.

I think, if I were King of Greece,
I'd push things off the mantelpiece.

If I were King of Norway,
I'd ask an elephant to stay.

If I were King of Babylon,
I'd leave my button gloves undone.

If I were King of Timbuctoo,
I'd think of lovely things to do.

If I were King of anything,
I'd tell the soldiers, "I'm the King!"

A.A. Milne

Independence

I never did, I never did,
I never did like "Now take care, dear!"
I never did, I never did,
I never did want "Hold-my-hand";
I never did, I never did,
I never did think much of "Not up there, dear!"
It's no good saying it.
They don't understand.

A.A. Milne

Lines and Squares

Whenever I walk in a London street,
I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;
And I keep in the squares,
And the masses of bears,
Who wait at the corners all ready to eat
The sillies who tread on the lines of the street
Go back to their lairs,
And I say to them, "Bears,
Just look how I'm walking in all the squares!"

And the little bears growl to each other, "He's mine,
As soon as he's silly and steps on a line."
And some of the bigger bears try to pretend
That they came round the corner to look for a friend;
And they try to pretend that nobody cares
Whether you walk on the lines or squares.
But only the sillies believe their talk;
It's ever so portant how you walk.
And it's ever so jolly to call out, "Bears,
Just watch me walking in all the squares!"

A.A. Milne

Market Square

I had a penny,
A bright new penny,
I took my penny
To the market square.
I wanted a rabbit,
A little brown rabbit,
And I looked for a rabbit
'Most everywhere.

For I went to the stall where they sold sweet lavender
("Only a penny for a bunch of lavender!").
"Have you got a rabbit, 'cos I don't want lavender?"
But they hadn't got a rabbit, not anywhere there.

I had a penny,
And I had another penny,
I took my pennies
To the market square.
I did want a rabbit,
A little baby rabbit,
And I looked for rabbits
'Most everywhere.

And I went to the stall where they sold fresh mackerel
("Now then! Tuppence for a fresh-caught mackerel!").
"Have you got a rabbit, 'cos I don't like mackerel?"
But they hadn't got a rabbit, not anywhere there.

I found a sixpence,
A little white sixpence.
I took it in my hand
To the market square.
I was buying my rabbit
I do like rabbits),
And I looked for my rabbit
'Most everywhere.

So I went to the stall where they sold fine saucepans
("Walk up, walk up, sixpence for a saucepan!").
"Could I have a rabbit, 'cos we've got two saucepans?"
But they hadn't got a rabbit, not anywhere there.

I had nuffin',
No, I hadn't got nuffin',
So I didn't go down
To the market square;
But I walked on the common,
The old-gold common...
And I saw little rabbits
'Most everywhere!

So I'm sorry for the people who sell fine saucepans,

I'm sorry for the people who sell fresh mackerel,
I'm sorry for the people who sell sweet lavender,
'Cos they haven't got a rabbit, not anywhere there!

A.A. Milne

Missing

Has anybody seen my mouse?

I opened his box for half a minute,
Just to make sure he was really in it,
And while I was looking, he jumped outside!
I tried to catch him, I tried, I tried....
I think he's somewhere about the house.
Has anyone seen my mouse?

Uncle John, have you seen my mouse?

Just a small sort of mouse, a dear little brown one,
He came from the country, he wasn't a town one,
So he'll feel all lonely in a London street;
Why, what could he possibly find to eat?
He must be somewhere. I'll ask Aunt Rose:
Have you seen a mouse with a woffelly nose?
He's just got out...

Hasn't anybody seen my mouse?

A.A. Milne

Pinkle Purr

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

A.A. Milne

Politeness

If people ask me,
I always tell them:
"Quite well, thank you, I'm very glad to say."
If people ask me,
I always answer,
"Quite well, thank you, how are you to-day?"
I always answer,
I always tell them,
If they ask me
Politely.....
BUT SOMETIMES

I wish

That they wouldn't.

A.A. Milne

Rice Pudding

What is the matter with Mary Jane?
She's crying with all her might and main,
And she won't eat her dinner - rice pudding again -
What is the matter with Mary Jane?

What is the matter with Mary Jane?
I've promised her dolls and a daisy-chain,
And a book about animals - all in vain -
What is the matter with Mary Jane?

What is the matter with Mary Jane?
She's perfectly well, and she hasn't a pain;
But, look at her, now she's beginning again! -
What is the matter with Mary Jane?

What is the matter with Mary Jane?
I've promised her sweets and a ride in the train,
And I've begged her to stop for a bit and explain -
What is the matter with Mary Jane?

What is the matter with Mary Jane?
She's perfectly well and she hasn't a pain,
And it's lovely rice pudding for dinner again!
What is the matter with Mary Jane?

