Poets Investigate Fairyland and the Supernatural

The imaginative essence of the child has facilitated his escape to a world of his very own—that world being fairyland. Few adults can be considered authorities of the little folk because fairyland is just not compatible with adult concepts. But in the arduous process of constructing the castle, a few architects have managed to materialize their blueprints of fairyland.

Scholarly research has revealed the fact that until the production of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, fairies were not popularly envisioned as "airy toys, diminutive winged creatures engaged in dainty, delicate occupations."¹ Shakespeare's writings were primarily for adults, but children still enjoy the singing quality of his verses without feeling compelled to listen. "Under the Greenwood Tree," from *As You Like It*, reminds children of Robin Hood and his green dwelling.

It would seem logical to conclude that anyone from Ballyshannon, Donegal, Ireland would surely be well-versed in fairies and their habits. William Allingham was born here where fairylore and balladry played a prominent part in the lives of these Irish folk. Exquisite lyric power and acute insight into the doings of fairies are displayed in *The Fairies*. "The Fairies"

¹Moore, op. cit., p. 60.
in this book is a favorite because it offers the "vital statistics" about fairies that children want to know.1

"Too many fairies" commented Walter Barnes when he discussed his impressions of Rose Fyleman's poetry. Rose Fyleman's fairies habitate not only " . . . the bottom of our garden," but they mingle freely with real people " . . . on Oxford Street." Life was certainly not hum-drum "Yesterday on Oxford Street" when the fairy queen surprisingly appeared:

Yesterday in Oxford Street, oh, what d'you think, my dears?
I had the most exciting time I've had for years and years;
The buildings looked so straight and tall, the sky was blue between,
And riding on a motor-bus, I saw the fairy queen!

Sitting there upon the rail and bobbing up and down,
The sun was shining on her wings and on her golden crown;
And looking at the shop she was, the pretty silks and lace--
She seemed to think that Oxford Street was quite a lovely place.

I never saw her any more, altho' I looked all day,
Perhaps she only came to peep, and never meant to stay:
But oh, my dears, just think of it, just think what luck for me,
That she should come to Oxford Street, and I be there to see!2

Adults often criticize Miss Fyleman's mass production of fairy poems, labeling them as unconvincing or as lacking

1Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 177.
2Ibid., p. 180.
authenticity. Children regard these criticisms as insidious. They like their fairies "pretty" so despite literary criticism, the Fyleman fairies are likely to continue to merit the whole-hearted devotion of children.1

Walter de la Mare contributed poetry which was neither the last blossoming of an era nor a transition in the architectural style. His poetry existed independent of trends and time. His illuminating insight was particularly penetrating in the world of the supernatural and in fairyland. "Weird, grotesque, mysterious, enchanted"--this was the essence of much of his outstanding poetry.2

Mr. De la Mare was truly an architectural genius; his room of poetry delineated a "fineness of texture, delicacy of feeling, sweetness of tone, and vigor of imagination."3

Mr. De la Mare adeptly blended realism and fancy in Down-Adown-Derry, his collection of fairy poetry. The nature of his fairies, ghosts, and witches is hinged on the emotion of the horror-story and fright poem. Unlike James Whitcomb Riley's whimsical goblins, the ghosts of Mr. De la Mare's poetry are not engrossed in foolery or drollery. Barnes feels that Mr. De la Mare operates on the concept that children need and love a good scare once in awhile.

His poetry is characterized by a dexterous melody, by plaintive and simple language. His writing lacks the "sirupy

1Ibid., p. 180.
2Neigs, op. cit., p. 413.
3Barnes, op. cit., p. 117.
sweet sentimentality" that so many authors are guilty of possessing. A tangy shot of robust humor pops up unexpectedly throughout his poetry. ¹

Barnes compared Walter de la Mare's style of writing with three other outstanding children's poets--William Blake, Christina Rossetti, and Robert Louis Stevenson--and found the styles to be strikingly similar. Similar themes, the same sad-sweet music, and pictorial qualities are characteristic of both Blake and Mr. De la Mare's poetry. The children in Mr. De la Mare's "The Massacre" resemble Robert Louis Stevenson's solitary child in the garden. Theme, moods, and phrasing are similar.² Both Stevenson and Mr. De la Mare explored the "Land of Counterpane." Mr. De la Mare, unlike Mr. Stevenson, lacked the childhood experience of being sickly, but he still adequately pictured this realm:

*The Window*

Behind the blinds I sit and watch
The people passing--passing by;
And not a single one can see
My tiny watching eye.

They cannot see my little room,
All yellowed with the shaded sun;
They do not even know I am here;
Nor guess when I am gone.³

While Stevenson's poetry was more earthy, Mr. De la Mare's displayed a more vivid imagination and a heightened emphasis of the supernatural.

¹Ibid., pp. 125-129.
²Ibid., p. 118.
³Ibid., p. 120.
A lamentive mood threads softly through both Miss Rossetti and Mr. De la Mare's poetry. Both describe tragedy and grief to children. Miss Rossetti's images are more cultivated and domesticated than those in the wild, untamed atmosphere of Mr. De la Mare's poems. In spite of these similarities, Mr. De la Mare's poems resemble himself first; others secondly. He would have written in the same styles, moods, and themes had they not lived.\(^1\) Here is a selected favorite:

**Silver**

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.\(^2\)

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Distinctive Group of Contemporaries See
World from Child's Standpoint

For a span of sixty-seven years, from 1891-1916, four
contemporary poets wrote distinctive literature for the child
from the child's point of view. A special exuberance must have
rung from the old castle's walls when these four men scurried to
and fro through the halls as they compared notes and frantically
annexed four more rooms. The castle welcomes children into the
rooms built by James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Field, Robert Louis
Stevenson, and Frank Dempster Sherman.

James Whitcomb Riley, born in Greenfield, Indiana, has
earned the title, "Hoosier Laureate" for his distinctive con-
tributions, most of which are in Hoosier dialect. Riley's ex-
periences with a roving patent medicine company prepared him
to write of the simple country folk. A summary of Riley and his
writings is cited in Barnes as follows: Riley had no children of
his own, but he adopted all children--bad, silent, glad, sober,
happy, onery--as his own to love. Most children are held spell-
bound when they hear "Little Orphant Annie" or "The Bear Story."
Riley prefers writing about joyous scenes of children eating,
playing, or idling around a crackling fire listening to spooky
tales and stories. He probably comes nearest of any poet to
picturing the "flesh-and-blood" urchin.¹ His only lullabies,

¹Ibid., pp. 178-193.
"Slumber Song" and "Through Sleepyland" are cold and constrained. Perhaps his dialect reflects a lowered standard for poetry, but again, the children, not the literary critics, are the judges. Verdict: children love his poetry!

