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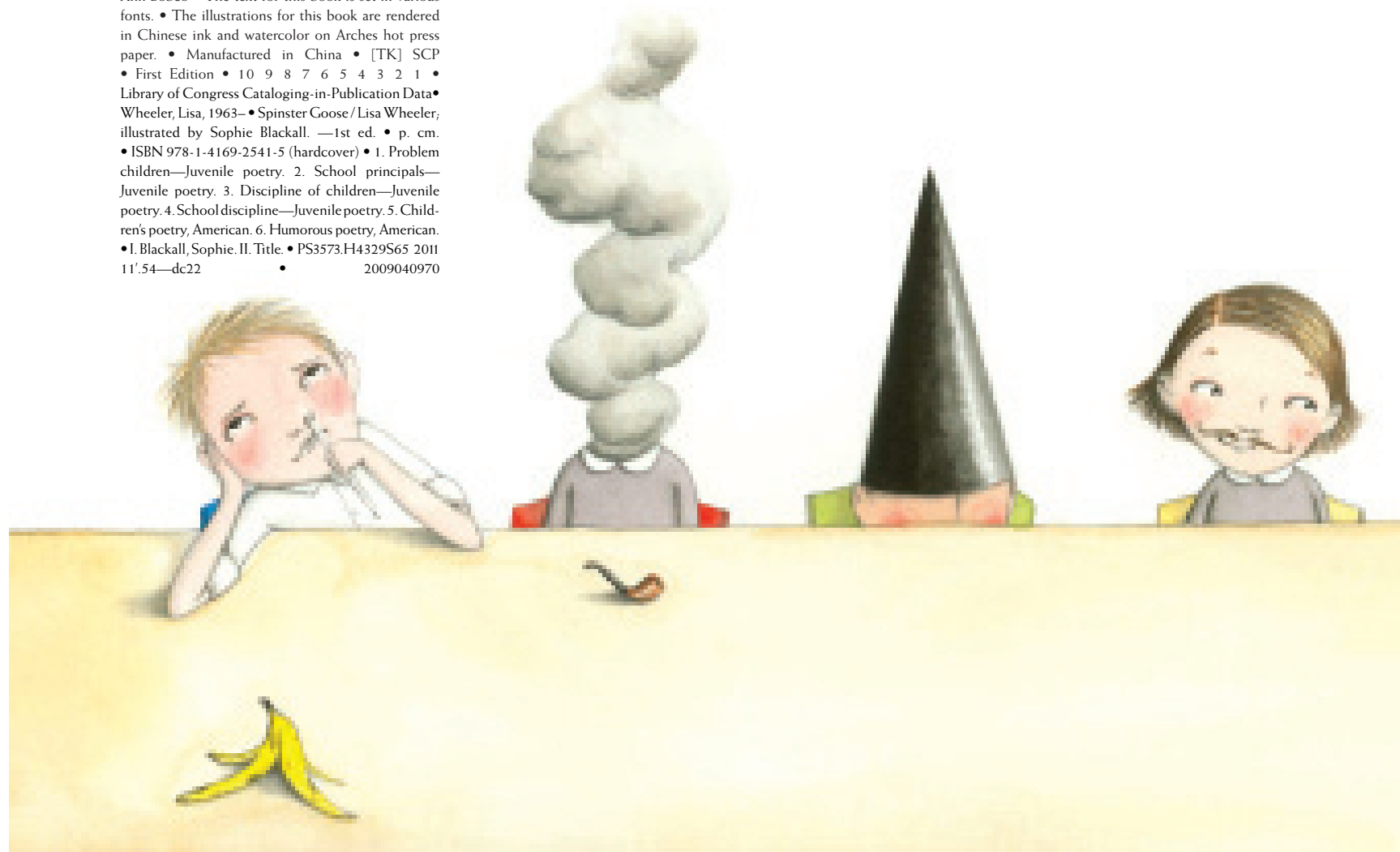




For my great-niece, Patience,
who lives up to her name.
Love, L.W.

For E. S.
—S. B.

