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opening extract from

The Jumble Book

poems chosen by

Roger Stevens

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For Joseph



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A Warning to Grown-Ups

Poetry is fun. Do not spoil it.

Do not make children read this book for homework. If you do you may be vaporized by a death ray.

Poems are allowed to have rude words because they are literature, so bum to you.

Do not ask children how these poems make them feel. It is a stupid question.

Do not try to analyse these poems: they may self-detonate.

If you can't see the sense of it, that's probably your fault.

Poems do not have to be written in grammatical sentences or have correct punctuation, so nurch.

Do not tell people off for daydreaming. Poems come from daydreams.

Never make anyone copy out a poem. It spoils it.

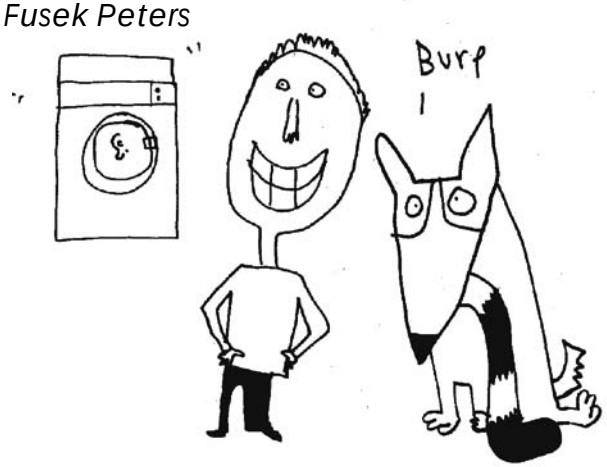
Do not make children read these poems aloud in front of the whole class. If you do, you will be kidnapped by aliens and taken to Alpha Centauri and forced to mark Year Six homework for a thousand years.

*Issued by the Galactic Authority and dictated by telepathy to **Ken Follett**, who wrote it all down with no crossings out*

The Side Up Down Poem

Wash your ears, Mum said.
So I took them off
And stuck them in the washing machine.
Clean your room, Dad said.
So I rolled it up
And shook it out of the window.
Make the breakfast, my brother said.
So I did –
With bits of balsa wood and modelling glue.
Feed the cat, my auntie said.
So I fed him . . .
To the dog!
Take your time, Dad said.
So I packed up the clocks
And I flew to Mars
Where the days fly by
Wearing nothing but stars.

Andrew Fusek Peters



Weightlessness

As the spaceship turns into the planet's pull
Weightlessness

As the teacher looks up from her book
And sees you just about
To throw the paper dart
Weightlessness

As the sandman drapes
The cape of darkness
On your half-formed thoughts
Weightlessness

Before you are born, when you are gone
Weightlessness

Roger Stevens

Rolling Down a Hill

I'm rolling
rolling
rolling
down

I'm rolling
down a
hill.

I'm rolling
rolling
rolling
down

I'm rolling
down it still.

I'm rolling
rolling
rolling
down

I'm rolling
down a
hill.

I'm rolling
rolling
rolling
down

But now
I'm feeling
ill.

Colin West

Metropoem



I am wri ting this po em
Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick
To a met ro nome
Tick tick tick tick tick
So if I get just one beat wrong
Tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick
It' ll hit me with a ve ry long
Stick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick.

Celina Macdonald

Second Look at the Proverbs

People who live in glass-houses
Should watch it while changing their trouziz

Gerard Benson

The Colour of My Dreams



I am a really rotten reader
the worst in all the class
the sort of rotten reader
that makes you want to laugh.

I'm last in all the readin' tests
my score's not on the page
and when I read to teacher
she gets in such a rage.

She says I cannot form my words
she says I can't build up
and that I don't know phonics
– and don't know c-a-t from k-u-p.

They say that I'm dyslexic
(that's a word they've just found out)
. . . but when I get some plasticine
I know what that's about.

I make these scary monsters
I draw these secret lands
and get my hair all sticky
and paint on all me hands.

I make these super models
I build these smashing towers
that reach up to the ceiling
and take me hours and hours.

I paint these lovely pictures
in thick green drippy paint
that gets all on the carpet
and makes the cleaners faint.

I build great magic forests
weave bushes out of string
and paint pink panderellos
and birds that really sing.

I play my world of real believe
I play it every day
and people stand and watch me
but don't know what to say.