Whereas Riley, a bachelor, had no real incentive for writing lullabies, Eugene Field certainly did not lack the appropriate atmosphere for crooning sleepy-time tunes. He fathered eight children, five of whom were boys. His lullabies encompass all nationalities—Norse, Jewish, Dutch, Scotch, Japanese, Orkney, Armenian, Sicilian. Each has its own appropriate imagery and native melody. "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" is probably his most original and most popular:

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
   Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
   Sailed on a river of crystal light,
   Into a sea of dew.
   "Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
   The old moon asked the three.
   "We have come to fish for the herring fish
   That live in this beautiful sea;
   Nets of silver and gold have we!"
   Said Wynken,
   Blynken,
   And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
   And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
   Is a wee one's little head,
So shut your eyes while mother sings
   Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
   As you rock in the misty sea,
   Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:
Wynken,
   Blynken, 1
   And Nod.

1Ibid., p. 189.
Field visits the cemetary even more frequently than Christina Rossetti; one sixth of his poems employ a death theme. His most perfect poem on the theme is "Little Boy Blue." He lost a baby son and his oldest boy died, but the latter occurred after he had written most of his dirges. He was very sensitive to the idea of a child dying.¹

Field does not usually employ a childish dialect in his poems although a skillful use of it is found in "Just for Christmas," "Seein' Things," and "The Limitations of Youth." Sometimes his poems are marred by sentimentality but they are sincere. Neigs does not think his nonsense verse is as convincing as is that of Lear and Carroll's,² but "The Tale of the Flimflam" is worth noting:

A flimflam flopped from a fillamaloo,
Where the pollywog pinkled so pale,
And the pipkin piped a petulant "pooh"
To the garrulous gawp of the gale.
"Oh, woe to the swap of the sweeping swipe
That booms on the bobbling bay!"²
Snickered the snark to the snoozing snipe
That lurked where the lamprey lay.

The pluglug glinked in the glimmering gloam
Where the buzzbuz bumbled his bee--
When the flimflam flitted, all flecked with foam,
From the oozing and succulent sea.
"Oh, swither the swipe, with its sweltering sweep!"
She swore as she swayed in a swoon,
And a doleful dank dumped over the deep,
To the lay of the limpid loon!"³

¹Ibid., p. 195.
²Neigs, op. cit., p. 41.
³Barnes, op. cit., pp. 184-185.
In some ways Field and Riley, like the sister team of Ann and Jane Taylor, could be considered brothers in their similarities as children's poets. Some similarities can be summarized as follows: (1) both call the Midwest their home, 2) they were friends and contemporaries, (3) they loved children and children loved them, (4) they had similar experiences and education, (5) they shared a similar philosophy of life, (6) both despised "literary snobbishness and solemn faced pedantry," 7) their intellectual and emotional fibers were "put together" similarly, (8) they loved everything sweet, fine, and human, (9) they were sentimental about human nature. 1

Barnes concluded that both Field and Riley had pleasant memories of childhood. Riley's "Old Aunt Mary's" and "The Ol' Swimming Hole" and Field's "When I was a Boy" and "In the Firelight" are sentimental recollections of their boyhood. Gooseflesh versus giggles symbolized their goals as they sought to scare children and then to erase the fears with hearty laughter. Their intent was never to moralize; they accepted children as they were.

A skill in verse making, a sense of unerring rhythm, a rapid, running, jingling movement, arts of onomatopoeia, alliteration, and assonance, a dancing meter, and staccato can be found in the verses of both these men.

Barnes feels that their personalities gave their poetry more popularity than it deserves. Too often the "I" in their

1 Ibid., p. 176.
poems was a mature Field or Riley speaking rather than a child.\footnote{Ibid., p. 182-194.} Neigs states that they were too tinged with sentiment to view the child objectively as Stevenson was able to do. Children have been almost hypnotized into loving Field and Riley. The habit of referring to them as children's poets has been established because Field and Riley have written of children so often.

Adults are especially grateful for the poet who can recall what they have forgotten. Robert Louis Stevenson did not simply glimpse childhood; he uncovered the hidden world of childhood for all to see. Stevenson was not the first to terminate the trend of moralizing or didacticism, but his poems constituted the first sizable group to do so. Stevenson may be described as a "man ahead of his time." He succeeded in recreating childhood sensations and emotions by combining memory and an almost undiluted objectivity.\footnote{Neigs, \emph{op. cit.}, p. 294.}

A hereditary weakness made Stevenson quite susceptible as a child to successive attacks of chills, bronchitis, and pneumonia; hence, long months spent in bed fitted him for a reading and writing career. His married life, in essence, was a search for health which eventually took him to Samoa where he died and was laid to rest by devoted natives.

Barnes classifies Stevenson's poems under five main themes: 1) Bedland, (2) Water in Motion, (3) Nature, (4) Imaginative Travel, and (5) Play. "The Land of Counterpane" is representative of the bedland theme. This theme is reminiscent of his childhood
experiences, but the attitudes reflected are not those of suffering. His bed-boat permitted him to escape reality by entering the land of dreams and make-believe.

The Land of Counterpane

When I was sick and lay abed,
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.¹

The music of water in motion was symphony to his ears.

"Rain" can be categorized within this group:

The rain is falling all around,
It falls on field and tree.
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.²

Stevenson was awed by the panorama of the seasons and of the phenomena of nature. The skillful use of rhythm to produce a galloping sound in "Windy Nights" is a favorite from this group. "Where Go the Boats" with its faint touch of philosophy signifies Stevenson's imaginative travels:

¹Barnes, op. cit., pp. 70-72.
²Ibid., p. 81.
Darr brown is the river,
Golden is the sand.
It flows along forever,
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating—
Where will all come home?

On goes the river
And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore.¹

His Child's Garden of Verses is a classic in children's literature. The child in the Garden, glimpsing the world from a tall tree or over the garden wall, plans trips he will take. He marvels at the sun's daily journey and predicts the destiny of his boats. The fourth theme of imaginative travel was actually fulfilled on Stevenson's search for health. Play is the fifth theme found in Stevenson's poetry. The child in the Garden usually engages in solitary play.² Nevertheless, group play is found in "Pirate Story," "A Good Play," and "The Hayloft."

