



Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals

# SPEECH ARTS MANUAL

PART 1: ADDENDUM

# SPEECH ARTS MANUAL PART 1: SOLO SPOKEN POETRY

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## Table of Contents

<b>SA 9001 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, KINDERGARTEN ..... Page 1</b>	
Safe? ..... Silverstein, Shel	What is it? ..... Allen, Marie Louise
Five Years Old ..... Allen, Marie Louise	The Hairy Dog ..... Asquith, Herbert
Mud ..... Boyden, P.C.	The Drinking Fountain ..... Chute, Marchette
The Queen Bee ..... Robinson, M.K.	“SH” ..... Tippett, James
Catkin ..... Unknown	The Wish ..... Friday, Ann
<b>SA 9003 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 1 ..... Page 6</b>	
Colors ..... Silverstein, Shel	Just Me ..... Hillert, Margaret
Yawn ..... Whelchan, Susan	Toes ..... Anglund, Joan Walsh
March ..... Newman, Fran	New Pet ..... Pasley, Lois F.
Something Big Has Been Here ..... Prelutsky, Jack	Words ..... Greve, Glenda
Spring Rain ..... Chute, Marchette	Magical Eraser ..... Silverstein, Shel
<b>SA 9005 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 2 ..... Page 12</b>	
Sick Days ..... Hoberman, Mary Ann	Automobile Mechanics ..... Baruch, Dorothy
An Early Worm Got Out of Bed ..... Prelutsky, Jack	Spiders ..... Hoberman, Mary Ann
Being Lost ..... Kuskin, Karla	Jonathan’s Farm ..... <span style="color: red;">Waddington</span> , Miriam
Bingo Has an Enemy ..... Fyleman, Rose	Camping ..... Marshall, Winifred C.
Mice ..... Fyleman, Rose	The Loser ..... Silverstein, Shel
<b>SA 9007 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 3 ..... Page 17</b>	
Polar Bear ..... Smith, William J.	Today is Very Boring ..... Prelutsky, Jack
Our Mole ..... Simmie, Lois	Under the Ground ..... Bacmeister, Rhoda W.
My Dog, He is an Ugly Dog ..... Prelutsky, Jack	Sea Cliff ..... Smith, A.J.M.
Pebbles ..... Kitching, John	Fishes’ Evening Song ..... Ipcar, Dahlov
The Sloth ..... Roethke, Theodore	Spaghetti ..... Flynn, Frank
<b>SA 9010 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CLASSICAL, GRADES 1 – 3 ..... Page 25</b>	
Cats ..... Farjeon, Eleanor	The Land of Nod ..... Stevenson, Robert Louis
The Crocodile ..... Carroll, Lewis	The Four Friends ..... Milne, A.A.
Who Has Seen the Wind? ..... Rossetti, Christina	Not That ..... Aldis, Dorothy
The Swing ..... Stevenson, Robert Louis	Politeness ..... Milne, A.A.
The March Wind ..... Anonymous	A Kitten ..... Farjeon, Eleanor
<b>PSA 9021 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 4 ..... Page 30</b>	
Alligators Are Unfriendly ..... Prelutsky, Jack	Lately I’ve Been Late ..... Lesynski, Loris
Brontosaurus ..... Kredenser, Gail	No Girls Allowed ..... Prelutsky, Jack
Homework ..... Yolen, Jane	Billy Batter ..... Lee, Dennis
Messy Room ..... Silverstein, Shel	New Jacket ..... Hoberman, Mary Ann
Unscratchable Itch ..... Silverstein, Shel	Anyone Seen My...? ..... Fatchen, Max
<b>PSA 9023 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 5 ..... Page 40</b>	
Did You? ..... Cole, William	Smart ..... Silverstein, Shel
I Am Flying ..... Prelutsky, Jack	An Elephant is an Odd Affair ..... Gay, Zhenya
Pachycephalosaurius ..... Armour, Richard	An Alley Cat with One Life Left ..... Prelutsky, Jack
Whose Boo is Whose? ..... Kennedy, X.J.	Sneaky Bill ..... Cole, William
Almost Perfect ..... Silverstein, Shel	Snowman ..... Silverstein, Shel

**PSA 9025 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 6 ..... Page 50**

Eggs! .....	Prelutsky, Jack	Polar Bear Snow .....	Heidbreder, Robert
Keep a Stiff Upper Lip .....	Cary, Phoebe	The Runaway .....	Frost, Robert
The Hump .....	Kipling, Rudyard	The Marrog .....	Scriven, R.C.
The Puzzle .....	Lee, Dennis	Seal .....	Smith, William Jay
It Couldn't Be Done .....	Guest, Edgar A.	The Flotz .....	Prelutsky, Jack

**PSA 9027 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CLASSICAL, GRADES 4 – 6 ..... Page 60**

My Shadow .....	Stevenson, Robert Louis	The River .....	Scott, Frederick George
The Lamplighter .....	Stevenson, Robert Louis	Wild Horses .....	Smith, Myra A.I.
The Ride-by-Nights .....	de la Mare, Walter	The Minuet .....	Dodge, Mary M.
Indian Summer .....	Campbell, Wilfred	A Bird Came Down the Walk .....	Dickinson, Emily
Going Up North .....	Lee, Dennis	The Kitten at Play .....	Wordsworth, William