A.A. Milne

Teddy Bear

A bear, however hard he tries,
Grows tubby without exercise.
Our Teddy Bear is short and fat,
Which is not to be wondered at;
He gets what exercise he can
By falling off the ottoman,
But generally seems to lack
The energy to clamber back.

Now tubbiness is just the thing
Which gets a fellow wondering;
And Teddy worried lots about
The fact that he was rather stout.
He thought: "If only I were thin!
But how does anyone begin?"
He thought: "It really isn't fair
To grudge one exercise and air."

For many weeks he pressed in vain
His nose against the window-pane,
And envied those who walked about
Reducing their unwanted stout.
None of the people he could see
"Is quite" (he said) "as fat as me!"
Then, with a still more moving sigh,
"I mean" (he said) "as fat as I!"

One night it happened that he took
A peep at an old picture-book,
Wherein he came across by chance
The picture of a King of France
(A stoutish man) and, down below,
These words: "King Louis So and So,
Nicknamed 'The Handsome!'" There he sat,
And (think of it!) the man was fat!

Our bear rejoiced like anything
To read about this famous King,
Nicknamed "The Handsome." There he sat,
And certainly the man was fat.
Nicknamed "The Handsome." Not a doubt
The man was definitely stout.
Why then, a bear (for all his tub)
Might yet be named "The Handsome Cub!"

"Might yet be named." Or did he mean
That years ago he "might have been"?
For now he felt a slight misgiving:
"Is Louis So and So still living?
Fashions in beauty have a way
Of altering from day to day.
Is 'Handsome Louis' with us yet?"

Unfortunately I forget."

Next morning (nose to window-pane)
The doubt occurred to him again.
One question hammered in his head:
"Is he alive or is he dead?"
Thus, nose to pane, he pondered; but
The lattice window, loosely shut,
Swung open. With one startled "Oh!"
Our Teddy disappeared below.

There happened to be passing by
A plump man with a twinkling eye,
Who, seeing Teddy in the street,
Raised him politely to his feet,
And murmured kindly in his ear
Soft words of comfort and of cheer:
"Well, well!" "Allow me!" "Not at all."
"Tut-tut! A very nasty fall."

Our Teddy answered not a word;
It's doubtful if he even heard.
Our bear could only look and look:
The stout man in the picture-book!
That 'handsome' King - could this be he,
This man of adiposity?
"Impossible," he thought. "But still,
No harm in asking. Yes I will!"

"Are you," he said, "by any chance
His Majesty the King of France?"
The other answered, "I am that,"
Bowed stiffly, and removed his hat;
Then said, "Excuse me," with an air,
"But is it Mr Edward Bear?"
And Teddy, bending very low,
Replied politely, "Even so!"

They stood beneath the window there,
The King and Mr Edward Bear,
And, handsome, if a trifle fat,
Talked carelessly of this and that....
Then said His Majesty, "Well, well,
I must get on," and rang the bell.
"Your bear, I think," he smiled. "Good-day!"
And turned, and went upon his way.

A bear, however hard he tries,
Grows tubby without exercise.
Our Teddy Bear is short and fat,
Which is not to be wondered at.
But do you think it worries him

To know that he is far from slim?
No, just the other way about -
He's proud of being short and stout.

A.A. Milne

The Christening

What shall I call
My dear little dormouse?
His eyes are small,
But his tail is e-nor-mouse.

I sometimes call him Terrible John,
'Cos his tail goes on -
And on -
And on.
And I sometimes call him Terrible Jack,
'Cos his tail goes on to the end of his back.
And I sometimes call him Terrible James,
'Cos he says he likes me calling him names...
But I think I shall call him Jim,
'Cos I am fond of him.

A.A. Milne

The Dormouse and the Doctor

There once was a Dormouse who lived in a bed
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red),
And all the day long he'd a wonderful view
Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue).

A Doctor came hurrying round, and he said:
"Tut-tut, I am sorry to find you in bed.
Just say 'Ninety-nine' while I look at your chest....
Don't you find that chrysanthemums answer the best?"

The Dormouse looked round at the view and replied
(When he'd said "Ninety-nine") that he'd tried and he'd tried,
And much the most answering things that he knew
Were geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue).

The Doctor stood frowning and shaking his head,
And he took up his shiny silk hat as he said:
"What the patient requires is a change," and he went
To see some chrysanthemum people in Kent.

The Dormouse lay there, and he gazed at the view
Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue),
And he knew there was nothing he wanted instead
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red).

The Doctor came back and, to show what he meant,
He had brought some chrysanthemum cuttings from Kent.
"Now these," he remarked, "give a much better view
Than geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue)."

They took out their spades and they dug up the bed
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red),
And they planted chrysanthemums (yellow and white).
"And now," said the Doctor, "we'll soon have you right."

