THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER – FIRST TIME EVER  Age 6 years

**CHOICE A**  UPSIDE DOWN by Aileen Fisher

It’s funny how beetles and creatures like that can walk upside down as well as walk flat:

They crawl on a ceiling and climb on a wall without any practice or trouble at all,

While I have been trying for a year (maybe more) and still I can’t stand with my head on the floor.

**CHOICE B**  SANTA CLAWS by Julia Donaldson

I don’t know why they’re blaming me When all I did was climb a tree And bat a shiny silver ball. How could I know the tree would fall? And when those silly lights went out They didn’t have to scream and shout And turf me out and shut the door. Now no one loves me any more. I’m in the kitchen by myself. But wait! What’s on the high-up shelf? A lovely turkey, big and fat! How nice! They do still love their cat.
THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER  Age 7 years

**CHOICE A**  A SILLY THING TO DO by Peter Dixon

When Father pulled a cracker
With silly Uncle Joe,
They pulled and pulled and struggled
  - then Father just let go!

Poor Uncle Joe went flying,
He flew into the street
And entered into orbit
  - still sitting in his seat!

You’ll see him every Christmas,
He rises in the West.
Just east of Mars and Saturn
is where you’ll see him best . .

He circles earth twice monthly.
So give poor Joe a thought,
When you pull your Christmas crackers
And drink your Christmas port.

**CHOICE B**  THE SWEET by Tony Bradman

I’ve found a sweet
In my jeans’ pocket
It could be a toffee
Or what’s left
Of a sherbet rocket,

It’s all covered
In fluff and other stuff
And stuck to some stones
I found in the street
But it’s still a sweet.

Scrape off the fluff
And the slime
And all that stuff
Till it looks almost clean

And just
Pop it in.
**CHOICE A**

MR. GRUMPLEDUMP’S SONG by Shel Silverstein

Everything’s wrong,  
Days are too long,  
Sunshine’s too hot,  
Wind is too strong.  
Clouds are too fluffy,  
Grass is too green,  
Ground is too dusty,  
Sheets are too clean.  
Stars are too twinkly,  
Moon is too high,  
Water’s too drippy,  
Sand is too dry.  
Rocks are too heavy,  
Feathers too light,  
Kids are too noisy,  
Shoes are too tight.  
Folks are too happy,  
Singin their songs.  
Why can’t they see it?  
Everything’s wrong.
**CHOICE A**  HELLO, MRS MORLEY by Jan Dean

Hello, Mrs Morley, as you can see  
There’s nobody home now apart from me.  
And I can’t ask you in for a nice cup of tea  
Because Mummy is hiding behind the settee,  
And she’s not coming out – whatever I say –  
Until she’s quite sure that you’ve gone away.

One thing, Mrs Morley, before you go,  
There’s something I really would like to know –  
Just what is a name-dropping, snooty-nosed cat?  
Next door have a Siamese – is it like that?

**CHOICE B**  WATCH YOUR TEACHER CAREFULLY by David Harmer

It happened in school last week  
when everything seemed fine  
assembly, break, science and spelling  
three twelves are four times nine.

But then I noticed my teacher  
scratching the skin from her cheek  
a forked tongue flicked from her lips  
her nose hooked into a beak.

Her twenty arms grew longer  
they ended in terrible claws  
by now she was orange and yellow and green  
with crunching great teeth in her jaws.

Her twenty eyes were upon me  
as I ran from the room for the Head  
got to his office, burst through the door  
met a bloodsucking alien instead.

Somehow I got to the staffroom  
the doorknob was dripping with slime  
inside were seven hideous things  
who thought I was dinner-time

I made my escape through a window  
just then a roaring sound  
knocked me over flat on my face  
as the whole school left the ground.

Powerful rockets pushed it  
back into the darkest space  
all I have left are the nightmares  
And these feather that grow on my face.
Dear Santa, here’s my Christmas list.
I hope you’ll bring it all.
I’ve only asked for gifts my parents can’t find at the mall.

I’d like to have a UFO,
with aliens inside,
And maybe a Tyrannosaurus Rex that I could ride.

