



# 77 POEMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**a poem is a net designed to catch the wind**

**-- Elinor Wylie**

**Funny Poems**

**Classic Poems**

**Limericks**

**Haiku**

**Cinquains**

**Quatrains**





# FUNNY POEMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

If I were in charge of the world  
I'd cancel oatmeal,  
Monday mornings.

Allergy shots, and also Sara Steinberg.

— Judith Viorst

Shel Silverstein

Jack Prelutsky

Samiya Vallee

AA Milne

Henry Leigh

And more



## The Homework Machine

Shel Silverstein

The Homework Machine,  
Oh, the Homework Machine,  
Most perfect  
contraption that's ever been seen.  
Just put in your homework, then drop in  
a dime,  
Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds'  
time,  
Your homework comes out, quick and  
clean as can be.  
Here it is— 'nine plus four?' and the  
answer is 'three.'  
Three?  
Oh me . . .  
I guess it's not as perfect  
As I thought it would be.

## **The Fly**

Ogden Nash

God in his wisdom made the fly  
And then forgot to tell us why.

## Jabberwocky

Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought

—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and  
through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

## How Not to Dry the Dishes

Shel Silverstein

If you have to dry the dishes  
(Such an awful, boring chore)  
If you have to dry the dishes  
('Stead of going to the store)  
If you have to dry the dishes  
And you drop one on the floor—  
Maybe they won't let you  
Dry the dishes anymore.

## If I Were In Charge of the World

Judith Viorst

If I were in charge of the world  
I'd cancel oatmeal,  
Monday mornings,  
Allergy shots, and also Sara Steinberg.

If I were in charge of the world  
There'd be brighter nights lights,  
Healthier hamsters, and  
Basketball baskets forty eight inches lower.

If I were in charge of the world  
You wouldn't have lonely.  
You wouldn't have clean.  
You wouldn't have bedtimes.  
Or 'Don't punch your sister.'  
You wouldn't even have sisters.

If I were in charge of the world  
A chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts would be a vegetable  
All 007 movies would be G,  
And a person who sometimes forgot to brush,  
And sometimes forgot to flush,  
Would still be allowed to be  
In charge of the world.

## Be Glad Your Nose is On Your Face

Jack Prelutsky

Be glad your nose is on your face,  
not pasted on some other place,  
for if it were where it is not,  
you might dislike your nose a lot.

Imagine if your precious nose  
were sandwiched in between your toes,  
that clearly would not be a treat,  
for you'd be forced to smell your feet.

Your nose would be a source of dread  
were it attached atop your head,  
it soon would drive you to despair,  
forever tickled by your hair.

Within your ear, your nose would be  
an absolute catastrophe,  
for when you were obliged to sneeze,  
your brain would rattle from the breeze.

Your nose, instead, through thick and thin,  
remains between your eyes and chin,  
not pasted on some other place--  
be glad your nose is on your face!

## **Snowball**

Shel Silverstein

I made myself a snowball  
As perfect as could be.  
I thought I'd keep it as a pet  
And let it sleep with me.  
I made it some pajamas  
And a pillow for its head.  
Then last night it ran away,  
But first it wet the bed.

## **Herbert Hilbert Hubert Snod**

Denise Richards

Herbert Hilbert Hubert Snod  
was known for eating all things odd.  
The thing that bothered me the most  
has he spread toothpaste on his toast?

“It’s springtime fresh, so cool and minty.”  
His smiling eyes were bright and squinty.  
On baked potatoes, he would slather  
one half can of shave cream lather.

I don’t know how his tum could cope  
as he ingested cubes of soap.  
At times his food choice made a scene;  
at least he kept his innards clean.

