

# Poems: The Magic of Childhood

## The Land of Counterpane By Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was sick and lay a-bed,  
I had two pillows at my head,  
And all my toys beside me lay,  
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain,  
The pleasant land of counterpane.

## maggie and milly and molly and may

by E. E. Cummings

maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach(to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her  
troubles,and

milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing  
bubbles:and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose(like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

## Sick

by Shel Silverstein

"I cannot go to school today,"  
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.  
"I have the measles and the mumps,  
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.  
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,  
I'm going blind in my right eye.  
My tonsils are as big as rocks,  
I've counted sixteen chicken pox  
And there's one more--that's seventeen,  
And don't you think my face looks green?  
My leg is cut--my eyes are blue--  
it might be instamatic flu.  
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,  
I'm sure that my left leg is broke--  
My hip hurts when I move my chin,  
My belly button's caving in,  
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,  
My 'pendix pains each time it rains.  
My nose is cold, my toes are numb.  
I have a sliver in my thumb.  
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,  
I hardly whisper when I speak.  
My tongue is filling up my mouth,  
I think my hair is falling out.  
My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,  
My temperature is one-o-eight.  
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,  
There is a hole inside my ear.  
I have a hangnail, and my heart is--what?  
What's that? What's that you say?  
You say today is. . .Saturday?  
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

## From A Very Little Sphinx By Edna St. Vincent Millay

Come along in then, little girl!  
Or else stay out!  
But in the open door she stands,  
And bites her lip and twists her hands,  
And stares upon me, trouble-eyed;  
'Mother,' she says, 'I can't decide!'

## **The Rainbow Fairies**

by Lizzie M. Hadley

Two little clouds one summer's day  
Went flying through the sky.  
They went so fast they bumped their heads,  
And both began to cry.

Old Father Sun look out and said,  
"Oh, never mind my dears,  
I'll send my little fairy folk  
To dry your falling tears."

One fairy came in violet,  
And one in indigo,  
In bleu, green, yellow, orange, red, --  
They made a pretty row.

They wiped the cloud tears all away,  
And then, from out the sky,  
Upon a line the sunbeams made  
They hung their gowns to dry.

## **The Swing**

by Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
River and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown—  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!

## **Gumeye Ball**

by Shel Silverstein

There's an eyeball in the gumball machine,  
Right there between the red and the green,  
Lookin' at me as if to say,  
You don't need anymore gum today.

## **Tree House**

by Shel Silverstein

A tree house, a free house,  
A secret you and me house  
A high up in the leafy branches  
Cozy as can be house.

A street house, a neat house,  
Be sure and wipe your feet house  
Is not my kind of house at all --  
Let's go live in a tree house.

## **Block City**

by Robert Louis Stevenson

What are you able to build with your blocks?  
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.  
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,  
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,  
There I'll establish a city for me:  
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,  
And a harbor as well where my vessels may  
ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,  
A sort of a tower on top of it all,  
And steps coming down in an orderly way  
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:  
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!  
And see on the steps of my palace, the kings  
Coming and going with presents and things!