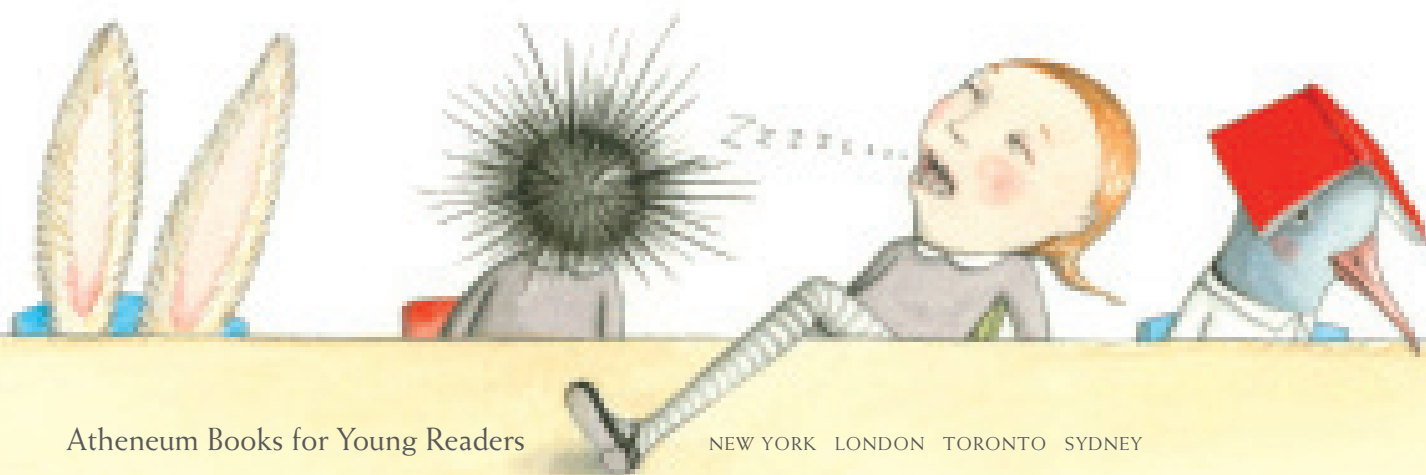
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LISA
WHEELER
&
SOPHIE
BLACKALL

Spinster Goose

Twisted
Rhymes
for
Naughty
Children



Atheneum Books for Young Readers

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY

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An Introduction from Mother Goose



There are many naughty children
far beyond my expertise.
I tried my best to help them
but the problems would not cease.



So . . .

I sent them to my sister.
Her school is well designed
to deal with uncouth urchins
who have manners unrefined.

Take a tour and please be sure
to follow every rule.
Remember . . . disobedience
will land you in her school.





Spinster Goose

Old Spinster Goose
never wanted to wander.
Instead, built a school,
which is seated down yonder.

Not painted up pretty,
it's mottled and gray.
The grounds are a nightmare.
(She likes it that way.)

Each of her charges
deserve nothing more.
For they have behaviors
that good folks abhor.

And she's always watching
to see that they mind.
Her rules and her staff
keep the children in line.



The pinchers get pinched,
and the pokers get poked.
The biters get bit
and the smokers get smoked.
The takers get taken.
The sordid get sore.
The shakers get shaken
right down to their core.

There are hundreds of rules
all beginning with NO,
and Spinster's bleak school
is the place you will go
if you are a brat
and you need to outgrow
your horrible habits.

She waits down below.

The Gum-Chewer

Chew-chaw, Margery Daw.

This girl is a gum-chewing master.

It makes her quite mad

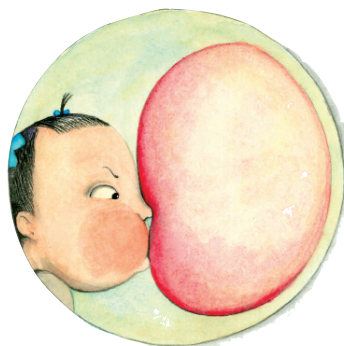
and a little bit sad

that she cannot chew any faster.

Look at her now, resembling a cow,
chomping with teeth all corroded.

Whenever she blows,

her bubble gum grows—



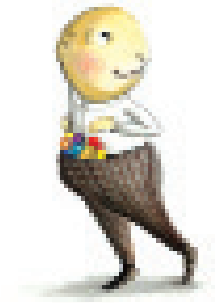


OOPS!
Too bad it exploded.

