

Helping your children choose books they will love



Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website  
created for parents and children to make  
choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from  
**The Oxford Treasury of  
Classic Poems**

Compiled by  
**Michael Harrison**  
**Christopher Stuart-  
Clark**

Published by  
**Oxford University Press**

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.



THE  
Oxford  
Treasury  
OF  
Classic  
Poems



## Past, Present, Future

Tell me, tell me, smiling child,  
What the past is like to thee?  
'An Autumn evening soft and mild  
With a wind that sighs mournfully.'

Tell me, what is the present hour?  
'A green and flowery spray  
Where a young bird sits gathering its power  
To mount and fly away.'

And what is the future, happy one?  
'A sea beneath a cloudless sun;  
A mighty, glorious, dazzling sea  
Stretching into infinity.'

*Emily Brontë*

THE  
Oxford  
Treasury  
OF  
Classic  
Poems

*Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart-Clark*



OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Prayer to Laughter

O Laughter  
giver of relaxed mouths

you who rule our belly with tickles  
you who come when not called  
you who can embarrass us at times

send us stitches in our sides  
shake us till the water reaches our eyes  
buckle our knees till we cannot stand

we whose faces are grim and shattered  
we whose hearts are no longer hearty  
O Laughter we beg you

crack us up  
crack us up

*John Agard*

# Contents

|                                                          |                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----|
| Past, Present, Future                                    | <i>Emily Brontë</i>            | 2  |
| Prayer to Laughter                                       | <i>John Agard</i>              | 4  |
| Tartary                                                  | <i>Walter de la Mare</i>       | 9  |
| The Owl and the Pussy-Cat                                | <i>Edward Lear</i>             | 10 |
| The Cat and the Moon                                     | <i>W. B. Yeats</i>             | 12 |
| January Jumps About                                      | <i>George Barker</i>           | 13 |
| Spell of Creation                                        | <i>Kathleen Raine</i>          | 16 |
| Pied Beauty                                              | <i>Gerard Manley Hopkins</i>   | 17 |
| from 'Lines Composed a Few<br>Miles above Tintern Abbey' | <i>William Wordsworth</i>      | 18 |
| The Wild Swans at Coole                                  | <i>W. B. Yeats</i>             | 20 |
| The Galloping Cat                                        | <i>Stevie Smith</i>            | 22 |
| from 'Auguries of Innocence'                             | <i>William Blake</i>           | 24 |
| The Eagle                                                | <i>Alfred, Lord Tennyson</i>   | 25 |
| The Donkey                                               | <i>G. K. Chesterton</i>        | 26 |
| Inversnaid                                               | <i>Gerard Manley Hopkins</i>   | 27 |
| Horses on the Camargue                                   | <i>Roy Campbell</i>            | 28 |
| My Heart's in the Highlands                              | <i>Robert Burns</i>            | 30 |
| Home Thoughts, from Abroad                               | <i>Robert Browning</i>         | 31 |
| A Martian Sends a Postcard Home                          | <i>Craig Raine</i>             | 32 |
| No!                                                      | <i>Thomas Hood</i>             | 34 |
| BC:AD                                                    | <i>U. A. Fanthorpe</i>         | 35 |
| Kubla Khan                                               | <i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> | 36 |
| London                                                   | <i>William Blake</i>           | 39 |
| The Embankment                                           | <i>T. E. Hulme</i>             | 40 |
| Summer Recorded                                          | <i>Russell Hoban</i>           | 41 |
| Snake                                                    | <i>D. H. Lawrence</i>          | 42 |
| The Flower-fed Buffaloes                                 | <i>Vachel Lindsay</i>          | 45 |
| Adlestrop                                                | <i>Edward Thomas</i>           | 46 |
| Waving at Trains                                         | <i>Roger McGough</i>           | 47 |
| The Night Mail                                           | <i>W. H. Auden</i>             | 48 |
| from 'The Rubaiyat of<br>Omar Khayyam'                   | <i>Edward Fitzgerald</i>       | 51 |