Stevenson rarely moralizes. When he does, a twinkling eye accompanies the bits of advice:

Children, you are very little
And your bones are very brittle;
If you would grow great and stately,
You must try to walk sedately.³

¹Ibid., p. 74.
²Ibid., p. 76.
³Ibid., p. 77.
Ethical behavior appears once:

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table
At least as far as he is able.1

Barnes feels that Stevenson's indomitable spirit is probably not emphasized enough. He faced the strains of life with a weak body, but with a powerful will and attitude. His poems sing of an optimism from the highest turret on the castle. To share Stevenson's philosophy of life is to see him in this optimism:

There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbors good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbor is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may.2

Stevenson's own "requiem" enhances his greatness:

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig me a grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly I die
And now I lay me down with a will.3

Following in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson is another man who also spent a solitary childhood. Barnes states that both Frank Dempster Sherman and Stevenson capture the child's moods, impressions, emotions, and experiences from the child's standpoint. The poetry of both is characterized by (1) quatrains, 2) brevity, (3) familiar styles which are not colloquial. They do not confuse childishness with childlikeness. They do not talk down to the child, but neither do they confuse him by complex

1Ibid.
2Ibid., p. 79.
3Ibid.
sentences and vocabulary beyond their comprehension. Neither wrote nonsense verses. Their poetry bore a minor plaintive note. Sherman’s delicate interpretations of the world’s beauty is denoted by “The Waterfall.” “A Wish” and “Spinning Top” resemble Stevenson’s insight of a child’s play. His themes of the phenomena of weather, seasons, and animal nature match those of Stevenson’s. Sherman’s twelve poems for the twelve months are notable. Some of his most fanciful dwell on the winter scene:

Snow Song

Over valley, over hill,
Mark the shepherd piping shrill!
Driving all the white flocks forth
From the far folds of the North.
Blow, Wind, blow,
Weird melodies you play,
Following your flocks that go
Across the world today.

How they hurry, how they crowd
When they hear the music loud!
Grove and lane and meadow full
Sparkle with their shining wool.
Blow, Wind, blow,
Until the forests ring:
Teach the eaves the tunes you know,
And make the chimneys sing!

Hither, thither, up and down
Every highway of the town,
Huddling close, the white flocks all
Gather at the shepherd’s call.
Blow, Wind, blow
Upon your pipes of joy;
All your sheep the flakes of snow
And you their shepherd boy.2

1 Ibid., pp. 197-199.
2 Ibid., pp. 199-201.
Poets Explore Child’s World of Imagination
And Play as Nature Adults

From high inside their citadel, Stevenson and his contemporaries surveyed the entire countryside. Even before their work was completed, other architects were approaching the castle laden with poetic construction materials. Stevenson’s days of tending the "garden" inside the courtyard were drawing to a close, but children would always derive nourishment from the fruits of his labor.

Pilgrims, young and old, especially children, had spread the news of a castle where lives were revitalized and hearts were made gay. The lips of all held "praise . . . for famous men, such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing."1 [The "for" was added by the author for clarification.] Thus a little band, led by A. A. Milne and encouraged by the news of the castle, picked their way along the countryside in search of the fortification where their poetry, too, could be protected and preserved by embattled parapets. Eleanor Farjeon, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Winifred Belles, and Rachel Field formed the rest of the poetic band. These poets had explored the child’s world of play and imagination. They were eager to share the fruits of their journey with all who would listen.

A. A. Milne has recorded the egocentricity of childhood perhaps more accurately than has any other venturer into the child's world of play and imagination. Milne exercised a thorough knowledge of children as he realistically manipulated them in their land of make-believe. His poems feature his only son, Christopher Robin, and his son's involvements with toys, games, and small animals. Christopher Robin's solitary world is not peopled by fairies but by talking animals, including Winnie-the-Pooh.¹

Milne uses words, rhyme, and rhythm to convey his character's moods and actions. Children adopt his coined words such as "buffalo-buffalo-bisons," "badgers and bidgers and bodgers" and a mouse with a "woffelly nose" because these words resemble their own expressions. The tale of "The King's Breakfast" is a favorite with its royal incongruity and verse pattern. Milne's use of monosyllables effectively captures the suspended action in "Halfway Down":

Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair
Where I sit.
There isn't any
Other stair
quite like
It.

I'm not at the bottom,
I'm not at the top,
So this is the stair
Where I always
Stop.²

Miss Arbuthnot says that Eleanor Farjeon received no formal schooling; her novelist father was her sole critic and

¹Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 118.
²Ibid., p. 119.
teacher, yet she had a convincing store of knowledge of the child's world. Her children are busy being children; her poems speak of children as naturally as breathing. She employs color, a rich imagination and a variety of verse patterns. Miss Farjeon writes skillful nonsense verse and her fairy lore combines fantasy and reality effectively as in "City Under Water."

Miss Farjeon's Christmas poems are quite outstanding in their tenderness, imagination, and contrast. "Shall I the Byre Go Down?" and "The Children's Song" are two such Christmas poems with noted contrast. Here is the latter one:

Here we come again, again, and here we come again!
Christmas is a single pearl swinging on a chain,
Christmas is a single flower in a barren wood,
Christmas is a single sail on the salty flood,
Christmas is a single song sung for charity.
Here we come again, again, to sing to you again,
Give a single penny that we may not sing in vain.1

Her poems may not rank as high as those by Milne or Dorothy Aldis, but, nevertheless, her poems are worthy of a room in the castle.

A better understanding of children and their thoughts can be gained by reading Elizabeth Hadow Roberts' fifty-nine poems in Under the Tree. Here the lonely child is accepted against the vast beauty of the surrounding landscape. Mrs. Roberts' room is to the castle what the leaf is to the tree; though frail in themselves, the room and leaf both draw strength.

1Arbuthnot, Children and Books, pp. 138-140.
From the bodies they represent. Mrs. Roberts is an architect artist who can recall childhood and reproduce her memories without becoming overly sentimental or unrealistic. Her poetry is emotionally satisfying though simple and straightforward in content as a stanza from "The Worm" will show:

His shining skin was soft and wet,
I poked him once to see him squirm
And then Will said, "I wonder if
He knows that he's a worm."

The Roberts child ruminates about nature's universe and sandwiches its inhabitants:

The People

The ants are walking under the ground
And the pigeons are flying over the steeple,
And between are the people.

Mrs. Roberts' verses are not adorned nor are they prettified to sound cute. Her couplets or quatrains are not forced but they are direct. They communicate a renewal of nature and a child's innocence spilling out to meet the experiences on the green.

The solitary child is once again the media for personifying the child's world as Minifred Nelles was inspired to write by observing her single son. A rare perception of the child's everyday interests is hers to share in Skipping Along Alone.

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2Astutnnot, Children and Books, p. 142.

3Ibid., p. 143.