A ninety-nine foot robot is a present I could use.
I’ll also need a time machine, and rocket-powered shoes.

Please bring a gentle genie
who will grant my every wish, and don’t forget a wizard’s wand and, yes, a talking fish.

Of course, I’ll need a unicorn, and won’t you please provide a dragon, and a castle in the English countryside.

Of course, the weight of all these things might cause your sleigh to crash, If that’s the case, dear Santa, please feel free to just bring cash.
I said, The dog wants a walk.

Mum said to Dad, It’s your turn.
Dad said, I always walk the dog.
Mum said, Well I walked her this morning.
Dad said, She’s your dog.
I didn’t want a dog in the first place.

Mum said, It’s your turn.

Dad stood up and threw the remote control
At the pot plant.
Dad said, I’m going down the pub.
Mum said, Take the dog.

Dad shouted, No way!
Mum shouted, You’re going nowhere!

I grabbed Judy’s lead
And we both bolted out the back door.

The stars were shining like diamonds.
Judy sniffed at a hedgehog, rolled up in a ball.
She ate a discarded kebab on the pavement.
She tried to chase a cat that ran up a tree.

Walking the dog
Seems like fun to me.
THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER  Age 12 to 14

CHOICE A  by Wendy Cope

I am in a tremendous huff-
Really, really bad.
It isn’t an ordinary huff –
It’s one of the best I’ve had.

I plan to keep it up for a month
Or maybe for a year
And you needn’t think you can make me smile
Or talk to you.  No fear.

I can do without you and her and them –
Too late to make amends.
I’ll think some deep thoughts on my own for a while,
Then find some better friends.

And they’ll be wise and kind and good
And bright enough to see
That they should behave with proper respect
Towards somebody like me.

I do like being in a huff –
Cold fury is so heady.
I’ve been like this for half an hour
And it’s cheered me up already.

Perhaps I’ll give them another chance,
Now I’m feeling stronger
But they’d better watch out – my next big huff
Could last much, much, much longer.
THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER  Age 12 to 14

CHOICE B  THE SPARROWS’ CHORUS by Elizabeth Jennings

How often you forget about us! We are
About all through the year.
Our feathers are drab, beside other birds we appear
Nonentities, no fashion parades for us.
Nobody makes a fuss
Of us and really we don’t care.
At least, not too much.
But we are faithful, whatever the weather we stay
Among you. And don’t think we’re ungrateful for the food
Some of you like to toss.
We need it badly. We can lose half our weight
On an icy night. We depend a lot on you.

Often, we have to admit, we wish we wore
Flamboyant colours. A yellow, a red, a blue.
The robin is lucky and all the tits are too.
But perhaps our smallness is noticeable. Beside
A starling or blackbird we are almost invisible
But don’t forget we are here,
Domestic creatures, never flying far.
Just to exist through an English climate is
Remarkable.
It’s almost a miracle simply that we are.
THE SABEY TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Girls Age 6 to 7

**CHOICE A**  WIND ON THE HILL by A. A. Milne

No one can tell me,
Nobody knows,
Where the wind comes from,
Where the wind goes.

It’s flying from somewhere
As fast as it can.
I couldn’t keep up with it,
Not if I ran.

But if I stopped holding
The string of my kite,
It would blow with the wind
For a day and a night.

And then when I found it,
Wherever it blew,
I should know that the wind
Had been going there too.

So then I could tell them
Where the wind goes . . .
But where the wind comes from
Nobody knows.

**CHOICE B**  MY DADDY DANCES TAPSTEP by Peter Dixon

Roger’s Daddy’s clever
Daisy’s flies a plane
Michael’s does computers
And has a house in Spain.
Lucy’s goes to London
He stays there every week . . .
    But my Daddy has an earring
    and lovely dancing feet.

He hasn’t got a briefcase
He hasn’t got a phone
He hasn’t got a mortgage
And we haven’t got a home.
He hasn’t got a fax machine
We haven’t got a car
    But he can dance and fiddle
    And my Daddy is
    A Star.
THE SABEY TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Girls Age 8 to 9

**CHOICE A**  NATIVITY PLAY by Peter Dixon

This year . . .
This year can I be Herod?
This year, can I be him?
A wise man
or a Joseph?
An inn man
or a king?

