

**Classic Poetry Series**

**C Micheal James Dennis**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **A change of Air**

Now, a man in Oodnadatta  
He grew fat, and he grew fatter,  
    Though he hardly had a thing to eat for dinner;  
While a man in Booboorowie  
Often sat and wondered how he  
    Could prevent himself from growing any thinner.

So the man from Oodnadatta  
    He came down to Booboorowie,  
Where he rapidly grew fatter;  
    And the folk will tell you how he  
Urged the man from Booboorowie  
    To go up to Oodnadatta -  
Where he lived awhile, and now he  
    Is considerably fatter.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Bird Song**

Crow

I detest the Carrion Crow!  
(He's a raven, don't you know?)  
He's a greedy glutton, also, and a ghoul,  
And his sanctimonious caw  
Rubs my temper on the raw.  
He's a demon, and a most degraded fowl.

Blue Wren

I admire the pert Blue-wren  
And his dainty little hen-  
Though she hasn't got a trace of blue upon her;  
But she's pleasing, and she's pretty,  
And she sings a cheerful ditty;  
While her husband is a gentleman of honour.

Cuckoo

I despise the Pallid Cuckoo,  
A disreputable "crook" who  
Shirks her duties for a lazy life of ease.  
I abhor her mournful call,  
Which is not a song at all  
But a cross between a whimper and a wheeze.

Kookaburra

I suspect the Kookaburra,  
For his methods are not thorough  
In his highly-praised campaign against the snakes,  
And the small birds, one and all,  
Curse him for a cannibal -  
Though he certainly is cheerful when he wakes.

C Micheal James Dennis

## Cuppacumalonga

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, where go you to-day?'  
I go to Cuppacumalonga, fifty miles away;  
Over plains where Summer rains have sung a song of glee,  
Over hills where laughing rills go seeking for the sea,  
I go to Cuppacumalonga, to my brother Bill.  
Then come along, ah, come along!  
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!  
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, how do you get there?'  
For twenty miles I amble on upon my pony mare,  
The walk awhile and talk awhile to country men I know,  
Then up to ride a mile beside a team that travels slow,  
And last to Cuppacumalonga, riding with a will.  
Then come along, ah, come along!  
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!  
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, what do you do then?'  
I camp beneath a kurralong with three good cattle-men;  
Then off away at break of day, with strong hands on the reins,  
To laugh and sing while mustering the cattle on the plains -  
For up to Cuppacumalonga life is jolly still.  
Then come along, ah, come along!  
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga!  
Come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

'Rover, rover, cattle-drover, how may I go too?'  
I'll saddle up my creamy colt and he shall carry you -  
My creamy colt who will not bolt, who does not shy nor kick -  
We'll pack the load and take the road and travel very quick.  
And if the day brings work or play we'll meet it with a will.  
So Hi for Cuppacumalonga!  
Come Along, ah, come along!  
Ah, come to Cuppacumalonga Hill!

C Micheal James Dennis

## Going to School

Did you see them pass to-day, Billy, Kate and Robin,  
All astride upon the back of old grey Dobbin?  
Jigging, jogging off to school, down the dusty track -  
What must Dobbin think of it - three upon his back?  
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,  
Billy holding on behind, his legs out straight.

Now they're coming back from school, jig, jog, jig.  
See them at the corner where the gums grow big;  
Dobbin flicking off the flies and blinking at the sun -  
Having three upon his back he thinks is splendid fun:  
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,  
Little Billy up behind, his legs out straight.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Growing Up**

Little Tommy Tadpole began to weep and wail,  
For little Tommy Tadpole had lost his little tail;  
And his mother didn't know him as he wept upon a log,  
For he wasn't Tommy Tadpole, but Mr. Thomas Frog.

C Micheal James Dennis

## Hist!

Hist! . . . . . Hark!  
The night is very dark,  
And we've to go a mile or so  
Across the Possum Park.

Step . . . . . light,  
Keeping to the right;  
If we delay, and lose our way,  
We'll be out half the night.  
The clouds are low and gloomy. Oh!  
It's just begun to mist!  
We haven't any overcoats  
And - Hist! . . . . . Hist!

(Mo . . . . . poke!)  
Who was that that spoke?  
This is not a fitting spot  
To make a silly joke.

Dear . . . . . me!  
A mopoke in a tree!  
It jarred me so, I didn't know  
Whatever it could be.  
But come along; creep along;  
Soon we shall be missed.  
They'll get a scare and wonder where  
We - Hush! . . . . . Hist!

Ssh! . . . . . Soft!  
I've told you oft and oft  
We should not stray so far away  
Without a moon aloft.

Oo! . . . . . Scat!  
Goodness! What was that?  
Upon my word, it's quite absurd,  
It's only just a cat.  
But come along; haste along;  
Soon we'll have to rush,  
Or we'll be late and find the gate  
Is - Hist! . . . . . Hush!

