

Level 1 Speaking Verse and Prose: Grade 3 – Verse

Titles in Level 1 Speaking Verse and Prose: Grade 3 – Verse

Truth

Extract from The Bed Book

People Ask

The Jade Staircase

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

The Travellers and the Purse

Beachcomber

It Couldn't Be Done

Truth

Sticks and stones may break my bones
but words can also hurt me.

Stones and sticks break only skin,
while words are ghosts that haunt me.

Slant and curved the word-swords fall
to pierce and stick inside me.

Bats and bricks may ache through bones
but words can mortify me.

Pain from words has left its scar
on mind and heart that's tender.

Cuts and bruises now have healed;
it's words that I remember.

By Barrie Wade

Extract from The Bed Book

Beds come in all sizes –
Single or double,
Cot-size or cradle,
King-size or trundle.

Most Beds are Beds
For sleeping or resting,
But the *best* Beds are much
More interesting!

Not just a white little
Tucked-in-tight little
Nighty-night little
Turn-out-the-light little
Bed –

Instead
A Bed for Fishing,
A Bed for Cats,
A Bed for a Troupe of
Acrobats.

The *right* sort of Bed
(If you see what I mean)
Is a Bed that might
Be a submarine

Nosing through water
Clear and green,
Silver and glittery
As a sardine

Or a Jet-Propelled Bed
For visiting Mars
With mosquito nets
For the shooting stars...

By Sylvia Plath

People Ask

My father travelled from Ceylon
 Island of cinnamon and rubies
 To my mother's birthplace
 In the heart of Yorkshire

People ask

Where do you come from?

I say:

From more places
 Than you imagine
 My father's memories
 My mother's dreams
 Mines of gems and coal
 Mango sunsets over rhubarb fields

People ask

Which half of you is white?

I say:

There are no halves in me
 Everything is whole
 I am a myriad of mingling
 Multicoloured stories
 Whispering wisely down
 Through centuries

People ask

Where do you belong?

I say:

In the world
 In my father's hopes
 In my mother's songs
 Most of all
 In the place inside myself
 Shining with its own futures

By Seni Seneviratne

The Jade Staircase

The jade staircase is bright with dew.

Slowly, this long night, the queen climbs,
Letting her gauze stockings and her elaborate robe
Drag in the shining water.

Dazed with the light,
She lowers the crystal blind
Before the door of the pavilion.

It leaps down like a waterfall in sunlight.

While the tiny clashing dies down,
Sad and long dreaming,
She watches between the fragments of jade light
The shining of the autumn moon.

By Li Po

Translated by Edward Powys Mathers

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there. I did not die.

By Mary Elizabeth Frye

The Travellers and the Purse

Two friends once were walking in sociable chat,
When a purse one espied on the ground;
'Oh, see!' said he, (thank my fortune for that,)
'What a large sum of money I've found!'

'Nay, do not say /' said his friend, 'for you know
'Tis but friendship to share it with me;
'I share it with you,' said the other. 'How so?
He who *found* it the owner should be.'

'Be it so,' said his friend, 'but what sound do I hear?
'Stop thief!' one is calling to you;
He comes with a constable close in the rear!
Said the other, 'Oh, what shall we do?'

'Nay, do not say we,' said his friend, 'for you know
You claimed the sole right to the prize!
And since all the money was taken by you,
With you the dishonesty lies.'

By Marmaduke Park

Beachcomber

Monday I found a boot –
Rust and salt leather.
I gave it back to the sea, to dance in.

Tuesday a spar of timber worth thirty bob.
Next winter
It will be a chair, a coffin, a bed.

Wednesday a half can of Swedish spirits.
I tilted my head.
The shore was cold with mermaids and angels.

Thursday I got nothing, seaweed,
A whale bone,
Wet feet and a loud cough.

Friday I held a seaman's skull,
Sand spilling from it
The way time is told on kirkyard stones.

Saturday a barrel of sodden oranges.
A Spanish ship
Was wrecked last month at The Kame.

Sunday, for fear of the elders,
I sit on my bum.
What's heaven? A sea chest with a thousand gold coins.

By George Mackay Brown

It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;'
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done,' and you'll do it.

By Edgar A. Guest