

Its Dark in Here by Shel Silverstein

I am writing these poems
From inside a lion,
And it's rather dark in here.
So please excuse the handwriting
Which may not be too clear.
But this afternoon by the lion's cage
I'm afraid I got too near.
And I'm writing these lines
From inside a lion,
And it's rather dark in here.

Gods Wheel by Shel Silverstein

GOD says to me with a kind
Of smile, "Hey how would you like
To be God awhile and steer the world?"
"Okay," says I, "I'll give it a try.

Where do I set?
How much do I get?
What time is lunch?
When can I quit?"

"Gimme back that wheel, " says GOD.
"I don't think you're quite ready YET.

Rain by Shel Silverstein

I opened my eyes
And looked up at the rain,
And it dripped in my head
And flowed into my brain,
And all that I hear as I lie in my bed
Is the slishity-slosh of the rain in my head.

I step very softly,
I walk very slow,
I can't do a handstand—
I might overflow,
So pardon the wild crazy thing I just said—
I'm just not the same since there's rain in my
head.

Moments of Vision by Thomas Hardy

That mirror
Which makes of men a transparency,
Who holds that mirror
And bids us such a breast-bared spectacle to see
Of you and me?

That mirror
Whose magic penetrates like a dart,
Who lifts that mirror
And throws our mind back on us, and our heart,
Until we start?

That mirror
Works well in these night hours of ache;
Why in that mirror
Are things we never see ourselves once take
When the world is awake?

That mirror
Can test each mortal when unaware;
Yea, that strange mirror
May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair,
Reflecting it—where?

If by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies.
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, not talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same.

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at the beginning,
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

My Homework by Kenn Nesbitt

I tried to do my homework
but a show was on TV.
A song was on the radio.
A friend was texting me.

My email chimed, and so, of course,
I had to look at that.
It linked me to a video
of someone's silly cat.

I watched a dozen videos,
and then I played a game.
I almost didn't hear her
when my mother called my name.

I looked up at the clock
and it was time to go to bed.
I didn't get my homework done;
just other stuff instead.

I hope my teacher listens
to the cause of my inaction.
It's really not my fault the world
is just one big distraction.

Science Homework by Kenn Nesbitt

I hope that you believe me,
for I wouldn't tell a lie.
I cannot turn my science homework in
and this is why:

I messed up the assignment
that you gave us yesterday.
It burbled from its test tube
and went slithering away.

It wriggled off the table,
and it landed with a splat,
convulsed across my bedroom floor
and terrorized the cat.

It shambled down the staircase
with a horrid glorping noise.
It wobbled to the family room
and gobbled all my toys.

It tumbled to the kitchen
and digested every plate.
That slimy blob enlarged
with every item that it ate.

It writhed around the living room
digesting lamps and chairs,
then snuck up on our napping dog
and caught him unawares.

I came to school upset today.
My head's in such a fog.
But this is my excuse:
You see, my homework ate my dog.

My Teacher by Kenn Nesbitt

My teacher calls me sweetie cakes.
My classmates think it's funny
to hear her call me angel face
or pookie bear or honey.

She calls me precious baby doll.
She calls me pumpkin pie
or doodle bug or honey bunch
or darling butterfly.

My class is so embarrassing
I need to find another;
just any class at all
in which the teacher's not my mother.

Since Hannah Moved Away by Judith Viorst

The tires on my bike are flat.
The sky is grouchy gray.
At least it sure feels like that
Since Hannah moved away.

Chocolate ice cream tastes like prunes.
December's come to stay.
They've taken back the Mays and Junes
Since Hannah moved away.

Flowers smell like halibut.
Velvet feels like hay.
Every handsome dog's a mutt
Since Hannah moved away.

Nothing's fun to laugh about.
Nothing's fun to play.
They call me, but I won't come out
Since Hannah moved away.

The World's Biggest Burp by Kenn Nesbitt

The record, so far, for the world's biggest burp,
is held by Belinda Melinda McNurp.
It wasn't on purpose. She wasn't to blame.
Her tummy just rumbled, and out the burp came.

Belinda then instantly saw her mistake.
The ground began trembling and starting to shake.
That rumble was suddenly more of a roar.
It busted the windows and knocked down the door.