(Kok! . . . . . Korrock!)  
Oh! I've had a shock!  
I hope and trust it's only just  
A frog behind a rock.

Shoo! . . . . . Shoo!  
We've had enough of you;  
Scaring folk just for a joke  
Is not the thing to do.  
But come along, slip along -

Isn't it a lark  
Just to roam so far from home  
On - Hist! . . . . . Hark!

Look! . . . . . See!  
Shining through the tree,  
The window-light is glowing bright  
To welcome you and me.

Shout! . . . . . Shout!  
There's someone round about,  
And through the door I see some more  
And supper all laid out.  
Now, run! Run! Run!  
Oh, we've had such splendid fun -  
Through the park in the dark,  
As brave as anyone.

Laughed, we did, and chaffed, we did,  
And whistled all the way,  
And we're home again! Home again!  
Hip . . . . . Hooray!

C Micheal James Dennis

## **I wonder**

I wonder what the Jacks have got to laugh and laugh about.  
I'm sure the worms don't see the joke when Jacky digs them out.

I wonder which is best: a rich plum-pudding stuffed with plums,  
Or lemon ice, or plain boiled rice, or long-division sums.

I wonder why I wear a tie. It is not warm to wear;  
But if I left it off someone would say it was not there.

I wonder, if I took a whiff of father's pipe for fun,  
Would I be big and strong like him, or just his small, sick son?

I wonder when our old white hen will know her squawk betrays her.  
I think she lets us find her eggs 'ust so that we shall praise her.

C Micheal James Dennis

## Lullaby

You are much too big to dandle,  
And I will not leave the candle.

Go to sleep.

You are growing naughty, rather,  
And I'll have to speak to father.

Go to sleep!

If you're good I shall not tell, then.

Oh, a story? Very well, then.

Once upon a time, a king, named Crawley Creep,  
Had a very lovely daughter . . . .

You don't want a drink of water!

Go to sleep! There! There! Go to sleep.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Old Black Jacko**

Old Black Jacko  
Smokes tobacco  
In his little pipe of clay.  
Puff, puff, puff,  
He never has enough  
Though he smokes it all day.

But his lubra says, "Mine tink dat Jacky  
Him shmoke plenty too much baccy."

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Old Farmer Jack**

Old farmer Jack gazed on his wheat,  
And feared the frost would nip it.  
Said he, "it's nearly seven feet -  
I must begin to strip 'it.

He stripped it with a stripper and  
He bagged it with a bagger;  
The bags were all so lumpy that  
They made the bumper stagger.

The lumper staggered up the stack  
Where he was told to stack it;  
And Jack was paid and put the cash  
Inside his linen jacket.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Our Cow**

Down by the slipralls stands our cow  
Chewing, chewing, chewing,  
She does not care what folks out there  
In the great, big world are doing.  
She sees the small cloud-shadows pass  
And green grass shining under.  
If she does think, what does she think  
About it all, I wonder?

She sees the swallows skimming by  
Above the sweet young clover,  
The light reeds swaying in the wind  
And tall trees bending over.  
Far down the track she hears the crack  
of bullock-whips, and raving  
Of angry men where, in the sun,  
Her fellow-beasts are slaving.

Girls, we are told, can scratch and scold,  
And boys will fight and wrangle,  
And big, grown men, just now and then,  
Fret o'er some fingle-fangle,  
Vexing the earth with grief or mirth,  
Longing, rejoicing, rueing -  
But by the slipralls stands our cow,  
Chewing.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Our Street**

In our street, the main street  
Running thro' the town,  
You see a lot of busy folk  
Going up and down:

Bag men and basket men,  
Men with loads of hay,  
Buying things and selling things  
And carting things away.

The butcher is a funny man,  
He calls me Dandy Dick;  
The baker is a cross man,  
I think he's often sick;

The fruiterer's a nice man,  
He gives me apples, too;  
The grocer says, "Good morning, boy,  
What can I do for you?"

Of all the men in our street  
I like the cobbler best,  
Tapping, tapping at his last  
Without a minute's rest;

Talking all the time he taps,  
Driving in the nails,  
Smiling with his old grey eyes -  
(Hush) ... telling fairy tales.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Polly Dibbs**

Mrs Dibbs - Polly Dibbs,  
Standing at a tub,  
Washing other people's clothes -  
Rub-Rub-Rub.  
Poor, old, skinny arms  
White with soapy foam -  
At night she takes her shabby hat  
And goes off home.

Mrs Dibbs - Polly Dibbs -  
Is not very rich.  
She goes abroad all day to scrub,  
And home at night to stitch.  
She wears her shabby hat awry,  
Perched on a silly comb;  
And people laugh at Polly Dibbs  
As she goes home.