## Bleezer's Ice Cream

Jack Prelutsky

I am Ebenezer Bleezer,  
I run BLEEZER'S ICE CREAM STORE,  
there are flavors in my freezer  
you have never seen before,  
twenty-eight divine creations  
too delicious to resist,  
why not do yourself a favor,  
try the flavors on my list:

COCOA MOCHA MACARONI  
TAPIOCA SMOKED BALONEY  
CHECKERBERRY CHEDDAR CHEW  
CHICKEN CHERRY HONEYDEW  
TUTTI-FRUTTI STEWED TOMATO  
TUNA TACO BAKED POTATO  
LOBSTER LITCHI LIMA BEAN  
MOZZARELLA MANGOSTEEN  
ALMOND HAM MERINGUE SALAMI  
YAM ANCHOVY PRUNE PASTRAMI  
SASSAFRAS SOUVLAKI HASH  
SUKIYAKI SUCCOTASH  
BUTTER BRICKLE PEPPER PICKLE  
POMEGRANATE PUMPERNICKEL  
PEACH PIMENTO PIZZA PLUM  
PEANUT PUMPKIN BUBBLEGUM  
BROCCOLI BANANA BLUSTER  
CHOCOLATE CHOP SUEY CLUSTER  
AVOCADO BRUSSELS SPROUT  
PERIWINKLE SAUERKRAUT  
COTTON CANDY CARROT CUSTARD  
CAULIFLOWER COLA MUSTARD  
ONION DUMPLING DOUBLE DIP  
TURNIP TRUFFLE TRIPLE FLIP  
GARLIC GUMBO GRAVY GUAVA  
LENTIL LEMON LIVER LAVA  
ORANGE OLIVE BAGEL BEET  
WATERMELON WAFFLE WHEAT

I am Ebenezer Bleezer,  
I run BLEEZER'S ICE CREAM STORE,  
taste a flavor from my freezer,  
you will surely ask for more.

## **The Silliest Teacher in School**

Darren Sardelli

Our teacher gave detention  
to the fountains in the hall.  
She handed extra homework  
to the artwork on the wall.

We saw her point a finger  
at a banner and a sign.  
She said their bad behavior  
was completely out of line.

The principal approached her  
and said, “What is all this fuss?  
I heard you tried to punish  
all the tires on a bus.

“You’ve made the teachers angry  
by disrupting all their classes,  
so if you want to keep this job,  
you have to wear your glasses!”

## Summer Camp Souvenirs

Richard Thomas

When I got home from camp today,  
My parents almost died.  
They asked me how I got this way,  
And here's what I replied:

This little cast from heel to hip  
Is nothing much at all.  
Some broken shingles made me slip  
From off the dining hall.

The poison ivy's not too bad.  
It missed my back and chest.  
Of course, I guess I oughta add  
Mosquitoes got the rest.

I tried to eat some hick'ry nuts  
And cracked a tooth or two.  
And all these bruises, scabs, and cuts?  
I haven't got a clue.

I got the lump that's on my head  
From diving in the lake.  
I should've watched for rocks instead  
Of grabbing for the snake.

That leaves this bandage on my chin  
And these three finger sprains,  
Along with lots of sunburned skin  
And sniffles from the rains.

I also got a muscle cramp  
And very nearly drowned.  
It's some terrific summer camp,  
The coolest one around.

## **Table Manners**

Gellet Burgess

The Goops they lick their fingers,  
And the Goops they lick their knives;  
They spill their broth on the tablecloth—  
Oh, they lead disgusting lives!  
The Goops they talk while eating,  
And loud and fast they chew;  
And that is why I'm glad that I  
Am not a Goop—are you?

## Englksh Is a Pane

Alan Balter

Hear eye sit inn English class; the likelihood is that eye won't pass  
An F on my report card wood bee worse than swallowing glass  
It's knot that eye haven't studied, often till late at knight  
Butt the rules are sew confusing, eye simply can't get them write

Hour teacher says, "Heed my advice, ewe must study and sacrifice"  
Butt if mouses are mice and louses are lice, how come blouses aren't blice  
The confusion really abounds when adding esses two nouns  
Gooses are geese, butt mooses aren't meese; somebody scent in the clowns

Two ultimatums are ultimata, and a couple of datum are data  
Sew wouldn't ewe expect it wood bee correct fore a bunch of plums to be plata?  
And if more than won octopus are octopi, and the plural of ox is oxen  
Shouldn't a couple of busses bee bussi and a pare of foxes bee foxen?

