6 YEARS AND UNDER

MY SHADOW
BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
(“The Works 7” chosen by Brian Moses)

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 sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

7 YEARS

DADDY FELL INTO THE POND
BY ALFRED NOYES
(“The Works 7” chosen by Brian Moses)

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,
And there seemed to be nothing beyond,
THEN
Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone's face grew merry and bright,
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.
"Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!
He's crawling out of the duckweed." Click!

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,
And doubled up, shaking silently.
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.

Oh, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond
WHEN
Daddy fell into the pond!

8 YEARS

NINE-O’CLOCK BELL
BY ELEANOR FARJEON
(“The Works 7” chosen by Brian Moses)

Nine-o’Clock Bell!
Nine-o’Clock Bell!
All the small children and big ones as well,
Pulling their socks up, snatching their hats,
Cheeking and grumbling and giving back-chats,
Laughing and quarrelling, dropping their things,
These at a snail’s pace, and those upon wings,
Lagging behind a bit, running ahead,
Waiting at corners for lights to turn red,

Some of them scurrying,
Others not worrying,
Carelessly trudging or anxiously hurrying,
All through the streets they are coming pell-mell
At the Nine-o’Clock
Nine-o’Clock
Nine-o’Clock
Bell!

9 YEARS

MUSIC
by ANN BONNER
(“The Works 2” Brian Moses and Pie Corbett)

Music…
is everywhere.
In the birds of the air.
In the hum of the honeybee.
In the song of the breeze
as it shivers the trees.
In the river that murmurs
over the stones.
In the snow wind that moans.

In the surge of the sea
lapping the shore.
In the roar of the storm
rattling the door.
In the drum of the rain
on the windowpane.
Music is here.
Filling your ear.
10 YEARS
THE SONG OF THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG
BY DYLAN THOMAS
(“Read Me: A Poem for Every Day of the Year. 10th Anniversary Edition.” Chosen by Gaby Morgan)

There are many who say that a dog has its day,
And a cat has a number of lives;
There are others who think that a lobster is pink,
And that bees never work in their hives.
There are fewer, of course, who insist that a horse
Has a horn and two humps on its head,
And a fellow who jests that a mare can build nests
Is as rare as a donkey that’s red.
Yet in spite of all this, I have moments of bliss,
For I cherish a passion for bones,
And though doubtful of biscuit, I’m willing to risk it,
And I love to chase rabbits and stones.
But my greatest delight is to take a good bite
At a calf that is plump and delicious;
And if I indulge in a bite at a bulge,
Let’s hope you won’t think me too vicious.

11 AND 12 YEARS
THE MONTHS
BY CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
(“The Works 7” chosen by Brian Moses)

January cold desolate;
February all dripping wet;
March wind ranges;
April changes;
Birds sing in tune
To flowers of May,
And sunny June
Brings longest day;
In scorched July
The storm-clouds fly;
Lightning torn
August bears corn.
September fruit;
In rough October
Earth must disrobe her;
Stars fall and shoot
In keen November;
And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak December.

13 AND 14 YEARS
THE LIZARD
BY LYDIA PENDER
(“The Puffin Book of Modern Children’s Verse” edited by Brian Patten)

Still is your delicate head,
Like the head of an arrow;
Still is your delicate throat,
Rounded and narrow;
Still is your delicate back,
Patterned in silver and black,
And bright with the burnished sheen that the gum-tips share;
Even your delicate feet
Are still, still as the heat,
With a stillness alive and awake, and intensely aware.
Why do I catch my breath,
Held by your spell?
Listening, waiting - for what?
Will you not tell?
More alive in your quiet than ever the locust can be,
Shrilling his clamorous song from the shimmering tree;
More alive in your motionless grace, as the slow minutes die,
Than the scurrying ants that go hurrying busily by.
I know, if my shadow but fall by your feet on the stone,
In the wink of an eye,
Let me try -
Ah!
He’s gone!
15 YEARS AND OVER

GRANNIE
BY VERNON SCANNELL
("Read Me: A Poem for Every Day of the Year. 10th Anniversary Edition." Chosen by Gaby Morgan)

I stayed with her when I was six then went
To live elsewhere when I was eight years old.
For ages I remembered her faint scent
Of lavender, the way she’d never scold
No matter what I’d done, and most of all
The way her smile seemed, somehow, to enfold
My whole world like a warm, protective shawl.

I knew that I was safe when she was near,
She was so tall, so wide, so large, she would
Stand mountainous between me and my fear,
Yet oh, so gentle, and she understood
Every hope and dream I ever had.
She praised me lavishly when I was good,
But never punished me when I was bad.

Years later war broke out and I became
A soldier and was wounded while in France.
Back home in hospital, still very lame,
I realised suddenly that circumstance
Had brought me close to that small town where she
Was living still. And so I seized the chance
To write and ask if she could visit me.

She came. And I still vividly recall
The shock that I received when she appeared
That dark cold day. Huge grannie was so small!
A tiny, frail, old lady. It was weird.
She hobbled through the ward to where I lay
And drew quite close, and, hesitating, peered.
And then she smiled: and love lit up the day.