This year . . .
can I be famous?
This year, can I be best?
Bear a crown of silver
and wear a golden vest?

This year . . .
can I be starlight?
This year, can I stand out?
. . . feel the swish of curtains
and hear the front row shout
‘Hurrah’ for good old Ronny
he brings a gift of gold
head afire with tinsel.
‘The Greatest Story Told...’
‘Hurrah for good old Herod!’
and shepherds from afar.

So –
Don’t make me a palm tree
And can I be -
    a Star?
Now a young porcupine
Makes a passable pet
Though he sneezes and snorts
If his prickles get wet.

So bathe him with caution
And dry him with care,
Shampoo well his whiskers
And massage his hair.

He’s tender and loving
A fair dinkum friend
Whose sweet disposition
I well recommend.

There’s no need to sing him
Asleep of a night,
Jut tell him a story
And tuck him in tight.

He’ll scare away lap-dogs,
Cockroaches and rats,
And frighten the life out
Of unwary cats.

He likes pickled parsnips,
Baked bananas and bread;
But one word of warning –
Keep him out of your bed!
"Flies taste with their feet."
They said on T.V.

I thought I’d give it a try
And walked barefoot
On the early morning lawn.

I was surprised to find
That I could make distinctions
Even with my eyes shut.

Green blades on young grass
Were juicy like coarse chopped spinach
And thistle points were hot pin-pricks
Of grains of pepper.

Buttercups were a disappointment
So many shiny sweet wrappings,
All colour and no flavour.
And daisies kept their heads down
Not giving much away

But I really enjoyed the moss.
Full of nice chewy but gentle scrunchiness.

Dad said my brain needed testing.
So I stood on my head.
But that didn’t work.
With a label on my blazer
And a suitcase in my hand,
My gas mask slung across me,
Very frightened here I stand.

I can hear some children crying,
Others laughing, but not I,
For I’m waiting very quietly,
And feeling small and shy.

We’ve travelled on a chugging rain,
We’ve travelled on a bus,
And now we’re lined up in the street,
And told we mustn’t fuss.

And the teachers study names on lists,
And knock upon each door,
‘Did you say you’d have one little girl?’
and ‘Could you have one more?’

I haven’t got a sister,
And I haven’t got a brother,
And that is why they take me out
The first of any other.

But at tea-time Billy Brown’s still there,
The twins are at his side,
They’ve got very dirty faces,
Where the tears have streaked and dried.

And I have the strangest feeling,
When I’m grown up, I’ll remember,
This year of 1939
The sad month of September.

And I’ll think about the night-time,
When my mum was far away,
And hope that other children
Never know so long a day.
'Never,’ said my father.
‘Never cut a pomegranate through the heart. It will weep blood.
Treat it delicately, with respect.

Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.
This is a magic fruit, so when you split it open, be prepared for the jewels of the world to tumble out, more precious than garnets, more lustrous than rubies, lit as if from inside.
Each jewel contains a living seed.
Separate one crystal.
Hold it up to catch the light.
Inside is a whole universe.
No common jewel can give you this.’

Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces of pomegranate seeds.
The juice spurted out, bright crimson, and stained my fingers, then my mouth.

I didn’t mind. The juice tasted of gardens I had never seen, voluptuous with myrtle, lemon, jasmine, and alive with parrots’ wings.

The pomegranate reminded me that somewhere I had another home.
'Why can’t you tidy your room?’ they cry,
Millions of mothers who fret round the land,
’It’s a horrible mess, I’ve never seen worse’,
- Mothers who don’t understand

They don’t understand how cosy it is
To have piles of books on the floor,
And knickers and socks making friends with the vest
Under the bed, where they like it best,
And notices pinned to the door.

They don’t understand why Kylie and Craig
Are smiling all over the walls,
And toffees and Chewys and dozens of Smarties
Are scattered about reminding of parties,
And jeans are rolled into balls.

They don’t understand why a good bed should be
All scrunched and friendly and gritty,
Why the bears and the paints and the toys are much less
Easy to find if there isn’t a mess –
To tidy would be a great pity.