4Smith, op. cit., 138.
"Green Noth" captures many children's expectancies and sense of wonderment as it beckons "so still." Her writing overflows with imagination and mystery at the highest in poems such as "Behind the Waterfall." According to Mrs. Arbuthnot, the fairies of Minifred Welles are a "lively and unconventional crew." The "Fairy Under Glass" is "all puffed up to scream" and the "Stocking Fairy" scolds until the toe is mended. Minifred Welles's poems have a fresh approach to commonplace episodes and sights. The fancy and imagination inherent in her poems which seem to penetrate the child's world even more deeply than Walter de la Mare's, make Minifred Welles a genuinely distinguished modern poet for children.¹

Rachel Field's vivid personality and exuberant love for people spill into her poems. Her vigor and vitality speak of her love of being alive. Rachel Field does not talk down to children nor is she pretentious; she tells children about their world in exactly the way they perceive it. She wonders "if skyscrapers ever want to lie down and never get up."

"Barefoot Days" shows her love for nature. Her taxis "roll along the Avenue like spools of colored thread." Rachel Field's child is interested in people with an outward keenness and her poems reflect these authentic views. The lack of artificiality coupled with her genuine sincerity grants her a special room in the castle as well as in the hearts of many children.²

¹ Arbuthnot, Children and Books, pp. 140-146.
² Ibid., pp. 147-150.
Contemporary Poets

The European castles of medieval times are, today, purely decorative reminiscences of a glorious and romantic past. A stagnant moat encircles the castle where busy, bustling halls once resounded with merriment and fellowship. Now the halls are cold, solemn, and hollow; they are merely a novelty with no real functional purpose.

This description is not applicable to the castle of poetry. As year builds upon year, brick upon brick, poem upon poem, the castle glows with a special sort of feeling for her hallways are still peopled by architects. It seems that the castle would soon have enough rooms, but no--there are always more children making the joyous pilgrimage to the old castle. Thus more architects place their bids, hoping to gain admittance to the castle.

Contemporary society, 1963, sparkles with architects who desire to keep up with the times in children's interests and tastes. The essence of the child does not change, but the world he lives in does. So another group of distinctive contemporary poets have interpreted this new world for tiny listening ears.

A new voice for today's children is David McCord. His verses range from pure nonsense to quiet meditations. It is said that his "light verse is feather light." "Joe," one of McCord's gay beast poems, finds nourishment at the backyard bird feeder.
60

...cord depicts the simple freshness of childhood in the following poems:

Notice

I have a dog,
I have a cat.
I have a frog
Inside my hat.

This is my Rock

This is my rock,
And here I run
To steal the secret of the sun;

This is my rock,
And here come I
Before the night has swept the sky.

This is my rock,
This is the place
I meet evening face to face.1

Adults and children, alike, are susceptible to the modern communicable disease known as laughing, especially when they come in contact with the nonsense in William Jay Smith's Laughing Time. Children delight in "The Toaster" which is operated by "a silver scaled Dragon."2

Five to nine-year-olds delight in the lyric charm and variety afforded by the verses of Harry Behn. His nonsense verses are in the minority, but "Mr. Pyne" and "Dr. Windiken" are notable. The children in "Picnic by the Sea" wonder why grown-ups bask in the sun when there is so much to explore on the intriguing beach. Behn's philosophy is one of peace and reassurance in "Others," "Spring Rain," "Lesson," and "The Little Hill."3

1Ibid., p. 125.
2Ibid., p. 126.
3Ibid., pp. 179-180.
A child does not have to be a Little Freckled Person to enjoy Mary Carolyn Davis' Poems about dolls and pets. Her poems reflect her passion for nature and particularly for the Canadian Rocky Mountains of British Columbia where she spent a Christmas season. Mary Davis, like David McCord, has a special rock. She discovered hers.

The Day Before April

The day before April
Alone, alone,
I walked in the woods,
And I sat on a stone.

I sat on a broad stone
And sang to the birds,
The tune was God's making
But I made the words. 1

Children derive keen enjoyment in recognizing themselves in the room of mirrors constructed by Dorothy Aldis. She does not dote on the charming ways of children as adults do; she expands on the little things that make children what they are--children! Her children detest piano exercises, go swimming under a water sprinkler, are surprised to see crocuses awake before they are, and play croquet at dusk, hoping "no one will call them in." 2

[In the poem "us" occurs in place of "them."]

The six to eight-year-olds especially respond to her humor and insight. Her verse patterns are not particularly interesting; her strength lies in her insight which permeates the realm of childhood. The parent-child relationship is caught in

1Ibid., p. 180.

I'm hiding, I'm hiding,
And no one knows where;
For all they can see in my
Toes and my hair.

And I just heard my father
Say to my mother
"But, darling, he must be
Somewhere or other;

Have you looked in the inkwell?
And mother said, "There?"
"In the inkwell," said father. But
I was not there.

Then "Wait!" cried my mother--
"I think that I see
Him under the carpet." But
It was not me.

"Inside the mirror's
A pretty good place,"
Said father and looked, but saw
Only his face.

"We've hunted," sighed mother,
"As hard as we could
And I'm afraid that we've
Lost him for good."

Then I laughed out aloud
And I wiggled my toes
And father said--"Look, dear,
I wonder if those

Toes could be Benny's.
There are ten of them. See?"
And they were so surprised to find
But it was me!

Dr. Spock is consulted by concerned parents when Junior
won't sleep; perhaps Dr. Seuss has the remedy. Most parents con-
sider Dr. Seuss's books as "sure-fire bedtime stories." Writing
under the pseudonym of Dr. Seuss, Ted Geisel has gained a rapid
rise in popularity through his books such as Horton Hears a

1Arbutnnot, Children and Books, p. 150.
Who, Thidwick-the-Fog-Hearted Moose, and one of his most recent
ones, Sleep Book. The Cat in the Hat, a supplementary reader for
the first grade published by Houghton Mifflin Company, contains
220 basic words. Delightful meter and repetition convey the
jingling cat plot to the hearts of beginning readers.

Although Dr. Seuss is labeled as a poet for children, his
wife rather thinks he writes to amuse himself—not children.
She explains, "His mind has never grown up." Seuss feels that
people fail as writers when they attempt to form preconceptions
of children.1

A great deal of Seuss's success must be attributed to
his illustrations as well as to his verses. Seuss explains that
his unorthodox, pot-bellied creatures are not entirely a product
of his imagination. "I just never learned to draw."2

Inspiration does not flow into the poet's mind magically
like melted butter. It takes Dr. Seuss approximately eighteen
months per book and many of these are "jam, panic days" when he
"thrashes convulsively." He says, "Every once in a while it comes
easily. Sometimes a lovely flow of words will carry me four
whole lines."