Let's talk about spelling a wile, specifically letters witch are silent  
Words like "psychologist" and "wreck" shirley make awl of us violent  
And another example quite plane witch is really hard two explain  
If it's eye before e except after sea, then what about feign and reign?

The final exam will determine how eye due, weather eye pass ore fail  
I halve prepared as much as eye can down two the last detail  
I'm ready two give it my vary best inn just a little wile  
And then isle take a relaxing wrest on a tropical aisle.

## Sneezles

AA Milne

Christopher Robin  
Had wheezles  
And sneezles,  
They bundled him  
Into  
His bed.  
They gave him what goes  
With a cold in the nose,  
And some more for a cold  
In the head.  
They wondered  
If wheezles  
Could turn  
Into measles,  
If sneezles  
Would turn  
Into mumps;  
They examined his chest  
For a rash,  
And the rest  
Of his body for swellings and lumps.  
They sent for some doctors  
In sneezles  
And wheezles  
To tell them what ought  
To be done.  
All sorts and conditions  
Of famous physicians  
Came hurrying round  
At a run.  
They all made a note  
Of the state of his throat,  
They asked if he suffered from thirst;  
They asked if the sneezles  
Came after the wheezles,  
Or if the first sneezle  
Came first.

They said, "If you teazle  
A sneeze  
Or wheeze,  
A measles  
May easily grow.  
But humour or pleazle  
The wheeze  
Or sneeze,  
The measles  
Will certainly go."  
They expounded the reazles  
For sneezles  
And wheezles,  
The manner of measles  
When new.  
They said "If he freezles  
In draughts and in breezles,  
Then PHTHEEZLES  
May even ensue."

Christopher Robin  
Got up in the morning,  
The sneezles had vanished away.  
And the look in his eye  
Seemed to say to the sky,  
"Now, how to amuse them to-day?"

## About the Teeth of Sharks

John Ciardi

The thing about a shark is—teeth,  
One row above, one row beneath.

Now take a close look. Do you find  
It has another row behind?

Still closer—here, I'll hold your hat:  
Has it a third row behind that?

Now look in and...Look out! Oh my,  
I'll never know now! Well, goodbye.

## Disobedience

AA Milne

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 Beetle Once Sat on a Barberry Twig**

Leroy F. Jackson

A beetle once sat on a barberry twig,  
And turned at the crank of a thingum-a-jig.  
Needles for hornets, nippers for ants,  
For the bumblebee baby a new pair of pants,  
For the grizzled old gopher a hat and a wig,  
The beetle ground out of his thingum-a-jig.

## **My Next Door Neighbor is a Witch**

Samiya Vallee

My next door neighbor is a witch,  
And she lives way down in a ditch.  
Her clothing is a little strange,  
Because she never wants to change.  
She has a black robe and a black hat,  
Green skin and a smelly black cat.  
A big fat wart grows on her nose,  
And seventeen pimples on her toes.

But...her food is EVEN worse,  
Because she eats it course by course.  
Her first course is seven dead bats,  
Laid on top of seven rats.  
Then she has twenty flies  
With lots and lots of llama eyes.  
Her main course is a horrible soup,  
Because it's made with doggie poop.  
But worst of all is her dessert.  
It's little children rolled in dirt.

Last night she had a witch's feast  
And turned into a greedy beast.  
I think she cooked my best friend Tilly  
And ate her with some peas and broccoli.

## The Twins

Henry S. Leigh

In form and feature, face and limb,  
I grew so like my brother,  
That folks got taking me for him,  
And each for one another.  
It puzzled all our kith and kin,  
It reach'd an awful pitch;  
For one of us was born a twin,  
Yet not a soul knew which.

One day (to make the matter worse),  
Before our names were fix'd,  
As we were being wash'd by nurse  
We got completely mix'd;  
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree,  
(Or rather nurse's whim),  
My brother John got christen'd me,  
And I got christen'd him.