The Thief

Bobby Shaftoe went to see
where the teacher's lounge might be.
Thinks he'll get some treats for free.

Thieving little gopher!



As Bobby creeps along the hall,
Spinster hides against the wall.
He drops the bounty—sweets and all!

Trips over her loafer.



Spinster grabs him by the ear.
Says he must confess right here.
He yells the words so all can hear:

"Free snacks in the lobby!"

The greedy kids are quite intense.
They eat up all the evidence.
Spinster Goose is so incensed. . . .

Down again goes Bobby.

The Swearer

Baa Baa Black Sheep

loves to curse and swear.

Here a BLEAT. There a BLEAT.

BLEAT, BLEAT everywhere!

He says BLEAT when he's happy,

and BLEAT-BLEAT when he's blue.

He BLEATS in front of little kids.

What should the Spinster do?

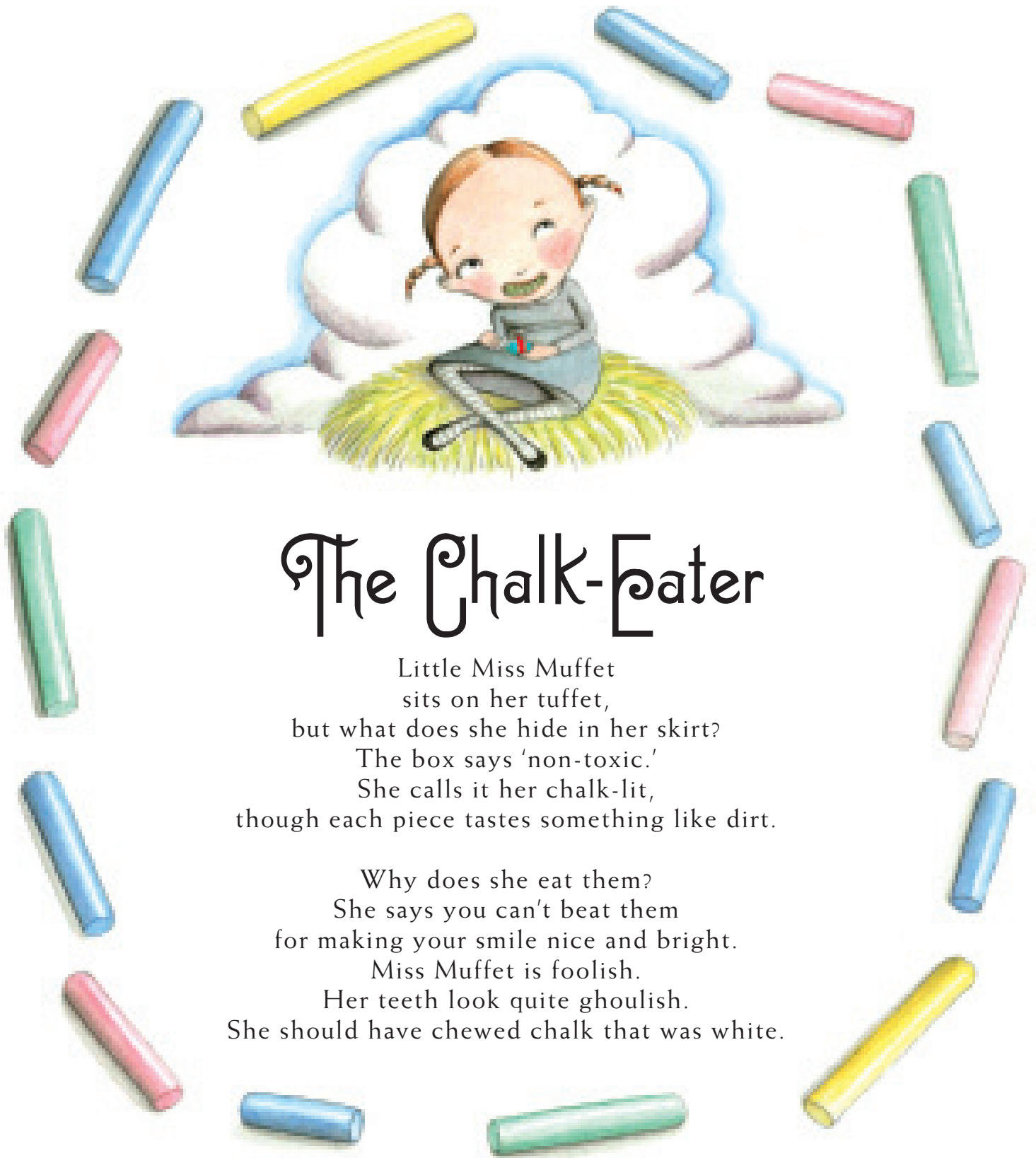
She hires shearers from the north,

hygenists from the south.

They promptly shear his BLEATING wool,

then wash his BLEATING mouth!





The Chalk-Eater

Little Miss Muffet
sits on her tuffet,
but what does she hide in her skirt?
The box says 'non-toxic.'
She calls it her chalk-lit,
though each piece tastes something like dirt.

Why does she eat them?
She says you can't beat them
for making your smile nice and bright.
Miss Muffet is foolish.
Her teeth look quite ghoulish.
She should have chewed chalk that was white.

Crooked Row

There is a crooked hall
