

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses,
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Iona and Peter Opie, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 213. Opie and Opie note attestations back to 1803 but assume the poem must be older.

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, sir, yes, sir,
Three bags full;
One for the master,
And one for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

Ibid., 88. Attested in the eighteenth century.

Little red wagon, painted blue,
Little red wagon, painted blue,
Little red wagon, painted blue,
Skip-a to my lou, my darling.

Lou, lou, skip-a to my lou,
Lou, lou, skip-a to my lou,
Lou, lou, skip-a to my lou,
Skip-a to my lou, my darling.

Pull her up and down in the little red wagon, etc.

Teeter up and down in the little red wagon, etc.

Etc.

Ruth Crawford Seeger, *American Folk Songs for Children in Home, School and Nursery School* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948), 166-67. Seeger notes, "This song has hundreds of stanzas and is always picking up new ones" (167).

John Newton (1725–1807)
Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

5 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!

10 Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

15 The Lord has promis'd good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

20 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the vail,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be for ever mine.

John Newton and William Cowper, *Olney Hymns: In Three Books* (London: W. Oliver, 1779), 1.53–54, [Library of Congress](#). The familiar tune was attached to the hymn in the nineteenth century.

Sir Patrick Spens (Child 58A)

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
'O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?'

5 Up and spak an eldern knight,
Sat at the kings riecht kne:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se.'

10 The king has written a **braid** letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

15 The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

'O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
20 To sail upon the se!

'Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:'
'O say na **sae**, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

25 'Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme.'

30 O our Scots nobles wer richt [laith](#)
To [weet](#) their cork-heild [schoone](#);
Bot lang [owre](#) a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam [aboone](#).

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
35 Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold [kems](#) in their hair.
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
40 For they'll se thame na mair.

[Haf](#) owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie [fadam](#) deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

Francis James Child, ed., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, pt. 3 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1885), 20–21, [HathiTrust](#). The ballad is attested from 1765. Child gives eighteen full or partial versions. The language is [Scots](#), in Bishop Percy's eighteenth-century English [transcription](#). On [YouTube](#) you can find a 1961 recording of a variant version by British folk pioneer [Ewan MacColl](#).

William Blake (1757–1827)
The Lamb

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
5 Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice;
Little Lamb who made thee
10 Dost thou know who made thee
Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb;
15 He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb.
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (London: William Blake, 1789, 1794), rpt. in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Copy B: Electronic Edition* (William Blake Archive, 2007), [object 16](#). This poem is part of the *Songs of Innocence* (1789). *Following page*: facsimile image, *ibid*.

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William Blake
The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

5 In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare sieze the fire?

10 And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat.
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

15 What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

20 When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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Ibid., object 35. This poem is part of the *Songs of Experience* (1794). *Following page:* facsimile in *ibid.*

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William Wordsworth (1770–1850)
We Are Seven

Please read this poem in the Internet Archive's digital facsimile of the first edition of Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (London: J. & A. Arch, 1798), [110–14](#).

Felicia Hemans (1793–1835)
Casabianca¹

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

5 Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though child-like form.

10 The flames rolled on—he would not go
Without his Father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud—'say, Father, say
If yet my task is done?'
15 He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

'Speak, father!' once again he cried,
'If I may yet be gone!'
And but the booming shots replied,
20 And fast the flames rolled on.

1. Young Casabianca, a boy about thirteen years old, son of the admiral of the *Orient*, remained at his post (in the Battle of the Nile) after the ship had taken fire, and all the guns had been abandoned; and perished in the explosion of the vessel, when the flames had reached the powder. [Hemans's note.]

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair.

25 And shouted but once more aloud,
‘My father! must I stay?’
While o’er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

30 They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound—
The boy—oh! where was he?
35 Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewed the sea!—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part—
But the noblest thing which perished there
40 Was that young faithful heart.

Poetical Works (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 396, [HathiTrust](#). The poem first appeared in 1826; in that [version](#), ll. 17–19 run:

“Speak, Father!” once again he cried,
“If I may yet begone!
”And”—but the booming shots replied,

Young Casabianca was a real person, the son of the commander of the French flagship *Orient*, which was sunk in the British naval victory over Napoleon in the Battle of the Nile in 1798. For more detail on the poem, see *Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials*, ed. Susan Wolfson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 428–30, [JSTOR](#).

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)
“I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading - treading - till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through -
5 And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum -
Kept beating - beating - till I thought
My mind was going numb -
And then I heard them lift a Box
10 And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space - began to toll,
As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
15 And I, and Silence, some strange Race
Wrecked, solitary, here -
And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down -
And hit a World, at every plunge,
20 And Finished knowing - then -

The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition, ed. R. W. Franklin (Cambridge: Belknap, 1998), text from [Emily Dickinson Archive](#). Franklin dates the poem to 1862. Compare the Emily Dickinson Archive facsimile of the manuscript, [Houghton MS Am 1.1.18.35](#).

Emily Dickinson
“I heard a Fly buzz - when I died”

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm -

5 The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset - when the King
Be witnessed - in the Room -

10 I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable - and then it was
There interposed a Fly -

15 With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -
Between the light - and me -
And then the Windows failed - and then
I could not see to see -

Ibid., text from [Emily Dickinson Archive](#). Franklin dates the poem to 1863. Compare the Emily Dickinson Archive facsimile of the manuscript, [Amherst MS fascicle 84](#), which comes from one of Dickinson’s hand-bound [fascicles](#) (little books).

Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) (1832–1898)
Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

5 “Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

10 He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

15 And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

20 One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

25 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (London: Macmillan, 1872 [actually 1871]),
21–24. [HathiTrust](#).

Muriel Rukeyser (1913–1980)
Ballad of Orange and Grape

Please read this poem in the [digital text](#) in *The Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser*, ed. Janet Kaufman et al. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), [492–93](#), and the annotation, [629](#). The poem appeared in Rukeyser's volume *Breaking Open* (New York: Random House, 1973).