

A Child's Evening Prayer
~Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say:
O God! preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year;
And, O! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy;
And O! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth,
And may we always love each other
Our friends, our father, and our mother:
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my great sleep I may
Awake to thy eternal day! Amen

A Light Exists in Spring
~Emily Dickinson

A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period --
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,
It shows the furthest Tree
Upon the furthest Slope you know
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step
Or Noons report away
Without the Formula of sound
It passes and we stay --

A quality of loss
Affecting our Content
As Trade had suddenly encroached
Upon a Sacrament.

A Morning Hymn

~Christopher Smart

O Thou, who lately closed my eyes,
And calmed my soul to rest,
Now the dull blank of darkness flies,
Be thanked, be praised, and blest!

And as thou saved me in the night,
From anguish and dismay,
Lead through the labours of the light,
And dangers of the day.

Through from Thy laws I daily swerve,
Yet still Thy mercy grant;
Shield me from all that I deserve,
And grant me all I want.

However she's tempted to descend,
Keep reason on her throne;
From all men's passions me defend,
But chiefly from my own.

Above the Bright Blue Sky
~Albert Midlane

There's a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
A Friend who never changes
Whose love will never die;
Our earthly friends may fail us,
And change with changing years,
This Friend is always worthy
Of that dear name he bears.

There's a home for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
Where Jesus reigns in glory,
A home of peace and joy;
No home on earth is like it,
Nor can with it compare;
And everyone is happy,
Nor could be happier there.

After Apple-Picking
~Robert Frost

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight

I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

All Things Bright and Beautiful

~Cecil Frances Alexander

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning,
That brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.



An Autumn Greeting

"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."

An Evening Hymn
~Thomas Ken

All praise to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light;
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Beneath thy own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The ill that I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

O may my soul on Thee repose,
And may sweet sleep my eyelids close:
Sleep that may me more vigorous make
To serve my God when I awake.

Answer to a Child's Question
~Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linner and thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent - the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving - all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he-
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

At the Seaside

~Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
 To dig the sandy shore.
My holes were empty like a cup,
In every hole the sea came up,
 Till it could come no more.

Bed in Summer

~Robert Louis Stevenson

In Winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle light.
In Summer, quite the other way,
 I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
 Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
 To have to go to bed by day?

Buttercups and Daisies

~Mary Howitt

Buttercups and daisies-
Oh the pretty flowers,
Coming ere the springtime
To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
While the fields are bare,
Buttercups and daisies
Spring up here and there.

Ere the snowdrop peepeth,
Ere the crocus bold,
Ere the early primrose
Opes its paly gold,
Somewhere on a sunny bank
Buttercups are bright;
Somewhere 'mong the frozen grass
Peeps the daisy white.

Little hardy flowers
Like to children poor,
Playing in their sturdy health
By their mother's door:
Purple with the north wind,
Yet alert and bold;
Fearing not and caring not,
Though they be a-cold.

What to them is weather!
What are stormy showers!
Buttercups and daisies
Are these human flowers!

He who gave them hardship
And a life of care,
Gave them likewise hardy strength,
And patient hearts, to bear.

Welcome yellow buttercups,
Welcome daisies white,
Ye are in my spirit
Visioned, a delight!
Coming ere the springtime
Of sunny hours to tell-
Speaking to our hearts of Him
Who doeth all things well.

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.

Covetousness

~Peter Idley

Covetousness hath never end,
And where is no end, is no rest;
Where is no rest, peace doth wend;
Where is no peace, God is a guest;
For God Himself made His nest
Where peace made his bower,
And there He dwelleth, our Saviour.

Evening

(In words of one syllable)

~Thomas Miller

The day is past, the sun is set,
And the white stars are in the sky;
While the long grass with dew is wet,
And through the air the bats now fly.

The lambs have now lain down to sleep,
The birds have long since sought their nests;
The air is still; and dark, and deep
On the hill side the old wood rests.

Yet of the dark I have no fear,
But feel as safe as when 'tis light;
For I know God is with me there,
And He will guard me through the night.

For God is by me when I pray,
And when I close mine eyes to sleep,
I know that He will with me stay,
And will all night watch by me keep.

For He who rules the stars and sea,
Who makes the grass and trees to grow.
Will look on a poor child like me,
When on my knees I to Him bow.

