

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-66147-9 - A Poetry Book for Children  
 A. Watson Bain  
 Excerpt  
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*Cradle Song*

WHAT does little birdie say  
 In her nest at peep of day?  
 Let me fly, says little birdie,  
 Mother, let me fly away.  
 Birdie, rest a little longer,  
 Till the little wings are stronger.  
 So she rests a little longer,  
 Then she flies away.

What does little baby say  
 In her bed at peep of day?  
 Baby says, like little birdie,  
 Let me rise and fly away.  
 Baby, sleep a little longer,  
 Till the little limbs are stronger.  
 If she sleeps a little longer,  
 Baby too shall fly away.

TENNYSON

*Minnie and Winnie*

MINNIE and Winnie  
 Slept in a shell.  
 Sleep, little ladies!  
 And they slept well.  
 Pink was the shell within,  
 Silver without;  
 Sounds of the great sea  
 Wander'd about.

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Sleep, little ladies!  
 Wake not soon!  
 Echo on echo  
 Dies to the moon.  
 Two bright stars  
 Peep'd into the shell.  
 "What are they dreaming of?  
 Who can tell?"  
 Started a green linnet  
 Out of the croft;  
 Wake, little ladies,  
 The sun is aloft!

TENNYSON

### *Ring o' Roses*

HUSH a while, my darling, for the long day closes,  
 Nodding into slumber on the blue hill's crest.  
 See the little clouds play Ring a ring o' roses,  
 Planting Fairy gardens in the rose-red West.  
 Greet him for us, cloudlets, say we're not forgetting  
 Golden gifts of sunshine, merry hours of play.  
 Ring a ring o' roses round the sweet sun's setting,  
 Spread a bed of roses for the dear dead day.  
 Hush-a-by, my little one, the dear day dozes,  
 Doffed his crown of kingship and his fair flag furled,  
 While the earth and sky play Ring a ring o' roses,  
 Ring a ring o' roses round the rose-red world.

W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON

### *English Lullaby*

SWEET and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!

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Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.  
 Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon:  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

TENNYSON

### *Highland Lullaby*

O HUSH thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,  
 Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;  
 The woods and the glens, from the towers that we see,  
 They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.  
 O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,  
 It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;  
 Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,  
 Ere the step of a foeman drew near to thy bed.  
 O hush thee, my babie, the time will soon come  
 When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;  
 Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,  
 For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

### *South African Lullaby*

SLEEP, Baby mine! The jackals by the river  
 Are calling soft across the dim lagoon,  
 Where tufted rows of mealies stand a-quiver  
 Under a silver moon.

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Little One, sleep! The cattle, softly lowing,  
 Seek once again the shelter of the kraal—  
 To-morrow come the reaping and the sowing—  
 To-night the shadows fall.

Little One, sleep! Grow stalwart in your sleeping!  
 The kraal is ringed with fires, redly bright—  
 Out in the forest tracks the beasts are creeping—  
 Sleep, Baby mine, to-night!

CULLEN GOULDSBURY

*Indian Lullaby*

LITTLE brown baby-bird, lapped in your nest,  
 Wrapped in your nest,  
 Strapped in your nest,  
 Your straight little cradle-board rocks you to rest;  
 Its hands are your nest,  
 Its bands are your nest;  
 It swings from the down-bending branch of the oak;  
 You watch the camp flame and the curling grey smoke;  
 But, oh, for your pretty black eyes sleep is best,—  
 Little brown baby of mine, go to rest.

Little brown baby-bird swinging to sleep,  
 Winging to sleep,  
 Singing to sleep,  
 Your wonder-black eyes that so wide open keep,  
 Shielding their sleep,  
 Unyielding to sleep;  
 The heron is homing, the plover is still,  
 The night-owl calls from his haunt on the hill,  
 Afar the fox barks, afar the stars peep,—  
 Little brown baby of mine, go to sleep.

E. PAULINE JOHNSON

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### *Japanese Lullaby*

SLEEP, little pigeon, and fold your wings—  
 Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;  
 Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—  
 Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star—  
 Silvery star with a tinkling song;  
 To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—  
 Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes—  
 Little gold moonbeam with misty wings;  
 All silently creeping, it asks: “Is he sleeping—  
 Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?”

Up from the sea there floats the sob  
 Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,  
 As though they were breaking in anguish and moaning—  
 Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings—  
 Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;  
 Am I not singing?—see, I am swinging—  
 Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

EUGENE FIELD

### *Dutch Lullaby*

THE mill goes toiling slowly round  
 With steady and solemn creak,  
 And my little one hears in the kindly sound  
 The voice of the old mill speak.  
 While round and round those big white wings  
 Grimly and ghost-like creep,  
 My little one hears that the old mill sings:  
 “Sleep, little tulip, sleep!”

