

IT'S ALL

ABOUT

THE

RHYME

By Ida J. Lewenstein



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The Poems That I Write

Let me tell you
A little about me
I've been writing poems
Since the age of three.

Come to think of it
I might have been four
I really don't remember
But...who keeps score?

My poems tell stories
As you will see
They are often rooted
In fantasy.

I write for children
Young and old
They seem to like how
My stories unfold.

The poems I write
Are written in rhyme
I write this way
Most of the time.

But rhyming, they say, is now passé
No longer the status quo
Yet who can forget the riveting rhymes
Of Edgar Allen Poe?

Or ask the child jumping rope
How do you keep in time?
It's a no brainer, says the child
It's the rhyme...always the rhyme.

As for me...
I'm going to keep on rhyming
That's the way I am.
Just think...
If no one ever wrote in rhyme
There'd be no Mary
Or her little lamb.

A Big Fat Rat

A Big Fat Rat
Sat alone on a mat
Passing the time away.

A Lean Mean Cat
Spied this rat.
Said he –
This is my lucky day!

The Lean Mean Cat
Pounced on the mat
Devoured the rat
And THAT was THAT!

Now a Big Fat Cat
Sits on the very same mat,
Purring the time away.

My Secret Rocket

Here in my hand
Is a small rubber band.
It's small right now
But watch it
E...X...P....A.....N.....D.

I pull it...
I stretch it...
And then let it go.
Where it'll land
I never know.

I like to watch it
Rise and fall.
Sometimes it smacks
Right INTO A WALL!

It's fun to stretch it
Into this or that angle
But the one I like best
Is a BIG RECTANGLE.

To make this shape
I use ALL MY FORCE.
Then let go
And follow its course.

I always keep one
In my little back pocket.
And sometimes I pretend
That it's a ROCKET!

“LIFT OFF!” I yell
We're headed for the MOON –
We'll circle the stars
And be back by noon.

It's fun to pretend that
This small rubber band
Will do WHATEVER I want
On my command.

A Sad Little Dog

A sad little dog
Sat down on a log
And oh, did he
complain!

“I’m a little dog –
Such a tiny dog –
If only I were
A GREAT DANE!”

Said a wise little frog
On a nearby log –
“Little dog, don’t be
blue.

Look at me
And you can see
That I am little too.”

“But I don’t moan
And I don’t whine.
In fact, I like being me
Most of the time.”

Said the sad little dog
To the wise little frog –
“That may be all right for you.
But if I were a Great Dane
I’d never complain
Because there’s so much
More I could do.”

“You see, I could leap and run –
And have so much fun
Chasing after a ball,
But with these little feet
I can’t compete –
I can’t do much at all.”

“Little dog,
So you can’t leap
Or win a race
Don’t you worry –
That’s no disgrace!
Being small has its place.”

“Little frog, maybe it’s true
All that you say –
It's just that I never
Think of myself that way.”

“But you're right –
I can fit into a closet
Meant for a broom.
Can you imagine a Great Dane
In such a room?”

“And too, I can sleep under a bed
Or on a chair.
I can lay my head down
Most anywhere.”

“What’s more – I can nap
On a lap
Just like a cat.
I'd like to see a
Great Dane
Do THAT!”

“And a little kibble
Is all I eat.
I don't need
Pounds and pounds of meat!”

“I guess I have no reason
To complain.
So I think I'll stay
Just the same.”

“So thank you, little frog
For making me see
That it's really OK
To be LITTLE – like me.”

The Weary Little Clock

There once was a weary, little
clock

Who was tired of hearing
That same – ol’ tick-tock.

Tick-TOCK

Beat the clock on the wall.

Tick-TOCK

Echoed the one down the hall.

Tick-TOCK

Ticked the one near the bed.

Tick-TOCK

Chimed the one overhead.

Tick-tock, tick-tock

Around the clock

Morning, night and noon

Tick-tock, tick-tock

Always the same old tune.