This fatal likeness even dogg'd  
My footsteps when at school,  
And I was always getting flogg'd,  
For John turned out a fool.  
I put this question hopelessly  
To every one I knew—  
What would you do, if you were me,  
To prove that you were you?

Our close resemblance turn'd the tide  
Of my domestic life;  
For somehow my intended bride  
Became my brother's wife.  
In short, year after year the same  
Absurd mistakes went on;  
And when I died—the neighbors came  
And buried brother John!

## My One-Eyed Love

Andrew Jefferson

I've fallen in love—I don't know why  
I've fallen in love with a girl with one eye.

I knew from the start. It was plain to see  
That this wonderful girl had an eye out for me

She's charming and witty and jolly and jocular  
Not what you'd expect from a girl who's monocular.

Of eyes—at the moment—she hasn't full quota  
But that doesn't change things for me one iota.

It must be quite difficult if you're bereft.  
If your left eye is gone and your right eye is left.

But she's made up her mind. She's made her decision.  
She can see it quite clearly in 10/20 vision.

She'll not leave me waiting, not left in the lurch  
If she looks slightly sideways she'll see me in church.

I'll marry my true love who's gentle and kind.  
And thus prove to everyone that loves not quite blind.



# CLASSIC POEMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Doom is the House without the Door**

--- **Emily Dickinson**

**Maya Angelou**

**Edgar Allan Poe**

**Robert Frost**

**Pablo Neruda**

**Emily Dickinson**

**And more**



## Still I Rise

Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.  
Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

## Mother to Son

Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I'se been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I'se still goin', honey,  
I'se still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

## I Looked Up From My Writing

Thomas Hardy

I looked up from my writing,  
And gave a start to see,  
As if rapt in my inditing,  
The moon's full gaze on me.

Her meditative misty head  
Was spectral in its air,  
And I involuntarily said,  
'What are you doing there?'

'Oh, I've been scanning pond and hole  
And waterway hereabout  
For the body of one with a sunken soul  
Who has put his life-light out.

'Did you hear his frenzied tattle?  
It was sorrow for his son  
Who is slain in brutish battle,  
Though he has injured none.

'And now I am curious to look  
Into the blinkered mind  
Of one who wants to write a book  
In a world of such a kind.'

Her temper overwrought me,  
And I edged to shun her view,  
For I felt assured she thought me  
One who should drown him too.

## **Doom is the House Without the Door**

Emily Dickinson

Doom is the House without the Door—  
'Tis entered from the Sun—  
And then the Ladder's thrown away,  
Because Escape—is done—

'Tis varied by the Dream  
Of what they do outside—  
Where Squirrels play—and Berries die—  
And Hemlocks—bow—to God—

## A Crowded Trolley Car

Elinor Wylie

The rain's cold grains are silver-gray  
Sharp as golden sands,  
A bell is clangng, people sway  
Hanging by their hands.

Supple hands, or gnarled and stiff,  
Snatch and catch and grope;  
That face is yellow-pale, as if  
The fellow swung from rope.

Dull like pebbles, sharp like knives,  
Glances strike and glare,  
Fingers tangle, Bluebeard's wives  
Dangle by the hair.

Orchard of the strangest fruits  
Hanging from the skies;  
Brothers, yet insensate brutes  
Who fear each others' eyes.

One man stands as free men stand  
As if his soul might be  
Brave, unbroken; see his hand  
Nailed to an oaken tree.

## Design

Robert Frost

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,  
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth  
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth--  
Assorted characters of death and blight  
Mixed ready to begin the morning right,  
Like the ingredients of a witches' broth--  
A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,  
And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,  
The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?  
What brought the kindred spider to that height,  
Then steered the white moth thither in the night?  
What but design of darkness to appall?--  
If design govern in a thing so small.