Mrs Dibbs - Mother Dibbs -  
Growing very old,  
Says, "it's a hard world!"  
And sniffs and drats the cold.  
She says it is a cruel world,  
A weary world to roam.  
But God will smile on Polly Dibbs  
When she goes Home.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Riding Song**

Flippity-flop! Flippity-flop!  
Here comes the butcher to bring us a chop  
    Cantering, cantering down the wide street  
    On his little bay mare with the funny white feet;  
Cantering, cantering out to the farm,  
Stripes on his apron and basket on arm.  
    Run to the window and tell him to stop -  
    Flippity-flop! Flippity-flop!

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Tea Talk**

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Ant Explorer

Once a little sugar ant made up his mind to roam-  
To fare away far away, far away from home.  
He had eaten all his breakfast, and he had his ma's consent  
To see what he should chance to see and here's the way he went  
Up and down a fern frond, round and round a stone,  
Down a gloomy gully where he loathed to be alone,  
Up a mighty mountain range, seven inches high,  
Through the fearful forest grass that nearly hid the sky,  
Out along a bracken bridge, bending in the moss,  
Till he reached a dreadful desert that was feet and feet across.  
'Twas a dry, deserted desert, and a trackless land to tread,  
He wished that he was home again and tucked-up tight in bed.  
His little legs were wobbly, his strength was nearly spent,  
And so he turned around again and here's the way he went-  
Back away from desert lands feet and feet across,  
Back along the bracken bridge bending in the moss,  
Through the fearful forest grass shutting out the sky,  
Up a mighty mountain range seven inches high,  
Down a gloomy gully, where he loathed to be alone,  
Up and down a fern frond and round and round a stone.  
A dreary ant, a weary ant, resolved no more to roam,  
He staggered up the garden path and popped back home.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Austral-aise

Fellers of Australier,  
Blokes an' coves an' coots,  
Shift yer --- carcasses,  
Move yer --- boots.  
Gird yer --- loins up,  
Get yer --- gun,  
Set the --- enemy  
An' watch the blighters run.

### CHORUS:

Get a --- move on,  
Have some --- sense.  
Learn the --- art of  
Self de- --- -fence.

Have some --- brains be-  
Neath yer --- lids.  
An' swing a --- sabre  
Fer the missus an' the kids.  
Chuck supportin' --- posts,  
An' strikin' --- lights,  
Support a ---- fam'ly an'  
Strike fer yer --- rights.

### CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

Joy is --- fleetin',  
Life is --- short.  
Wot's the use uv wastin' it  
All on --- sport?  
Hitch yer --- tip-dray  
To a --- star.  
Let yer --- watchword be  
"Australi- --- -ar!"

### CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

'Ow's the --- nation  
Goin' to ixpand  
'Lest us --- blokes an' coves  
Lend a --- 'and?  
'Eave yer --- apathy  
Down a --- chasm;  
'Ump yer --- burden with  
Enthusi- ---- -asm.

### CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

W'en old mother Britain

Calls yer native land  
Take a --- rifle  
In yer --- 'and  
Keep yer --- upper lip  
Stiff as stiff kin be,  
An' speed a --- bullet for  
Post- --- -ity.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

W'en the --- bugle  
Sounds "Ad- --- -vance"  
Don't be like a flock er sheep  
In a --- trance  
Biff the --- Kaiser  
Where it don't agree  
Spifler- --- -cate him  
To Eternity.

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on, etc.

Fellers of Australier,  
Cobbers, chaps an' mates,  
Hear the --- German  
Kickin' at the gates!  
Blow the --- bugle,  
Beat the --- drum,  
Upper-cut an' out the cow  
To kingdom- --- -come!

CHORUS:

Get a --- move on,  
Have some --- sense.  
Learn the --- art of  
Self de- --- -fence.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Axeman

High on the hills, where the tall trees grow,  
There lives an axeman that I know.  
From his little hut by a ferny creek,  
Day after day, week after week,  
He goes each morn with his shining axe,  
Trudging along by the forest tracks;  
And he chops and he chops till the daylight goes  
High on the hills, where the blue-gum grows.