They don’t understand the point of a desk
Is to balance the muddle quite high:
To leave the drawers open, grow mould on the drink,
It is very much easier, some people think,
Than explaining to mothers just why.

‘PLEASE can you tidy your room?’ they wail,
Millions of mothers who fret round the land:
‘What will you do when there’s no one to nag you?’
- Mothers who don’t understand.
CHOICE A
HOW I LEARNED TO SWEEP by Julia Alvarez

My mother never taught me sweeping . . .
One afternoon she found me watching
T.V. She eyed the dusty floor
boldly, and put a broom before
me, and said she’d like to be able
to eat her dinner off that table,
and nodded at my feet, then left.
I knew right off what she expected
And went at it. I stepped and swept;
the T.V. blared the news; I kept
my mind on what I had to do,
until in minutes, I was through.
Her floor was immaculate
as a just-washed dinner plate.
I waited for her to return
and turned to watch the President,
live from the White House, talk of war:
in the Far East our soldiers were
landing in their helicopters
into jungles their propellers
swept like weeds seen underwater
while perplexing shots were fired
from those beautiful green gardens
into which these dragonflies
filled with little men descended.
I got up and swept again
as they fell out of the sky.
I swept all the harder when
I watched a dozen of them die . . .
as if their dust fell through the screen
upon the floor I had just cleaned.
She came back and turned the dial;
The screen went dark. That’s beautiful,
she said, and ran her clean hand through
my hair, and on, over the window –
sill, coffee table, rocker, desk,
and held it up – - I held my breath - -
That’s beautiful, she said, impressed,
She hadn’t found a speck of death.
CHOICE B  THE PROPER STUDY by W S Slater

Seated before her window Mrs Jones
Described the passers-by in ringing tones.
“Look,” she would say, “the girl at Number Three
Has brought her latest boyfriend home to tea;
And, see, the woman at the upstairs flat
Has bought herself another summer hat.”
Her daughter Daphne, filled with deep disgust,
Expostulated “Mother, really must
You pry upon the neighbours? Don’t you know
Gossip is idle, empty-minded, low?”
And Mrs Jones would murmur “Fancy, dear!
There’s Mr Thompson going for his beer.”
Daphne, an earnest girl of twenty – three
Read Sociology for her degree
And every Saturday she would repair,
Armed with her tutor’s latest questionnaire,
To knock on doors, demanding “Are you wed?
Have you a child? A car? A double bed?”
Poor Mrs Jones would remonstrate each week,
“Daphne, I wonder how you have the cheek.
And then to call me nosey!” Daphne sighed.
“Oh, will you never understand?” she cried.
“Mere curiosity is one thing, Mother:
Social Analysis is quite another.”
**CHOICE A**  
**DEFEAT** by Roger McGough

Paint the goalposts black. Lower  
the corner flags and fly them at halfmast.  
Our team defeated and outclassed.

Weak in defence and attack. Our  
supporters openly break down and weep.  
Football legends, long dead, stir in their sleep.

Return the lions to their cages. Blow  
the final whistle and play ‘The Last Post’.  
Then raise your glass and drink a toast . .

To what might have been.

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**CHOICE B**  
**MY SISTER’S GETTING MARRIED** by Peter Dixon

My sister’s getting married  
And it’s awful news.  
My sister wants a page boy  
And it’s me she’s going to choose!  
She’s going to buy a satin suit  
With frills and lacy stuff,  
A soppy little jacket,  
With soppy little cuffs.

I’m gonna be a page boy!  
Please don’t tell my mates!  
Don’t tell ‘em where the church is,  
Don’t tell ‘em wedding dates.  
Oh please,  
Oh please don’t tell them!

I wish it wasn’t true  
My sister’s 27  
and I am 42!
THE PARSLOW TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Boys Age 8 to 9

**CHOICE A**  
THE AFRICAN LION by A E Housman

To meet a bad lad on the African waste  
Is a thing that a lion enjoys;  
But he rightly and strongly objects to the taste  
Of good and uneatable boys.