It got to the point

He would cover his ears

And there were times

He just burst into tears.

This poor, weary clock
Was losing his mind
So he went out looking
Determined to find
Another click,
Another sound.
He looked up at the sky
And put his ear to the ground.

He listened to the birds
He listened to the bees
And even to the rustle
Of the leaves.
But those sounds were not
What he had in mind.

So he kept on listening
Hoping to find
Something pleasing
To his ear –
Something that he
Would really like to hear.

On hearing THIS
There arose a loud clatter
Those other clocks
Began to chatter.

Said one, “What’s the matter
With the way I tock?
After all, I am a clock!
We’ve been tick-tocking this way
For a long, long time
It’s what we like
IT SUITS US FINE!”

These clocks were so angry –
So up in arms
It’s no wonder their loud ticking
Set off their alarms.

Fortunately for him
On that very same day
He saw a boy with a stick
Tapping away.

He listened closely
And he could hear
A tick that was pleasing
To his ear.

He repeated the sound
Tock-tick, Tock-tick
Said he – I like that sound –
That’s the one I’ll pick.
It was then he gleefully shouted
“No more tick-tocks!
I’ll leave that
To all those other clocks.”

Thereafter, he would go
On his merry old way
Tock-ticking – tock ticking
Night and Day.

Tock – tick
Tock – tick
Tock – tick
Tock – tick
I like that sound –
It’s the one I’ll pick.

A Little Chair

Once there was a little chair
Who said to himself – It's just not fair
While others go here and there
All I do is SIT and STARE
At that corner window over there.

This is no life for me –
There is SO much more I want to see!

Day after day, I see legs come and go
How they do it, I don't know
But if it takes legs to get out this door –
I have – let's see – one, two, three – no, FOUR !

I see mommas come and go
I see children running to and fro
I see people moving all about
It seems so easy – I want to shout
Hey! Let me try it – Let me out!

One day while she was cleaning the floor,
The mother put me out the door.
A gust of wind blew me off my feet
And sent me rolling down the street.

I rolled so fast, I rolled so hard,
I rolled right into someone's yard.

Said a little boy who saw me there
Just what I need – a little chair.
This will be my wagon seat
Now my wagon is complete.

A wish came true
For this little chair
Now it travels EVERYWHERE.

Down the street and
Around the block,
OH! What it would say
If it could REALLY talk!

Rain... Rain Go Away

Rain...rain go away
Come again
Some other day.

On second thought
You had better stay
We need you now
In every way.

You see, we're having
A terrible drought
We beg you please...
Open wide your water spout.

Our reservoirs are at
An all-time low
There is not much water
In the melting snow.

Without water
Plants can't grow
Fish can't swim
And rivers can't flow.

Rain...rain
DON'T go 'way
We need you now
More than we can say.

If I Let It... In My Room

My room
Could be a tomb
Filled with gloom and doom
If I let it...

It could also be a stage
Where I could express
Love or even rage
If I let it...

It could become my favorite spot
To peel back time and
Reminisce a lot
If I let it...

And last but not least –
It could become my Camelot
Where good things happen and
Bad things do not
If I let it...

Sky Visits Earth

One day

Sky looked down
And said to himself –

Sky- “I’m tired of being up here
Alone on this shelf.
I think I’ll go down
Way down to the ground
Visit Earth
And look all around.”

Earth looked up
Shaking with fear,

Earth- “Sky, stay up there!
Don’t come down here!
Visit a planet
Or maybe a star
They are much nearer to you
Much nearer by far!”

Sky-

“All I want
Is a closer view.
I won’t stay long,
I promise you.

“And besides, I’m so light –
So full of air
You won’t know
That I’m even there.”

Earth-

“OK – OK!
Just a look and a see,
Remember, Sky –
You promised me!”

Sky-

“Oh, all right
That’s what I’ll do.
You’ll see – you’ll see –
I won’t bother you!

“I just want to see
‘Cause I have no way of knowing
Are those trees very tall?
Is that grass really growing?