## See It Through

Edgar Albert Guest

When you're up against a trouble,  
Meet it squarely, face to face;  
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,  
Plant your feet and take a brace.  
When it's vain to try to dodge it,  
Do the best that you can do;  
You may fail, but you may conquer,  
See it through!

Black may be the clouds about you  
And your future may seem grim,  
But don't let your nerve desert you;  
Keep yourself in fighting trim.  
If the worst is bound to happen,  
Spite of all that you can do,  
Running from it will not save you,  
See it through!

Even hope may seem but futile,  
When with troubles you're beset,  
But remember you are facing  
Just what other men have met.  
You may fail, but fall still fighting;  
Don't give up, whate'er you do;  
Eyes front, head high to the finish.  
See it through!

## Those Winter Sundays

Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early  
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,  
then with cracked hands that ached  
from labor in the weekday weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes as well.  
What did I know, what did I know  
of love's austere and lonely offices?

## **Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening**

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,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

## **My Momma Moved Among the Days**

Lucille Clifton

My Mama moved among the days  
like a dreamwalker in a field;  
seemed like what she touched was hers  
seemed like what touched her couldn't hold,  
she got us almost through the high grass  
then seemed like she turned around and ran  
right back in  
right back on in

## Mirror

Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful,  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.  
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.  
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

## O Captain! My Captain!

Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

## Discoverers

Pablo Neruda

From the north Almagro brought his wrinkled lightning,  
and over the territory, amid explosion and twilight  
he bent day and night as over a chart.

Shadow of thorns, shadow of thistle and wax  
the Spaniard united with his dry figure,  
watching the wounded strategies of earth.

Night, snow and sand make the form  
of my slim fatherland,  
all silence is in its long line,  
all foam emerges from its marine beard,  
all coal fills it with mysterious kisses.

Like an ember, gold burns in its fingers  
and silver illumines, like a green moon,  
its hardened shadow of grave planet.

The Spaniard seated near the rose, one day,  
near the oil, near the wine, near the old sky,  
could not conceive this spot of angry stone  
rising from the dung of the marine eagle.

## Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

## **Bewick Finzer**

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Time was when his half million drew  
The breath of six per cent;  
But soon the worm of what-was-not  
Fed hard on his content;  
And something crumbled in his brain  
When his half million went.

Time passed, and filled along with his  
The place of many more;  
Time came, and hardly one of us  
Had credence to restore,  
From what appeared one day, the man  
Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,  
The coat worn out with care,  
The cleanliness of indigence,  
The brilliance of despair,  
The fond imponderable dreams  
Of affluence,—all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,  
Fares hard now in the race,  
With heart and eye that have a task  
When he looks in the face  
Of one who might so easily  
Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan  
We give and then forget;  
He comes, and probably for years  
Will he be coming yet,—  
Familiar as an old mistake,  
And futile as regret.

## **Even Such is Time**

Sir Walter Raleigh

Even such is time, that takes in trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with age and dust;  
Who, in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days.  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

## Eldorado

Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



# LIMERICKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**A circus performer named Brian  
Once smiled as he rode on a lion.**

Anonymous poems  
To make your  
Students laugh  
And giggle  
And write  
Poetry of their own



## **The Dread Pirate of Boulder**

There was a dread pirate of Boulder  
Whose cutlass was slung from his shoulder.  
He'd mighty fine notions  
Of plundering oceans,  
But his mom said: "Perhaps, when you're older."

## **A Certain Young Fellow**

A certain young fellow named Bee-Bee  
Wished to wed a woman named Phoebe.  
“But,” he said, “I must see  
What the clerical fee  
Be before Phoebe be Phoebe Bee-Bee.”

## **Ambition**

An ambitious young fellow named Matt  
Tried to parachute using his hat  
Folks below looked so small  
As he started to fall  
Then got bigger and bigger and SPLAT!

## **There Was an Old Man From Nantucket**

There was an old man of Nantucket  
Who kept all his cash in a bucket;  
But his daughter, named Nan  
Ran away with a man—  
And as far as the bucket, Nantucket.