that is called the Crooked Row.
It leads to Spinster's office—
a most dreadful place to go.

And if a crooked child
should behave in crooked ways,
he is sent down Crooked Row—
a foreboding crooked maze.

There are many crooked rumors
of the crooked things in there:
a crooked wooden paddle
and a tall electric chair,

a murky dunking tank
and yard-long leather strap,
a shiny cat-o'-nine-tails
and a crooked stretching rack.

If you've heard the crooked rumors
then you should already know:
Stay on the straight and narrow
to avoid the Crooked Row.



Student of the Week

Monday's child insulted the tutors.



Tuesday's child hacked all the computers.



Wednesday's child drew cats on the walls.



Thursday's child raced rats in the halls.



Friday's child stole seventeen lunches.



Saturday's child threw seventeen punches.

But the child who got a
Sunday detention
did something too naughty
for me to mention.



The Cooks

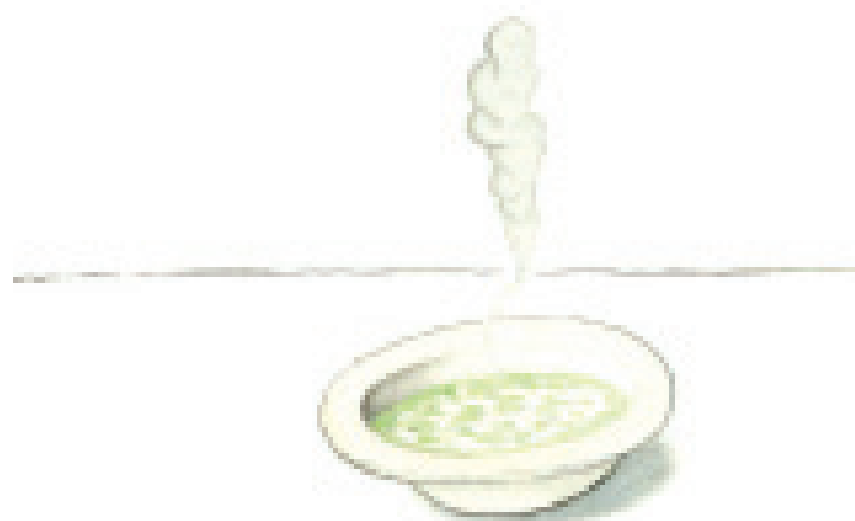
Jack Sprat stirs in the fat;
his wife dumps in the beans.
It's boiled hard in vats of lard
and served in soup tureens.

Then both the Sprats observe the brats,
all seated in their places.
The couple smiles as all the while
the young ones stuff their faces.

Bean after bean, the kids turn green.
They sweat, and shake, and drool.
As stomachs turn, the kiddies learn
the motto:
Life Is Gruel.