“Is that blanket of white
Really snow?
Are those rivers down there flowing?
Just where do they go?

“There’s nothing like that
Way up here.
Nothing but clouds
And atmosphere.”

But Earth was still worried
As she could be.

Earth- “What will I look like
When he lands on me?

“Will he flatten my mountains?
Will he fill up my sea?
Oh, what will I look like
When he lands on me?”

Give it some thought –
Just what would you do
If Sky decides
To visit you?

An Immigrant's Dilemma

“Much” is a word
I've often heard
But don't know much about.

And then there's "many"
A word I hear plenty
But still have many a doubt.

I've given some thought
To the words "a lot"
A lot of times I've misused.

And "tree" and "three"
Sound SO much alike to me –
No wonder I'm confused.

Now "didja" is a word
That's really absurd –
In fact, it makes me wary.

I look and look,
But it's not in my book
Nor in any dictionary.

What does it take
(For heaven's sake)
To master English lessons?

Even a fool
Can learn a rule
But what about those exceptions?

When I was young
My mother tongue
Was easy to speak and spell.

I wait for the day
When someone will say,
"You speak English good"
(or is it "well"?)

Consider the Litter

Consider the litter
We so willingly disown –
It keeps right on growing
With a life of its own.

It's out there!
It's down there!
It's around every turn.
We neglect it –
We reject it –
It's not our concern.

It slips from our fingers
And onto the street.
But we keep right on walking –
Never missing a beat.

The wrapper – the bag –
The Styrofoam cup
We hope some do-gooder
Will soon pick it up.

It's curious
That we humans
With our superior brain
Act in ways that are
Hard to explain.

But deep in the jungle
And way out of sight
There's a group of monkeys
Who do things just right.

They know a good way
To leave their place clean.
And under their tree
They leave no messy scene!

You see, they're the sort
That eat all of their meal.
They first eat the banana
And then eat the peel.

I think from these monkeys
We can all take our cue
And eat our snack food
As these bright creatures do.

Oh, how I wish
For an edible dish –
And an edible can and cup.
Oh, what a treat
To walk down the street
And find there's no trash
To pick up!

Footprints in the Sand

Footprints in the sand
Disappear with the rising tide
But carbon footprints are everywhere
Those you cannot hide.

They blacken the skies
They hurt our eyes
They trap the sun
Temperatures rise.

They scorch the earth
Plants can't grow
People are starving
Far more than we know.

Does it have to get worse
Before we take action?
Or do we consider it simply
Just another distraction?

God Also Made The Flea

Ogden Nash wrote:

The Lord in his wisdom made the fly.
And then forgot to tell us why.

Ida Lewenstein wrote:

God also made the flea
Without consulting you or me.
Why he created this pesky pest
I don't know, only he knows best.

Goldilocks and The Bear

Goldilocks met an enormous, bearish bear

Did she worry? Au contraire.

This bear was friendly to little girls

Especially those with golden curls.

This bear liked patting her golden tresses

And hugging her gently with caresses

Did Goldilocks worry? Au contraire.

She was getting to like this huggable bear.

This bear was huge and very hairish

Without a doubt looked very bearish

But yet there was a side of him

Well I'd say...rather...debonairish.

Did Goldilocks worry? Au contraire.

She was quite taken by his eloquent air.

One day, this very hairish bear

Invited Goldilocks to his lair.

There he surprised her with gourmet fare

Berries and honey and a prickly pear

Followed by cheese...a savory gruyere.

Did Goldilocks worry? Au contraire.
She ate it all...with room to spare
And then...washed it down
With vin ordinaire.

What came next?
I don't know – but for what it's worth
Glancing at the bear's expanded girth
He probably ate her...
For des...serth.

I Like to Rhyme

I like to rhyme
It suits me fine.
In fact, I write this way
Most of the time.

I like the rhythm.
I like the beat.
I like the meter
I often repeat.