Dr. Seuss feels that children deserve quality. They will
accept a ludicrous situation if it is pursued logically: a
two-headed creature necessitates two toothbrushes and two spec-
tacles.3

1Robert Cahn, "The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss," Sat-
urday Evening Post, CCVWV (July 6, 1957), 42-46.
2Ibid., p. 19.
3Ibid., p. 113.
The essence of Dr. Seuss's writing is nonsense and bizarre creatures. His "animal" subjects are reminiscent of his childhood when he played among the cages at the Springfield, Massachusetts park where his father was commissioner.¹

The subtle moralizing present in modern poems exists even beneath the high hilarity of Dr. Seuss's verses:

In our books there is usually a point if you want to find it. But we have discovered that the kids don't want to feel you are trying to push something down their throats. So when we have a moral, we try to tell it sideways.

The "hidden germ of wisdom" can be found, for example, in *Horton Hears a Who*. Horton, protectorate of the inhabitants of a microcosmic dust speck comes to the rescue when the Who's are about to boiled in Beazle-Nut Stew. Their cries for help go unheard until one more tiny Who adds his yap to the community efforts:

And that Yap, that one small extra Yap
put it over!
Finally at last! From that speck on the clover,
Their voices were heard! They rang out clear and clean.
And the elephant smiled. "Do you see what I mean?
They've proved they are persons no matter how small.
And their whole world was saved by the smallest of all!²

"Dr. Seuss has an imagination with a big long tail," commented one of the child fans of Dr. Seuss. Seuss responded, "That fellow will go places."³

¹Ibid., p. 112.
²Ibid., p. 116.
³Ibid., p. 113.
Mrs. Arbuthnot mentions that the modern narrative is particularly fascinating and enjoyable to children. What child has not spiritually followed Robert Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamlin"? Eight-nine-, and ten-year-olds can feel the tempo of scurrying rats and of the skipping children. They are especially delighted by the mystery surrounding the Piper's identity and journey. Another renowned classic is Clement Clark Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Children throughout the world call it "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

Children from eight to ten love the funny words and tickling phrases of Mildred Slew Leis's "The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee" and William Brighty Rand's poem about "Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Core," the "boy who never would shut a door."¹


¹Arbuthnot, Children and Books, pp. 96-101.
Other authors who write primarily for adults have gained pre-eminence in the children's castle of poetry, too. Some of the poems of Vachel Lindsay, Rudyard Kipling, Amy Lowell, Carl Sandburg, Alfred Tennyson, Walt Whitman, A. E. Houseman, William Butler Yeats, Sir Walter Scott, Alfred Noyes, William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy B. Shelley, John Keats, Louis Untermeyer, and Robert Frost have been most appealing to and adopted by youthful readers.
PART II

CREATIVE PROJECT
CHAPTER III

ORIGINAL POETRY FOR CHILDREN BY JUDY LUGINBILL

A Special Pilgrimage to the Castle

Through the centuries of constructing the castle of poetry, architects patterned the design of their individual blueprints in accordance with the essence of childhood. Each room had a definite purpose; each one met the various needs of the scores of children who had made the pilgrimage to the old castle. Childhood, though, is not necessarily a prerequisite for visiting the castle. In fact, very few children would have had the opportunity of wandering through the halls and of finding the satisfactions and enjoyment afforded by the rooms of poetry if they had not made the pilgrimage under the capable leadership of a guide who had already made the journey to the castle.

Children cannot become friends with poetry until they are introduced to poetry; they must be shown the way to the castle by one who has previously traveled the halls of poetry. Society has instituted a system of education which can serve as an appropriate medium for introducing poetry to children. The link between the castle of poetry and the child is the classroom teacher.

The teacher, like the architect, is a builder. Children are the essence of his building materials. They are as precious
clay modified by the skillful hands of the teacher. A great reward of teaching is viewing the successful fruits of one's labors.

Rarely does the child find his way to the castle of poetry by himself. Ideally, every teacher as well as every parent should have made the pilgrimage to the castle so that his experience will enable him to lead children there also.

In the spring of 1963, this writer, a prospective teacher, recognized the desirability of making the pilgrimage to the castle of poetry. Thus she considered and planned this significant journey under the auspices of the Honors Program at Ball State Teachers College. Special traveling advice and a roadmap to the castle were provided in consultation with Dr. Mildred Ballou, Research Director of the Honors Thesis.

As this young college student, Judy Luginbill, toured the various rooms of the castle, she attempted to trace the development of children's poetry, a development which actually spanned thousands of centuries. Some of the first rooms she visited provided her with a glimpse of prehistoric poetry. It was a whirlwind journey of enlightenment and enjoyment from the initial welcome at the drawbridge to the conclusion of the journey. She viewed the unfolding panorama of childhood literature "from Mother Goose to Dr. Seuss."

As Miss Luginbill met the many architects, she was delighted to find that many of their values, philosophies, and interests were similar to hers. She saw her personality reflected back to her many times. It was like seeing oneself in a clear,
sparkling pool, only to have the image disrupted, then reappear again as she entered another room.

She was deeply moved when she found that religion played a significant role in the lives of Christina Rossetti and Lucy Larcom as it did in her own life. She could praise the realm of nature with Elizabeth Coatsworth, Sara Teasdale, Hilda Conkling, and Celia Chaxter, for she, too, found a genuine peace and assurance in the beauty, mystery, and orderliness of nature. She shared with Rachel Field a love for people, children in particular, as well as a genuine zest for living.

As Miss Luginbill stooped to pluck the fragrant flowers in the garden which Robert Louis Stevenson had cultivated with care and devotion, she was pleasantly reminded of the symbolism a garden held for her. A garden is any place where growth and friendship sprout and thrive. A garden can provide comfort and joy; peace and reflection. Where there is a garden, there is happiness.

Miss Luginbill found one characteristic in common with all the architect poets she met—she enjoyed writing poetry, too. With haste she returned to Dr. Ballou, eager to report her experiences in the castle of poetry and especially eager to write her own poetry for children. With Dr. Ballou's encouragement and aid, she began applying the things she had learned from her pilgrimage. The children in her poems rebel against the restrictions placed on them by well-meaning parents; they enjoy being "me" more than anyone else, and they are engaged in the activities so important to children: climbing trees, taking imaginary trips into space,
going fishing, and "slish, slosh, slishin" mud puddles. She attempts to capture the bustling festivities of Christmas in "Holiday Rush." A child's fascination with the futility or facility of animal's tails is presented in her collection of "Tales of Tails." Her love of nature is shown in her twelve poems--one for each month. The subtle novelizing of contemporary poetry appears in her "Smiles" and "Look pleasant, Please."

With a garden theme in mind, Miss Luginbill entitled her contribution to children's literature, Melodies Sung by the Garden Gate. With Plato's words in mind--"Those having torches will pass them on to others"--Miss Luginbill has resolved that she will make the pilgrimage again next year, this time with thirty fifth graders. Before her poetry will be added to the castle, it must be subjected to time and to children. Only after it has passed these two tests will the "garden melodies" be sung within the castle of poetry.
Melodies Sung By The Garden Gate
Come With Me

Clatter, patter,
Down
The
Stairs.