**PSA 9029 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CANADIAN, GRADES 4 – 6 ..... Page 69**

A Path to the Moon .....	Nichol, B.P.	Lion .....	Smith, William Jay
And My Heart Soars .....	George, Chief Dan	Pizza Theme & Variations .....	Lesynski, Loris
Mrs. Piper .....	Smith, William Jay	Paul Bunyan .....	Bourinot, Arthur S.
Procrastination .....	Simmie, Lois	The Diver .....	Ross, W.W.E.
The Camper .....	Johnson, E. Pauline	Flight of the Roller Coaster .....	Souster, Raymond

**PSA 9031 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, MANITOBAN, GRADES 4 – 6 ..... Page 79**

From Death Unto Life .....	Giesbrecht, Cornelius V.	Spirit Sands .....	Atkin, Robert C.
I Call Her Home .....	Wright, Lenore	The People in the Valley .....	Le Dressay, Anne
Ma-he-can (Wolf) .....	Mercredi, Duncan	Lake Winnipeg 1956 .....	Mercredi, Duncan
Manitoba .....	Burak, Randy	The Magic Painters .....	Connolly, Frank
Old House .....	Kenny, Anita	Sow the Land .....	Bredin, Errol

**PSA 9041 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 7 ..... Page 89**

Clean Gene .....	Silverstein, Shel	Winnie the .....	Webster, Clive
The Train Dogs .....	Johnson, E. Pauline	The Road Not Taken .....	Frost, Robert
It Must Be the Devil in Me .....	McNaughton, Colin	This Was My Brother .....	Gould, Mona
Manitoba Farmers .....	Hulbert, Winifred	Digging for China .....	Wilbur, Richard
Those Winter Sundays .....	Hayden, Robert	In Between .....	Banks, Lisa

**PSA 9043 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 8 ..... Page 99**

Rain .....	Graham, Carolyn	Eastern Shore .....	Bruce, Charles
If .....	Kipling, Rudyard	The Beaches of Mexico .....	Graham, Carolyn
Stick to It .....	Guest, Edgar A.	The Cage .....	Manning-Sanders, Ruth
It Was a Long Time Ago .....	Farjeon, Eleanor	The Little Green Orchard .....	de la Mare, Walter
The Fog .....	Davies, W.H.	Talking .....	Viorst, Judith

**PSA 9045 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 9 ..... Page 109**

The Need of Being Versed in Country Things .....	Frost, Robert	Velvet Shoes .....	Wylie, Elinor
Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night .....	Thomas, Dylan	Mountain Lion .....	Lawrence, D.H.
The Glove and the Lions .....	Hunt, Leigh	Sad Story of a Motor Fan .....	Field, H.A.
Fortune .....	Ferlinghetti, Lawrence	No Doctors Today Thank You .....	Nash, Ogden
The Long Voyage .....	Cowley, Malcolm	Barter .....	Teasdale, Sara

**PSA 9047 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CLASSICAL, GRADES 7 – 9 ..... Page 120**

London, 1802 .....	Wordsworth, William	Because I Could Not Stop for Death .....	Dickinson, Emily
Abou Ben Adhem .....	Hunt, James Henry Leigh	High Flight .....	Magee, John Gillespie
The Listeners .....	de la Mare, Walter	Wander – Thirst .....	Gould, Gerald
The Fiddler of Dooney .....	Yeats, William Butler	Annabel Lee .....	Poe, E.A.
There Came a Wind Like a Bugle .....	Dickinson, Emily	Ozymandias .....	Shelley, Percy

**PSA 9049 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CANADIAN, GRADES 7 – 9 ..... Page 129**

The Ships of Yule .....	Carman, Bliss	The Colt .....	Knister, Raymond
It is Dangerous to Read Newspapers .....	Atwood, Margaret	How One Winter Came in the Lake Region .....	Campbell, Wilfred
The Blue Heron .....	Roberts, T.G.	The Deserted Pasture .....	Carman, Bliss
The Reformed Pirate .....	Roberts, T.G.	To Hilton .....	Panchami, Vasnata
Workworn .....	Johnson, E. Pauline	A January Morning .....	Lampman, Archibald

**PSA 9051 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, MANITOBAN, GRADES 7 – 9 ..... Page 139**

The Danger of Merely Living .....	Kroetch, Robert	The Prairie Child .....	Freeman, Marta
Prairie Crocus .....	Saunders, Thomas	Friend or Foe .....	Antoniw, Lillian
September Heat .....	Cory, Wendy	Popular Geography .....	Waddington, Mariam
Transformations .....	Waddington, Mariam	Okanagan .....	Christie, Norma G.
Grey to Green .....	Thorleifson, Al	Poem .....	Livesay, Dorothy