## A Canner

A canner, exceedingly canny  
One morning remarked to his granny,  
“A canner can can  
Anything that he can;  
But a canner can’t can a can, can he?”

## **The Circus Performer**

A circus performer named Brian  
Once smiled as he rode on a lion.  
They came back from the ride,  
But with Brian inside,  
And the smile on the face of the lion.

## **The Young Woman From Bright**

There was a young woman named Bright,  
Whose speed was much faster than light.  
She set out one day,  
In a relative way,  
And returned on the previous night.

## **The Mighty Hunter**

There once was a hunter named Paul  
Who strangled nine grizzlies one Fall.  
Nine is such a good score,  
So he tried for one more  
But he lost. Well, you can't win them all!

## Carpentry

I need a front door for my hall,  
The replacement I bought was too tall.  
So I hacked it and chopped it,  
And carefully lopped it,  
And now the dumb thing is too small.

## I'd Rather

I'd rather have Fingers than Toes,  
I'd rather have Ears than a Nose.  
And as for my Hair,  
I'm glad it's all there,  
I'll be awfully sad, when it goes.

## **The Thingamajig**

There once was a Thingamajig--  
Like a Whatsis, but three times as big.  
When it first came in view  
It looked something like you  
But it stayed and turned into a pig.

## **The Tale of Sid & the Shark**

There once was a poor boy named Sid  
Who thought he knew more than he did.  
He thought that a shark  
Would turn tail if you bark.  
So he swam out to try it --- poor kid!



# HAIKU FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Light of the moon  
Moves west, flowers' shadows  
Creep eastward.**

**-- Yosa Buson**

**Yosa Buson  
Kobayeshi Issa  
Natsume Soseki  
RM Hansard  
Katsushika Hokusai  
And more**



## April Wind

Richard Wright

Whitecaps on the bay:  
A broken signboard banging  
In the April wind.

## **Moon**

Yosa Buson

Light of the moon  
Moves west, flowers' shadows  
Creep eastward.

## **Leafless Tree**

Natsume Soseki

The crow has flown away:  
swaying in the evening sun,  
a leafless tree.

## **Christmas**

Anonymous

Santa is coming  
He rewards good behavior  
No presents for me

## School

Anonymous

My homework is late  
Dog ate it before breakfast  
Very helpful dog

## **Lighting One Candle**

Yosa Buson

The light of a candle  
Is transferred to another candle—  
Spring twilight

## A Poppy Blooms

Katsushika Hokusai

I write, erase, rewrite  
Erase again, and then  
A poppy blooms.

## Over the Wintry

Natsume Sōseki

Over the wintry  
Forest, winds howl in rage  
With no leaves to blow.

## **Everything I Touch**

Kobayashi Issa

Everything I touch  
with tenderness, alas,  
pricks like a bramble.

## **The West Wind Whispered**

RM Hansard

The west wind whispered,  
And touched the eyelids of spring:  
Her eyes, Primroses.

## **Plum Flower Temple**

Natsume Soseki

Plum flower temple:  
Voices rise  
From the foothills



# CINQUAINS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Apple  
red, delicious  
crunching, chewing, eating  
my favorite snack  
apple

William Swink

Adelaide Crapsey

Anita Sehgal

Chandra Thiagarajan

David Kulczyk

And more



## **Ice Cream, Cold & Yummy**

Ice cream  
Cold and yummy  
I love its sweet richness  
As it finds its way into my  
tummy.

## **Summer Swim**

Summer  
Hot, humid  
Swimming pool lounging  
Refreshing coolness in midday  
satisfaction

## **Apple, Red, Delicious**

Apple  
red, delicious  
crunching, chewing, eating  
my favorite snack  
apple

## **School Days**

David Kulczyk

School Days  
Crazy, boring  
Work! Work! Work! Too much work!  
The last days are always the best  
All done.

## Water

Chandra Thiagarajan

Water  
To drink  
And to clean  
An ambrosia for life  
Paramount

## **Existence**

Anita Sehgal

Existence

Joyous, melancholy

Creating, flowing, demolishing,

Energy that is life and death

Vitality

## **Snow**

Adelaide Crapsey

Look up ...  
From bleakening hills  
Blows down the light, first breath  
Of wintry wind ... look up, and scent  
The snow!