Hop, Stop,
No
More
Cares.

I'm going outside.
I
Can't
Wait.

To sing a little song
By
The
Gate.

I love the garden,
It's
The
Place.

Where I meet me,
Face
To
Face.

One, two,
You come too,
Three, four,
Out the door.
Five, six,
Some silly tricks,
Seven, eight,
I'm at the gate.
Nine, ten,
Fun again.
September Shoes

Brand new shoes
On my feet!
Sleek and squeaky,
Slick and shiny.

But, oh--those shoes,
They hurt so much--
Rub-up pinch,
Rub-upouch.

No more shoes
On my feet.
They're put away
And I'm out to play--

Barefooted!

October Leaves

October leaves came tumbling,
Down,
Down,
Down,
Red, yellow, gold, and brown.

Topsy-turvy,
Twisty-turvy,
Crispy-curly,
Crunchy-curvy.

I like the sound
Beneath my feet.
October leaves
Are fun to greet!
November Days

November days mean
Lots of company,
A big fat turkey,
The first winter snow,
Tearing boots (maybe),
Mama and Daddy at home,
A sizzling, crackling fire,
Eating buttered popcorn,
Pumpkin pie,
A big crunchy pile of leaves,
A warm, "puzzy" blanket,
And a missing front tooth!

The First Christmas

A babe was born,
Far away,
Jesus, this babe,
In a manger lay.

A star watched o'er
The peaceful child;
The cattle lowed
And the mother smiled.

The star was brighter
Than all the rest,
It shone on a babe--
Heaven blest.

Angels on high
Sang of His birth,
The news was spread
O'er all the earth.
Holiday Rush

Scurry, worry,
Hurry, flurry,
Church bells ringing,
Children singing.

People rushing,
Shoppers pushing,
Snow is falling,
Traffic stalling.

Hurry home,
Before they come,
Kitchen smells,
Excitement swells.

Why the fuss?
Why the mass?
Company's here!
Christmas cheer!

January

The cold wind stings,
The snow blows too,
January brings
Snowy things to do.

Skaters with cheeks
All rosy red,
Pile off a sled
Into crispy snow.

On a distant hill,
A skier takes
A flip-flop spill
Into snow-white flakes.

Choose a toboggan,
A ride on the sleigh,
Build a snowman
For a fun snowy day.
February's Promise

Snow is piled
High and deep,
But little children,
Don't you weep.

Snow is falling,
Hard and pelting,
Look, little children,
It fast is melting.

Snow is trickling,
With a tinkling ring,
Rejoice, little children,
A hint of spring.

Valentine Secret

I have a secret
As you'll soon see.
It's hidden in a valentine
To you from me.

Nestled in hearts
Are the words so true,
Whispering the secret
That I love you!
March's Secret

There's a secret in the air
That nature wants to share.

It rustles in leaves
And hides beneath eaves,

It nestles in roots
And sleeps among shoots,

It speaks to the crocus
And makes quite a fuss,

Sh, sh--it whispers about--
But the secret is out.

Spring-time is here--
Singing good cheer.

April's Gown

The air is fresh
And life is new,
The grass is pearled
With sparkling dew.

The trees are crowned
With laughing tresses,
While flowers sport
Fragrant dresses.

The hills resound
With birdland voices,
Nature is queen,
Green world rejoices.

The rainbow hues
Are viewed by all,
For April's dressed
For May's spring ball.
May's Spring Ball

A sunshine beam
Made April seem
Best dressed of all
For May's spring ball.

While bluebells rang
And birdies sang,
They crowned the queen
On a carpet green.

The queen was May.
The wee folk say,
Her crown was blue,
And flecked with dew.

June entered and bowed
On a snow-white cloud.
The ball was over,
In the field of clover.

June Is

June is a hot, muggy day,
A long, long play,
A strawberry sundae,
A long wedding on Sunday,
A firefly's light,
A squirt gun fight,
A mosquito bite,
A warnish night,
A castle in the sand,
A bandaged hand,
A sour lemonade,
A booming parade.
A July Birthday

Happy birthday to the U. S. A.,
July fourth is the day.
Fireworks and picnics to celebrate
Our grand old America's birth date.

August

One last swim
With my pal, Jim.
Summer fun
Will soon be done.

The school bells ring,
Just one last swing
On the garden gate.
School won't wait.
Stop, Stoop, and See

Take time, with me,
To stop, stoop, and see,
To love and to pleasure,
Each small earthly treasure.

An ant tugging,
A worn bugging.
Your face in a brook,
A cool shady nook.

An opening flower,
An ant's hill tower,
Or a slimy snail
On a tiny trail.

A fossil's print
A shell's pink tint.
Some mossy roots
Or a clover's bee.

A dainty violet in a shaded spot,
Or new green plants in a garden plot,
A tree's root--snarled and twisty
Or a piece of bark--wet and misty.

So please take time
No, not a dime,
Because it's free
To stop, stoop, and see.

Rain

God sends the rain
That fills the sea,
And God sends the rain,
That falls on me.
Parachutes from Fairyland

Little snowflakes floating,
Down from the sky.
Gently, softly, whirling
I wondered why.

Glimpse fairies, swirling,
Learning to fly.

Rain Drop Dancers

Tip-toe dancers,
Dainty and meek,
Have come to play
Upon my cheek.

Rain drop slippers,
Satin dew-pearled,
Dance the ballet
For spring's new world.
A Good Morning

The beaming sun
Smiled and said,
Quick, get up--
Get out of bed.

The Uninvited Visitor

I can be seen
But I never talk,
I visit you
But never walk.

I don't come to stay
Or creep around,
I come to peep
Without a sound.

I brush your cheeks
And cover your head,
I sleep with you
Til morn, in bed.

I am always dark
And never light,
I'll come again,
I am the night.
No One But Me

If I were my mother,  
I'd never climb a tree,  
Or if I were my dad,  
I wouldn't chase a bee.

I can hop like a bunny  
But never ever be one,  
And wig-wagging my nose  
Is just the mostest fun.

When rolling down a hill,  
Sliding down the stairs,  
Or slish, slosh, slishing puddles,  
I haven't any cares.

Fishing or wishing,  
Hiking or hiking,  
I'm always me, when I  
Do what I'm liking.

If the question were asked,  
"What do you want to be?"  
I know I would answer,  
"Why, no one but me."

Those Milk Rules

"Drink all your milk,"  
They always say,  
"And then you'll be  
A man someday."

"Why drink my milk?"  
I always call.  
"To be a boy  
Is best of all!"
Flight

By ship is in orbit
Amidst the light of stars,
Whirring, whirling,
Past the planet Mars.