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The sails are reefed and the nets are drawn,  
 And over his pot of beer  
 The fisher against the morrow's dawn  
 Lustily maketh cheer;  
 He mocks at the winds that caper along  
 From the far-off clamorous deep;  
 But we, we love their lullaby song  
 Of "Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"  
 Old dog Fritz in slumber sound  
 Groans of the stony mart:  
 To-morrow how proudly he'll trot you round,  
 Hitched to the new milk-cart!  
 And you shall help me blanket the kine  
 And fold the gentle sheep,  
 And set the herring a-soak in brine,—  
 And now, little tulip, sleep!  
 A Dream-One comes to button the eyes  
 That wearily droop and sink,  
 While the old mill buffets the frowning skies  
 And scolds at the stars that blink.  
 Over your face the misty wings  
 Of that beautiful Dream-One sweep,  
 And, rocking your cradle, she softly sings:  
 "Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

EUGENE FIELD

*The Birds' Lullaby*

SING to us, cedars; the twilight is creeping,  
 With shadowy garments, the wilderness through;  
 All day we have carolled and now would be sleeping,  
 So echo the anthems we warbled to you;  
 While we swing, swing,  
 And your branches sing,  
 And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

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Sing to us, cedars; the night wind is sighing,  
 Is wooing, is pleading, to hear you reply;  
 And here in your arms we are restfully lying  
 And longing to dream to your soft lullaby;  
 While we swing, swing,  
 And your branches sing,  
 And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

Sing to us, cedars; your voice is so lowly,  
 Your breathing so fragrant, your branches so strong;  
 Our little nest-cradles are swaying so slowly,  
 While zephyrs are breathing their slumberous song;  
 And we swing, swing,  
 While your branches sing,  
 And we drowse to your slumberous whispering.

E. PAULINE JOHNSON

*Baby Seed Song*

LITTLE brown seed, oh! little brown brother,  
 Are you awake in the dark?  
 Here we lie cosily, close to each other:  
 Hark to the song of the lark!  
 "Waken!" the lark says, "waken and dress you;  
 Put on your coats green and gay;  
 Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you:  
 Waken! 'tis morning—'tis May!"

Little brown seed, oh! little brown brother,  
 What kind of flower will you be?  
 I'll be a poppy, all white, like my mother;  
 Do be a poppy like me!  
 What! you're a sun-flower? How I shall miss you  
 When you're grown golden and high!  
 But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you:  
 Little brown brown brother, good-bye!

EDITH NESBIT

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*A Cradle Song*

O, MEN from the fields!  
 Come gently within.  
 Tread softly, softly,  
 O! men coming in.

Mavourneen is going  
 From me and from you  
 Where Mary will fold him  
 With mantle of blue!

From reek of the smoke  
 And cold of the floor,  
 And the peering of things  
 Across the half-door.

O, men from the fields!  
 Soft, softly come thro',  
 Mary puts round him  
 Her mantle of blue.

PADRAIC COLUM

*Wynken, Blynken, and Nod*

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night  
 Sailed off in a wooden shoe—  
 Sailed on a river of crystal light  
 Into a sea of dew.  
 “Where are you going, and what do you wish?”  
 The old moon asked the three.  
 “We have come to fish for the herring-fish  
 That live in this beautiful sea;  
 Nets of silver and gold have we!”  
 Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.



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The old moon laughed and sang a song,  
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,  
And the wind that sped them all night long  
Ruffled the waves of dew.  
The little stars were the herring-fish  
That lived in that beautiful sea—  
“Now cast your nets wherever you wish—  
But never afeared are we”;  
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:  
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw  
To the stars in the twinkling foam—  
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,  
Bringing the fishermen home;  
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed  
As if it could not be,  
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed  
Of sailing that beautiful sea—  
But I shall name you the fishermen three:  
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,  
And Nod is a little head,  
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies  
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.  
So shut your eyes while mother sings  
Of wonderful sights that be,  
And you shall see the beautiful things  
As you rock on the misty sea,  
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:  
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

EUGENE FIELD

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*Baby*

WHERE did you come from, baby dear?  
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get those eyes so blue?  
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?  
Some of the starry twinkles left in.

Where did you get that little tear?  
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?  
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?  
I saw something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?  
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear?  
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?  
Love made itself into bonds and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?  
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?  
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, my dear?  
God thought about you, and so I am here.

GEORGE MACDONALD