**PSA 9061 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 10 ..... Page 149**

Disembarking at Quebec .....	Atwood, Margaret	I, Icarus .....	Nowlan, Alden
Jazz Concert .....	Tawara, Machi	Departure .....	Kirkland, Glen
To L.H.B. (1894 – 1915) .....	Mansfield, Katherine	Antlers Against the Sky .....	Barker, S. Omar
The Bear on the Delhi Road .....	Birney, Earle	Ars Poetica .....	MacLeish, Archibald
Warty Bliggens the Toad .....	Maquis, Don	Fire on the Hills .....	Jeffers, Robinson

**PSA 9063 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 11 ..... Page 159**

Constantly Risking Absurdity and Death .....	Ferlinghetti, Lawrence	The Shell .....	Stephens, James
An Elementary School Classroom in a <b>Slum</b> .... <b>Spender</b> , Stephen	Spender, Stephen	The Burning of the Leaves .....	Binyan, Lawrence
The Soldier .....	Brooke, Rubert	After Apple Picking .....	Frost, Robert
My Position, My View .....	Hobson, Julie	Warren Pryor .....	Nowlan, Alden
Ukranian Church .....	Waddington, Mariam	From the Shore .....	Sandburg, Carl

**PSA 9065 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, 20<sup>TH</sup>/21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, GRADE 12 ..... Page 169**

All Aboard .....	Wright, Lenore	October Paint .....	Sandburg, Carl
Perception .....	Wright, Lenore	Exile .....	Sheard, Virna
The Ice-Cart .....	Gibson, Wilfred Wilson	Too Hot to Sleep .....	Marty, Sid
Night-Boat .....	Brown, Audrey Alexander	Canadian Railroad Trilogy .....	Lightfoot, Gordon
The Forsaken .....	Scott, Duncan Campbell	Ex Basketball Player .....	Updike, John

**PSA 9067 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CLASSICAL, GRADES 10 – 12 ..... Page 180**

Brave New World .....	MacLeish, Archibald	A Description of Love .....	<b>Raleigh</b> , Sir Walter
Silences .....	Pratt, E.J.	Charge of the Light Brigade .....	Tennyson, Alfred Lord
The Dark Stag .....	Crawford, Isabella Valancy	Home – Thoughts, from Abroad .....	Browning, Robert
A Valediction Forbidding Mourning .....	Donne, John	The Lady of Shalott .....	Tennyson, Alfred Lord
Vestigia .....	Carman, Bliss	The Tyger .....	<b>Blake</b> , William

**PSA 9069 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, CANADIAN, GRADES 10 – 12 ..... Page 191**

The Wind Our Enemy .....	Marriott, Anne	The Game .....	Crozier, Lorna
The Sculptors .....	Purdy, Alfred	The Kite is a Victim .....	Cohen, Leonard
Dazzle .....	Roberts, Dorothy	July .....	Borson, Roo
A Walk in Kyoto .....	Birney, Earle	The Shrouding .....	Livesay, Dorothy
Please Hear What I Am Not Saying .....	Stewart, Brenda	Woman by the Shore .....	Nero, Robert <b>W.</b>

**PSA 9071 SOLO SPOKEN POETRY, MANITOBAN, GRADES 10 – 12 ..... Page 201**

Without Benefit of Tape .....	Livesay, Dorothy	Green Rain .....	Livesay, Dorothy
Lynx in Winnipeg .....	Valgardson, W.D.	Wooded Paths .....	Rioux, Christianne
Paul Isfeld: Fisherman .....	Valgardson, W.D.	Forsaken Dreams .....	Sanderson, Ida E.
The Child Looks Out .....	Livesay, Dorothy	Lonely Home .....	Antoniw, Lillian
Silent Seasons .....	Hulbert, Winifred	Reprieve .....	Hulbert, Winifred N.

BEING LOST

Being lost  
Is the perfect way  
To pass the time  
On a sky blue day  
When it's warm  
And the open window  
Uncurtains a call  
Spiraling up the stairway  
Hovering in the hall.  
No one comes then  
When they call me.  
I am not there  
Where they look.  
I linger alone  
In a place of my own  
Lost  
In a book.

Karla Kuskin (Secret Places, Charlotte Huck, Greenwillow Books)

BINGO HAS AN ENEMY

Bingo is kind and friendly,  
A gentleman right to the core,  
But he can't bear rats  
And he hates all cats  
And the fuzzy brown dog next door.

There's a nice little girl who lives there,  
But they glare at us more and more;  
So we never can call,  
And the cause of it all  
Is the fuzzy brown dog next door.

Bingo is limping a **little**  
And one of his ears is sore,  
He's rather a fright,  
But, oh, what a sight  
Is the fuzzy brown dog next door!

Rose Fyleman (Time for Poetry, W.J. Gage and Company)

BRONTOSAURUS

The giant brontosaurus  
Was a prehistoric chap  
With four fat feet to stand on  
And a very skimpy lap.  
The scientists assure us  
Of a most amazing thing—  
A brontosaurus blossomed  
When he had a chance to sing!

(The bigger brontosauruses,  
Who liked to sing in choruses,  
Would close their eyes  
and harmonize  
And sing most anything.)

They growled and they yowled,  
They deedled and **they** dummed;  
They warbled and **they** whistled,  
They howled and they hummed.  
They didn't eat, they didn't sleep;  
They sang and sang all day.  
Now all you'll find are footprints  
Where they tapped the time away!