Her mother and father both covered their ears.
Her brother and sister were nearly in tears.
Her puppy looked panicked and yipped as he fled.
Her kitten just cowered and covered his head.

The cars on the street began skidding and stopping.
The shoppers in shops started dropping their shopping.
The squirrels all burrowed. The birds flew away.
The sun disappeared for the rest of the day

as clouds began thundering all around town.
The trees toppled over. The buildings fell down.
Tornadoes and hurricanes blew through the sky.
The rivers flowed backward. The oceans ran dry.

Volcanoes erupted from Perth to Peru.
The Grand Canyon widened. Mount Everest grew.
The earth started spinning a different direction.
And, worst of all, I lost my iPhone connection.

Belinda was pretty embarrassed alright,
but she was well-mannered, and very polite.
And that's why she knew it would all be okay
when she said, "Excuse me," and went on her way.

My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an India-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Sick by Shel Silverstein

"I cannot go to school today,"
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.

"I have the measles and the mumps,
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.

My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,
I'm going blind in my right eye.

My tonsils are as big as rocks,
I've counted sixteen chicken pox
And there's one more--that's seventeen,
And don't you think my face looks green?

My leg is cut--my eyes are blue--
It might be instamatic flu.

I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
I'm sure that my left leg is broke--
My hip hurts when I move my chin,
My belly button's caving in,
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,
My 'pendix pains each time it rains.

My nose is cold, my toes are numb.
I have a sliver in my thumb.

My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,
I hardly whisper when I speak.

My tongue is filling up my mouth,
I think my hair is falling out.

My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,
My temperature is one-o-eight.

My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,
There is a hole inside my ear.

I have a hangnail, and my heart is--what?
What's that? What's that you say?

You say today is. . .Saturday?
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

Mother Doesn't Want a Dog by Judith Viorst

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they smell,
And never sit when you say sit,
Or even when you yell.
And when you come home late at night
And there is ice and snow,
You have to go back out because
The dumb dog has to go.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they shed,
And always let the strangers in
And bark at friends instead,
And do disgraceful things on rugs,
And track mud on the floor,
And flop upon your bed at night
And snore their doggy snore.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
She's making a mistake.
Because, more than a dog, I think
She will not want this snake.

School Lunches by Rita

Our school lunches are so, so bad.
Eating this just makes me sad.

None of this weird food is delicious,
And all the lunch ladies are malicious!

The chocolate cookie is the best,
But it is really hard to digest.

This idea is a great big flop
And will never ever be on top.

Scary teachers scream, "EAT UP!"
But how do I drink from the dirty cup?

I don't have a packed lunch, so I'm not so lucky.
All this food is super mucky!

I cannot cope with even half,
In math class I might barf on my graph.

I always think, "What's that on my plate?"
This is the stuff I really hate,

But I do quite like fish and chips,
Even if the ketchup burns my lips!

Official Birthday Wish List, In ABC Order

Synopsis: *Sam reads his Birthday wish list out to his mother and father:*

SAM:

Okay, Dad are you listening? Sit still. You have to sit still so you can listen! This is my official birthday wish list, in ABC order.

1. A NERF "Fortnite" Dart Blaster. Promise I won't shoot it inside.
2. A Basketball hoop for the garage.
3. A basketball, obviously.
4. A real crossbow and about 50 arrows. Again, not for inside.
5. A magic set: not a 'little kid' one, a 'big kid' one!
6. A metal detector for when we go to the beach.
7. A Star Wars Darth Vader Alarm clock so you can sleep in.
8. And a dishwasher ... cuz I don't wanna do them anymore.

Oh, and this might be hard, but I wrote it anyway: I also want a puppy. Any questions?

Time To Go, Rufus

Synopsis: *Jesse is telling his best friend Rufus, an old golden retriever that it's time to go to the vet.*

JESSE:

Come here, boy! Sit down on the blanket. Good boy. Are you comfy there? Did you know that you're twelve years old now? That's ... eighty-four in dog years. That's older than Gran!

Anyway, I have to tell you something. Dad told me not to say, but I'm pretty sure you won't dob me in. We're going to get in the car soon and drive to the vet. I know, I don't like that place either! But they give you a treat at the end and I get to pick a lollipop from the jar, so I guess it's not that bad.

Well, thing is, you won't be coming home with us this time. You have to stay at the vet and they're going to take care of you. You don't need to be scared, I'm pretty sure I've met all the vets and nurses and they're all really nice!