He holds all things in His right hand,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small;
When we sleep, or sit, or stand,
He is with us, for He loves us all.

Flint

~Christina Rossetti

An emerald is as green as grass,
A ruby red as blood;
A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;
A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,
To catch the world's desire;
An opal holds a fiery spark;
But a flint holds fire.

Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild
~Charles Wesley

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

Fain I would to Thee be brought,
Dearest God, forbid it not;
Give me, dearest God, a place
In the Kingdom of Thy grace.

Put Thy hands upon my head,
Let me in Thine arms be stayed,
Let me lean upon Thy breast,
Lull me, lull me, Lord to rest.

Hold me fast in Thine embrace,
Let me see Thy smiling face,
Give me, Lord, Thy blessings give,
Pray for me, and I shall live.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee,
Thou shalt my example be;
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild,
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art,
Give me Thy obedient heart;
Thou art pitiful and kind,
Let me have Thy loving mind.

Let me, above all, fulfil
God my heavenly Father's will,

Never His good Spirit grieve;
Only to His glory live.

Thou didst live to God alone,
Thou didst never seek Thine own,
Thou Thyself didst never please:
God was all Thy happiness.

Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art,
Live Thyself within my heart.

I shall then show forth Thy praise,
Serve Thee all my happy days;
Then the world shall always see
Christ, the Holy Child, in me.

God to be First Served

~Robert Herrick

Honour thy parents; but good manners call
Thee to adore thy God, the first of all.

Good Night and Good Morning

~Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton

A fair little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,
And said, "Dear work, good night! good night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying, "Caw! Caw!" on their way to bed;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things, good night! good night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,
The sheep's "Bleat! bleat!" came over the road;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl, good night! good night!"

She did not say to the sun, "Good night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light,
For she knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head,
The violets curtsied and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said on her knees her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day;
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good morning! good morning! our work is begun!"

Morning Prayer

~Ogden Nash

Now another day is breaking,
Sleep was sweet and so is waking.
Dear Lord, I promised you last night
Never again to sulk or fight.
Such vows are easier to keep
When a child is sound asleep.
Today, O Lord, for your dear sake,
I'll try to keep them when awake.

My Shadow

~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 things 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.

Now the Day is Over
~Sabine Baring-Gould

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars began to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night-watches
May thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise

Pure and fresh and sinless
In thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to thee, blest Spirit,
Whilst all ages run.

Once in Royal David's City
~Cecil Frances Alexander

Once in royal David's city
Stood in a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless,

Tears and smiles like us he knew,
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
See at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around.

Our Saviour's Golden Rule

~Isaac Watts

Be you to others kind and true,
As you'd have others be to you;
And neither do nor say to men
Whate'er you would not take again.

Rising in the Morning

~Hugh Rhodes

A plant without moisture sweet
Can bring forth no good flower;
If in youth ye lack virtue,
In age ye shall want honour.

First dread you God, and fly from sin,
Earthly things are mortal;
Be thou not haughty in thy looks
For pride will have a fall.
Rise you early in the morning,
For it hath properties three:
Holiness, health, and happy wealth,
As my father taught me.
At six of the clock, without delay,
Accustom thee to rise,
And give God thanks for thy good rest
When thou openest thine eyes.
Pray Him also to prosper thee
And thine affairs in deed:
All the day after, assure thyself,
The better shalt thou speed.

Robin Redbreast

~William Allingham

Goodbye, goodbye to Summer!
For Summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;
Our Thrushes now are silent,
Our Swallows flown away-
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,
With ruddy breast-knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robing singing sweetly
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian Princes,
But soon they'll turn to Ghosts;
The leathery pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough,
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
"Twill soon be winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the Cricket,
The wheatsack for the Mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house;
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow-
Alas! in Winter, dead, and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

The Canary

~Elizabeth Turner

Mary had a little bird,
With feathers bright and yellow,
Slender legs-upon my word,
He was a pretty fellow!

Sweetest notes he always sung,
Which much delighted Mary;
Often where his cage was hung,
She sat to hear Canary.

Crumbs of bread and dainty seeds
She carried to him daily,
Seeking for the early weeds,
She decked his palace gaily.

This, my little readers, learn,
And ever practice duly;
Songs and smiles of love return
To friends who love you truly.