When he bites off a piece of a boy of that sort  
He spits it right out of his mouth,  
And retires with a loud and dissatisfied snort  
To the east, or the west, or the south.

So lads of good habits, on coming across  
A lion, need feel no alarm,  
For they know they are sure to escape with the loss  
Of a leg, or a head, or an arm.

**CHOICE B**  
I GOT OUT OF BED by Jack Prelutsky

I got out of bed,  
sensing something was strange,  
and swiftly discerned  
that I’d gone through a change.  
My smile in the mirror  
reflected a frown,  
the head on my shoulders  
had turned upside-down.

The mirror revealed  
that I wasn’t quite me,  
my eyes filled the space  
where my lips used to be.  
My upside-down ears  
seemed unwieldy and weird,  
and the hair on my head  
had the look of a beard.

If I should go out  
in the rain, I suppose  
that water would fill  
my unfortunate nose.  
The only advantage  
I find in my head,  
it’s taught me one lesson –  
don’t get out of bed.
Hello, Mrs Spinner,
Now, about your son, Sam.

First of all I must say
I’m sorry to hear about your Rottweiler
Sam says it’s been poorly
Well, the number of times it’s eaten Sam’s homework
I’m not surprised.
And then it gave Sam dog-flu and he was away
On the day that Brighton played Spurs in the cup
And it was a shame that he chewed Sam’s PE kit
What’s that?
You don’t have a Rottweiler?
You don’t even have a dog?
How strange.

By the way, Mrs Spinner,
May I congratulate your husband
On being chosen to represent England in the next Olympics
You must be very proud.
He’s a shot-putter, Sam says.
And Sammy tells me you’re a model.
And you’re in those bra commercials.
What’s that?
You have to be going?
You have something to say to Sammy?
Well, lovely to meet you at last.
Tell Sammy I’m looking forward to seeing him
Tomorrow.

Goodbye, Mrs Spinner.
Goodbye.
THE ENID LE FEUVRE CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys Age 10 to 11

**CHOICE B**

THE FEAR by Brian Moses

I am the footsteps that crackle on gravel
and the sudden chill that’s hard to explain.
I am the figure seen flitting through doorways
and the noisy rattle of a loose windowpane.

I am the scream that wakes you at night
with the thought, was it real or a dream?
I am the quickening thud of your heart
and the feeling things aren’t what they seem.

I am the slam of a door blown shut
when there isn’t even a breeze
and the total and absolute certainty
that you just heard someone sneeze.

I am the midnight visitor,
the knock when there’s no one there.
I am the ceiling creaking
and the soft footfall on your stair.

I am the shadows that dance on your wall
and the phantoms that float through your head.
And I am the fear that you feel each night
as you wriggle down deep in your bed.
THE ENID LE FEUVRE CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys Age 12 to 14

**CHOICE A**  IN FLANDERS FIELDS by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
    That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
    Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
    The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

**CHOICE B**  FIFTEEN, MAYBE SIXTEEN THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT by Judith Viorst

My pants could maybe fall down when I dive off the diving board.
My nose could maybe keep growing and never quit.
Miss Brearly could ask me to spell words like stomach and special.
    (Stumick and spechul?)
I could play tag all day and always be “it.”
Jay Spievack, who’s fourteen feet tall, could want to fight me.
Miss Brearly could ask me a question about Afghanistan.
    (Who’s Afghanistan?)
Somebody maybe could make me ride a horse.
My mother could maybe decide that I needed more liver.
My dad could decide that I needed less TV.
Miss Brearly could say that I have to write script and stop printing
    (I’m better at printing.)
Chris could decide to stop being friends with me.

The world could maybe come to an end on next Tuesday.
The ceiling could maybe come crashing on my head.
I maybe could run out of things for me to worry about.
And then I’d have to do my homework instead.
CHOICE A  THE SOLDIER by Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:
  That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
  Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
  Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
  Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
  And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
  In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

CHOICE B  ANTARTICA by Derek Mahon

“I am just going outside and may be some time.”
The others nod, pretending not to know.
At the heart of this ridiculous, the sublime.

He leaves them reading and begins to climb,
Goading his ghost into the howling snow;
He is just going outside and may be some time.