|                                                             |                                   |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Sonnet LX                                                   | <i>William Shakespeare</i>        | 52  |
| Death, Be Not Proud                                         | <i>John Donne</i>                 | 53  |
| To His Coy Mistress                                         | <i>Andrew Marvell</i>             | 54  |
| Dover Beach                                                 | <i>Matthew Arnold</i>             | 56  |
| An Arundel Tomb                                             | <i>Philip Larkin</i>              | 58  |
| Noah                                                        | <i>Roy Daniells</i>               | 60  |
| Not Waving but Drowning                                     | <i>Stevie Smith</i>               | 61  |
| The Lady of Shalott                                         | <i>Alfred, Lord Tennyson</i>      | 62  |
| The Lake Isle of Innisfree                                  | <i>W. B. Yeats</i>                | 71  |
| Song                                                        | <i>Christina Rossetti</i>         | 72  |
| Song                                                        | <i>W. H. Auden</i>                | 73  |
| To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time                        | <i>Robert Herrick</i>             | 74  |
| Leisure                                                     | <i>W. H. Davies</i>               | 75  |
| Naming of Parts                                             | <i>Henry Reed</i>                 | 76  |
| Excelsior                                                   | <i>Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</i> | 78  |
| Legend                                                      | <i>Judith Wright</i>              | 80  |
| Jim Who Ran Away from his Nurse, and<br>was Eaten by a Lion | <i>Hilaire Belloc</i>             | 82  |
| Adventures of Isabel                                        | <i>Ogden Nash</i>                 | 84  |
| By St Thomas Water                                          | <i>Charles Causley</i>            | 86  |
| Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night                       | <i>Dylan Thomas</i>               | 88  |
| Follower                                                    | <i>Seamus Heaney</i>              | 89  |
| Fern Hill                                                   | <i>Dylan Thomas</i>               | 90  |
| The Woman of Water                                          | <i>Adrian Mitchell</i>            | 93  |
| Tarantella                                                  | <i>Hilaire Belloc</i>             | 94  |
| The Trees                                                   | <i>Philip Larkin</i>              | 96  |
| Loveliest of Trees                                          | <i>A. E. Housman</i>              | 97  |
| The Way Through the Woods                                   | <i>Rudyard Kipling</i>            | 98  |
| Hawk Roosting                                               | <i>Ted Hughes</i>                 | 99  |
| Ozymandias                                                  | <i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>       | 100 |
| The Road Not Taken                                          | <i>Robert Frost</i>               | 101 |
| The Terrible Path                                           | <i>Brian Patten</i>               | 102 |
| Uphill                                                      | <i>Christina Rossetti</i>         | 104 |
| Stopping by Woods on a<br>Snowy Evening                     | <i>Robert Frost</i>               | 105 |



|                                      |                               |     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| You Are Old, Father William          | <i>Lewis Carroll</i>          | 106 |
| I Am                                 | <i>John Clare</i>             | 108 |
| On His Blindness                     | <i>John Milton</i>            | 109 |
| The Tiger                            | <i>William Blake</i>          | 110 |
| A Small Dragon                       | <i>Brian Patten</i>           | 112 |
| Jabberwocky                          | <i>Lewis Carroll</i>          | 113 |
| Hunter Trials                        | <i>John Betjeman</i>          | 114 |
| Lochinvar                            | <i>Sir Walter Scott</i>       | 116 |
| The Horn                             | <i>James Reeves</i>           | 119 |
| The Highwayman                       | <i>Alfred Noyes</i>           | 120 |
| The Destruction of Sennacherib       | <i>Lord Byron</i>             | 127 |
| Abbey Tomb                           | <i>Patricia Beer</i>          | 128 |
| Innocent's Song                      | <i>Charles Causley</i>        | 130 |
| Say This City Has Ten Million Souls  | <i>W. H. Auden</i>            | 131 |
| In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations' | <i>Thomas Hardy</i>           | 133 |
| There Will Come Soft Rains           | <i>Sara Teasdale</i>          | 134 |
| April Rain Song                      | <i>Langston Hughes</i>        | 135 |
| maggie and milly and molly and may   | <i>E. E. Cummings</i>         | 136 |
| Sea-Fever                            | <i>John Masefield</i>         | 137 |
| On This Island                       | <i>W. H. Auden</i>            | 138 |
| Cargoes                              | <i>John Masefield</i>         | 139 |
| A Smuggler's Song                    | <i>Rudyard Kipling</i>        | 140 |
| The Forsaken Merman                  | <i>Matthew Arnold</i>         | 142 |
| O Captain! My Captain!               | <i>Walt Whitman</i>           | 147 |
| Casabianca                           | <i>Felicia D. Hemans</i>      | 148 |
| La Belle Dame Sans Merci             | <i>John Keats</i>             | 150 |
| The Listeners                        | <i>Walter de la Mare</i>      | 152 |
| The Hansel and Gretel House          | <i>Gerda Mayer</i>            | 154 |
| To Any Reader                        | <i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i> | 155 |
|                                      |                               |     |
| Index of Titles and First Lines      |                               | 156 |
| Index of Authors                     |                               | 158 |
| Index of Artists                     |                               | 159 |
| Acknowledgements                     |                               | 159 |





