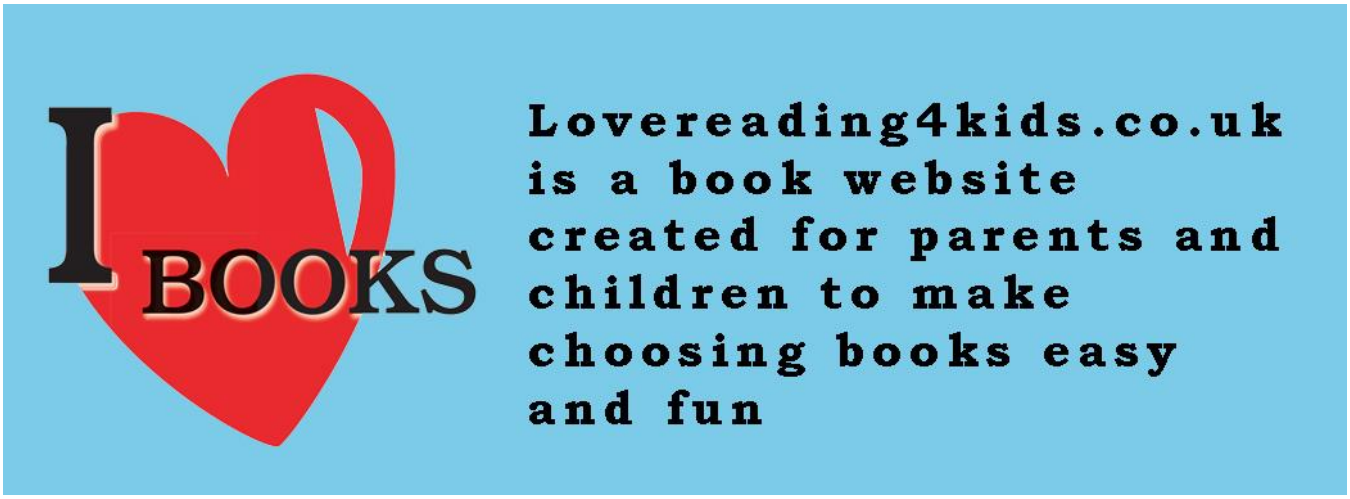


Opening extract from

1066 and Before That – History Poems

Written by

Brian Moses and Roger Stevens

Published by

Macmillan Children's Books

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First published 2016 by Macmillan Children's Books
an imprint of Pan Macmillan
20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR
Associated companies throughout the world
www.panmacmillan.com

ISBN 978-1-4472-8394-2

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1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

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CONTENTS

VERY EARLY DAYS: STONE AGE



Ice and Snow	*Roger Stevens*	1
Two Mammoth Poems	*Brian Moses*	3
What Is the Use of That?	*Roger Stevens*	4
Cave Painting	*Brian Moses*	6
Invitation to a Cave Rave	*Brian Moses*	8
The Good Old Stone Age Days	*Roger Stevens*	10
Family Tree	*Roger Stevens*	12
Burial Mound	*Brian Moses*	14
Stonehenge	*Brian Moses*	16



ANCIENT EGYPT

The Peasant Farmer's Tale	*Roger Stevens*	18
Shoe the Blues Away	*Roger Stevens*	19
The Nile Flood	*Brian Moses*	20
The Curse of Osiris	*Roger Stevens*	22
You Can't Take It with You When You Go . . .	*Brian Moses*	23
The Afterlife	*Roger Stevens*	24
The Great Pyramid	*Brian Moses*	26
Toothache	*Roger Stevens*	28
The Weirdest Exhibit	*Brian Moses*	29



Ancient Greece

Three Ancient Greeks	*Roger Stevens*	31
If I Was . . .	*Brian Moses*	33
Diogenes (1)	*Roger Stevens*	35
Diogenes (2)	*Brian Moses*	36
Archimedes	*Roger Stevens*	38
The Suburbs of Olympus	*Brian Moses*	40
A Gift from the Greeks	*Roger Stevens*	42
It's Called Money	*Roger Stevens*	43
Meanwhile, Two and a Half Thousand Years Ago . . .	*Roger Stevens*	44
Time For a Chocolate Drink, I Think	*Roger Stevens*	45

Ancient Rome



Romulus and Remus	*Roger Stevens*	47
Julius Caesar's Last Breakfast	*Roger Stevens*	48
Woad	*Brian Moses*	50
The Vindolanda Run	*Brian Moses*	52
Boudicca Is Coming to Town	*Brian Moses*	54
Equus	*Roger Stevens*	56
Elephant Tears	*Brian Moses*	57
A Show in the Colosseum	*Roger Stevens*	59
Reading the Entrails	*Roger Stevens*	61

Tortoise	*Brian Moses*	62
Roman Curses	*Brian Moses*	64
Ode to a Roman Road	*Brian Moses*	66
Jesus – The Truth	*Roger Stevens*	68
Don't Pick a Fight with a Pict	*Brian Moses*	69
To Be a Druid You Need To . . .	*Brian Moses*	70
The Bones of You	*Brian Moses*	71

