

# Foreign Lands



This is a poem that describes what a child sees as he climbs to the top of a tree. To a grown-up the things he sees may seem ordinary, but the child finds them exciting. The child wishes to climb higher still. Let us read the poem to find out what he sees.

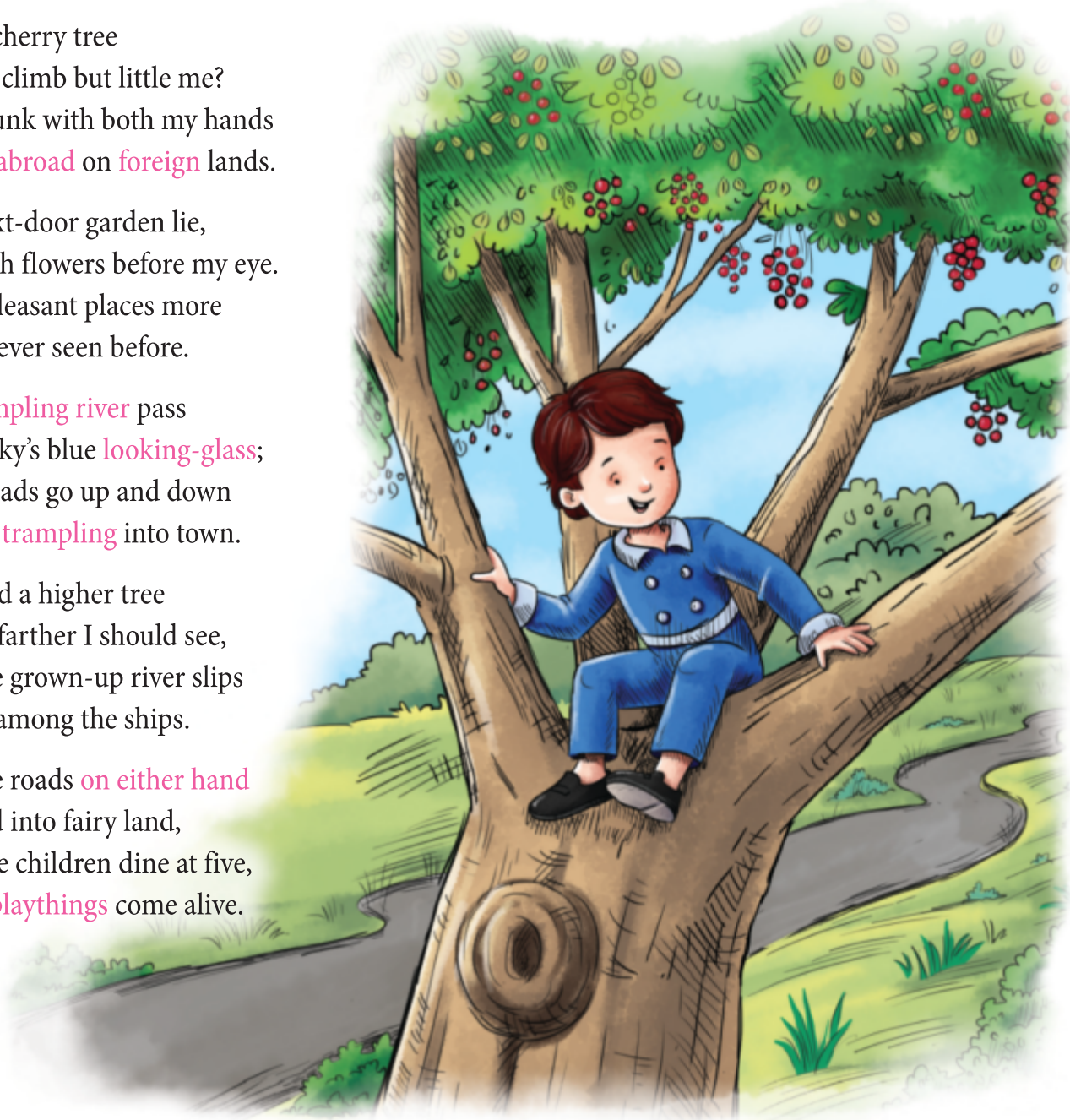
Up into the cherry tree  
Who should climb but little me?  
I held the trunk with both my hands  
And looked **abroad** on **foreign** lands.

I saw the next-door garden lie,  
**Adorned** with flowers before my eye.  
And many pleasant places more  
That I had never seen before.

I saw the **dimpling river** pass  
And be the sky's blue **looking-glass**;  
The dusty roads go up and down  
With people **trampling** into town.

If I could find a higher tree  
Farther and farther I should see,  
To where the grown-up river slips  
Into the sea among the ships.

To where the roads **on either hand**  
Lead onward into fairy land,  
Where all the children dine at five,  
And all the **playthings** come alive.



**abroad:** (here) all around

**foreign:** in or from a different country

**adorned:** decorated

**dimpling river:** as the river water flows, it looks as though it has creases that fold and unfold producing a dimple

**looking-glass:** a mirror

**trampling:** walking

**on either hand:** on both sides

**playthings:** toys

**Robert Louis Stevenson** (1850–1894) was born in Scotland on 13 November 1850. Like the child in the poem, Stevenson loved to travel. He wrote many novels and poems. *A Child's Garden of Verses* is one of his best-known collections of poetry for children. *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* are two popular novels written by him. They are full of adventure and daring.



## Make connections

Answer the following questions based on the poem.

In this section, we will:

- understand the details of the poem.
- learn how to analyse a poem.  
(C-2.1, 2.2)

1. Fill in the blanks with words from the poem.
  - a. The river is compared to a \_\_\_\_\_ for the sky.
  - b. We know the speaker is a child because he uses the word \_\_\_\_\_ to describe himself.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ is a word meaning 'at a great distance' which is often confused with 'further' which means 'more'.
  - d. Because the river seems to crease, fold and unfold; the adjective \_\_\_\_\_ has been used to describe it.
  - e. Rivers start in mountains and end in seas. So if we call a river 'young' when it is in the mountains we would call it \_\_\_\_\_ by the time it reaches the sea.
2. Read these lines and answer the questions that follow.
  - a. *I held the trunk with both my hands*  
*And looked abroad on foreign lands.*
    - i. Who has climbed the tree? What tree is it?
    - ii. What are the foreign lands that can be seen from the top of the tree?
    - iii. Are these really foreign lands? Why does the speaker say they are?
  - b. *If I could find a higher tree*  
*Farther and farther I should see.*
    - i. Why does the speaker wish to find a higher tree?
    - ii. What does the speaker wish to see from the top of the higher tree?
    - iii. Why do you think the word 'farther' is repeated?
3. Would you like to travel and see foreign lands? What would you like to see?

# Appreciation

## Expressing imagination

1. Robert Louis Stevenson's poems often tell us about the imagination of young people. Given below is a poem that describes what a young person, who had to stay in bed, imagines. Let us read it aloud. As you read, underline all the rhyming words in the poem.

### Where Go the Boats

Dark brown is the river.  
Golden is the sand.  
It flows along for ever,  
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.

2. In the last stanza of the poem the child imagines a land where playthings come alive. Imagine that you are a toy that has come alive. Write a short verse about yourself as a toy. Here is a sample for you to read.

I am a bright red and blue train  
I wonder how fast I can go on my track  
I hear the thunder, I hear the rain  
I want to travel to the moon and back  
I am a bright red and blue train.

- a. I am a \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I wonder what \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I hear \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I want to \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I am a \_\_\_\_\_