Gail Kredenser ([Random House Book of Poetry for Children](#), Random House)

UNSCRATCHABLE ITCH

There is a spot that you can't scratch  
Right between your shoulder blades,  
Like an egg that just won't hatch  
Here you set and there it stays.  
Turn and squirm and try to reach it,  
Twist your neck and bend your back,  
Hear your elbows creak and crack,  
Stretch your fingers, now you bet it's  
Going to reach—no that won't get it—  
Hold your breath and stretch and pray,  
Only just an inch away,  
Worse than a sunbeam you can't catch  
Is that one spot that  
You can't scratch.

Shel Silverstein (*A Light in the Attic*, Harper Collins Publishing)

THE PUZZLE

Annie and Ernie  
    McGilligan Spock  
Pedalled their tricycles  
    Round the block.

They pedalled and pedalled  
    And pedalled in pairs,  
Till they came to a house  
    That was just like theirs.

In the same front yard  
    Stood the same small tree;  
On the same brown table  
    The same pot of tea;

And the very same smells!  
    And the very same noise!  
And the very same beds  
    With the very same toys!

They stood and **they** stared  
    And they stared and they stood;  
The thing was too weird  
    To be understood:

*How was it possible?*  
    Think of the shock  
Of Annie and Ernie  
    McGilligan Spock!

Dennis Lee (Jelly Belly, MacMillan Canada)

THE FLOTZ

I am the Flotz, I gobble dots,  
indeed, I gobble lots and lots,  
every dot I ever see  
is bound to be a bite for me.  
I often munch on myriads  
of sweet, abundant periods,  
I nibble hyphens, and with ease  
chew succulent apostrophes.

From time to time, I turn my gaze  
to little dotted “i’s” and “j’s,”  
and if I chance upon a dash,  
I soon dispatch it with panache.  
I chomp on commas half the day,  
quotation marks are rarer prey,  
a semicolon’s quite a treat,  
while polka dots are joys to eat.

When I confront a dotted line,  
my tongue flicks out, those dots are mine,  
Morse code becomes a feast, and yes,  
I’ve snacked upon an S.O.S.  
For I’m the Flotz, who gobbles dots,  
I gobble them in pails and pots,  
and you’ll not like my brief embrace  
if you have freckles on your face.

Jack Prelutsky (New Kid on the Block, Scholastic)

THE RIVER

Why hurry, little river,  
Why hurry to the sea?  
There is nothing there to do  
But to sink into the blue  
And all forgotten be.  
There is nothing on that shore  
But the tides for evermore,  
And the faint and far-off line  
Where the winds across the brine  
For ever, ever roam  
And never find a home.

Why hurry, little river,  
From the mountains and the mead,  
Where the graceful elms are sleeping  
And the quiet cattle feed?  
The loving shadows cool  
The deep and restful pool;  
And every tribute stream  
Brings its own sweet woodland dream  
Of the mighty woods that sleep  
Where the sighs of earth are deep,  
And the silent skies look down  
On the savage mountain's frown.

Oh linger, little river,  
Your banks are all so fair,  
Each morning is a hymn of praise,  
Each evening is a prayer.  
All day the sunbeams glitter  
On your shallows and your bars,  
And at night the dear God stills you  
With the music of the stars.

Frederick George Scott (All Sails Set, Copp Clark Publishing)

MRS. PIPER

There was an Old Woman named Piper  
Who spoke like a windshield wiper.  
    She would say: “Dumb Gump!  
    Wet Stump! Wet Stump!”  
And then like the voice of disaster  
Her words would come faster and faster:  
    “Dumb Gump! Dumb Gump!  
    Wet Stump! Wet Stump!  
    Wet Stump! Wet Stump!  
Tiddledy-diddledy-diddledy-bump...  
    Bump...  
        Bump...  
            Bump...  
                BUMP!”  
—Which greatly annoyed *Mr.* Piper!

William Jay Smith ([Around My Room](#), Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

It's cold.  
Winter is dying.  
But it is not yet dead.  
In its final days,  
It makes one last effort  
To conquer life.

A breeze starts up from the northwest.  
It grows stronger, and soon becomes  
A wild, wicked wind, whipping the white snow  
Into a fanatical, freezing fury.  
The once large and gentle snowflakes  
Have become small and sinister and icy;  
Driven by the angry air,  
They show mercy to no man,  
Penetrating the flesh  
Like minute hypodermic needles,  
Injecting the deadly cold  
Into the heart,  
Into the very soul  
Of all who dare defy the winter wind.

But March has come,  
And though it has come like a raging lion,  
It may yet leave like a meek little lamb;  
For Winter is dying,  
And in spite of its last mad, malicious moments,  
Its death is inevitable.  
Soon Spring will come,  
And with it,  
Warmth, life, and joy.

Cornelius V. Giesbrecht ([Poetry of Manitoba](#), Province of Manitoba)

SOW THE LAND

Thunder roars over the prairie  
Lightning turns night into day  
They mentioned hail in the forecast  
Pray it doesn't pass this way.