I promise it's going to be okay. You just lie down and close your eyes, and it'll be like when we've had a big playdate and go to bed early because we're so tired and can't keep our eyes open any longer. You trust me, don't you? I promise: it's going to be okay.

Oh, one more thing, Rufus: you're the bestest friend I've ever had.

ABE

Synopsis: *Abe's dad is trying to teach him to play baseball on a hot summer day.*

ABE:

Dad, I'm sick of this. The mosquitoes are eating me alive. Can't we go inside now? I don't really have to learn to play baseball. It's OK. I think I get it now. "Eyes on the ball." Right?

Maybe I'm just not any good at this? Maybe I never will be... But a guy can only be hit in the head with a baseball so many times. I'm kinda sick of this game. I don't think I want to play any more. I'll just quit the team. Can't I just quit, Dad?

LOUIS

Synopsis: *Louis is a picky eater: he only eats hot dogs. He's over at his friend Jack's house and Jack's mom, Mrs. Jones, doesn't have any hot dogs.*

LOUIS:

No, I'm sorry, Mrs. Jones, I don't eat that. I only eat hot dogs. You don't have hot dogs? Oh. Well, maybe I should go home then. That's all I eat. Hot dogs for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Sometimes I eat two or three instead of just one.

My mom says I'll grow out of it someday. I doubt it. I love hot dogs. My little sister is worse. She only eats chicken soup. She sticks her pigtails in the soup and sucks it out of her hair. It's disgusting. Well, tell Jack I'll see him later. I've got to go home and have a few hot dogs. I think it's a three-hot-dog day, today. See you later, Mrs. Jones!

BEAN

Synopsis: *Bean is playing hide and seek with a bunch of boys. They can't find anybody.*

BEAN:

Hey! Where did everybody go? I give up! I counted to a hundred, like you said. It took a really long time. Where is everybody? I said I give up! I can't find you!

I've been looking for ages. Can anybody hear me? This isn't funny any more, you guys. Come out, come out, wherever you are! Come on, guys. Let's play a different game! We could play tag outside? Or maybe we could have a snack and play video games? I'll let you guys play first! I promise! Just come out. I can't find you, OK? I give up. What more do you want from me? Guys? Hey, guys?

Kid Hero

Synopsis: *Ash talks about becoming a caped crusader.*

ASH:

I've always dreamed of being a hero. I've tried everything to become super. I let a spider bite me ... no spider powers, just lots of itching. I tried standing too close to the microwave oven hoping the radiation would change me. Nothing. And I got in trouble for making so many bags of popcorn! But I took it all to school and had a popcorn party. I was a hero *that* day. So I guess it kinda worked?

I love being a hero. I love helping people. I love making them happy. And I hate bad guys. I hate creeps who hurt people. There's this kid at school ... he's always hurting everyone. I am sick of him hurting us. I just need those super powers. I need something that will make him stop!

Maybe if I eat more of the school lunches? They look radioactive. If I get enough green hotdogs and brown sauce in me, something is bound to happen! And I need a catch phrase, like "Gonna smoosh me a baddie!" And a cool costume! Actually, last time I was in the bathroom, I saw the perfect superhero name. "Protecto!" Instead of a telephone booth like Superman, I could use a bathroom stall and those Protecto seat covers could be a cape- and I could make a toilet paper mask! Nothing scares bad guys more than bathroom stuff. *(Thinks.)* Or maybe it will really make them want to give me a swirly? I better rethink this...

TIMMY

Synopsis: *Timmy tries to convince his mom that his messy room is not his fault.*

TIMMY:

Mom, it's not my fault my room's a mess! Me and Anthony were playing with his new race-cars. Only four of them. And we heard a weird noise outside, so we opened the window. This huge spaceship landed and a slimy, green alien with three heads came out and jumped in the window. Anthony tried to shoot him with my zapper gun, but it didn't even hurt him—he just got real mad. So he knocked all the books off my shelf and picked up my toy box with his long, purple antennas and dumped it all over my room. So I threw a Frisbee at him and it bonked him on his third head and he slimed out the window and the spaceship disappeared into the sky. Geez, Mom, you should be happy I'm still alive!