Be it ionic pentameter
Anapest or trochee
It doesn't matter
At all to me.

I like to rhyme.

It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature

It's not nice to fool Mother Nature

So the saying goes.

Yet, we trample her sites –

Create hideous blights.

Each day the problem grows.

We have no right to fool Mother Nature

We're treading on her toes.

We tell her we care

Yet we go on polluting her air.

We've shaken her, heaven knows!

All around us are glaring reminders

But we have on dark blinders

Not realizing what we do.

If it doesn't affect us

Don't expect us

To change our point of view.

It really should alarm us

For eventually it'll harm us

Yet, we don't seem to make much fuss.

There's an enemy out there

But we don't seem to care

I think the enemy is US!

I've Got Writer's Block!

Writers Block! I've Got Writer's Block!

What on earth should I do?

It would be nice

If I could give you advice

But I'm in the same boat as you!

So you have Writer's Block...

When I think of what

We call Writer's Block

I think of a key

Stuck deep in a lock.

The more you jiggle it –

The more you persist –

It's for certain that

It's going to resist.

My advice to you

For 2 cents plain

Let it all go!

CLEAR YOUR BRAIN!

Take a break
Listen to rock
Better yet –
Listen to Bach.

Work a puzzle
Knit a sweater
Tomorrow, for sure
Things will be better.

Limericks

There once was a girl named Sue
Who would utter things...untrue
When they would ask her why?
She would heave a big sigh
Saying – I don't know why, I just do.

There once was a parrot named Mush
Who usually spoke in a hush
But when they'd cover his cage
He'd go into a rage, screeching cuss words
To make a sailor blush.

There once was a girl called a-CHOO
Who lived in an icy i-GLOO
It was damp; it was freezing
She couldn't stop sneezing
No wonder they called her a-CHOO!

I once met a man called Brett
Who's someone I cannot forget
I asked him to dine
But he had to decline
Saying – Sorry, I already done et.

Memory

Memory is a funny thing
Some people remember it all.
Then there are those who
Write it all down and
Still others who seldom recall.

Ode to Ogden

Dear Ogden,

My husband tells me

That my poems and rhymes oft times

Remind him of you.

I can't tell you how much this has meant –

After all, it's quite a compliment.

But then, he has a biased view...husbands often do.

For sure, I strive for humor and dash –

But come on – No one can write

Like Ogden Nash.

No, there is no one around like you!

And Ogden,

All of your poems

Are little jewels.

Who cares if you break

Those silly ol' rules.

For instance, we simply love

How you turn a word

Into something

No one's ever heard.

Words like wearance and tearance
Are in your lexicon.
They're not British or French
And certainly not Mexican.

And then, some of your poems
Are so outlandish,
I often wonder how
They would sound in Spanish.

In addition,
I want to mention.
It's your two-line verses
That get my attention.

Candy is dandy
But liquor is quicker.

Nowadays, blank verse
Is all the rage.
Words seem to flow freely
Across the page.
There is little need
For meter or rhyme.
It's restricting they say –
A waste of time.

But, it's your whimsical rhymes
I love to quote,
The one 'bout the fly
I wish I had wrote.

The Lord in his wisdom made the fly.
But then forgot to tell us why.

There are times your phrases
Are ever so sparsely.
Who would say –
Parsley is gharsley.

And who can forget
Your ode to a tree
That you write about
So poignantly.

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.
Moreover, the things you say
'Bout the frailties of men
Come back to haunt us
Time and again.

Professional men, they have no cares
Whatever happens, they get theirs.

Those More Innocent Days

Remember Rip Van Winkle
That amiable chap
Who woke up one day
After a twenty-year nap?

He was often surprised
And also distressed
By the way people acted
And the way people dressed.

Well, sometimes I feel
The same as he
I look in wonderment
At the strange things I see.

I walk down the street
And what do you suppose?
There's a girl walking toward me
With a ring in her nose.

There's a boy with blue hair
Wearing pants that hang low
I ask – Is this for real
Or just for show?