The crop is coming along nicely  
There's been just the right bit of rain  
Lost it all to a storm last year  
Won't make it if it happens again.

With one eye on the heavens  
The other on the crop as it grows  
Trusting there'll be a good harvest this year  
And next spring again I can sow,  
Sow the land with my heart in my hands  
Sow with a hope and a prayer  
Sweat blood as once more I gamble  
That the "Dealer" will be fair.

I'm a gambler by profession  
A farmer who works the land  
It's a mixture of hard work and hoping  
That I'm dealt a winning hand.

But drought, hoppers and hailstorms  
Can soon destroy a dream  
And unless you work the land, my friend  
You don't know what I mean.

Errol Bredin (Manitoba Myriad, Dennis County Writers' Group)

THE LISTENERS

“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:  
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 anybody there?” he said.  
But no one descended to the Traveler;  
No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his gray 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  
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.  
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  
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  
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,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare (Classic Poems to Read Aloud, Kingfisher)

THE REFORMED PIRATE

His proper name was Peter Sweet:  
But he was known as Keel-haul Pete  
From Turtle Cay to Port-of-Spain  
And all along the Spanish Main,  
And up and down those spicy seas  
Which lave the bosky Caribbees.  
His sense of humour was so grim,  
Fresh corpses were but jokes to him.  
He chuckled, chortled, slapt his flank,  
To see his victims walk the plank.  
His language – verbal bilge and slush-  
Made all who heard it quake and blush.  
Loud would he laugh, with raucous jeers,  
To see his shipmates plug their ears  
Whenever, feeling extra gay,  
To his high spirits he gave way.

But were his shipmates **prudes**? Oh no!-  
Ptomaine Bill and Strangler Joe,  
Slicer Mike, Tarnation Shay,  
And twoscore more as bad as they,  
Ready to cut throats any day.  
But Pete's expressions used to freeze  
E'en their tough sensibilities.  
Like shocked young ladies they would cry,  
"Avast!" "Belay!" and "Fie, oh fie!"  
Pete's home-life was not – well, quite nice.  
In one short week he married thrice;

And so on. All his cool retreats  
(From which had fled the parakeets)  
Were over-run with Missus Sweets:  
And yet his heart was ever true-  
Deep down – to Angostura Sue.

Three nights hand-running – one, two, three-  
He dreamed about a gallows-tree.  
Three nights hand-running, he awoke  
With yells that made the bulkheads smoke.  
Then terror took his soul by storm:  
So he decided to reform.

T.G. Roberts (The Leather Bottle, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd.)

## WORKWORN

Across the street, an humble woman lives;  
 To her 'tis little fortune ever gives;  
 Denied the wines of life, it puzzles me  
 To know how she can laugh so cheerily.  
 This morn I listened to her softly sing,  
 And, **marvelling** what this effect could bring  
 I looked: 'twas but the presence of a child  
 Who passed her gate, and looking in, had smiled.  
 But self-encrusted, I had failed to see  
 The child had also looked and laughed to me.  
 My lowly **neighbour** thought the smile God-sent,  
 And singing, through the toilsome hours she went  
 O! weary singer, I have learned the wrong  
 Of taking gifts, and giving naught of song;  
 I thought my blessings scant, my mercies few,  
 Till I contrasted them with yours, and you;  
 To-day I counted much, yet wished it more—  
 While but a child's bright smile was all your store,

If I had thought of all the stormy days,  
 That fill some lives that tread less favoured ways,  
 How little sunshine through their shadows gleamed,  
 My own dull life had much the brighter seemed;  
 If I had thought of all the eyes that sweep  
 Through desolation, and still smiling keep  
 That see so little pleasure, so much woe,  
 My own had laughed more often long ago;  
 If I had thought how leaden was the weight  
 Adversity lays at my kinsman's gate,  
 Of that great cross my next door neighbour bears,  
 My thanks had been more frequent in my prayers;  
 If I had watched the woman o'er the way,  
 Workworn and old, who labours day by day,  
 Who has no rest, no joy to call her own,  
 My tasks, my heart, had much the lighter grown.

E. Pauline Johnson (Flint & Feather, The Complete Poems of E. Pauline Johnson, Hodder & Stoughton)

OKANAGAN

The clear skies of the Okanagan, lakes, a  
sparkling diamond blue.  
Mountains rise in stately splendour,  
creating a panoramic view.  
Sagebrush growing on the craggy slopes  
and on the rolling valley floor,  
Pine and evergreen surround us, this is  
Mother Nature's store.  
Feathery crystals falling from the sky,  
leave a blanket of pure white snow,  
Rain's come down to touch the earth  
urging fruit trees and flower to grow.

Apple blossoms, peach and plum are  
bursting into bloom,  
Cherry, apricot and grape, fill the valley  
with sweet perfume.  
Sandy beaches, trails and parks,  
viewpoints along the way  
Come and visit **for a while**, we know  
you will want to stay.  
Gracious people you will always find  
make you feel welcome here,  
Friendly smiles, affectionate hello's and a  
heart full of good Cheer.

