

Helping you choose books for children



opening extract from

# **The Usborne Book of Poems for Young Children**

chosen by

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illustrated by

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## Introduction

Choosing a collection of poems like this is a tricky job. Imagine throwing a party to which you can invite anyone at all, but only having room for a hundred guests. Like all the best parties, I wanted this book to be fun and surprising, so there's a good mix of old poems and new ones, long poems and short ones, and a whole variety of styles. There's also a huge range of subjects, from ketchup to kiwis.

I hope you enjoy reading the poems as much as I enjoyed choosing them.

*Philip Hawthorn*



## Magic Cat

My mum whilst walking through the door  
Spilt some magic on the floor.  
Blobs of this  
and spots of that  
but most of it upon the cat.

Our cat turned magic, straight away  
and in the garden went to play  
where it grew two massive wings  
and flew around in fancy rings.  
"Oh look!" cried Mother, pointing high,  
"I didn't know our cat could fly."  
Then with a dash of Tibby's tail  
she turned my mum into a snail!

So now she lives beneath a stone  
and dusts around a different home.  
And I'm an ant  
and Dad's a mouse  
And Tibby's living in our house.

Peter Dixon



## Rain

There are holes in the sky  
Where the rain gets in,  
But they're ever so small,  
That's why rain is thin.

Spike Milligan

## Weather

Whether the weather be fine  
Or whether the weather be not,  
Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather,  
Whether we like it or not.

Anon

## Pennies from Heaven

I put 10p in my Piggy Bank  
To save for a rainy day.  
It rained the *very next morning!*  
Three Cheers, Hip Hip Hooray!

Spike Milligan

## The Snowman

Once there was a snowman  
Stood outside the door,  
Thought he'd like to come inside  
And run around the floor;  
Thought he'd like to warm himself  
By the firelight red;  
Thought he'd like to clamber up  
On that big white bed.  
So he called the North Wind, "Help me now I pray,  
I'm completely frozen, standing here all day."  
So the North Wind came along and blew him in the door –  
And now there's nothing left of him  
But a puddle on the floor.

Anon

## Haiku

Snowman in a field  
listening to the raindrops  
wishing him farewell

Roger McGough




## The Owl and the Pussy-cat

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.  
The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
And sang to a small guitar,  
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love  
What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
You are,  
You are!  
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!  
How charmingly sweet you sing!  
O let us be married! Too long we have tarried:  
But what shall we do for a ring?"  
They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
To the land where the Bong-tree grows,  
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
With a ring at the end of his nose,  
His nose,  
His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."  
So they took it away, and were married next day  
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
They danced by the light of the moon,  
The moon,  
The moon,  
They danced by the light of the moon.

Edward Lear



## The Joy of Socks

Nice warm socks,  
Nice warm socks –  
We should celebrate them.  
Ask a toe!  
Toes all know  
It's hard to overrate them.

Toes say, "Please  
Don't let us freeze  
Till we're numb and white.  
Summer's gone  
Put them on!  
Wear them day and night!"

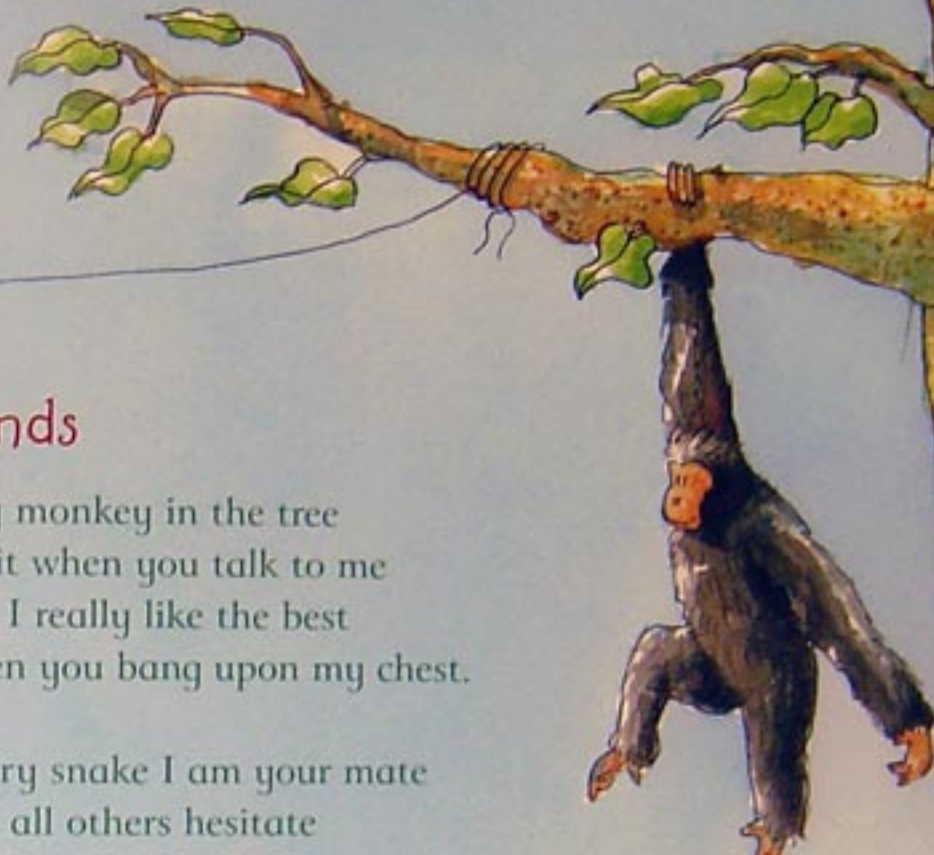
Nice warm socks,  
Nice warm socks –  
Who would dare to mock them?  
Take good care  
Of every pair  
And never, ever knock them.

Wendy Cope

## The Sorrow of Socks

Some socks are loners –  
They can't live in pairs.  
On washdays they've shown us  
They want to be loners.  
They puzzle their owners,  
They hide in dark lairs.  
Some socks are loners  
They won't live in pairs.

Wendy Cope



## Friends

Funky monkey in the tree  
I like it when you talk to me  
What I really like the best  
Is when you bang upon my chest.

Slippery snake I am your mate  
When all others hesitate  
I'll be there right by your side  
I am known to slip and slide.

Hop along, croak croak, how ya doing frog?  
No one understands our deep dialogue  
People may laugh when they see us on the road  
We must stick together  
Monkey, snake, me, you and toad.

Benjamin Zephaniah