I see a kid in a car
The music blaring
He's bobbing and weaving
Not looking – not caring.

It is then I look back
On Those More Innocent Days
When we all dressed
In more conservative ways.

Girls in loose-fitting sweaters
And colorful plaid skirts
Boys in well-fitting cords
And checkered shirts.

No one I knew wore a ring in her nose
No one would be seen with his bottom exposed
Rarely did one drive with the music blaring
To be sure – we had fun
But we weren't THAT DARING!

Nowadays, MELODY is OUT!
RAP is THE THING!
But who can follow it –
Let alone...sing?

I'm so glad I was around
When melody was king –
Frank Sinatra, Glenn Miller
And Oh...that swing!

It seems that each generation
Has its very own ways
As for me, I'm glad I grew up
In Those More Innocent Days.

The World Is Warming Day By Day

The die is cast
The experts say
The world is warming
Day by day.

We've ignored those warnings
It's quite alarming
Glaciers are melting
Penguins are starving.

Polar bears are losing
Their hunting ground
The seas are rising
All around.

Precious time
We've frittered away
Now the piper
We must pay.

No time to waste
We must act soon!
There's
An Elephant
Stirring
In the
ROOM!

Un Poco De Spanglish

Los hombres fuman en el autobus

The men smoke on the bus

They smoke all the time.

El letrero dice: NO FUMAR !

The sign (above) says No smoking!

Pero el humo hides the sign.

But the smoke ...

A Perplexing Poem

I read a perplexing poem
today.

I'm not really sure
What it's trying to say.

But someone apparently
More daring than me
Decided to print it
For all to see.

It harps on one word –
One word, ad infinitum.
But don't look at me
I just read 'em
I don't write 'em.

I just scratch my head
In serious doubt,
And leave it to you
To figure it out.

Tough, tough tough
tough, tough tough the
wheels are tough, the
seats are tough, the
valves are tough, and
you're one tough guy
driving this tough truck

To me...

There's no flashes of Ogden Nash
Nor hint of Edgar Allen Poe,
Rather, I find it stuck in neutral
With simply nowhere to go.

Please help me out
It's tough to see
Is this really – poetry?

A Bird On My Dome

I awoke one morning
Ready to jump out of bed
But was stopped by something
Pressing on my head.

I thought I was dreaming
But mirrors don't lie
There was a bird on my dome
Staring me in the eye.

I called to this bird
This uninvited guest –
My head is not a home
And certainly not your nest!

You there – sitting on my dome
Is more than I can bear
You're ruining my good looks
And mussing up my hair!

I beg you little bird
Please leave me be
Fly away now
And find yourself a tree!

Mama bird – You know I’ve searched and
searched

For a ready-made nest
And of all the places
Your dome looked the best.

I love your hair – so thick and bushy
Something I love to pat
What’s more, it’s so soft and cushy
Who could resist all that?

Gathering leaves and twigs is such a chore
Just where would I begin?
Here was a ready-made nest
Inviting me to move right in.

-

Bewildered, I hurried back to my mirror
She was still there, all right
Now I’ll have to think of something
To keep her out of sight.

Perhaps, I could wear a hat
To cover up my head
But what would I do at night
When I'm ready to go to bed?

Should I keep my window open
So that she can come and go as she pleases?
What would happen if suddenly
I started to sneeze – earth-shaking sneezes?

No one I know has a bird on her dome.
Oh, why does she pick on me?
Why can't she be a normal bird
And build her nest in a tree?

This is some predicament!
And certainly not fair
At times, I feel as if I want to
Tear out all my hair!

Perhaps, if my hair was straight
And also rather thin
I'm sure that this little bird
Would never think of moving in!

My Poems

(From Jack Prelutsky's poem starters)

A Turtle

Because I am a turtle
I have no need to roam
I simply stick my head inside
And call it “Home Sweet Home”.

A Cow

I moo because I'm happy
Doing what I do
And often
When I feel that way
I say it with a moo.