A Sign in the Cafeteria:



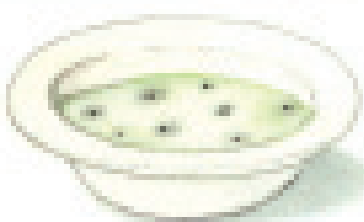
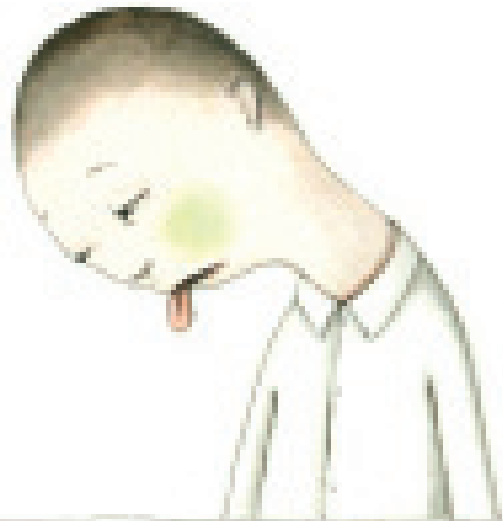
The Menu

Peas porridge hot
(I hate this food a lot.)

Peas porridge cold
(All moldy, green, and old.)

Peas porridge thin.
(In slimy gelatin.)

Peas porridge thick.
(I think I'm feeling sick.)



The Ditchers

Jack and Jill went up the hill
to ditch a boring class.
In their haste the twosome spaced
and left without a pass.



When Jack fell down and broke his crown,
Jill went to get the nurse.
Old Dame Dodd patched up his nod
but that's when things got worse.

Dame Dodd was sly—the Spinster's spy—
therefore, could not be trusted.
She grabbed the twins and turned them in.
Now Jack and Jill are busted.





Georgie Georgie
puddin' and pie.
Pushed first-graders,
made them cry.
Poked preschoolers,
took their ball.
Picked on people, weak and small.
When the Spinster came outside,
Georgie Porgie ran to hide.



But the Spinster always sees
bully boys who taunt and tease.

Georgie Porgie
beans and beets.
Now that's all this bully eats.
No more puddin'.
No more pie.
No more making kiddies cry.
When the tots come out to play,
Georgie Porgie stays away.



The Loser

Lucy Locket

lost her pocket—

lost her homework, too.

Lost her best friend at the park,

her sister at the zoo.

Forgot to walk her

St. Bernard.



Forgot to feed her fish.

Lucy Locket

left her ice cream

melting in a dish.



She also came to school today

forgetting what to wear.

Lucy Locket

has no pocket—

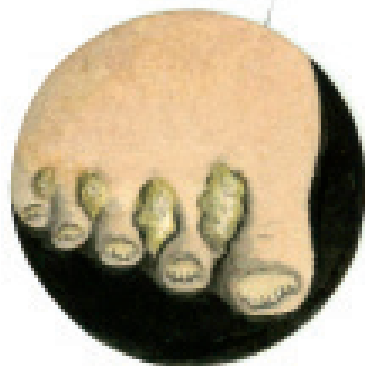
'cause she's mostly bare!

The Thumb- Sucker



A Sign in the Classroom:





The Dirty Kid

Dirty Polly Flinders
lives among the cinders,
and never, ever thinks to wash or bathe.

Her hygiene is atrocious.
Her odor is ferocious.
Her smell resembles something from the grave.

Her breath is quite appalling.
Her filthy hair is crawling!
Have you seen the stuff between her toes?

Her teeth look green and gunky.
Her fingernails are funky.
Has she ever changed or washed her clothes?

In Spinster's finest hour,
she throws her in the shower,
orders her to use the soap and sponge.

But Polly sets to striking.
The dirt is to her liking.
Can't Spinster see this punk is into grunge?

The Hair-Twirler

There was a little girl
who liked to twist and twirl
every single curl on her head.
When she was good, she was very, very good.
But when she was bad, she was . . .

bald.



Sub-standard

Rub-a-dub-dub,
each class has a sub
as mean as mean can be:
a screamer,
a teaser,
a grouchy ol' geezer—
a fearsome, formidable three.



They master at screeching.
They're horrid at teaching.
They don't know their letters or sums.