(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
There's a log to move and a branch to lop.  
Now to the felling! His sharp axe bites  
Into a tree on the forest heights,  
And scarce for a breath does the axeman stop-  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Bell-birds watch him; and in the fern  
Wallabies listen awhile, and turn  
Back through the bracken, and off they hop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Patient and tireless, blow on blow  
The axeman swings as the minutes go;  
While the echoes ring from the mountain-top.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Round about him the rabbits play,  
Skipping and scampering all the day,  
And the sweet young grass by the logs they crop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Crimson parrots above him climb,  
The Axeman

Chattering, chattering all the time,  
As down from the branches the twigs they drop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Steadily, surely, on he goes,  
Shaking the tree with his mighty blows:  
There's never a pause and there's never a stop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

Out from the bush beyond is heard  
The swaggering song of the butcher-bird  
Seeking a joint for his butcher's shop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Deeper and deeper the cut creeps in,  
While the parrots shriek with a deafening din,  
And the chips fly out with a flip and a flop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Yellow robins come flocking round,  
Watching the chips as they fall to ground,  
Darting to catch the gubs that drop.  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)

The blows come quicker. The axe~biade hums,  
Stand well back, there, before she comes!  
Hark! How the splinters crack and pop-  
(Chip! . . Chop! . . Chip! . . Chop!)  
Listen! Listen! She's creaking now!  
Look, high up, at that trembling bough!  
Another second, and down she'll smash,  
Shaking the earth with a mighty crash;  
Look at her! Look at her! (Chip! Chop!  
Chip! . . . . .Chip!)  
                  Wee - E - E - E - E - E --  
                                          FLOP!

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Band

Hey, there! Listen awhile! Listen awhile, and come.  
Down in the street there are marching feet, and I hear the beat of a drum.  
Bim! Boom!! Out of the room! Pick up your hat and fly!  
Isn't it grand? The band! The band! The band is marching by!

Oh, the clarinet is the finest yet, and the uniforms are gay.  
    Tah, rah! We don't go home -  
    Oom, pah! We won't go home -  
Oh, we shan't go home, and we can't go home when the band begins to play.

Oh, see them swinging along, swinging along the street!  
Left, right! buttons so bright, jackets and caps so neat.  
Ho, the Fire Brigade, or a dress parade of the Soldier-men is grand;  
But everyone, for regular fun, wants a Big-Brass-Band.

The slide-trombone is a joy alone, and the drummer! He's a treat!  
    So, Rackety-rumph! We don't go home -  
    Boom, Bumph! We won't go home -  
Oh, we shan't go home, and we can't go home while the band is in the street.  
    Tooral-ooral, Oom-pah!  
                                The band is in the street!

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Circus**

Hey, there! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!  
Have you seen the elephant? Have you seen the clown?  
Have you seen the dappled horse gallop round the ring?  
Have you seen the acrobats on the dizzy swing?  
Have you seen the tumbling men tumble up and down?  
Hoop-la! Hoop-la! the circus is in town!

Hey, there! Hoop-la! Here's the circus troupe!  
Here's the educated, dog jumping through the hoop.  
See the lady Blondin with the parasol and fan,  
The lad upon the ladder and the india-rubber man.  
See the joyful juggler and the boy who loops the loop.  
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Here's the circus troupe!

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Dawn Dance**

What do you think I saw to-day when I arose at dawn?  
Blue Wrens and Yellow-tails dancing on the lawn!  
Bobbing here, and bowing there, gossiping away,  
And how I wished that you were there to see the merry play!

But you were snug abed, my boy, blankets to your chin,  
Nor dreamed of dancing birds without or sunbeams dancing in.  
Grey Thrush, he piped the tune for them. I peeped out through the glass  
Between the window curtains, and I saw them on the grass -

Merry little fairy folk, dancing up and down,  
Blue bonnet, yellow skirt, cloaks of grey and brown,  
Underneath the wattle-tree, silver in the dawn,  
Blue Wrens and Yellow-tails dancing on the lawn.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Drovers**

Out across the spinifex, out across the sand,  
Out across the saltbush to Never Never land  
That's the way the drovers go, jogging down the track -  
That's the way the drovers go. But how do they come back?  
Back across the saltbush from Never Never land.  
Back across the spinifex, back across the sand.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Famine and The Feast**

### THE FAMINE

Cackle and lay, cackle and lay!  
How many eggs did you get to-day?  
None in the manger, and none in the shed,  
None in the box where the chickens are fed,  
None in the tussocks and none in the tub,  
And only a little one out in the scrub.  
Oh, I say! Dumplings to-day.  
I fear that the hens must be laying away.

### THE FEAST

Cackle and lay, cackle and lay!  
How many eggs did you get to-day?  
Two in the manger, and four in the shed,  
Six in the box where the chickens are fed,  
Two in the tussocks and ten in the tub,  
And nearly two dozen right out in the scrub.  
Hip, hooray! Pudding to-day!  
I think that the hens are beginning to lay.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The I'd like to be..... series

### The Sailor

I'd like to be a sailor - a sailor bold and bluff -  
Calling out, "Ship ahoy!" in manly tones and gruff.  
I'd learn to box the compass, and to reef and tack and luff;  
I'd sniff and sniff the briny breeze and never get enough.  
Perhaps I'd chew tobacco, or an old black pipe I'd puff,  
But I wouldn't be a sailor if ...  
The sea was very rough.  
Would you?