# Tartary

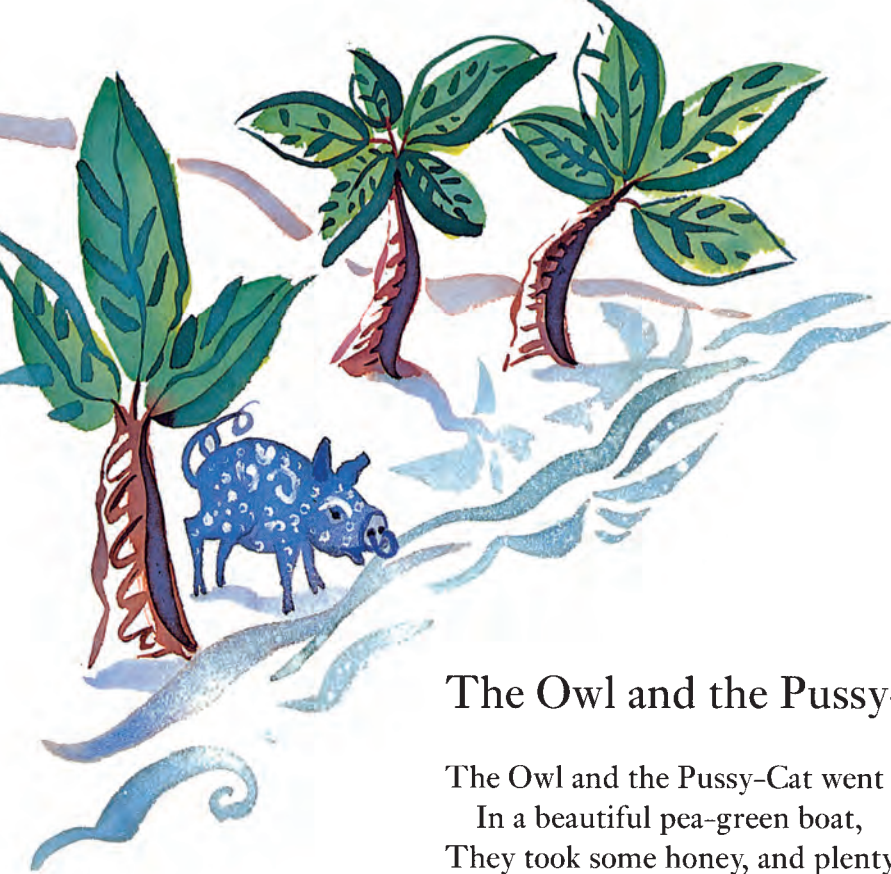
If I were Lord of Tartary,  
    Myself and me alone,  
My bed should be of ivory,  
    Of beaten gold my throne;  
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,  
And in my forests tigers haunt,  
And in my pools great fishes slant  
    Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
    Trumpeters every day  
To every meal would summon me,  
    And in my courtyard bray;  
And in the evening lamps would shine,  
Yellow as honey, red as wine,  
While harp, and flute, and mandoline,  
    Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
    I'd wear a robe of beads,  
White, and gold, and green they'd be—  
    And clustered thick as seeds;  
And ere should wane the morning-star,  
I'd don my robe and scimitar,  
And zebras seven should draw my car  
    Through Tartary's dark glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,  
    Her rivers silver-pale!  
Lord of the hills of Tartary,  
    Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!  
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,  
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,  
Her bird-delighting citron-trees  
    In every purple vale!

*Walter de la Mare*



## The Owl and the Pussy-Cat

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.  
The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
And sang to a small guitar,  
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,  
What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
You are,  
You are!  
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!  
How charmingly sweet you sing!  
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:  
But what shall we do for a ring?'  
They sailed away for a year and a day,  
To the land where the Bong-tree grows,  
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,  
With a ring at the end of his nose,  
His nose,  
His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.



'Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'  
So they took it away, and were married next day  
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
They danced by the light of the moon,  
The moon,  
The moon,  
They danced by the light of the moon.

*Edward Lear*

## The Cat and the Moon

The cat went here and there  
And the moon spun round like a top,  
And the nearest kin of the moon,  
The creeping cat, looked up.  
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,  
For, wander and wail as he would,  
The pure cold light in the sky  
Troubled his animal blood.  
Minnaloushe runs in the grass  
Lifting his delicate feet.  
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?  
When two close kindred meet,  
What better than call a dance?  
Maybe the moon may learn,  
Tired of that courtly fashion,  
A new dance turn.  
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass  
From moonlit place to place,  
The sacred moon overhead  
Has taken a new phase.  
Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils  
Will pass from change to change,  
And that from round to crescent,  
From crescent to round they range?  
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass  
Alone, important and wise,  
And lifts to the changing moon  
His changing eyes.

*W. B. Yeats*