The tent recedes beneath its crust of rime
And frostbite is replaced by vertigo:
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

Need we consider if some sort of crime,
This numb self-sacrifice of the weakest? No,
He is just going outside and may be some time –

In fact, for ever. Solitary enzyme,
Thought the night yield no glimmer there will glow,
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.

He takes leave of the earthly pantomime
Quietly, knowing it is time to go.
“I am just going outside and may be some time.”
At the heart of the ridiculous, the sublime.
Ben turned eagerly from his family’s presents to his post.

He turned over the letters first, looking for his grandfather’s handwriting; but there was nothing. Then he looked at the writing on the two picture-postcards that had come for him – although you would hardly expect anything so important to be left to a postcard. There was nothing. Then he began to have the feeling that something might have gone wrong after all. He remembered, almost against his will, that his grandfather’s promise had been only a whisper and a nod, and that not all promises are kept, anyway.

He turned to the parcels, and at once saw his grandfather’s handwriting on a small flat one. Then he knew for certain that something was wrong. They would hardly send him an ordinary birthday present as well as one so special as a dog. There was only one explanation: they were sending him an ordinary present **instead of** the dog.

“Open it, Ben,” said his mother; and his father reminded him, “Use your new knife on the string, boy.” Ben never noticed the sharpness of the Sheffield steel as he cut the string round the parcel and then unfolded the wrapping-paper.

They had sent him a picture instead of a dog.
There was an island – a small, wooded island. A hill crowned the middle, and a little beach ran all around its edge like a rim around a hat.

Now, although Captain Balckpatch didn’t care for the sea, or lakes, or ponds, or puddles, or even little drips of water, he did like islands. As far as Captain Blackpatch knew there was only one reason for there being an island. Islands were there so that people could bury things on them. And the only things that people buried were valuable things – like treasure.

Looking across the shining water, Blackpatch could see people on the distant island. What were they doing? Surely they were digging? DIGGING! He screwed up his eyes and squinted hard, trying to focus them more clearly. The big question was: were the diggers putting something in, or taking something out?

A little boy ran past, stopped, came back slowly and then stood and stared at the Captain. ‘Are you a real pirate?’ he asked. Blackpatch glared down at him fiercely.

‘I might be. Are those real binoculars hanging round your neck?’ The boy nodded. ‘In that case, I’m a real pirate and if you don’t lend them to me I’ll chop you up and make you into sausages.'
The hare was the handsomest hare in the world
With a white fluffy bobtail and whiskers that curled.
He lived in a field and his favourite sport was
Leapfrogging over the back of the tortoise.
_The hare went_ a-loping, a-lolloping, a-leaping.
_The tortoise_ went crawling, a-creaking, a-creeping.

The hare claimed that no one was faster than he.
He asked all the animals, ‘Who’ll race with me?’
The tortoise said, ‘I will!’ The hare roared with laughter.
‘Race with a tortoise? Why, what could be dafter?
_I’ll go_ a-loping, a-lolloping, a-leaping.
_You’ll go_ a-crawling, a-creaking, a-creeping.’

They mapped out a course and they fixed a day.
It’s one two three go! And the hare is away,
Whisking his bobtail and frisking and gambolling.
Way back behind him the tortoise is ambling.
_The hare goes_ a-loping, a-lolloping, a-leaping.
_The tortoise comes_ crawling, a-creaking, a-creeping.

The hare is halfway when he stretches and blinks.
‘I’ve nothing to lose if I snatch forty winks.’
His head drops, his eyes close, and soon he is slumbering.
Inching towards him the tortoise is lumbering.
_The hare is_ a-snoring, a-snoozing, a-sleeping
_The tortoise comes_ crawling, a-creaking, a-creeping.

The hare wakes and starts: is it real or a ghost?
The tortoise is nearing the finishing post.
The hare helter-skelters but just doesn’t do it.
Slowcoach the tortoise has beaten him to it.
_The hare lost_ a-snoring, a-snoozing, a-sleeping
_The tortoise won_ crawling, a-creaking, a-creeping.
CHOICE B  THE SEA by James Reeves

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And ‘Bones, bones, bones, bones!’
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and sniffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.
Under the cold ash-peak, 
under a crown of fitful flowers, 
he sleeps, 

Under the silent crust, 
welded and twisted from ancient meanders 
and bitter lakes of fluid rock, 
he sleeps. 