AFTER THE ROMANS



Unfamiliar Tongues	*Brian Moses*	73
We Are the Anglo Saxons	*Roger Stevens*	75
Advice to a Viking Girl from Her Parents	*Brian Moses*	77
The Truth about Vikings	*Roger Stevens*	79
Radgar Hairy Breeches	*Brian Moses*	81
Sköfnung	*Roger Stevens*	83
To the Rim of the World	*Brian Moses*	84
Eight Swords	*Roger Stevens*	86
King Canute	*Roger Stevens*	87
The Throwing-Horseshoes World Cup	*Roger Stevens*	88
The Great King Alfred	*Roger Stevens*	89
King Alfred and the Cakes	*Roger Stevens*	90
The Prophecy of Love	*Roger Stevens*	91
A Short History of Religion	*Roger Stevens*	92
The Ploughman	*Brian Moses*	94
Harold & William & 1066	*Brian Moses*	95
Battlefield	*Brian Moses*	97

ICE AND SNOW

Born into a world of ice and snow
Everywhere you look
Everywhere you go
Ice and snow
More ice, more snow
Born into a world of ice and snow

There is a garden, far, far away
The rumours say, the rumours say
Where the sun always shines
And butterflies play . . .
What are they?
What are they?

Now we stoke the fire
With our dwindling wood
Wrapped up in our deer hides
Eat the last of our food
How I dream of a garden
With no ice and no snow



What does that look like?
Will we ever know?
Ice and snow,
Ice and snow,
We'll never know

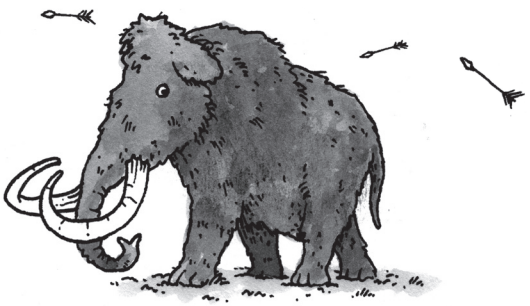
Roger Stevens

There is evidence that when the last great Ice Age happened, the humans that survived lived in an area on Africa's southern coast, the only part of the world that remained habitable. Some people claim that this was the basis for the Garden of Eden story in the Bible. And indeed for similar stories told by other religions and in other civilizations.

TWO MAMMOTH POEMS

1. Why?

Why was a mammoth called a mammoth
and not an 'enormous' or a 'colossal'?
And how did they know what to call it
when they discovered the very first fossil?



2. Fossil

Now, many years from the Ice Age
a fossilized piece of bone
helps us make sense of the mammoth
like an ancient text message in stone.

Brian Moses



It's a bit of a mystery why creatures were given their names. How did scientists and archaeologists know what to call their discoveries? And, of course, there's a message in everything we find from the past.

WHAT IS THE USE OF THAT?

What's that?
It's a wheel?
What does it do?
It goes round
Round and round
Along the ground.
Well, what is the use of that?

What's that?
It's a clock.
What does it do?
Tells the time.
We've the sun, we've the moon
Got midnight, got noon
Well, what is the use of that?



What's that?
It's writing.
What does it do?
It's exciting.
All these new ideas
It will all end in tears
Now I've had my say, and that's that.

Roger Stevens

The ancient Sumer civilization grew up around the meeting point of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Mesopotamia (now known as Iraq) around seven thousand years ago, because of its natural fertility. It is often called the 'cradle of civilization' – and some people say the Sumerians were the world's greatest inventors.

CAVE PAINTING

A mammoth hunt
on a cave wall.

Stick people holding spears,

painted with charcoal,
stained with berries.

A tribe's history
handed down.

And below the hunt
a handprint.

A child, maybe,
reaching up . . .



One thought in his head
to make it clear . . .

'I was here,
I existed,
I lived,
I survived . . .

'And this smudge of paint
on a wall
will say it all.'

Brian Moses

Handprints and hand stencils were left by cave dwellers of all ages, including children.

INVITATION TO A CAVE RAVE

(A found poem)

Uay san grm urgle garumffff
Heffa dargle com dewyda.
Crum volla gan gowda guwalla
em tay unta flappu skewyva.

Garada ugla simso sarra sku
jaavada gu galla em furtle.
Heffu slapta don wolka em fluga
em slata solata dum myrtle.

Hep greer oof flaffa san.



Translation:
Hey, man, can you dig it?
There's a cave rave at ours tonight.
The old folk are off hunting mammoths
and they won't be back before light.

Bring some of that very berry juice
that makes us laugh and sway.
There'll be music on drum and horn
and we'll party till break of day.

Be here, or be nowhere, man.

Brian Moses

THE GOOD OLD STONE AGE DAYS

I don't hold with this new-fangled 'Bronze Age'.
What's it good for, eh?
What's wrong with the good old Stone Age days?

What's wrong with eating woolly mammoths?
Nothing like a good chewy hunk of mammoth's brain.
All this modern eating-vegetables malarkey
And growing grapes for wine.
What's wrong with drinking water
Like we did in the good old Stone Age days?

Why do we have to smelt copper
And alloy it with tin to make bronze vessels?
It will make the gods angry, mark my words.
The potter's wheel? That's just a phase.
Let's drink from hand-fashioned clay pots again
Like we did in the good old Stone Age days.

And all this 'writing' nonsense.
What's wrong with daubing a few pictures on the cave walls?
What's the point of writing things down?
And don't get me started on building houses!
What's so bad about living in caves?
Why else would the gods make holes in the ground?
So we can live in them, that's why!
Bring back the good old Stone Age days.



No, this so-called Bronze Age is not for me.
Whatever next? Organized warfare?
It will all end in tears.
Mark my words.
Astronomy? Mathematics? Centralized government?
It's just the latest craze.
I say, Bring back the good old Stone Age days.

Roger Stevens