Norma G. Christie ([Rapid City Anthology](#), Compascor)

ANTLERS AGAINST THE SKY  
FIRE ON THE HILLS

The deer were bounding like blown leaves  
Under the smoke in front of the roaring wave of the brush-fire;  
I thought of the smaller lives that were caught.  
Beauty is not always lovely; the fire was beautiful, the terror  
Of the deer was beautiful; and when I returned  
Down the black slopes after the fire had gone by, an eagle  
Was perched on the jag of a burnt pine,

Insolent and gorged, cloaked in the folded storms of his  
shoulders.  
He had come from far off for the good hunting  
With fire for his beater to drive the game; the sky was  
merciless  
Blue, and the hills merciless black,  
the **sombre**-feathered great bird sleepily merciless between  
them.  
I thought, painfully, but the whole mind,  
The destruction that brings an eagle from heaven is better  
than mercy.

Robinson Jeffers ([Poetry of our Time](#), Macmillan)

WARREN PRYOR

When every pencil meant a sacrifice  
his parents boarded him at school in town,  
slaving to free him from the stony fields,  
the **meagre** acreage that bore them down.

They blushed with pride when, at his graduation,  
they watched him picking up the slender scroll,  
his passport from the years of brutal toil  
and lonely patience in a barren hole.

When he went in the Bank their cups ran over.  
They **marvelled** how he wore a milk-white shirt  
work days and jeans on Sundays. He was saved  
from their thistle-strewn farm and its red dirt.

**And** he said nothing. Hard and serious  
like a young bear inside his teller's cage,  
his axe-hewn hands upon the paper bills  
aching with empty strength and throttled rage.

Alden Nowlan (Connections 3 – Discovering, Gage Publishing)

Volume 1, Page 167

FROM THE SHORE

A lone gray bird,  
Dim-dipping, far-flying,  
Alone in the shadows and grandeurs and tumults  
Of night and the sea  
And the stars and storms.

Out over the darkness it wavers and hovers,  
Out into the gloom it swings and batters,  
Out into the wind and the rain and the vast,  
Out into the pit of a great black world,  
Where fogs are at battle, **sky-driven, sea-blown,**  
Love of mist and rapture of flight,  
Glories of chance and hazards of death  
On its eager and palpitant wings.

Out into the deep of the great dark world,  
Beyond the long borders where foam and drift  
Of the sundering waves are lost and gone  
On the tides that **plunge** and rear and crumble.

Carl Sandburg (Poetry for Young People, Scholastic)

ALL ABOARD

a distant whistle blows  
through the long tunnel  
of memory

feel the shuttle-sway  
steel wheels on steel tracks  
clickety clack  
throbs a pulse  
that matches  
my own

conductor arranges seats  
for a 3AM village stop  
never a porter to answer  
a silent bell  
for a middle-of-the-night  
assist

landscape moves by windows  
a real – too – real film  
running sideways  
eye-balled from padded seats  
that face  
where we've been

observation car sees  
grey-green foothills grey-purple  
mountains  
approach at clickety clack speed

burrowing tunnels spill  
new life – new scenes  
trestles cross  
vicious torrents  
300 feet below - stop  
the heart in the throat

the ocean larger  
much larger than Lake Winnipeg  
not nearly  
as calm

Vancouver  
next stop  
end of the line

mountains to the east  
ocean to the west  
and I claustrophobic  
breathe in the coast  
long  
for the prairie flat-lands  
soon too soon  
the last spike  
is driven in the heart  
of Via

TOO HOT TO SLEEP

He was sleeping when bear  
came down from the mountain  
by the water trap  
after cleaning the screen  
of branches and gravel

He fell asleep, a hot june morning  
above Wapta Lake, the Kicking Horse Pass  
When Muskwa came down without a sound  
and snuffed at his jeans

Who's this asleep on my mountain?

It's my friend Birnie asleep I said  
(in my head)  
I didn't hear you coming bear  
I was dozing, I looked up  
and there you were

You never know said Bear  
just where the wind will lead me  
when I'll be around  
or what beat I'm hunting on

and sniffed at Birnie's collar  
at his ear, which he licked tentatively  
causing Birnie to moan softly

Nothing doing here he said, nothing doing

"We were just going bear," I said quietly  
edging backwards

Don't move too quickly will you, said Bear  
when you move, or better still  
don't move at all

Are you her often, are you coming again?  
he asked, flipping over a stone  
licking delicately the underside  
"No," I said. good he said, that's good.

I just came down from the pass  
the wind blowing up my nose  
to see who was sleeping on my mountain  
he said, and sniffed at Birnie's armpit  
Whoosh whoosh he snorted

and tuned away, clattered down the creek  
popping his teeth, his hackles up  
Went out of sight  
around the shoulder of Mount Hector

as Birnie woke rubbing his eyes  
"Too hot to sleep he said." Yeah.

Sid Marty (Signatures: Poems of Canada Two, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

“So over the mountains and over the plains,  
Into the muskeg and into the rain.  
Up the Saint Lawrence all the way to Gaspé,  
Swingin’ our hammers and drawin’ our pay,  
Layin’ ‘em in and tyin’ ‘em down,  
Away to the bunkhouse and into the town,  
A dollar a day and a place for my head  
A drink to the living, a toast to the dead!”