### The Porter

I'd like to be a porter, and always on the run,  
Calling out, "Stand aside!" and asking leave of none.  
Shoving trucks on people's toes, and having splendid fun,  
Slamming all the carriage doors and locking every one -  
And, when they asked to be let in, I'd say, "It can't be done."  
But I wouldn't be a porter if ...  
The luggage weighed a ton.  
Would you?

### The Pieman

I'd like to be a Pieman, and ring a little bell,  
Calling out, "Hot pies! Hot pies to sell!"  
Apple-pies and Meat-pies, Cherry-pies as well,  
Lots and lots and lots of pies - more than you can tell.  
Big, rich Pork-pies! Oh, the lovely smell!  
But I wouldn't be a Pieman if ...  
I wasn't very well.  
Would you?

### The Barber

I'd like to be a barber, and learn to shave and clip,  
Calling out, "Next please! and pocketing my tip."  
All day I'd hear my scissors going, "Snip, Snip, Snip;"  
I'd lather people's faces, and their noses I would grip  
While I shaved most carefully along the upper lip.  
But I wouldn't be a barber if ...  
The razor was to slip.  
Would you?

### The Teacher

I'd like to be a teacher, and have a clever brain,  
Calling out, "Attention, please!" and "Must I speak in vain?"  
I'd be quite strict with boys and girls whose minds I had to train,  
And all the books and maps and things I'd carefully explain;  
I'd make them learn the dates of kings, and all the capes of Spain;  
But I wouldn't be a teacher if ...  
I couldn't use the cane.  
Would you?

### The Postman

I'd like to be a postman, and walk along the street,

Calling out, "Good Morning, Sir," to gentlemen I meet,  
Ringing every door-bell all along my beat,  
In my cap and uniform so very nice and neat.  
Perhaps I'd have a parasol in case of rain or heat;  
But I wouldn't be a postman if ...  
The walking hurt my feet.  
Would you?

The Baker  
I'd like to be a baker, and come when morning breaks,  
Calling out, "Beeay-ko!" (that's the sound he makes) -  
Riding in a rattle-cart that jogs and jolts and shakes,  
Selling all the sweetest things a baker ever bakes;  
Currant-buns and brandy-snaps, pastry all in flakes;  
But I wouldn't be a baker if ...  
I couldn't eat the cakes.  
Would you?

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Long Road Home

When I go back from Billy's place I always have to roam  
The mazy road, the crazy road that leads the long way home.  
Ma always says, "Why don't you come through Mr Donkin's land?  
The footbridge track will bring you back." Ma doesn't understand.  
I cannot go that way, you know, because of Donkin's dog;  
So I set forth and travel north,, and cross the fallen log.

Last week, when I was coming by, that log had lizards in it;  
And you can't say I stop to play if I just search a minute.  
I look around upon the ground and, if there are no lizards,  
I go right on and reach the turn in front of Mrs Blizzard's.  
I do not seek to cross the creek, because it's deep and floody,  
And Ma would be annoyed with me if I came home all muddy.

Perhaps I throw a stone or so at Mrs Blizzard's tank,  
Because it's great when I aim straight to hear the stone go "Plank  
Then west I wend from Blizzard's Bend, and not a moment wait,  
Except, perhaps, at Mr Knapp's, to swing upon his gate.  
So up the hill I go, until I reach the little paddock  
That Mr Jones at present owns and rents to Mr Craddock.

For boys my size the sudden rise is quite a heavy pull,  
And yet I fear a short-cut here because of Craddock's bull;  
So I just tease the bull till he's as mad as he can get,  
And then I face the corner place that's been so long to let.  
It's very well for Ma to tell about my dawdling habits.  
What would you do, suppose you knew the place was thick with rabbits?

I do not stay for half a day, as Ma declares I do,  
No, not for more than half-an-hour - perhaps an hour - or two.  
Then down the drop I run, slip-slop, where all the road is slithy.  
And have to go quite close, you know, to Mr Horner's smithy.  
A moment I might tarry by the fence to watch them hammer,  
And, I must say, learn more that way than doing sums and grammar.

And, if I do sometimes climb through, I do not mean to linger'.  
Though I did stay awhile the day Bill Homer burst his finger.  
I just stand there to see the pair bang some hot iron thing  
And watch Bill Horner swing the sledge and hit the anvil - Bing!  
(For Mr Horner and his son are great big brawny fellows:  
Both splendid chaps!) And then, perhaps, they let me blow the bellows.

A while I stop beside the shop, and talk to Mr Horner;  
Then off I run, and race like fun around by Duggan's Corner.  
It's getting late, and I don't wait beside the creek a minute,  
Except to stop, maybe, and drop a few old pebbles in it.  
A few yards more, and here's the store that's kept by Mr Whittle-  
And you can't say I waste the day if I 'ust wait ... a little.