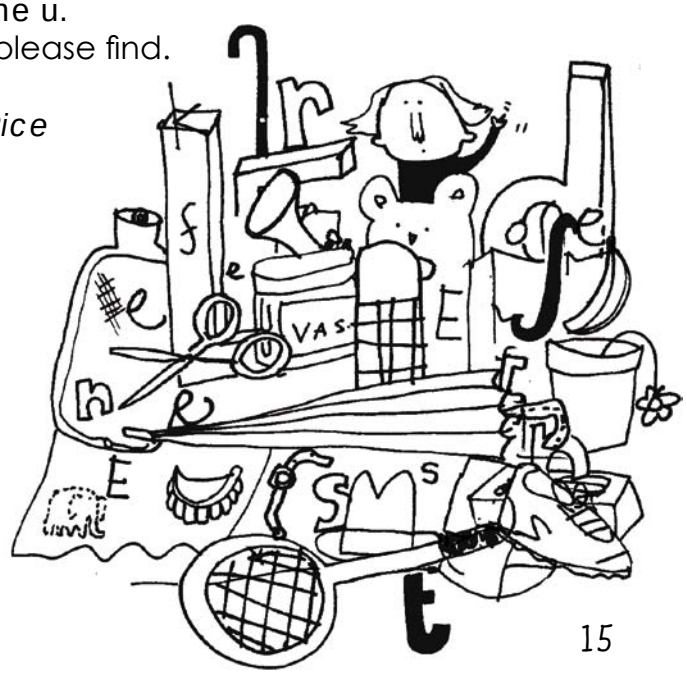
They give me diagnostic tests
they try out reading schemes
but none of them will ever know
the colour of my dreams.

Peter Dixon

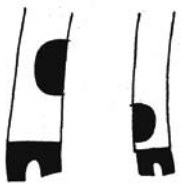
Lost Proprty Ofice

Pair of sunglases.
A walking stic.
Flowr pot.
A trumpt.
A child's tedy bear.
Gentlman's brown hat.
Nike runing shoe (left foot).
Box of white candls.
A libray book.
Pilow case (with embroidered elephant).
Set of fals teeth.
Plastic bnana.
Tenis racket.
Hot-water bttle.
Pair of scisors.
Umbrela.
A child's Disny watch.
A mouse (not a real one – a cmputer mouse!)
Smal suitcase.
Green flask with red beakr.
Map of London undergrond.
Silver whisle.
Larg jar of Vaseline.
Nine e's
three l's
two n's
two o's
two s's
one a
one d
one f
one k
one r
one t
and one u.
If lost, please find.

John Rice



Hey Diddle Diddle



Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the bed
The little dog laughed
But not for long
Cos the cow landed right on his head

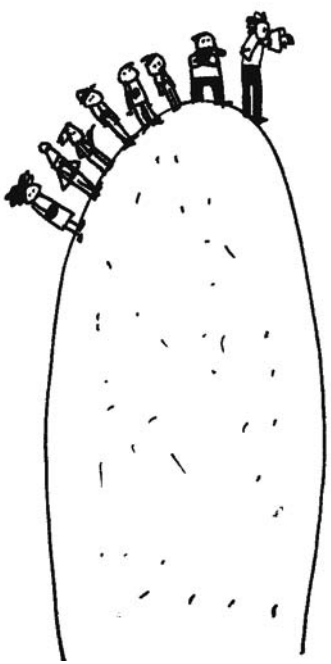
Roger Stevens



High Queue

On the mountain top
tourists politely queue to
photograph the view.

Bernard Young

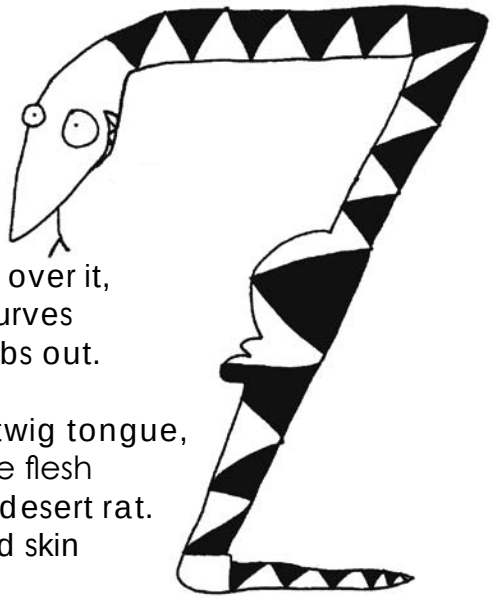


The Moon Speaks

I, the moon,
would like it known - I
never **f**ollow people home. I
simply do not have the time. And
neither do I ever shine. For what you
often see at night is me reflecting solar
light. And I'm not cheese! No, none of
these: no mozzarellas, cheddars, bries, all
you'll find here if you please – are my
dusty, empty seas. And cows do not
jump over me. Now that is simply
lunacy**! Yo**u used to come and
visit me. Oh, do return,
I'm *lon**ely*, see.

James Carter

Snake



The sand is hot
my belly zip-zips over it,
drawing neat curves
that the wind rubs out.
I divine water
with my forked-twig tongue,
water held in the flesh
and blood of a desert rat.
With my polished skin
my lithe body
my sinuous movement
my unhingeing jaw
my engulfing maw
I surround my meal –
a long, long gulp,
a week's digestion.

Catherine Benson