One pulled Mary's hair.
One made Black Sheep swear.
One picked up poor Jack by his thumbs!

But why have these creatures
stepped in for the teachers?



It's FREE Teacher's Day at the pool.

This threesome feels slighted
'cause they weren't invited . . .
so they get their kicks here at school.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty
hides in a stall.
Humpty Dumpty's
been there since fall.

His memory's scrambled
up in his small brain.
Poor Humpty's embarrassed,
afraid to explain.

The Spinster's hard-boiled,
and she has a knack
for grilling the students
and making them crack.

In a moment of weakness
he shared his true feeling.
Now Humpty is heartsick.
His hard shell is peeling.

Upon the school's willow,
he'd carved on a whim:

Humpty loves Spinster
and
Spinster loves him!





The Cheater

Peter, Peter was a cheater.
Stolen grades
could not be sweeter.

Made good marks for weeks and weeks—
forging essays,
sneaking peeks.

Peter laughed through many days—
stealing quizzes,
making As.

Spinster caught him in the act.
In Crooked Row
poor Peter cracked.

Peter is no longer merry.
He takes tests
in solitary.



A Sign in the Hallway:



The Custodian

Old Mother Hubbard
lives in a cupboard
along with her bucket and mop.

She tidies the rooms
with sponges and brooms,
scrubbing from bottom to top.

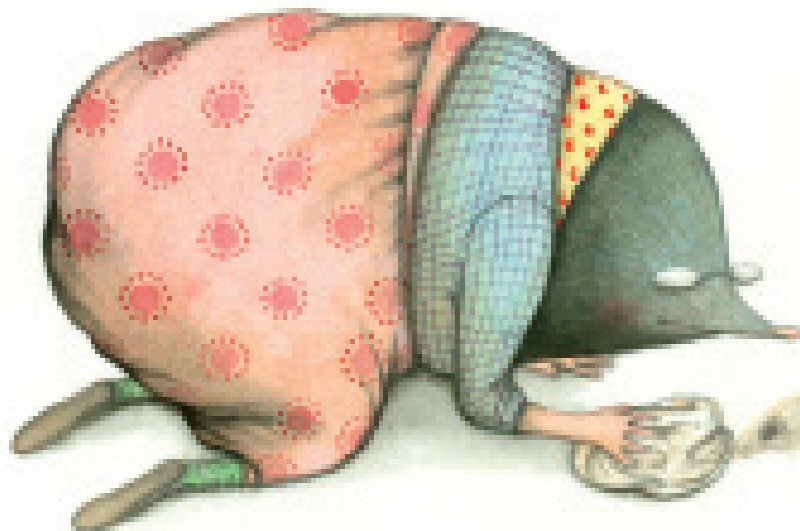
Between you and me—
what she cannot see—
her little dog follows her closely.

He scuttles behind
with dirt, mud, and grime,
besmirching the school rather grossly.



Old Hubbard is meek,
her eyesight is weak,
so she never once gets annoyed.

Her dog isn't bad,
that resourceful lad—
he's keeping his master employed!



The Interrupter

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
she's a walking dictionary.

"I think you mean encyclopedia."

Mary's such a know-it-all
even though she's three feet tall.

"I'm actually three-feet-two!"

Always interrupting folks
with her comments and her jokes.

“Why didn’t the chicken cross the road?”

Correcting people when they speak.
Injecting humor, old and weak.

“Because she was chicken. Get it? Chicken!”

Mary thinks she knows what’s best
and will not listen to the rest—

“I’m speaking here!”

of my poem that—



“Enough about you. Let’s talk about me.”





The Fibber

Mary had a little lamb.
She said it was a horse.
But anyone with eyes could see
it was a lamb, of course.

It followed her to school one day.
Which wasn't all that prudent.
Mary introduced her lamb
and said it was a student.

Mary's teacher turned them out.
(The lamb broke every rule.)
So Mary claimed her little lamb
had graduated school.

Spinster Goose was not convinced.
The lamb was not too bright.
It failed to pass the math exam
and couldn't read or write.

"Why does Mary fib so much?"
the other children cry.
She says she cannot help herself.
(Of course, that's just a lie.)

