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Opening extract from
100 Brilliant Poems for Children

Written by
Paul Cookson

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Let No One Steal Your Dreams

Let no one steal your dreams
Let no one tear apart
The burning of ambition
That fires the drive inside your heart

Let no one steal your dreams
Let no one tell you that you can't
Let no one hold you back
Let no one tell you that you won't

Set your sights and keep them fixed
Set your sights on high
Let no one steal your dreams
Your only limit is the sky

Let no one steal your dreams
Follow your heart
Follow your soul
For only when you follow them
Will you feel truly whole

Set your sights and keep them fixed
Set your sights on high
Let no one steal your dreams
Your only limit is the sky

Paul Cookson



My Colours

These are
My colours,
One by one:

Red –
The poppies
Where I run.

Orange –
Summer's
Setting sun.

Yellow –
Farmers'
Fields of corn.

Green –
The clover
On my lawn.

Blue –
The sea
Where fishes spawn.

Violet –
The dancing
Heather.

A rainbow
They make
All together.

Colin West

A Morning Song

For the First Day of Spring

Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
From the first Word.

Sweet the rain's new fall
Sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall
In the first hour.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
From the first shower.

Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning
Spring's re-creation
Of the First Day!

Eleanor Farjeon



Slithering Silver

A shiny, slimy trail unravels behind each tiny snail tail's travels, without fail its long and winding, though only one footprint's left behind him...

Liz Brownlee

To Make a Prairie

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.

Emily Dickinson

For Every Thing There Is a Season

For every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate;

A time of war, and a time of peace.

From *Ecclesiastes*

Conquer

Five children clasping mittens
could not hug the entire trunk.
Whole hands could hide in the folds of its bark.
James, the tallest boy in class,
could sit on a root,
his feet would not touch the ground.

Every classroom faced the playground,
every child could see the tree.
Leaves beckoning.
Conkers swelling.

As the bells rang
we'd march to the tree,
sticks in hand,
eyes fixed on the mace-like horse chestnuts.
Green spikes hungry to prick
our minds obsessed by the jewels within.

Joseph Coelho

There Will Come Soft Rains

There will come soft rains and the smell of
the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools, singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire,
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

Sara Teasdale

The Apple Raid

Darkness came early, though not yet cold;
Stars were strung on the telegraph wires;
Street lamps spilled pools of liquid gold;
The breeze was spiced with garden fires.

That smell of burnt leaves, the early dark,
Can still excite me but not as it did
So long ago when we met in the Park –
Myself, John Peters and David Kidd.

We moved out of town to the district where
The lucky and wealthy had their homes
With garages, gardens, and apples to spare
Ripely clustered in the trees' green domes.

We chose the place we meant to plunder
And climbed the wall and dropped down to
The secret dark. Apples crunched under
Our feet as we moved through the grass and dew.

The clusters on the lower boughs of the tree
Were easy to reach. We stored the fruit
In pockets and jerseys until all three
Boys were heavy with their tasty loot.

Safe on the other side of the wall
We moved back to town and munched as we went.
Wonder if David remembers at all
That little adventure, the apples' fresh scent?

Strange to think that he's fifty years old,
That tough little boy with scabs on his knees;
Stranger to think that John Peters lies cold
In an orchard in France beneath apple trees.

Vernon Scannell

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

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.

Robert Frost

Den to Let

To let

One self-contained

Detached den.

Accommodation is compact

Measuring one yard square.

Ideal for two eight-year-olds

Plus one small dog

Or two cats

Or six gerbils.

Accommodation consists of:

One living room

Which doubles as kitchen

Bedroom

Entrance-hall

Dining room

Dungeon

Space capsule

Pirate boat

Covered wagon

Racing car

Palace

Aeroplane

Junk-room

And lookout post.

Property is southward facing

And can be found

Within a short walking distance

Of the back door

At bottom of garden.
Easily found in the dark
By following the smell
Of old cabbages and tea bags.
Convenient escape routes
Past rubbish dump
To Seager's Lane
Through hole in hedge,
Or into next door's garden;
But beware of next door's rhinoceros
Who sometimes thinks he's a poodle.
Construction is of
Sound corrugated iron
And roof doubles as shower
During rainy weather.
Being partially underground,
Den makes
A particularly effective hiding place
When in a state of war
With older sisters
Brothers
Angry neighbours
Or when you simply want to be alone.
Some repair work needed
To north wall
Where Mr Spence's foot came through
When planting turnips last Thursday.
With den go all contents
Including:
One carpet – very smelly

One teapot – cracked
One woolly penguin –
No beak and only one wing
One unopened tin
Of sultana pud
One hundred and three *Beanos*
Dated 1983–1985
And four *Rupert* annuals.
Rent is free
The only payment being
That the new occupant
Should care for the den
In the manner to which it has been accustomed
And on long summer evenings
Heroic songs of days gone by
Should be loudly sung
So that old and glorious days
Will never be forgotten.

Gareth Owen