WILL

Synopsis: *Will isn't very good at math. His teacher is not being nice to him, so he's hiding in the bathroom during class.*

WILL:

I'm never coming out. Don't tell. I'm just going to stay in here. I hate this class. I hate Mrs. Stupidhead. She's always mean to me. Don't tell, will you Mark? You can stay in here, too, if you want! You're good at maths. It's not fair. She made me do the same problem six times, yesterday. She tells me I don't listen. I do listen! She's too mean. Please don't tell her where I am. You won't get in trouble. I'm just going to stay in the bathroom during maths from now on, that's all. I'm never going back. I don't care what anyone says.

The Green Tie-Dye One Piece

Synopsis: *Sasha talks about what she'll be doing this Summer on her family holiday to Monterey.*

SASHA:

This summer we're going to Monterey again. We go every year to get out of the city and also so Mom has an excuse to drink mojitos at 2pm. Dad says she has a problem. She says "I'm married to you, so I deserve it".

I found out that the McKinley's are going too. They have two kids as well: Jasper is same age as my brother and Lulu is one year older than me. Lulu has this really long brown hair, which her Mom does in a fishtail every morning for school and she got an iPhone 11 Plus for her birthday in January, and she lets me take photos with her sometimes. I guess she'll bring the phone with her on the trip. They get to catch a plane to Monterey which takes two hours, but we're driving which will take fifteen.

We basically just sit on the beach or by the pool all day and go out for dinner together at night. I love the feeling of being in the sun all day and then washing my hair in a cold shower to cool off.

I look ... different now. Mom had to take me shopping for a new swimming costume at the last minute because I put my old one on and it didn't fit right anymore. Maybe it's because I stopped playing Netball... Anyways, I had a big fight with Mom at the mall because she wanted to look at everything when I tried it on, but I just wanted to make the decision by myself and I didn't want anyone else to walk past and see. I ended up getting a green tie-dye pattern one piece with thick straps and a hole cut out the back from Topshop. I wonder if Lulu will like it? If she says it's "cool", that means she doesn't really like it, but if she says nothing at all, that means she likes it and is probably jealous. I hope she doesn't say anything...

So, yeah, that's what I'll be doing this summer.

Little Sailfish

Synopsis: *Ruby is a swim champ, but she's not sure she actually enjoys swimming anymore, or if she just does it so as not to disappoint her dad.*

RUBY:

My dad was an Olympic freestyler. He beat the world record in 2011. He's the fastest swimmer I've ever seen.

He takes me to swim training every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and on Saturdays there's a meet down at the outdoor pool. I like spending time with my Dad; he brings hot chocolate in a thermos for me and on the way home he gives me notes on how I can get better and faster. He thinks my coach Sam is "overpaid and inexperienced". I think Sam's nice. He smiles all the time and has a nice voice. He doesn't yell or lose his temper like my Dad does sometimes. Which is why I need to make sure I'm good, so he doesn't yell. Sometimes my tummy hurts on Thursdays because I try to beat my one-hundred-meter PB from the week before so that Dad's in a good mood all evening. When he's really proud of me, he calls me his little Sailfish—cuz they can swim up to seventy miles an hour.

I always smell of chlorine though, and my hair used to be strawberry blonde but it's kind of green now and sometimes I have rings around my eyes for hours after I get out of the pool from the goggles being so tight.

But, don't get me wrong: I love swimming ... I think.

Thanks For Nothing, Santa

Synopsis: *Lila wakes up on Christmas morning, hoping to get a soccer ball from Santa, but things don't seem to go her way...*

LILA:

“Please, Please, Please, Please, PLEASE!”

I wake up before the sun and run into the living room. Under the tree is a huge pile of presents: some wrapped in red—those ones are from my Mom and Dad—and the rest are wrapped in gold paper. Those must be from Santa.

I start to pick up the presents and shake them, real gentle, so I can hear if it rattles and feel how heavy it is. I always try to guess before I open it. I wrote a big list this year, but the main thing I want is a pink soccer ball. I pick up the biggest one. Looks about soccer ball size. It's heavy too. I rip the gold paper off and...

A box of books?! It's got pictures of fairies on the front, in different colours, with little silver stars all over it! What the heck am I gonna do with a bunch of fairy books?! Thanks for nothing, Santa!

