

My Shadow – by Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.

He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

The Sound Collector - by Roger McGough

A stranger called this morning
Dressed all in black and grey
Put every sound into a bag
And carried them away

The whistling of the kettle
The turning of the lock
The purring of the kitten
The ticking of the clock

The popping of the toaster
The crunching of the flakes
When you spread the marmalade
The scraping noise it makes

The hissing of the frying pan
The ticking of the grill
The bubbling of the bathtub
As it starts to fill

The drumming of the raindrops
On the windowpane
When you do the washing up
The gurgle of the drain

The crying of the baby
The squeaking of the chair
The swishing of the curtain
The creaking of the stair

A stranger called this morning
He didn't leave his name
Left us only silence
Life will never be the same.

Dear Mum- by Brian Pattern

Dear Mum,
While you were out
A cup went and broke itself,
A crack appeared in the blue vase
Your great-great grandad
Brought back from Mr Ming in China.
Somehow, without me even turning on the tap,
The sink mysteriously overflowed.
A strange jam-stain,
About the size of a boy's hand,
Appeared on the kitchen wall.
I don't think we will ever discover
Exactly how the cat
Managed to turn on the washing-machine
(especially from the inside),
or how Sis's pet rabbit went and mistook
the waste-disposal unit for a burrow.
I can tell you I was scared when,
As if by magic,
A series of muddy footprints
Appeared on the new white carpet.
I was being good
(honest)
but I think the house is haunted so,
knowing you're going to have a fit,
I've gone over to Gran's for a bit.

I Had A Hippopotamus - by Patrick Barrington

I had a Hippopotamus, I kept him in a shed
 And fed him upon vitamins and vegetable bread
 I made him my companion on many cheery walks
 And had his portrait done by a celebrity in chalk

His charming eccentricities were known on every side
 The creatures' popularity was wonderfully wide
 He frolocked with the Rector in a dozen friendly tussles
 Who could not but remark on his hippopotamuscles

If he should be affected by depression or the dumps
 By hippopotameasles or the hippopotamumps
 I never knew a particle of peace 'till it was plain
 He was hippopotamasticating properly again

I had a Hippopotamus, I loved him as a friend
 But beautiful relationships are bound to have an end
 Time takes alas! our joys from us and rids us of our blisses
 My hippopotamus turned out to be a hippopotamisses

My house keeper regarded him with jaundice in her eye
 She did not want a colony of hippotami
 She borrowed a machine gun from from her soldier nephew, Percy
 And showed my hippopotamus no hippopotamercy

My house now lacks that glamour that the charming creature gave
 The garage where I kept him is now as silent as the grave
 No longer he displays among the motor tyres and spanners
 His hippopomastery of hippopotamanners

No longer now he gambols in the orchards in the spring
 No longer do I lead him through the village on a string
 No longer in the morning does the neighbourhood rejoice
 To his hippopotamusically-modulated voice.

I had a hippopotamus but nothing upon earth
 Is constant in its happines or lasting in its mirth
 No joy that life can give me can be strong enough to smother
 My sorrow for that might-have-been-a-hippopota-mother

Adventures of Isabel - by Ogden Nash

Isabel met an enormous bear,
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't care;
 The bear was hungry, the bear was ravenous,
 The bear's big mouth was cruel and cavernous.
 The bear said, Isabel, glad to meet you,
 How do, Isabel, now I'll eat you!
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry. Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
 She washed her hands and she straightened her hair up,
 Then Isabel quietly ate the bear up.

Once in a night as black as pitch
 Isabel met a wicked old witch.
 The witch's face was cross and wrinkled,
 The witch's gums with teeth were sprinkled.
 Ho, ho, Isabel! the old witch crowed,
 I'll turn you into an ugly toad!
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry, Isabel didn't scream or scurry,
 She showed no rage and she showed no rancor,
 But she turned the witch into milk and drank her.

Isabel met a hideous giant,
 Isabel continued self reliant.
 The giant was hairy, the giant was horrid,
 He had one eye in the middle of his forehead.
 Good morning, Isabel, the giant said,
 I'll grind your bones to make my bread.
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry, Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
 She nibbled the zwieback that she always fed off,
 And when it was gone, she cut the giant's head off.

Isabel met a troublesome doctor,
 He punched and he poked till he really shocked her.
 The doctor's talk was of coughs and chills
 And the doctor's satchel bulged with pills.
 The doctor said unto Isabel,
 Swallow this, it will make you well.
 Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry, Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
 She took those pills from the pill concocter,
 And Isabel calmly cured the doctor.