The Dormouse looked out, and he said with a sigh:
"I suppose all these people know better than I.
It was silly, perhaps, but I did like the view
Of geraniums (red) and delphiniums (blue)."

The Doctor came round and examined his chest,
And ordered him Nourishment, Tonics, and Rest.
"How very effective," he said, as he shook
The thermometer, "all these chrysanthemums look!"

The Dormouse turned over to shut out the sight
Of the endless chrysanthemums (yellow and white).
"How lovely," he thought, "to be back in a bed
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red.)"

The Doctor said, "Tut! It's another attack!"
And ordered him Milk and Massage-of-the-back,

And Freedom-from-worry and Drives-in-a-car,
And murmured, "How sweet your chrysanthemums are!"

The Dormouse lay there with his paws to his eyes,
And imagined himself such a pleasant surprise:
"I'll pretend the chrysanthemums turn to a bed
Of delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red)!"

The Doctor next morning was rubbing his hands,
And saying, "There's nobody quite understands
These cases as I do! The cure has begun!
How fresh the chrysanthemums look in the sun!"

The Dormouse lay happy, his eyes were so tight
He could see no chrysanthemums, yellow or white.
And all that he felt at the back of his head
Were delphiniums (blue) and geraniums (red).

And that is the reason (Aunt Emily said)
If a Dormouse gets in a chrysanthemum bed,
You will find (so Aunt Emily says) that he lies
Fast asleep on his front with his paws to his eyes.

A.A. Milne

The End

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A.A. Milne

The King's Breakfast

The King's Breakfast
The King asked
The Queen, and
The Queen asked
The Dairymaid:
"Could we have some butter for
The Royal slice of bread?"
The Queen asked the Dairymaid,
The Dairymaid
Said, "Certainly,
I'll go and tell the cow
Now
Before she goes to bed."

The Dairymaid
She curtsied,
And went and told
The Alderney:
"Don't forget the butter for
The Royal slice of bread."
The Alderney
Said sleepily:
"You'd better tell
His Majesty
That many people nowadays
Like marmalade
Instead."

The Dairymaid
Said, "Fancy!"
And went to
Her Majesty.
She curtsied to the Queen, and
She turned a little red:
"Excuse me,
Your Majesty,
For taking of
The liberty,
But marmalade is tasty, if
It's very
Thickly
Spread."

The Queen said
"Oh!:"
And went to
His Majesty:
"Talking of the butter for
The royal slice of bread,
Many people
Think that
Marmalade

Is nicer.
Would you like to try a little
Marmalade
Instead?"

The King said,
"Bother!"
And then he said,
"Oh, deary me!"
The King sobbed, "Oh, deary me!"
And went back to bed.
"Nobody,"
He whimpered,
"Could call me
A fussy man;
I only want
A little bit
Of butter for
My bread!"

The Queen said,
"There, there!"
And went to
The Dairymaid.
The Dairymaid
Said, "There, there!"
And went to the shed.
The cow said,
"There, there!"
I didn't really
Mean it;
Here's milk for his porringer,
And butter for his bread."

The Queen took
The butter
And brought it to
His Majesty;
The King said,
"Butter, eh?"
And bounced out of bed.
"Nobody," he said,
As he kissed her
Tenderly,
"Nobody," he said,
As he slid down the banisters,
"Nobody,
My darling,
Could call me
A fussy man -
BUT
I do like a little bit of butter to my bread!"

A.A. Milne

The Morning Walk

When Anne and I go out a walk,
We hold each other's hand and talk
Of all the things we mean to do
When Anne and I are forty-two.

And when we've thought about a thing,
Like bowling hoops or bicycling,
Or falling down on Anne's balloon,
We do it in the afternoon.

A.A. Milne

Twinkletoes

When the sun
Shines through the leaves of the apple-tree,
When the sun
Makes shadows of the leaves of the apple-tree,
Then I pass
On the grass
From one leaf to another,
From one leaf to its brother,
Tip-toe, tip-toe!
Here I go!

A.A. Milne

Us Two

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)
"I think it ought to be twenty-two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.

"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few-
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!"- and off they flew.

"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,
Can stick together, says Pooh, says he. "That's how it is," says Pooh.

A.A. Milne

Wind on the Hill

No one can tell me,
Nobody knows,
Where the wind comes from,
Where the wind goes.

It's flying from somewhere
As fast as it can,
I couldn't keep up with it,
Not if I ran.

But if I stopped holding
The string of my kite,
It would blow with the wind
For a day and a night.

And then when I found it,
Wherever it blew,
I should know that the wind
Had been going there too.

So then I could tell them
Where the wind goes...
But where the wind comes from
Nobody knows.

A.A. Milne