ALICIA

Synopsis: *Alicia is a princess who doesn't like boys. She is talking to her father, the king.*

ALICE:

Daddy, I don't want to be a princess anymore. I like the pretty dresses and I sort of like the dancing, but ... why do I have to dance with boys? I really don't like boys. The last boy I danced with told me about all the worms he ate. How he'd get his servants to search far and wide for the fattest, juiciest worms in the kingdom. I almost puked on my pretty slippers, Daddy! It was gross. I could just dance by myself from now on. And you, of course, because you're my dad and not a boy. But I just cannot stand another day of dancing with worm-eaters!

SHONDA

Synopsis: *Shonda wants to help her mom bake in the kitchen. She wants to be a chef when she grows up.*

SHONDA:

Mom, can I help? Why not? I'm good at baking. I do not make a mess! I do a good job. Can we make cookies? Chocolate chip? Everybody likes cookies. I'm done with my homework. So I can help you? Please? I want to be Rachel Ray when I grow up. Can I use the rolling pin? I like the rolling pin. You want me to watch TV? I never get to help. You told me you'd teach me to cook when I'm older, and I'm older now. I know you told me that last week, so I'm a whole week older now. I just want to help, Mommy!

ADDY

Synopsis: *Addy fell asleep while chewing gum. Now it's stuck in her hair!*

ADDY:

(Screams!) Look what happened! Oh no, oh no, oh noooooo! What am I going to do? It won't come out! No, Mom, you can't cut my hair! There must be another way! This is all Daddy's fault. He gave me that Hubba Bubba gum. Two whole pieces! I can't help that I fell asleep. My hair will be way too short if you cut it! Can't you wash it out? Isn't there anything we can do? I don't want to lose all my hair!

MANDY

Synopsis: *Mandy helps her little sister learn what is true and what is make-believe.*

MANDY:

There's no such thing as real fairies! Think about it. If they existed, we'd see them caught in our bug zapper. Or we'd feel them get squashed under our bare feet in the grass. If you can't see them or feel them, they don't exist. That's why the only fairy that is real is the Tooth Fairy. I know that for a fact because she leaves me cold, hard cash. Now that's something you can feel.

KATY

Synopsis: *Katy is making fun of a girl in her class, Darla, by repeating everything she says.*

KATY:

“Stop repeating everything I say!” “I said stop it!” “Quit it!” “You’re going to get in trouble if you don’t stop!” “I’m telling!” “That’s it! I’m going to the teacher.” Wait! Darla, I was just kidding! Can’t you take a joke? How come you have to be so serious all the time? You’re always running to the teacher. Learn to take a joke. Jeez! Hey, stop repeating me! I said stop it! It’s not funny. I did this already! You’re not original. Quit it!

NINA

Synopsis: *Nina just found out from her best friend, Ashley, that she wasn’t invited to their friend Britney’s sleepover party.*

NINA:

Britney is having a party? Tonight? Oh. I guess ... I didn’t get invited. Maybe she forgot? Or it got lost? I thought we were friends. Did everybody else get invited? That’s so mean! I was never, ever mean to her. I don’t like Britney! I don’t care that I’m not going to a party. She’s not my friend anymore. Why don’t you come over to my house instead of going to her party? If you go to her party, you won’t be my friend anymore, Ashley. I won’t be friends with you, either.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND (adapted from the book by Lewis Carroll)

Synopsis: *In this short adaptation of Lewis Carroll's children's classic, Alice meets the White Rabbit and follows him down the rabbit hole.*

ALICE:

Why, how impolite of him. I asked him a civil question, and he pretended not to hear me. That's not at all nice. *(Calling out.)* I say, Mr. White Rabbit, where are you going? Hmm. He won't answer me. And I do so want to know what he is late for. I wonder if I might follow him. Why not? There's no rule that I mayn't go where I please. I- I will follow him.

Wait for me, Mr. White Rabbit. I'm coming, too! *(She falls.)* How curious. I never realised that rabbit holes were so dark . . . and so long . . . and so empty. I believe I have been falling for five minutes, and I still can't see the bottom! Hmph! After such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling downstairs. How brave they'll all think me at home. Why, I wouldn't say anything about it even if I fell off the top of the house! I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time? I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny that would be. Oh, I think I see the bottom. Yes, I'm sure I see the bottom. I shall hit the bottom, hit it very hard, and oh, how it will hurt!