Coiled, black hissing, 
curled, dark, hissing, 
waiting while time whirls slowly past. 

(A thousand years 
in the blink of a slow stone eye.) 

Rain washes his back, 
smoothing mud into the crevices, 
helping grass to dress him in summer clothing. 

Trees clutch him with fingered roots, 
But never deep enough to spoil his sleep, 
Never deep enough to ruffle his hot dreams. 

But once upon a time, just as a soft summer 
is folding itself into autumn, 
his hiss becomes a roar, 
His skin cracks and stretches, 
His black jaws open in a vast and fiery yawn. 

The surprised grass crackles and blackens, 
and floats away; 
Trees wave like torches and dissolve; 
His skin heaves and splits, 
folds and breaks 
as the snake swiftly rises, 
and tumbles and rumbles 
into the broken and burning valley. 

Up into the sky 
on wings that cover the sun, 
the black dragon flies.
Colonel Fazackerley Butterworth-Toast
Brought an old castle complete with a ghost,
But someone or other forgot to declare
To Colonel Fazackerley that the spectre was there.

On the very first evening, while waiting to dine,
The Colonel was taking a fine sherry wine,
When the ghost, with a furious flash and a flare,
Shot out of the chimney and shivered, ‘Beware!’

Colonel Fazackerley put down his glass
And said, ‘My dear fellow, that’s really first class!
I just can’t conceive how you do it at all.
I imagine you’re going to a Fancy Dress Ball?’

At this, the dread ghost gave a withering cry.
Said to the Colonel (his monocle firm in his eye),
‘Now just how you do it I wish I could think.
Do sit down and tell me, and please have a drink.’

The ghost in his phosphorous cloak gave a roar
And floated about between ceiling and floor.
He walked through a wall and returned through a pane
And backed up the chimney and came down again.

Said the Colonel, ‘With a laughter I’m feeling quite weak!’
(As trickles of merriment ran down his cheek).
‘My house-warming party I hope you won’t spurn.
You must say you’ll come and you’ll give us a turn!’

At this, the poor spectre – quite out of his wits –
Proceeded to shake himself almost to bits.
He rattled his chains and he clattered his bones
And he filled the whole castle with mumbles and groans.

But Colonel Fazackerley, just as before,
Was simply delighted and called out, ‘Encore!’
At which the ghost vanished, his efforts in vain,
And never was seen at the castle again,

‘Oh dear, what a pity! Said Colonel Fazackerley
‘I don’t know his name, so I won’t call him back.’
And then with a smile that was hard to define,
Colonel Fazackerley went in to dine
Miss asked if we had any favourite sounds, and could we quickly write them down, Tim said the screeeeeam of a mean guitar or a saxophone or a fast sports car. Shakira said cats when they purr on your lap, and Amie, the CRASH of a thunderclap. Paul asked what word he could possibly write for the sound of a rocket on Guy Fawkes Night, or a redwood tree as it fell to the ground and Miss said to write it as it sounds. So Paul wrote wooooooooooosh with a dozen ‘o’s and CRACK with a crack in it, just to show the kind of noise a tree might make as it hit the ground and made it SHAKE They everyone began to call, hey listen to this, what do you think? Or is this right Miss, I can’t decide, if balloons go POP or BANG or BUST, do bells peeeeeeal or just CLANG Then Miss said it was quite enough and time to stop all the silly stuff. What she really likes, as she’s often said is a quiet room, with every head bent over books, writing things down. The sound of silence, her favourite sound.
This is the story of Bubblegum Pete
Who ate all the bubblegum he could eat.
There was gum in his pockets and gum in his boots
Gum in his socks and his shorts and his suits.

Sticky pink lumps, sometimes wrapped, often not
Wherever he went to, the bubblegum got.
And when he had finished this mess of a sweet
He would spit it and stick it on somebody’s seat.