One day, you know, a year ago, a man gave me a penny,  
And Mr Whittle sold me sweets (but not so very many).  
You never know your luck, and so I look to see what's new

In Mr Whittle's window. There's a peppermint or two,  
Some buttons and tobacco (Mr Whittle calls it "baccy"),  
And fish in tins, and tape, and pins.... And then a voice calls, "Jacky!"

"I'm coming, Ma. I've been so far-around by Duggan's Corner.  
I had to stay awhile to say 'Good day' to Mr Horner.  
I feel so fagged; I've tramped and dragged through mud and over logs, Ma -  
I could not go short-cuts, you know, because of bulls and dogs, Ma.  
The creek, Ma? Why, it's very high ! You don't call that a gutter?  
Bill Horner chews tobacco, Ma .... I'd like some bread and butter."

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Looking Glass**

When I look into the looking glass  
I'm always sure to see -  
No matter how I dodge about -  
Me, looking out at me.

I often wonder as I look,  
And those strange features spy,  
If I, in there, think I'm as plain  
As I, out here, think I.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **The Music of your Voice**

A vase upon the mantelpiece,  
A ship upon the sea,  
A goat upon a mountain-top  
Are much the same to me;  
But when you mention melon jam,  
Or picnics by the creek,  
Or apple pies, or pantomimes,  
I love to hear you speak.

The date of Magna Charta or  
The doings of the Dutch,  
Or capes, or towns, or verbs, or nouns  
Do not excite me much;  
But when you mention motor rides -  
Down by the sea for choice  
Or chasing games, or chocolates,  
I love to hear your voice.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Song of the Sulky Stockman

Come, let us sing with a right good ring  
(Sing hey for lifting lay, sing hey!)  
Of any old, sunny old, silly old thing.  
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)  
The sun shone brightly overhead,  
And the shearers stood by the shearing shed;  
But "The run wants rain," the stockman said  
(Sing di-dum, wattle-gum, Narrabori Ned.  
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

The colts were clipped and the sheep were shorn  
(Sing hey for a liltin lay, sing hey!)  
But the stockman stood there all forlorn.  
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)  
The rails were up and the gate was tied,  
And the big black bull was safe inside;  
But "The wind's gone West!" the stockman sighed  
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, rally for a ride.  
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

The cook came out as the clock struck one  
(Sing hey for a liltin lay, sing hey!)  
And the boundary rider got his gun.  
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)  
He fired it once at an old black crow;  
But the shot went wide, for he aimed too low;  
And the stockman said, "Fat stock is low."  
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, Jerridiiii Joe.  
For a lifting lay sing hey!)

They spread their swags in the gum-tree's shade  
(Sing hey for a liltin lay, sing hey!)  
For the work was done and the cheques were paid.  
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)  
The overseer rode in at three,  
But his horse pulled back and would not gee,  
And the stockman said, "We're up a tree!"  
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, Johnny-cake for tea.  
For a liltin lay sing hey!)

The sun sank down and the stars shone out  
(Sing hey for a lifting lay, sing hey!)  
And the old book-keeper moped about.  
(Sing ho for the ballad of a backblock day!)  
The dingo walled to the mopoke's call,  
The crazy colt stamped in his stall;  
But the stockman groaned, "it's bunk for all."  
(Sing, di-dum, wattle-gum, wattle-gum, wattle-gum,  
Hey for a backblock day!  
Sing hey!  
Sing hey for a lifting lay!)

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Spotted Heifers

Mr Jeremiah Jeffers  
Owned a pair of spotted heifers  
These he sold for two pounds ten  
To Mr Robert Raymond Wren  
Who reared them in the lucerne paddocks  
Owned by Mr Martin Maddox,  
And sold them, when they grew to cows,  
To Mr Donald David Dowse.  
A grazier, Mr Egbert Innes,  
Bought them then for twenty guineas,  
Milked the cows, and sold the milk  
To Mr Stephen Evan Silk.  
Who rents a butter factory  
From Mr Laurence Lampard-Lee.  
Here, once a week, come for his butter  
The grocer, Mr Roland Rutter,  
Who keeps a shop in Sunny Street  
Next door to Mr Peter Peat.  
He every afternoon at two  
Sent his fair daughter, Lucy Loo,  
To Mr Rutter's shop to buy  
Such things as were not priced too high,  
Especially a shilling tin  
Of "Fuller's Food for Folk Too Thin."  
This food was bought for Lucy Loo -  
A girl of charming manners, who  
Was much too pale and much too slight  
To be a very pleasant sight.  
When Lucy Loo beheld the butter  
Stocked by Mr Roland Rutter,  
She said, "I'll have a pound of that."  
She had it, and thenceforth grew fat.  
We now we go back to Mr Jeffers,  
Who sold the pair of spotted heifers.  
He had a son, James Edgar John,  
A handsome lad to gaze upon,  
Who had now reached that time of life  
When young men feel they need a wife;  
But no young girl about the place  
Exactly had the kind of face  
That seemed to suit James Edgar John -  
A saddening thing to think upon,  
For he grew sad and sick of life  
Because he could not find a wife.  
One day young James was passing by  
(A look of sorrow in his eye)  
The shop of Mr Roland Rutter,  
When Lucy Loo came out with butter.  
At once James Edgar John said, "That  
Is just the girl for me! She's fat."  
He offered her his heart and hand  
And prospects of his father's land.