“Oh, the song of the future has been sung,  
All the battles have been won,  
On the mountain tops we stand,  
All the world at our command.  
We have opened up the soil  
With our teardrops—  
And our toil.”

For there was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not  
run,  
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun,  
Long before the white man and long before the wheel,  
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real  
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real.  
And many are the dead men,  
Too silent  
To be real.

Gordon **Lightfoot** (Sunburst, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

THE DARK STAG

A startled stag, the blue-grey Night,  
 Leaps down beyond black pines.  
 Behind—a length of yellow light—  
 The hunter's arrow shines:  
 His moccasins are stained with red,  
 He bends upon his knee,  
 From covering peaks his shafts are sped,  
 The blue mists plume his mighty head,—  
 Well may the swift Night flee!

The pale, pale Moon, a snow-white doe,  
 Bounds by his dappled flank:  
 They beat the stars down as they go,  
 Like wood-bells growing rank.  
 The winds lift dewlaps from the ground,  
 Leap from the quaking reeds;  
 Their hoarse bays shake the forests round,  
 With keen cries on the track they bound,—  
 Swift, swift the dark stag speeds!

Away! his white doe, far behind,  
 Lies wounded on the plain;  
 Yells at his flank the nimblest wind,  
 His large tears fall in rain:  
 Like lily-pads, small clouds grow white  
 About his darkling way;  
 From his bald nest upon the height  
 The red-eyed eagle sees his flight;  
 He falters, turns, the antlered Night,—  
 The dark stag stands at bay!

His feet are in the waves of space;  
 His antlers broad and dun  
 He lowers; he turns his velvet face  
 To front the hunter, Sun;  
 He stamps the liliated clouds, and high  
 His branches fill the west.  
 The lean stork sails across the sky,  
 The shy loon shrieks to see him die,  
 The winds leap at his breast.

Roar the rent lakes as thro' the wave  
 Their silver warriors plunge,  
 As vaults from core of crystal cave  
 The strong, fierce muskallunge;  
 Red torches of the sumach glare,  
 Fall's council-fires are lit;  
 The bittern, squaw-like, scolds the air;  
 The wild duck splashes loudly where  
 The rustling rice-spears knit.

Shaft after shaft the red Sun speeds:  
 Rent the stag's dappled side,  
 His breast, fanged by the shrill winds, bleeds,  
 He staggers on the tide;  
 He feels the hungry waves of space  
 Rush at him high and blue;  
 Their white spray smites his dusky face,  
 Swifter the Sun's fierce arrows race  
 And pierce his stout heart thro'.

His antlers fall; once more he spurns  
 The hoarse hounds of the day;  
 His blood upon the crisp blue burns,  
 Reddens the mounting spray;  
 His branches smite the wave—with cries  
 The loud winds pause and flag—  
 He sinks in space—red glow the skies,  
 The brown earth crimson as he dies,  
 The strong and dusky stag.

A DESCRIPTION OF LOVE

Now what is love? I pray thee, tell.  
It is that fountain and that well,  
Where pleasure and repentance dwell.  
It is perhaps that sauncing bell,  
That tolls all in to heaven or hell:  
And this is love, as I hear tell.

Yet what is love? I pray thee say.  
It is a work on holy-day;  
It is December matched with May;  
When lusty bloods, in fresh array,  
Hear ten months after of the play:  
And this is love, as I hear say.

Yet what is love? I pray thee sayn.  
It is a sunshine mixed with rain;  
It is a tooth-ache, or like pain;  
It is a game where none doth gain;  
The lass saith no, and would full fain:  
And this is love, as I hear sayn.

Yet what is love? I pray thee say.  
It is a yea, it is a nay,  
A pretty kind of sporting fray;  
It is a thing will soon away;  
Then take the vantage while you may:  
And this is love, as I hear say.

Yet what is love? I pray thee show.  
A thing that creeps, it cannot go;  
A prize that passeth to and fro;  
A thing for one, a thing for mo;  
And he that proves must find it so:  
And this is love, sweet friend, I trow.

Sir Walter Raleigh (Oxford Book of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Verse, Oxford University Press)

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,  
 Half a league onward,  
 All in the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.  
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!  
 Charge for the guns!" he said:  
 Into the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
 Was there a man dismayed?  
 Not tho' the soldiers knew  
 Some one had blundered:  
 Theirs not to make reply,  
 Theirs not to reason why,  
 Theirs but to do and die:  
 Into the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon in front of them  
 Volleyed and thunder'd;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 Boldly they rode and well,  
 Into the jaws of Death,  
 Into the mouth of Hell,  
 Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabers bare,  
 Flashed as they turned in air,  
 Sab'ring the gunners there,  
 Charging an army, while  
 All the world wondered:  
 Plunged in the battery smoke,  
 Right through the line they broke;  
 Cossack and Russian  
 Reeled from the **sabre**-stroke  
 Shattered and sundered.  
 Then they rode back, but not-  
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
 Volleyed and thundered;  
 Stormed at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
 Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?  
 Oh, the wild charge they made!  
 All the world wondered.  
 Honor the charge they made!  
 Honor the Light Brigade,  
 Noble Six Hundred!