I won't have to say
Thank-you and please
To little green Martians
For moon-greenish cheese.

Green blur, thank-you, sir,
Green glow, green eyes,
Green cheese, green please,
Green light of sunrise.

Please,
Please,
Please,
My home, not these.

Mother's voice,
"It's only a dream,
Come have some breakfast
Of corn flakes and cream."
No, No, No

Wash your hands,
Scrub your face,
Bow your head,
Say your grace.

No, no, no,
I say to father,
To wash my hands
Is too much bother.

Drink your milk,
Eat your peas,
Wash your hands,
And don't climb trees.

No, no, no,
I say to mother,
All these rules,
I'll not hear another!

A Fish Story

Fishery, fishery, fiddlefum fow,
I see a fish
In the water
Below.

Fishery, wishery, widdlewum whine,
I want a fish;
Will he be Mine?

Slishery, slishery, sliddlesum sing,
I catch a fish;
A wriggley Thing.

Fishery, wishery, fiddlefum dine,
I eat my fish
And he tastes Fine!
Privacy

My brother, Mike,
Always seems to like,
Places high and tall
Where I can't go,
At all, at all, at all.

He says his tree
Is privacy.
That I might fall
If I try to climb,
At all, at all, at all.

Brother and branches--
There are no chances
To climb and fall.
No fun for me,
At all, at all, at all.

Fingers

Count my fingers,
I have ten,
Tweedle-de-ha-ho,
My fat hen.

Wiggle them,
Squint them,
Wave them,
See them,
Hide them,
Find them.

Count my fingers,
I have ten,
Tweedle-de-ha-ho,
My fat hen.
Tales of Tails

Irisesy legs get up early
To twist their tails
And make them curly.

When my puppy is sad,
His tail glumly lags,
But when he is very glad,
His tail gaily wags.

When the day is sultry,
And there isn't a pool,
The peacock's tail
Will keep him cool.

The beaver is so clever,
His tail can be a lever.

The tale of the tail of
a whale is too long for a tale to tell, for the tale of the tail of a whale is a whale of a tale to tell when you're telling the tale of a tail.
I'd Never Be a Spider

I'm glad I'm not a spider,
Nor any other bug--
'Cause I'd surely get lost
Beneath a ruffled rug.

If a spider tried to do
What a boy like me can do,
He'd surely have some problems,
That would make him green and blue.

If he could ride a bicycle
With eight tiny peddles,
Then someone should give him
Eight shiny new peddles.

Eating spaghetti,
Italian style--
Would be a tricky meal
Lasting quite a long while.

It seems that a spider
Would never be able
To keep all his eight legs
Hidden under the table.

How does he pray
With "eight folded hands"
And does he throw confetti
At gay marching bands?

The spider would make
Quite a funny clown
'Cause he'd try to shake hands
And instead--fall down!

With eight tiny legs
His pace is not fast,
In a race with me
He'd still come in last.

He'd surely get caught
On an escalator,
And sore he would be
As a fancy ice skater.

I'm glad I'm no spider
And no other bug,
'Cause boys, and not spiders
Get a nice mother-bug.
Limericks

A mixed-up lady named Hock,
Had trouble setting her clock,
Then she wound her alarm
She broke her arm,
So now she wakes up with the cock.

There once was a sailor from Cuba,
Who could play quite well on the tuba,
With one loud blast
He flew to the mast,
And frightened away all of the tuna!
Smiles

Smiles can't be sold
For silver or gold.
All the world can see
That smiles are free.

Saying smiles like money
Won't make your face sunny,
So put a smile in place
Of the frown on your face.

There are friends to win
With a smile or a grin,
So give some away
Each and every day.

Look Pleasant, Please

If you never smile,
You'll lose your friends.

If you lose your friends,
Then you can't play.

If you can't play,
You'll soon be bored.

And when you're bored,
You look so glum.

When you are glum,
Life is so hum-drum.

So--
Look pleasant, please!
Happiness Is

Happiness is the blue flash of a rolling hoop,
Clean sheets with a wind-blown fragrance,
Unopened, unloved coloring book,
Pointed crayons,
New-mown grass between my toes,
More sand in my sandbox,
A cuddly kitten I call Alvin,
Paper dolls to dress,
Playing house under the drooping apple tree,
A boy speeding on a two-wheeler, a red one,
A "big one" on the end of my line,
Sniffing snapdragons,
Discovering baby kittens in the hayloft,
The pump at grandpa's house,
The first day of school,
Two rosebushes in our backyard,
Lime popsicles in summertime,
Playing next door for a long time,
A peppermint-striped dress my mommy made,
Hair ribbons and blond curls,
Getting over a tonsil operation,
Going downtown with mother and baby sister,
Louching hard,
A surprise birthday party for me,
A new baby brother,
Easter Sunday,
Under the bridge,
Hot chocolate for breakfast,
Grandma's noodles,
A "blanket tent" thrown over the fence,
Paddy coming home,
A big red sucker,
Warm peanut butter cookies on the cupboard,
A pumpkin face and trick-or-treating,
And swinging on the garden gate!
PART III
EVALUATION
To be of real value, any task or project must have a purpose or definite goal. If the goal is set among the stars, ever visible yet unattainable and intangible, the goal becomes a guide by which to steer. High achievements result from higher goals. As Robert Browning appropriately said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" 1

The values of both the research paper and the creative project will not only benefit the author but her students as well. As she steps into the role of a teacher, her love and increased knowledge of poetry can be shared with them. As J. B. Priestley reflects:

To show a child what has once delighted you, to find the child's delight added to your own, so that there is now a double delight seen in the glow of trust and affection, this is happiness.2

The teacher is a prophet, an architect, an artist, and hopefully, a poet. Any experience he can tuck into his past is of use in the present and a foundation to build on in the future. A child in part reflects the teachers he has encountered during

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1*FA's Book of Quotations, A New Collection of Famous Sayings, Reflecting the Wisdom and the Wit of Times Past and Present and Including the Virtuous, Humorous, Philosophic Commentary on Life by Men and Women of Every Age Together With Riches from the Profound Wells of the Bible, Proverbs, and Anonymity as selected by Franklin Pierce Adams.* (New York: Funk & Wagnall's, 1952), p. 68. From Robert Browning's "Andrea del Sarto."

2"Points to Ponder," *Reader's Digest*, (March, 1962), 94. (J. B. Priestley quoted in *The English Digest.*)
his education. Henry B. Adams reaffirms this statement, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."1

Writing poetry for children has been very rewarding and satisfying to the author. She enjoys writing poetry as well as prose using allegories and new approaches. It is a real delight to her to twist reality just a bit and add a special human touch of her own. A real challenge is provided each time she arranges the ideas in her mind by trial and error until the puzzle fits just right.