The Reverend Saul Sylvester Slight  
Performed the simple marriage rite.  
The happy couple went their way,  
And lived and loved unto this day.  
Events cannot be far foreseen;  
And all ths joy might not have been  
If Mr Jeremiah Jeffers  
Had kept his pair of spotted heifers.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Swagman

Oh, he was old and he was spare;  
His bushy whiskers and his hair  
Were all fussed up and very grey  
He said he'd come a long, long way  
And had a long, long way to go.  
Each boot was broken at the toe,  
And he'd a swag upon his back.  
His billy-can, as black as black,  
Was just the thing for making tea  
At picnics, so it seemed to me.

'Twas hard to earn a bite of bread,  
He told me. Then he shook his head,  
And all the little corks that hung  
Around his hat-brim danced and swung  
And bobbed about his face; and when  
I laughed he made them dance again.  
He said they were for keeping flies -  
"The pesky varmints" - from his eyes.  
He called me "Codger". . . "Now you see  
The best days of your life," said he.  
"But days will come to bend your back,  
And, when they come, keep off the track.  
Keep off, young codger, if you can.  
He seemed a funny sort of man.

He told me that he wanted work,  
But jobs were scarce this side of Bourke,  
And he supposed he'd have to go  
Another fifty mile or so.  
"Nigh all my life the track I've walked,"  
He said. I liked the way he talked.  
And oh, the places he had seen!  
I don't know where he had not been -  
On every road, in every town,  
All through the country, up and down.  
"Young codger, shun the track," he said.  
And put his hand upon my head.  
I noticed, then, that his old eyes  
Were very blue and very wise.  
"Ay, once I was a little lad,"  
He said, and seemed to grow quite sad.

I sometimes think: When I'm a man,  
I'll get a good black billy-can  
And hang some corks around my hat,  
And lead a jolly life like that.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Traveller

As I rode in to Burrumbeet,  
I met a man with funny feet;  
And, when I paused to ask him why  
His feet were strange, he rolled his eye  
And said the rain would spoil the wheat;  
So I rode on to Burrumbeet.

As I rode in to Beetaloo,  
I met a man whose nose was blue;  
And when I asked him how he got  
A nose like that, he answered, "What  
Do bullocks mean when they say 'Moo'?"  
So I rode on to Beetaloo.

As I rode in to Ballarat,  
I met a man who wore no hat;  
And, when I said he might take cold,  
He cried, "The hills are quite as old  
As yonder plains, but not so flat."  
So I rode on to Ballarat.

As I rode in to Gundagai,  
I met a man and passed him by  
Without a nod, without a word.  
He turned, and said he'd never heard  
Or seen a man so wise as I.  
But I rode on to Gundagai.

As I rode homeward, full of doubt,  
I met a stranger riding out:  
A foolish man he seemed to me;  
But, "Nay, I am yourself," said he,  
"Just as you were when you rode out."  
So I rode homeward, free of doubt.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The Triantiwontigongolope

There's a very funny insect that you do not often spy,  
And it isn't quite a spider, and it isn't quite a fly;  
It is something like a beetle, and a little like a bee,  
But nothing like a wooly grub that climbs upon a tree.  
Its name is quite a hard one, but you'll learn it soon, I hope.

So try:

Tri-  
Tri-anti-wonti-  
Triantiwontigongolope.

It lives on weeds and wattle-gum, and has a funny face;  
Its appetite is hearty, and its manners a disgrace.  
When first you come upon it, it will give you quite a scare,  
But when you look for it again, you find it isn't there.  
And unless you call it softly it will stay away and mope.

So try:

Tri-  
Tri-anti-wonti-  
Triantiwontigongolope.

It trembles if you tickle it or tread upon its toes;  
It is not an early riser, but it has a snubbish nose.  
If you sneer at it, or scold it, it will scuttle off in shame,  
But it purrs and purrs quite proudly if you call it by its name,  
And offer it some sandwiches of sealing-wax and soap.

So try:

Tri-  
Tri-anti-wonti-  
Triantiwontigongolope .

But of course you haven't seen it; and I truthfully confess  
That I haven't seen it either, and I don't know its address.  
For there isn't such an insect, though there really might have been  
If the trees and grass were purple, and the sky was bottle green.  
It's just a little joke of mine, which you'll forgive, I hope.

