

## 1. Down With Children

Down with children! Do them in!  
Boil their bones and fry their skin!  
Bish them, squish them, bash them, mash them!  
Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!  
Offer chocs with magic powder!  
Say "Eat up" then say it louder.  
Crrram them full of sticky eats,  
Send them home still guzzling sweets.  
And in the morning little fools  
Go marching off to separate schools.  
A girl feels sick and goes all pale.  
She yells, "Hey look! I've grown a tail!"  
A boy who's standing next to her  
Screams, "Help! I think I'm grrrowing fur!"  
Another shouts, "Vee look like frreaks!  
There's viskers growing on our cheeks!"  
A boy who vos extremely tall  
Cries out, "Vot's wrong? I'm grrrowing small!"  
For tiny legs begin to sprrrout  
From everybody rrround about.  
And all at vunce, all in a trrrice,  
There are no children! Only MICE!

*from THE WITCHES by Roald Dahl*

## 2. From Summer

Welcome, ye shades! ye bowery thickets, hail!  
Ye lofty pines! ye venerable oaks!  
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep!  
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,  
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,  
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides  
Laves, as he floats along the herbage'd brink.  
Cool, through the nerves, your pleasing comfort glides;  
The heart beats glad; the fresh-expanded eye  
And ear resume their watch; the sinews knit;  
And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.

*James Thomson (1834-82)*

### 3. Man and Cows

I stood aside to let the cows  
Swing past me with their wrinkled brows,  
Bowing their heads as they went by  
As to woodland deity  
To whom they turned mute eyes  
To save them from the plaguing god of flies.

And I too cursed Beelzebub,  
Watching them stop to rub  
A bulging side or bony haunch  
Against a trunk or pointing branch  
And lift a tufted tail  
To thresh the air with its soft flail.

They stumbled heavily down the slope,  
As Hethor led them or the hope  
Of the lush meadow-grass,  
While I remained, thinking it was  
Strange that we both were held divine,  
In Egypt these, man once in Palestine.

*Andrew Young(1885-1971)*

#### 4. A Contemplation upon Flowers

BRAVE flowers--that I could gallant it like you,  
And be as little vain!  
You come abroad, and make a harmless show,  
And to your beds of earth again.  
You are not proud: you know your birth:  
For your embroider'd garments are from earth.

You do obey your months and times, but I  
Would have it ever Spring:  
My fate would know no Winter, never die,  
Nor think of such a thing.  
O that I could my bed of earth but view  
And smile, and look as cheerfully as you!

O teach me to see Death and not to fear,  
But rather to take truce!  
How often have I seen you at a bier,  
And there look fresh and spruce!  
You fragrant flowers! then teach me, that my breath  
Like yours may sweeten and perfume my death.

*Henry King(1592-1669)*

## 5. A Boy's Song

Where the pools are bright and deep,  
Where the grey trout lies asleep,  
Up the river and over the lea,  
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,  
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,  
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,  
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,  
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,  
There to track the homeward bee,  
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,  
Where the shadow falls the deepest,  
Where the clustering nuts fall free,  
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away  
Little sweet maidens from the play,  
Or love to banter and fight so well,  
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play  
Through the meadow, among the hay;  
Up the water and over the lea,  
That's the way for Billy and me.

*James Hogg(1770-1835)*

## 6. From Is Life Worth Living?

Is life worth living? Yes, so long  
As Spring revives the year,  
And hails us with the cuckoo's song,  
To show that she is here;  
So long as May of April takes,  
In smiles and tears, farewell,  
And windflowers dapple all the brakes,  
And primroses the dell;  
While children in the woodlands yet  
Adorn their little laps  
With ladysmock and violets,  
And daisy-chain their caps;  
While over orchard daffodils  
Cloud-shadows float and fleet,  
And ouzel pipes and laverock trills,  
And young lambs buck and bleat;  
So long as that which bursts the bud  
And swells and tunes the rill,  
Makes springtime in the maiden's blood,  
Life is worth living still.

*Alfred Austin(1835-1913)*

## 7. Leaves

Leaves of the summer, lovely summer's pride,  
Sweet is the shade below your lofty tree,  
Whether in waving copses, where ye hide  
My roamings, or in fields that let me see  
The open sky; and whether ye may be  
Around the low-stemm'd oak, outspreading wide;  
Or taper ash upon the mountain side;  
Or lowland elm; your shade is sweet to me.

Whether ye wave above the early flow'rs  
In lively green; or whether, rustling sere,  
Ye fly on playful winds, around my feet,

In dying autumn; lovely are your bow'rs,  
Ye early-dying children of the year;  
Holy the silence of your calm retreat.

*William Barnes (1801-86)*

## **8. You Love the Roses**

You love the roses - so do I. I wish  
The sky would rain down roses, as they rain  
From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?  
Then all the valley would be pink and white  
And soft to tread on. They would fall as light  
As feathers, smelling sweet: and it would be  
Like sleeping and yet waking, all at once.

*George Eliot (1819-80)*



## 9.The Fairy Tale

How obstinate the morning is.  
Its mist-and- castle fairy tale  
Carries us back to nurseries  
Where Good must win and Evil fail,  
The magic milking-pail

Of days that never could run dry,  
Of hopes no disillusion shook,  
When only giants had to die,  
Heroes immortal, as the book  
Shut on a loving look.

Most otherwise the world has proved.  
The mists blow off, the castles fade.  
The need to love and to be loved  
We have a thousand times betrayed,  
Ashamed in our own shade.

As rivers sidle to the sea  
We rise and wrinkle to our end,  
Between the banks of what -must -be  
Confined at every reach and bend,  
Gradually we descend.

Yet still on mornings such as these  
The mirage shifts our channelled course;  
Streams run uphill above the trees;  
The hero on the enchanted horse  
Opens incredible doors.

*Robert Gittings (b 1911)*

**10. 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?...'**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

*William Shakespeare(1564-1616)*

## 11. Look at the Grass

Look at the grass, sucked by the seed from dust,  
Whose blood is the spring rain, whose food the sun,  
Whose life the scythe takes ere the sorrels rust,  
Whose stalk is chaff before the winter's done.  
Even the grass its happy moment has  
In May, when glistening buttercups make gold;  
The exulting millions of the meadow-grass  
Give out a green thanksgiving from the mould.  
Even the blade that has not even a blossom  
Creates a mind, its joy's persistent soul  
Is a warm spirit on the old earth's bosom  
When April's fire has dwindled to a coal;  
The spirit of the grasses' joy makes fair  
The winter fields when the wind goes bare.

*John Masefield (1878-1967)*