The Tattletale

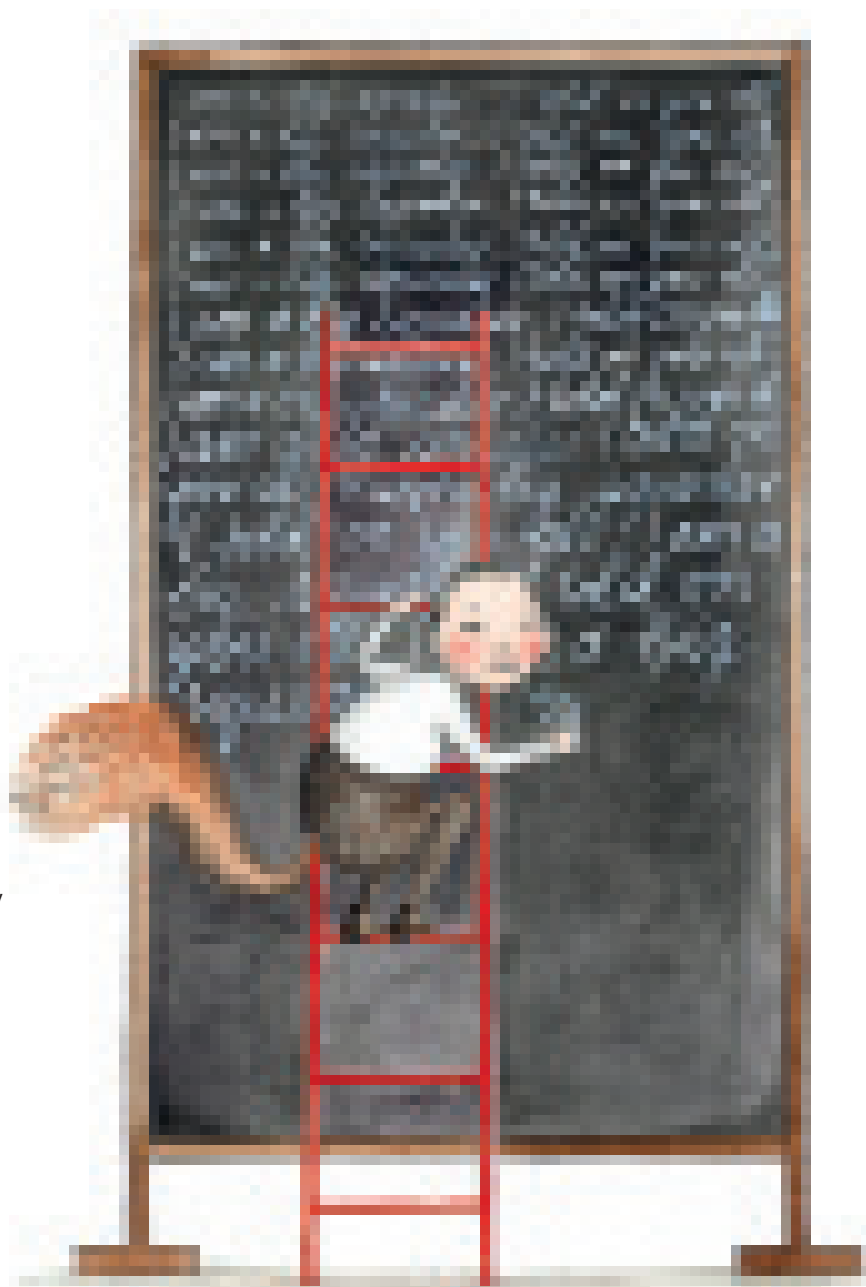
Wee Willie Winkie
runs through the school—
upstairs and down—
with an ink writing tool.

He watches the children,
takes note of their deeds.
Then runs to the Spinster
and tells what he sees.

Wee Willie's nervous.
He stammers and twitches
as Spinster Goose glares.
(She doesn't like snitches.)

And when he is finished,
so pleased with his tattling,
the Spinster decrees
a response that is rattling.

Wee Willie must write
on a board six feet tall:
"I am a big squealer.
I told on you all."



Good-bye

Sing a song of sixpence,
a pocket full of rye.

Your scheduled tour is over.
It's time to say good-bye.

