

## 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.