“Please don’t chew gum, you are sure to get wind,”
His mother asked kindly, but Peter just grinned.
But wind as it happened did give him some trouble
When Pete blew the world’s biggest bubblegum bubble.

He was out in the garden with nothing to do
So he put in some gum and started to chew
When it went mushy he started to blow
And little by little it started to grow,

As big as a golf ball, as big as a mouse,
As big as a horse then as big as a house.
The giant gum bubble was caught by a breeze
Which wafted poor Peter up over the trees,
Higher and higher right over the steeple
Higher until he could not see the people,
Up in the clouds like some rare sort of bird
Where silly boys crying for help can’t be heard.

Higher that spaceships and higher than stars
Higher than Venus and Saturn and Mars
“I will never blow bubbles again. I will stop
Said Peter quite rightly. The bubble went POP
CHOICE A  THE SONG OF THE JELLICLES by T S Eliot

Jellicle Cats come out tonight
Jellicle Cats come one come all:
The Jellicle Moon is shining bright –
Jellicles come to the Jellicle Ball.

Jellicle Cats are black and white,
Jellicle Cats are rather small;
Jellicle Cats are merry and bright,
And pleasant to hear when they caterwaul.
Jellicle Cats have cheerful faces,
Jellicle Cats have bright black eyes;
They like to practise their airs and graces
And wait for the Jellicle Moon to rise.

Jellicle Cats develop slowly,
Jellicle Cats are not too big;
Jellicle cats are roly-poly,
They know how to dance a gavotte and a jug.
Until the Jellicle Moon appears
They make their toilette and take their repose:
Jellicles wash behind their ears,
Jellicles dry between their toes.

Jellicle Cats are white and black,
Jellicle Cats are of moderate size;
Jellicles jump like a jumping-jack,
Jellicle Cats have moonlit eyes.

They’re quiet enough in the morning hours,
They’re quiet enough in the afternoon,
Reserving their terpsichorean powers
To dance by the light of the Jellicle Moon.

Jellicle Cats are black and white,
Jellicle Cats (as I said) are small;
If it happens to be a stormy night
They will practice a caper or two in the hall.
If it happens the sun is shining bright
You would say they had nothing to do at all:
They are resting and saving themselves to be right
For the Jellicle Moon and the Jellicle Ball.
Choice B  THE LAST FLOWER by James Thurber

World War XII, as everybody knows, brought about the collapse of civilization. Towns, cities, and villages disappeared from the earth. All the groves and forests were destroyed, and all the gardens, and all the works of art. Men, women, and children became lower than the Lower animals. Discouraged and disillusioned, dogs deserted their fallen masters. Emboldened by the pitiful condition of the former lords of the earth, rabbits descended up on them. Books, paintings and music disappeared from the earth, and human beings just sat round doing nothing. Years and years went by. Even the few Generals who were left forgot what the last war had decided. Boys and girls grew up to stare at each other blankly, for love had passed from the earth.

One day a young girl who had never seen a flower chanced to come upon the last one in the world. She told the other human beings that the last flower was dying. The only one who paid any attention to her was a young man she found wandering about. Together the young man and the girl nurtured the flower and it began to live again. One day a bee visited the flower, and a hummingbird. Before long there were two flowers, and then four, and then a great many. Groves and forests flourished again. The young girl began to take an interest in how she looked. The young man discovered that touching the girl was pleasurable. Love was reborn into the world. Their children grew up strong and healthy and learned to run and laugh. Dogs came out of their exile. The young man discovered, by putting one stone upon another, how to build a shelter. Pretty soon everybody was building shelters. Towns, cities and villages sprang up.
Song came back into the world,
And troubadours and jugglers.
And tailors and cobblers
And painters and poets
And sculptors and wheelwrights
And soldiers
And Lieutenants and Captains
And Generals and Major-Generals
And liberators.
Some people went one place to live, and some
another.
Before long, those who went to live in the valleys
wished they had gone to live in the hills,
And those who had gone to live in the hills wished
they had gone to live in the valleys,
The liberators, under the guidance of God, set fire
to the discontent,
So presently the World was at war again.
This time the destruction was so complete . . .
That nothing at all was left in the World –
Except one man
And one woman
And one flower