We Are The Cyber Generation

We are the CYBER GENERATION

We want the latest Apps right now!

Sadly, we are hardly aware

And don't much care

Where they are made

Or even how!

We are a SMART GENERATION

We have no time to waste

We walk and talk

Talk and walk

With an iPhone in our face.

(We live in cyberspace.)

We are the NOW GENERATION

We buy and dispose

We buy and dispose

With rarely a thought

To where it ultimately goes

We want the latest Apps right now

AND HOW!

Ida's Commentary

Read about the thoughts behind every poem!

The Poems I Write

I wrote poems in rhyme as a child and have continued to do so throughout my adulthood.

Big Fat Rat

This poem came from my ESL lesson on pronunciation of the letter “a,” as in rat, fat, cat, mat.

My Secret Rocket

This poem is about a little boy and his imagination. He imagines his rubber band is a rocket that takes him to lots of interesting places.

Sad Little Dog (two voices – dog and frog)

This poem came from my ESL lesson on pronunciation of the letter “o,” as in log, dog, frog. The story is also a commentary about accepting who you are, and feeling proud about it.

Weary Little Clock

This poem is about a clock who is not happy with the way things are. He looks for a new sound to replace the tick-tocks of the clocks around him, and also for himself.

The Little Chair

This poem is about a little chair who is envious of all that he sees out the window, such as children moving about. He wants to move about himself.

Rain Rain Go Away

This is a poem to help children understand what a drought is all about. The inspiration comes from the poet having been in a drought in California.

If I Let It...

This poem comes from the fact that I am quarantined in my room during the COVID-19 crisis.

Sky Visits Earth

Sky Visits Earth is a story-poem for young children. In a flight-of-fancy, the story attaches human qualities to both Sky and Earth, suggesting the conversation that might take place between the two if Sky decides he wants to come down to visit Earth to take a look around, and how Earth might feel about such a prospect.

An Immigrant's Dilemma

This poem stems from my mother, who had a very hard time speaking English.

Consider the Litter

I wrote this poem in reaction to my experience:

I was sitting in the window of the hairdresser, watching high school students toss onto the sidewalk the paper wrappers from their fast-food lunches as they walked back to school.

Footprints in the Sand

This is an environmental poem that speaks to our changing climate.

God Also Made the Flea

Ogden Nash wrote a famous poem about a fly,
and I wrote a poem in reaction to his.

Goldilocks and the Bear

I've taken the children's poem, Goldilocks and
the Three Bears, a step further, featuring an
encounter between Goldi and a very romantic
bear. Apparently, the encounter doesn't end
well for Goldi.

I Like to Rhyme

As a child, I liked to write poems that rhymed,
and I have continued to do so throughout my
adulthood.

It's Not Nice to Fool Mother Nature

For too long, we pretended that climate change
does not exist. Now we're paying the price for
that.

I've Got Writer's Block

Writer's block is a very common occurrence
among writers – one I know all too well!

Limericks

I had seen so many limericks, that I decided to try out writing some of my own.

Memory

As we get older, memory becomes a problem for many of us.

Ode to Ogden

Some people say that my poems remind them of Ogden Nash, and I guess they do. Ogden has been my inspiration for whatever I write.

Those More Innocent Days

This poem is a look-back to what life was like in the 1940s and 1950s – a far more innocent time than today.

The World Is Warming Day by Day

This poem calls our attention to climate change.

Un poco de Spanglish

This poem is a fun diversion that combines English and Spanish.

A Perplexing Poem

This is a fun poem that I read about in the SF Chronicle, and I decided to write about it.

A Bird on My Dome

This poem about a stork was inspired by Jack Prelutsky.

My Poems

Jack Prelutsky is a famous writer of children's poems. He was my inspiration for these two short poems, and also for "A Bird on my Dome".

We Are the Cyber Generation

We are the new generation who want all the latest apps, right now. We are not mindful of the waste we are producing.