Alfred Lord Tennyson (Norton Anthology of English Literature, W.W. Norton & Co.)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
 And through the field the road runs by  
     To many-tower'd Camelot;  
 And up and down the people go,  
 Gazing where the lilies blow  
 Round an island there below.  
     The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
 Little breezes dusk and shiver  
 Through the wave that runs for ever  
 By the island in the river  
     Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle embowers  
     The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
 By slow horses; and unhail'd  
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
     Skimming down to Camelot:  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
     The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to tower'd Camelot:  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
     Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 And abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes through the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often through the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, went to Camelot:  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed;—  
 "I am half sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Lord Tennyson (Words on Wings I, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

THE TYGER

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

In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare **seize** the fire?

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?

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

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?

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

William Blake (Themes on the Journey, Nelson Canada)

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I AM NOT SAYING

In body – just inches apart  
But in our minds, who knows?  
Are we united? Are your thoughts my thoughts?  
Do you feel what I feel?  
Constantly I wonder.  
Please hear what I am not saying.

How do I tell you?  
With an earnest look, with pleading eyes  
I pour my heart **out** to you.  
My eyes reflect the innermost feelings of my heart  
Can you not see through them?  
Please hear what I am not saying.

How can one go on not knowing?  
Not being able to feel for someone.  
That need must be fulfilled.  
Is there a gleam of hope behind that wry smile?  
Or must one search elsewhere, settle for less?  
Oh, please hear what I am not saying.

I begin to feel the dreaded fear of defeat  
Am I rejected, not wanted, or just not recognized?  
Am I defeated before I have risen up?  
Where do I begin?  
Oh, please hear what I am not saying.

Teardrops from heaven fall softly against the window  
My world is lonely, desolate and dark  
I feel abandoned, I'm lost and alone  
A feeling of emptiness creeps over me.  
- Tell me, where do I stand?  
- Please hear what I am not saying.

Brenda Stewart (It's Not Always a Game, All About Us Books)

THE GAME

So many **conversations** between  
the tall grass and the wind.  
A child hides in that sound,  
hunched small  
as a rabbit, knees tucked  
to her chest, head on knees,  
yet she's not asleep.

She is waiting with a patience  
I had long forgotten,  
hair wild with grass seeds,  
skin silvery with dust.

It was my brother's game.  
He was the one who counted,  
and I, seven years younger,  
the one who hid.

When I ran from the yard,  
he found his gang of friends  
and played kick-the-can  
or caught soft spotted frogs  
at the creek so summer-slow,  
who can blame him?

As darkness fell,  
from the kitchen door  
someone always called my name.  
He was there before me  
at the supper table;  
milk in his glass  
and along his upper lip  
glowing like moonlight.  
*You're so good at that, he'd say,  
I couldn't find you.*

Now I wade through hip-high bearded grass  
to where she sits so still,  
lay my larger hand  
upon her shoulder.

Above the wind I say,  
*You're it,*  
then kneel beside her  
and with the patience  
that has lived so long in this body  
clean the dirt from her nose and mouth,  
separate the golden speargrass from her hair.

A KITE IS A VICTIM

A kite is a victim you are sure of.  
You love it because it pulls  
gentle enough to call you master,  
strong enough to call you fool;  
because it lives  
like a desperate trained falcon  
in the high sweet air,  
and you can always haul it down  
to tame it in your drawer.

A kite is a fish you have already caught  
in a pool where no fish come,  
so you play him carefully and long,  
and hope he won't give up,  
or the wind die down.

A kite is the last poem you've written;  
so you give it to the wind,  
but you don't let it go  
until someone finds you  
something **else** to do.

A kite is a contract of glory  
that must be made with the sun,  
so you make friends with the field  
the river and the wind,  
then you pray the whole cold night before  
under the traveling cordless moon,  
to make you worthy and lyric and pure.

Leonard Cohen (Tribal Drums, McGraw-Hill)

## WOODED PATHS

I enter the dark green, cool shade of the woods. A little way off to the side a sparkling stream tinkles and cascades over the pebbles on its sandy bed. Lush green moss grows abundantly at the edge.

The coolness **envelops** me as I stroll down the path. Sunlight filters through the dense leaves to reach the ground and halo the flowers.

The fragrant smell of spring and flowers is in the air blending with the smell of pine needles. I stoop to kneel on the emerald green grass. There I pick an azure blue-bell and inhale its tender perfume of dew, spring and its own sweet scent.

The birch trees look like young girls talking with young men. Their buds are like tight curls in their hair and their waving branches are their gesticulating arms.

I pick lilies and lilacs and inhale their virginal fragrance. I bind up the flowers and their scent with my hair ribbon.

There on the wooded paths all cares of the world are lost in the delicate perfume of flowers, the potpourri of spring and the calm, cool air of the woods. Reluctantly I re-enter the real world from my haven.

Christianne Rioux ([Rapid City Anthology](#), Compascor Manitoba)

