

Poems for Kylie  
*edited by Andy Lyons*



# Contents

Preface	5
1 Wynken, Blynken, and Nod	7
2 Be Glad Your Nose is on Your Face	9
3 The Cremation of Sam McGee	11
4 Pat-A-Cake Pat-A-Cake	13



# Preface

Kylie is my little niece. As I write this, she is only 10 months old. She loves being read to, although currently she is mostly interested in turning the pages and trying to eat the cover. I am compiling some of my favorite poems to read to her as she gets older.



*Kylie with Auntie Zilo*

# Chapter 1

## Wynken, Blynken, and Nod

*by Eugene Field, 1889*<sup>1</sup>

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.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,  
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,  
And the wind that sped them all night long  
Ruffled the waves of dew.  
The little stars were the herring fish  
That lived in that beautiful sea —  
“Now cast your nets wherever you wish —  
Never afraid are we”;  
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:  
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw  
To the stars in the twinkling foam —  
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,  
Bringing the fishermen home;  
'Twas all so pretty a sail  
it seemed  
As if it could not be,  
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed  
Of sailing that beautiful sea —  
But I shall name you the fishermen three:  
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod* is a popular poem for children written by American writer and poet Eugene Field and published on March 9, 1889. The poem is a fantasy bed-time story about three children sailing and fishing amongst the stars from a boat which is a wooden shoe. The little fishermen symbolize a sleepy child's blinking eyes and nodding head.

Wynken and Bynken are two little eyes,  
And Nod is a little head,  
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies  
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.  
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, Bynken, and Nod.



## Chapter 2

# Be Glad Your Nose is on Your Face

*by Jack Prelutsky*<sup>1</sup>

Be glad your nose is on your face,  
not pasted on some other place,  
for if it were where it is not,  
you might dislike your nose a lot.

Imagine if your precious nose  
were sandwiched in between your toes,  
that clearly would not be a treat,  
for you'd be forced to smell your feet.

Your nose would be a source of dread  
were it attached atop your head,  
it soon would drive you to despair,  
forever tickled by your hair.

Within your ear, your nose would be  
an absolute catastrophe,  
for when you were obliged to sneeze,  
your brain would rattle from the breeze.

Your nose, instead, through thick and thin,  
remains between your eyes and chin,  
not pasted on some other place—  
be glad your nose is on your face!

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<sup>1</sup>Born in 1940, Jack Prelutsky is the author of more than thirty collections and anthologies of children's poetry.



## Chapter 3

# The Cremation of Sam McGee

*by Robert Service, 1907*<sup>1</sup>

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun  
By the men who toil for gold;  
The Arctic trails have their secret tales  
That would make your blood run cold;  
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,  
But the queerest they ever did see  
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge  
I cremated Sam McGee.*

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.  
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole, God only knows.  
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;  
Though he'd often say in his homely way that he'd "sooner live in hell".

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the Dawson trail.  
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail.  
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes we couldn't see;  
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes beneath the snow,  
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,  
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "*I'll cash in this trip, I guess;  
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request.*"

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says with a sort of moan:  
"*It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.  
Yet 'tain't being dead – it's my awful dread of the icy grave that pains;  
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my last remains.*"

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore I would not fail;  
And we started on at the streak of dawn; but God! he looked ghastly pale.  
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day of his home in Tennessee;  
And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death, and I hurried, horror-driven,  
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid, because of a promise given;

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<sup>1</sup> *The Cremation of Sam McGee* is among the most famous of Robert W. Service's (1874–1958) poems. It was published in 1907 in *Songs of a Sourdough*. It concerns the cremation of a prospector who freezes to death near Lake Laberge, Yukon, Canada, as told by the man who cremates him.

It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say: "*You may tax your brawn and brains,  
But you promised true, and it's up to you to cremate those last remains.*"

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.  
In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart how I cursed that load.  
In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the huskies, round in a ring,  
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows – O God! how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;  
And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was getting low;  
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would not give in;  
And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.

Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there lay;  
It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the "Alice May".  
And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;  
Then "Here", said I, with a sudden cry, "is my cre-ma-tor-eum."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;  
Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the fuel higher;  
The flames just soared, and the furnace roared – such a blaze you seldom see;  
And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear him sizzle so;  
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to blow.  
It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks, and I don't know why;  
And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear;  
But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I ventured near;  
I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "*I'll just take a peep inside.*  
*I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked*"; ... then the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the furnace roar;  
And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: "*Please close that door.*  
*It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm –*  
*Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm.*"

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun  
By the men who toil for gold;  
The Arctic trails have their secret tales  
That would make your blood run cold;  
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,  
But the queerest they ever did see  
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge  
I cremated Sam McGee.*

## Chapter 4

# Pat-A-Cake Pat-A-Cake

*Nursery rhyme, 1698* ^["Pat-a-cake" or "patty-cake" is one of the oldest and most widely known surviving English nursery rhymes. Published in 1698.

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can  
Pat it and prick it and mark it with "B"  
Put it in the oven for baby and me

For baby and me  
For baby and me  
And there will be plenty for baby and me

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake baker's man  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can  
Pat it and prick it and mark it with "B"  
Put it in the oven for baby and me

For baby and me  
For baby and me  
And there will be plenty for baby and me