

Birdfoot's Grampa

-Joseph Bruchac III

The old man
must have stopped our car
two dozen times to climb out
and gather into his hands
the small toads blinded 5
by our lights and leaping,
live drops of rain.

The rain was falling,
a mist about his white hair
and I kept saying 10
you can't save them all,
accept it, get back in
we've got places to go.

But, leathery hands full
of wet brown life, 15
knee deep in the summer
roadside grass,
he just smiled and said
they have places to go to too.

I'm Nobody

-Emily Dickerson

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

Little Things

-James Stephens

Little things, that run, and quail,
And die, in silence and despair!

Little things, that fight, and fail,
And fall, on sea, and earth, and air!

All trapped and frightened little things,
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer!

As we forgive those done to us,
--The lamb, the linnet, and the hare—

Forgive us all our trespasses,
Little creatures, everywhere!

The Porcupine

Any hound a porcupine nudges
Can't be blamed for harboring grudges,
I know one hound that laughed all winter
At a porcupine that sat on a splinter.

Particle man

By John Linnell (TMBG)

Particle man, particle man
Doing the things a particle can
What's he like? It's not important
Particle man

Is he a dot, or is he a speck? 5
When he's underwater does he get wet?
Or does the water get him instead?
Nobody knows, Particle man

Triangle man, Triangle man
Triangle man hates particle man 10
They have a fight, Triangle wins
Triangle man

Universe man, Universe man
Size of the entire universe man
Usually kind to smaller man 15
Universe man

He's got a watch with a minute hand,
Millenium hand and an eon hand
When they meet it's a happy land
Powerful man, universe man 20

Person man, person man
Hit on the head with a frying pan
Lives his life in a garbage can
Person man

Is he depressed or is he a mess? 25
Does he feel totally worthless?
Who came up with person man?
Degraded man, person man

Triangle man, triangle man
Triangle man hates person man 30
They have a fight, triangle wins
Triangle man

The Spider

-Robert P. Tristram Coffin

With six small diamonds for his eyes
He walks upon the summer skies,
Drawing from his silken blouse
The lacework of his dwelling house.

He lays his staircase as he goes, 5
Under his eight thoughtful toes
And grows with the concentric flower
Of his shadowless thin bower.

His back legs are a pair of hands, 10
They can spindle out the strands
Of a thread that is so small
It stops the sunlight not at all.

He spins himself to threads of dew
Which will harden soon into
Lines that cut like slender knives 15
Across the insects' airy lives.

He makes no motion but is right,
He spreads out his appetite
Into a network, twist on twist, 20
This little ancient scientist.

He does not know he is unkind,
He has a jewel for a mind
And logic deadly as dry bone,
This small son of Euclid's own

The Listeners

-Walter de la Mare

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveler,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor: 5
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveler's head
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveler;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill 10
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight 15
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveler's call. 20
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even 25
Louder, and lifted his head:
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,' he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake 30
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward, 35
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Binky Barnes

-Mark Brown

When recess starts, I feel afraid.
There's this kid in second grade...
I hear he sat on Tom O'Connor.
If he sits on me, then I'm a goner!

He looks for kids to squish and crunch.
He said he'd find me after lunch!
They say he likes to pulverize.
Wish he'd pick on kids his size.

Of course, there are no kids that big.
I'll bet he snaps me like a twig.
Oh no! He's coming over here!
I think I'm sick!

I think I'm sick!
He sees me now, he's almost here.
I'm going to die!
I'm going to die!

Uh-oh, he's standing next to me.
Should I even try to flee?
I'd better pray.
What did you say?

You want to play?!
Well, gee, okay!
I think he wants to be my friend.
Too bad recess has to end.