The Cow

~Robert Louis Stevenson

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

The Exhortation of a Father to His Children
~Robert Smith

Ye are the temples of the Lord,
For ye are dearly bought;
And they that do defile the same,
Shall surely come to nought.

Possess not pride in any wise,
Build not your house too high;
But have always before your eyes,
That ye be born to die.

Defraud not him that hired is,
Your labour to sustain;
But give him always out of hand,
His penny for his pain.

And as you would that other men
Against you should proceed,
Do you the same to them again,
When they do stand in need.

And part your portion with the poor,
In money and in meat;
And feed the fainted feeble soul,
With that which ye should eat.

Ask counsel always at the wise,
Give ear unto the end;
Refuse not you the sweet rebuke
Of him that is your friend.

Be thankful always to the Lord,
With prayer and with praise,
Desiring Him in all your works
For to direct your ways.

The Father's Vineyard

~Anonymous

As round their dying father's bed
His sons attend, the peasant said:
"Children, deep hid from prying eyes,
A treasure in my vineyard lies;
When you have laid me in the grave,
Dig, search-and your reward you'll have."

"Father," cries one, "but where's the spot?"
He sighs! he sinks! he answers not.

The tedious burial service over,
Home go his sons, and straight explore
Each corner of the vineyard round,
Dig up, beat, break, and sift the ground;
Yet though to search so well inclined,
Nor gold, nor treasure could they find;
But when the autumn next drew near,
A double vintage crowned the year.

"Now," quoth the peasant's wisest son,
"Our father's legacy is known,
In yon rich purple grapes 'tis seen,
Which, but for digging, never had been.
Then let us all reflect with pleasure.
That labour is the source of treasure."

The Fieldmouse

~Cecil Frances Alexander

Where the acorn tumbles down,
Where the ash tree sheds its berry,
With your fur so soft and brown,
With your eye so round and merry,
Scarcely moving the long grass,
Fieldmouse, I can see you pass.

Little thing, in what dark den,
Lie you all the winter sleeping?
Till warm weather comes again,
Then once more I see you peeping
Round about the tall tree roots,
Nibbling at their fallen fruits.

Fieldmouse, fieldmouse, do not go,
Where the farmer stacks his treasure,
Find the nut that falls below,
Eat the acorn at your pleasure,
But you must not steal the grain
He has stacked with so much pain.

Make your hole where mosses spring,
Underneath the tall oak's shadow,
Pretty, quiet harmless thing,
Play about the sunny meadow.
Keep away from corn and house,
None will harm you, little mouse.

The Lamb
~William Blake

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

The Rainbow
~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.

The Rooks

~Jane Euphemia Browne

The rooks are building on the trees;
They build there every spring:
"Caw, caw," is all they say,
For none of them can sing.

They're up before the break of day,
And up till late at night;
For they must labour busily
As long as it is light.

And many a crooked stick they bring,
And many a slender twig,
And many a tuft of moss, until
Their nests are round and big.

"Caw, caw." Oh, what a noise
They make in rainy weather!
Good children always speak by turns,
But rooks all talk together.

The Sheep

~Ann and Jane Taylor

"Lazy sheep, pray tell me why
In the pleasant fields you lie,
Eating grass, and daisies white,
From the morning till the night?
Everything can something do,
But what kind of use are you?"

"Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray;
Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back, to make you clothes?
Cold, and very cold, you'd be
If you had not wool from me.

True, it seems a pleasant thing,
To nip the daisies in the spring;
But many chilly nights I pass
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick a scanty dinner, where
All the common's brown and bare.

Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
And cuts my woolly coat away,
To warm you in the winter's day:
Little master, this is why
In the pleasant fields I lie."

The Wind
~Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you;
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I;
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.

Upon the Swallow
~Robert Herrick

This pretty bird, oh, how she flies and sings!
But could she do so if she had not wings?
Her wings bespeak my faith, her songs my peace;
When I believe and sing, my doubtings cease.

What are Heavy?
~Christina Rossetti

What are heavy? Sea-sand and sorrow;
What are brief? Today and tomorrow;
What are frail? Spring blossoms and youth;
What are deep? The ocean and truth.

Whole Duty of Children
~Robert Louis Stevenson

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table:
At least as far as he is able.