Oh, try!

Tri-  
Tri-anti-wonti-  
Triantiwontigongolope.

C Micheal James Dennis

## The White Foxglove

Reynard, the fox, was asked to a party.  
"Come", they said, in your Sunday best,  
For we like good form, tho' the fun be hearty;  
So all who dance must be formally dressed:  
Black tail-coat and a shirt-front gleaming.  
Brushed and burnished each dancing shoe,  
Pantaloons with a silk braid seaming,  
Clean white gloves of the snowiest hue.  
This most especially -  
Very especially -  
Snow-white gloves of a spotless hue.

Reynard, the fox, as he dressed (says the fable)  
Dreamed of the dance and his lady love,  
Then he searched and he hunted in dresser and table,  
But all he discovered was - one old glove!  
A horrible glove, with a broad black stitching  
Sorriest match for his stiff white shirt.  
Could lover go wooing a maid so bewitching,  
Wearing but one glove, grubby with dirt?  
Oh, most disgustedly -  
Very disgustedly -  
Creased and crumpled and yellow with dirt.

Said Reynard, the fox, to the King of the Fairies,  
"King, I come to you craving a dower.  
Gloves! All as white as the lamb that was Mary's.  
Pray you, fashion a pair from a magic flower.  
>From a summer cloud, from the web of a spider.  
Skin of a toadstool, a snowberry rind,  
Down from the breast of a fledgling eider."  
And the King said "Sure", for the King was kind.  
Ever so graciously -  
Gaily and graciously -  
"Oke", said the Monarch, for he was kind.

Then Reynard, the fox, beheld a wonder:  
A wave of his wand by the Fairy King -  
And there, with the green leaves spreading under,  
Sprang forth a sceptre, a magic thing  
With garlands of gloves in a gleaming cluster,  
White as the fleeces of new-shorn flocks  
That fairy shepherds in Arcady muster.  
And a pair they presented to Reynard, the fox.  
They fitted him perfectly.  
Said the King, "perfectly"  
"Your Majesty.' Thank you!" said Reynard, the fox.

Reynard, the fox, made haste to the revel;  
Beau of the ball, as they had to confess.  
And the ladies sighed, "What a handsome devil?"  
As for his lady - of course it was, "yes".

Then they danced and they fasted with merry laughter.  
While Reynard weaved dreams in the clouds above.  
And they called that blossom, from then ever after -  
Men, foxes and fairies - the white Fox-glove.  
Tall and so slenderly  
Graceful and tenderly,  
Swaying its sceptre - the White Fox-Glove.

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Upon the Road to Rockabout**

Upon the road to Rockabout  
I came upon some sheep -  
A large and woolly flock about  
As wide as it was deep.

I was about to turn about  
To ask the man to tell  
Some things I wished to learn about  
Both sheep and wool as well,

When I beheld a rouseabout  
Who lay upon his back  
Beside a little house about  
A furlong from the track.

I had a lot to talk about,  
And said to him "Good day."  
But he got up to walk about,  
And so I went away -

C Micheal James Dennis

## **Woolloomooloo (A Riddle)**

Here's a ridiculous riddle for you:

How many o's are there in Woolloomooloo?  
Two for the W, two for the m,  
Four for the l's, and that's plenty for them.

C Micheal James Dennis

## You and I

They say the eagle is a bird  
That sees some splendid sights  
When he soars high into the sky  
Upon his dizzy flights:  
He sees the ground for miles around  
Our house, and Billy Johnson's;  
But we can not be Eagles, for  
That would, of course, be nonsense.

But you and I, some summer day,  
Providing we're allowed,  
Will go up in an aeroplane  
And sail right through a cloud.  
But, if they say we may not go,  
We'll stay upon the ground  
With other things that have no wings,  
And watch them walk around.

They say the bottom of the sea  
Is beautiful to view;  
They say the fish, whene'er they wish,  
Can sail and see 'it, too,  
The shining pearls, the coral curls,  
The sharks, the squids, the schnappers,  
And fish with fins (though not in tins)  
And fish with funny flappers.

But you and I, some sunny day,  
When weather's in condition,  
Will go there in a submarine,  
Providing we've permission.  
But if they say we may not go  
We must respect their wishes;  
And you and I will just keep dry  
Because we are not fishes.

They say to fly so very high  
Is not exactly pleasant.  
They say to go deep down below  
Is not quite safe at present.  
But you and I don't care for that,  
And, if there's time for spending,  
When work is done, we'll have our fun  
By simply just pretending.

The earth is quite a jolly place,  
And we don't care for flying;  
And things that creep down in the deep  
Are sometimes rather trying.  
So, if they'll grant a holiday  
Or even only half,  
We'll lie upon some grassy place,

And think of things, and laugh.

C Micheal James Dennis