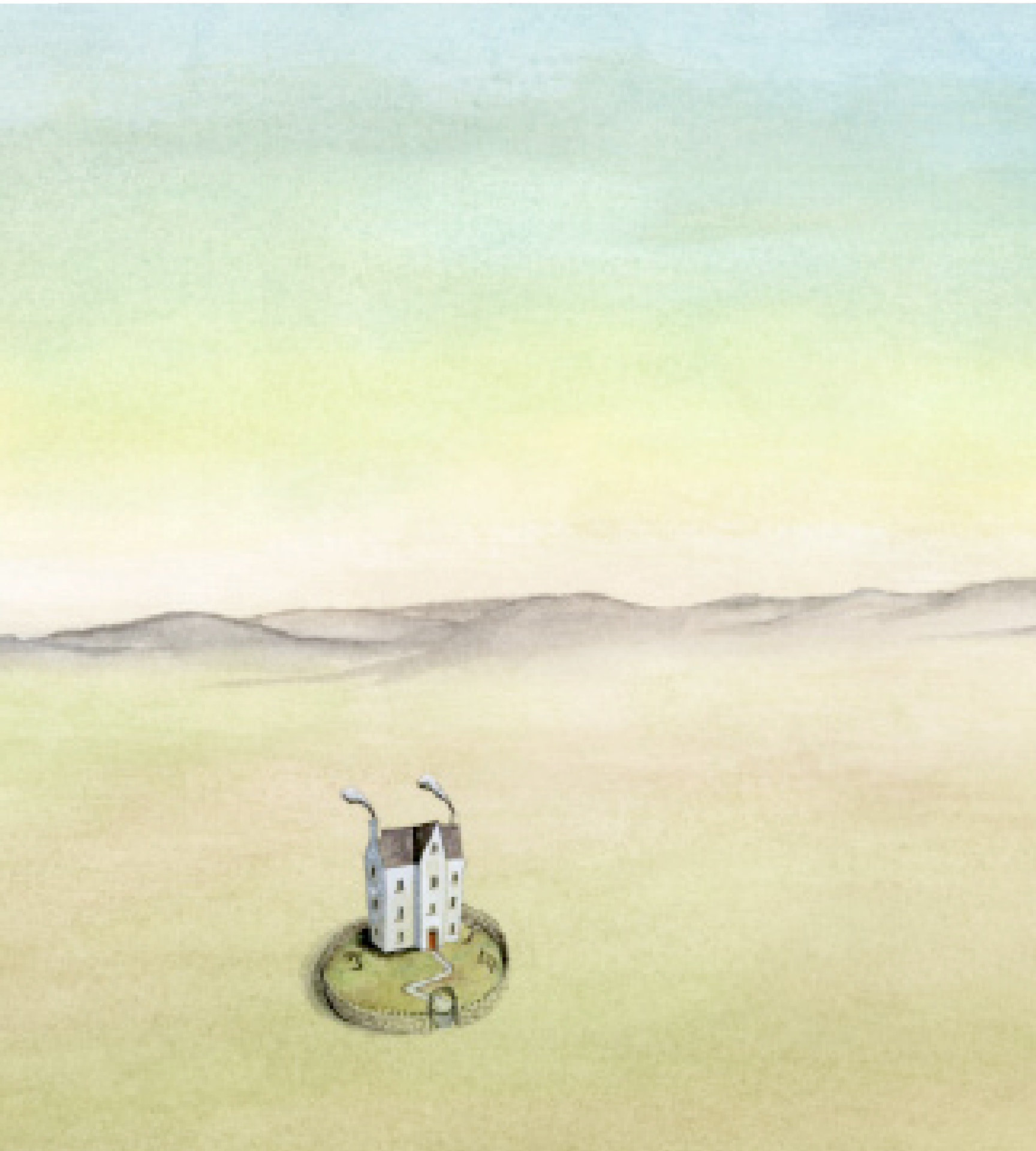
You've met the staff and students.
You know what happens here.
And since you are obedient,
you think you're in the clear.

But . . .

You'd better watch your manners.
Watch out for Spinster, too.
She'll box and wrap each little brat
and send them home to you!







paste-down