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.

A. A. MILNE
Your Birthday Cake

Your birthday cake is made of mud
Because I cannot cook.
I cannot read a recipe or follow in a book.
I’m not allowed to use the stove
To simmer, roast, or bake.
I have no money of my own to buy a birthday cake.
I’m sure to get in trouble if I mess around with dough.
But I’ve made your birthday cake of mud
Because I love you so.

ROSEMARY WELLS
Beach Time
We’re driving to the beach now,
The air’s potato chips—
so salty on my fingers,
so salty on my lips.

We’re running on the beach now,
The waves play with the sea.
I wonder if I’m chasing them
or if they’re chasing me.
We have to leave the beach now,
Good-bye sand and sun and foam.
But in my hand I hold a shell
to bring the beach back home.

Marilyn Singer
THE MAGIC PIPER

Here piped a piper in the wood
Strange music – soft and sweet –
And all the little wild things
Came hurrying to his feet.

They sat around him on the grass,
Enchanted, unafraid,
And listened, as with shining eyes
Sweet melodies he made.

The wood grew green, and flowers sprang up,
The birds began to sing;
For the music it was magic,
And the piper’s name was – Spring!

E. L. MARSH
**LOST RAINBOW**

One day  
coming home from school  
(where else?)  
I found a rainbow  
Lost  
and sad  
and torn  
and broken  
on a garage forecourt.  
I picked it up,  
wrapped it in a Wonderloaf wrapper  
(which was also lost)  
and took it home  
where I warmed it  
and dried it  
in front of my mother's fire  
But it died.

I think it must have been  
a very old rainbow.

*Peter Dixon*
Wet

Wet wet wet
the world of melting winter,
icicles weeping themselves away
on the eaves
little brown rivers streaming
down the road
nibbling
at the edges of the tired snow,
    all puddled mud
not a dry place to put
    a booted foot,
everything
dripping
slipping
gushing
slushing
and listen to that brook
rushing
like a puppy loosed from its leash.

Lilian Moore
WHAT IS PINK?

What is pink? a rose is pink
By the fountain’s brink.
What is red? a poppy’s red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro’
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? why, an orange,
Just an orange!

Christina Rossetti
My Little Sister

My little sister used to get on my nerves.
She'd borrow things without asking, then put them back in the wrong place.
When my friends came round, she'd pester them until they'd let her play with them.
If there was something I wanted to watch, she'd refuse to change channels unless I bribed her.
When she woke up in the middle of the night, she'd crawl in beside me and wake me up with her wriggling.
My little sister used to get on my nerves. But the bedroom seems so empty without her and I miss her terribly.

John Foster
Have You Ever Seen?

Have you ever seen a duvet on a flower bed?
Or a single hair from a hammer's head?
Has the foot of a mountain got any toes?
And can you cross over the bridge of a nose?

Why don't the hands on a clock ever clap?
Or the wings of a building flutter or flap?
Can the bottoms of oceans sit down for their tea?
And can you unlock the trunk of a tree?

Are the teeth of a comb ever going to bite?
Can the eye of a needle look left - and then right?
Has the bank of a river ever got any cash?
And how loud is the sound of a computer's crash?

Anon, adapted by Phillip Hawthorn
WAKING UP

Oh! I have just had such a lovely dream!
And then I woke,
And all the dream went out like kettle-steam,
Or chimney-smoke.

My dream was all about – how funny, though!
I’ve only just
Dreamed it, and now it has begun to blow
Away like dust.

In it I went – no! in my dream I had –
No, that’s not it!
I can’t remember, oh, it is too bad,
My dream a bit.

But I saw something beautiful, I’m sure –
Then someone spoke,
And then I didn’t see it any more,
Because I woke.

ELEANOR FARJEON
Light of day going,
Harvest moon glowing,
People beginning to snore,
Tawny owl calling,
Dead of night falling,
Littlemouse opening her door.

Scrabbling and tripping,
Sliding and slipping,
Over the ruts of the plough,
Under the field gate,
Mustn’t arrive late,
Littlemouse hurrying now.

Into a clearing,
All the birds cheering,
Woodpecker blowing a horn,
Nightingale fluting,
Blackbird toot-tooting,
Littlemouse dancing till dawn.

Soon comes the morning,
No time for yawning,
Home again Littlemouse creeps,
Over the furrow,
Back to her burrow,
Into bed. Littlemouse sleeps.
THE SECRET SONG

Who saw the petals
     drop from the rose?
I, said the spider,
But nobody knows.

Who saw the sunset
     flash on a bird?
I, said the fish,
But nobody heard.

Who saw the fog
     come over the sea?
I, said the sea pigeon,
Only me.

Who saw the first
     green light of the sun?
I, said the night owl,
The only one.

Who saw the moss
     creep over the stone?
I, said the grey fox,
All alone.

Margaret Wise Brown
Where Is the Forest?

Where is the forest?
cried the animals.
Where are the trees?

We needed the wood,
said the people.
Wood to make fires.
Wood to build houses.
We cut it down.

Where is the forest?
cried the animals.
Where are the trees?

We needed the land,
said the people.
Land for our cattle.
Land for our roads.
We cut it down.

Where is the forest?
cried the animals.
Where is our home?

Gone, whispered the wind.
Gone. Gone. Gone.

John Foster
SPIKE MILLIGAN

The 'Veggy' Lion

I’m a vegetarian Lion,
I’ve given up all meat,
I’ve given up all roaring
All I do is go tweet-tweet.

I never ever sink my claws
Into some animal’s skin,
It only lets the blood run out
And lets the germs rush in.

I used to be ferocious,
I even tried to kill!
But the sight of all that blood
made me feel quite ill.

I once attacked an Elephant
I sprang straight at his head.
I woke up three days later
In a Jungle hospital bed.

Now I just eat carrots,
They’re easier to kill,
‘Cos when I pounce upon them,
They all remain quite still!
Finding Magic

Are you looking for magic?
   It’s everywhere.
   See how a kestrel
   Hovers in air;
   Watch a cat move:
   What elegant grace!
   See how a conker
   Fits its case.
   Watch a butterfly come
   From a chrysalis,
Or a chick from an egg –
   There’s magic in this;
   Then think of the
   Marvellous mystery
   Of an acorn becoming
   A huge oak tree.
   There’s magic in sunsets
   And patterned skies:
   There’s magic in moonlight –
   Just use your eyes!
   If you’re looking for magic
   It’s easily found:
   It’s everywhere,
   It’s all around.

   Eric Finney