## **Castle**

William Swink

Castle  
Strong, beautiful  
Imposing, protecting, watching  
Symbolizes wealth and power  
Fortress

## **Acrobats Make Me Laugh**

Acrobats  
Flexible, amusing  
Flipping, twirling, jumping  
They make me laugh  
Performers

## Penguins

Penguins  
White, black  
Waddling, swimming, eating  
They are playing in the water  
Emperors



# QUATRAINS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**It was the schooner Hesperus,  
That sailed the wintry sea;  
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,  
To bear him company.**

--- **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

**William Blake**

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

**Emily Dickinson**

**AE Housman**

**Claude McKay**

**And more**



## The Chimney Sweeper

William Blake

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"  
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said,  
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins & set them all free;  
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,  
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.  
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark  
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.  
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;  
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

## The Wreck of the Hesperus

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

It was the schooner Hesperus,  
That sailed the wintry sea;  
And the skipper had taken his little daughtèr,  
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,  
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,  
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,  
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,  
His pipe was in his mouth,  
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow  
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,  
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,  
"I pray thee, put into yonder port  
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night, the moon had a golden ring,  
And to-night no moon we see!"  
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,  
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,  
A gale from the Northeast,  
The snow fell hissing in the brine,  
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote a main  
The vessel in its strength;  
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,  
Then leaped her cable's length.

Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,  
And do not tremble so;  
For I can weather the roughest gale  
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat  
Against the stinging blast;  
He cut a rope from a broken spar,  
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,  
Oh say, what may it be?"  
"T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!" —  
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,  
Oh say, what may it be?"  
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live  
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,  
Oh say, what may it be?"  
But the father answered never a word,  
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,  
With his face turned to the skies,  
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow  
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed  
That savèd she might be;  
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave  
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,  
Through the whistling sleet and snow,  
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept  
Tow'rd the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between  
A sound came from the land;  
It was the sound of the trampling surf  
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,  
She drifted a dreary wreck,  
And a whooping billow swept the crew  
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves  
Looked soft as carded wool,  
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side  
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,  
With the masts went by the board;  
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,  
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,  
A fisherman stood aghast,  
To see the form of a maiden fair,  
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,  
The salt tears in her eyes;  
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,  
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,  
In the midnight and the snow!  
Christ save us all from a death like this,  
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

## Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –  
The Dews drew quivering and Chill –  
For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground –  
The Roof was scarcely visible –  
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –

## Is My Team Ploughing

AE Housman

“Is my team ploughing,  
That I was used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?”

Ay, the horses trample,  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

“Is football playing  
Along the river shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?”

Ay the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

“Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?”

Ay, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep:  
Your girl is well contented.  
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

“Is my friend hearty,  
Now I am thin and pine,  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?”

Yes, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man’s sweetheart,  
Never ask me whose.

## December, 1919

Claude McKay

Last night I heard your voice, mother,  
The words you sang to me  
When I, a little barefoot boy,  
Knelt down against your knee.

And tears gushed from my heart, mother,  
And passed beyond its wall,  
But though the fountain reached my throat  
The drops refused to fall.

'Tis ten years since you died, mother,  
Just ten dark years of pain,  
And oh, I only wish that I  
Could weep just once again.

## **The Eagle & the Mole**

Elinor Wylie

Avoid the reeking herd,  
Shun the polluted flock,  
Live like that stoic bird,  
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds  
Begets and fosters hate;  
He keeps above the clouds  
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,  
And herds to shelter run,  
He sails above the storm,  
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track  
Your sinews cannot leap,  
Avoid the lathered pack,  
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul  
From spotted sight or sound,  
Live like the velvet mole:  
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse  
With roots of trees and stones,  
With rivers at their source,  
And disembodied bones.

## Dreams

Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.