The author definitely feels that the involvement in this project has been an asset to her as a potential teacher. The whole realm of poetry and what it can offer to young and old alike has been opened to her. She is grateful that the project is so practical and applicable to her career and that it is something she enjoyed doing.

She defines the research and creative project combined as a "genuine and meaningful learning experience." She feels more confident and more capable in her ability to write for children as a result of her research and the advice given by Dr. Ballou. She feels that the poetry found in her research served as both a guide and a goal for her own poetry. The combined knowledge of the many poets in the castle gave her a clearer insight into the interests, desires, and characteristics of children.

Her students can now appreciate and become aware of good poetry because the author has first encountered it. She will not

be forcing poetry on her students because "it is good for them." Instead it will be a sharing process resulting from her love for poetry and children. Children will either learn to dislike poetry very much or they will return to the castle time and again after the initial pilgrimage. The latter of course is the desirable goal, but whether or not the goal is reached depends on the teacher's attitude. She can make all the difference.

To write poetry for children, one must be able to perceive the total child and the total environment of the child through the child's eyes. The genuine children's poet does not pretend to see the child's world; if he does, his pretense will be obvious. He does not remember childhood; he relives it. He does not concoct experiences in adult misconceptions; he is as a child and they are his own experiences.

Not many poets are capable of accurately recording the emotions, aspirations, thoughts, and disappointments of childhood for Time does not and will not ever move backward for anyone. The rarity of the really good children's poet is analogous to Alice's predicament in Wonderland as Barnes puts it. She was too big to get through the garden door. After she drank the contents of the bottle, she could not reach the keyhole. So it seems with adults. "When you are small enough you haven't the key; when you have the key, you aren't small enough."1

Alaster Reid effectively summarized the essence of childhood and how the poet views the child:

The principal difference between childhood and the stages of life into which it invisibly dissolves is that as children we occupy a limitless present. The past has scarcely room to exist, since, if it means anything at all, it means only the previous day. Similarly, the future is in abeyance; we are not meant to do anything about it until we reach a suitable size. Correspondingly, the present is enormous, mainly because it is all there is—a garden is as vast as Africa, and can easily become Africa, at the drop of a wish. Walks are dizzying adventures; the days tingle with unknowns, waiting to be made into wonders. Living so utterly in the present, children have an infinite power to transform; they are able to make the world into anything they wish, and they do so, with alacrity. There are no preconceptions, which is why, when a child tells us he is Napoleon, we had better behave with the respect due to a small emperor. Later in life, the transformations are forbidden: they may prove dangerous. By then, we move in a context of expectations and precedents, of past and future, and the present, whenever we manage to catch it and realize it, is a shifting, elusive question mark. Habit takes over, and days tend to slip into pigeonholes, accounted for because everything has happened before, because we know by then that life is long and has to be intelligently endured. Except that, every now and again, one of these moments occurs, so transcendent in its immediacy, so amazing in its extraordinary ordinariness, that we get a sudden glimpse of what childhood was all about and of how much the present has receded before a cluttered past and an anxious future.\(^1\)

Eleanor Farjeon concluded her Regina Award Acceptance Speech with these thoughts for reflection:

I knew—I know—that childhood is one of the states of eternity, and "in that state we came we shall return."\(^2\)

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1 Alaster Reid, "A Poet's View of Childhood," The Atlantic Monthly, CXXI, No. 3 (March, 1963), 103.

2 Eleanor Farjeon, "Regina Award Acceptance," The Horn Book Magazine, XXXV (April, 1959), 108.
PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
A. PROBLEM

To peruse the field of children's poetry, to identify people who have made major contributions to this field, and to write original poetry for children.

B. SUMMARY

The innate essence of man--his love for rhythmic, beautiful, and imaginative words, his imaginative powers, and his emotional interactions with his environment of both people and nature--has drawn him to poetry. He may be the creator of poetry or he may be the reason for its creation; he may be a poet or he may be a child. For many centuries, man has thought poetry, spoken poetry, written poetry, and/or heard poetry. Although poetry has not always been written specifically for them, children responded to poetry written for adults long before they were discovered as special recipients.

Spoken poetry can be traced back to prehistoric times--the dawn of poetry. The Holy Bible laid the basis for the first written poetry to be followed by the ballad which flourished in various forms since the fourth century. In the seventeenth century, the name of Mother Goose was attached to nursery rhymes which had been in the process of refinement for generations.

The historic upheaval within the Roman Catholic Church followed by the Protestant Reformation and the resulting division of the protesting groups is believed to have influenced the
writing of poetry for children during this period. Moralizing traditionalists sought to teach lessons in behavior during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The moralists were followed by the humorists, Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, who introduced fun and nonsense in their poetry for children. In the mid-nineteenth century, subtle moralizing was justified. With the modern discovery of the real nature of the child, poets began writing from the child's point of view. Various poets reflected on the realm of nature. Sara Teasdale is representative of this group. Walter de la Mare was one poet who chose to explore the child's world of fairyland and the supernatural.

Robert Louis Stevenson and three of his contemporary poets for children pictured the world as the child saw it. A. A. Milne, Eleanor Farjeon, and other poets recreated the child's world of play and demonstrated the imagination of a child in their poems. Dr. Seuss and Dorothy Aldis are two poets who have written poetry that makes children laugh and allows children to look at themselves as they would in a mirror. The author has attempted to write poetry for children, using the poems of successful children's authors as her guides and goals.

Children are attracted to various kinds of poetry for different reasons. Poetry permits children to see themselves, it makes them smile or laugh, it stirs their thoughts, it stimulates their imagination, and it describes the world as they interpret it. Children like poetry for some or all of these reasons. It is probable that children's needs and interests will
continue to be not and to be used as subjects for poetry. It seems unlikely that children's love for poetry will ever die; the roots of appreciation and enjoyment of poetry are deeply imbedded in the past. Since a love for poetry sprouts and thrives in children's hearts in the present, it is likely that the future will yield even more fruitful harvests as poets continue to write for children.

C. CONCLUSIONS

Writing poetry for children is not an easy task. Thus there have been few genuine poets writing for children throughout the course of history. Maturity and adulthood seem to produce a widening gap between the present and the past. A veil distorts and dims the adult's memories as he attempts to recreate his childhood. It is difficult to write poetry simply, but at the same time, to challenge young minds, to send their imaginations off into unexplored realms. The author also experienced difficulties in remembering her childhood and of being able to see the world as only a child is able to do. Sometimes words flowed easily and ideas came spontaneously; at other times thoughts just did not seem to materialize on paper. A deeper understanding and appreciation for children's poetry has been developed with the author's research and personal attempts to write poetry.
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