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**Brighten the Corner Where You Are***Helen Steiner Rice*

We cannot all be famous  
Or listed in "Who's Who,"  
But every person great or small  
Has important work to do,  
For seldom do we realize  
The importance of small deeds,  
Or to what degree of greatness  
Unnoticed kindness leads--  
For it's not the big celebrity  
In a world of fame and praise  
But it's doing unpretentiously  
In undistinguished ways,  
The work that God assigned for us,  
Unimportant as it seems,  
That makes our task outstanding  
And bring reality to dreams--  
So do not sit and idly wish  
For wider and newer dimension,  
Where you can put in practice  
Your many good intentions--  
But at the spot God placed you  
Begin at once to do  
Little things to brighten up  
The lives surrounding you,  
For if everybody brightened up  
The spot on which they're standing,  
By being more considerate  
And a little less demanding,  
This dark cold world would very soon  
Eclipse the Evening Star,  
If everybody brightened up  
The corner where they are.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

## **The Charge of the Light Brigade**

*Alfred Tennyson*

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
“Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!” he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”  
Was there a man dismay’d?  
Not tho’ the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder’d:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why.  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley’d and thunder’d;  
Storm’d at with shot and shell  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

Flash’d all their sabers bare,  
Flash’d as they turn’d in air  
Sab’ring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder’d:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro’ the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel’d from the saber-stroke  
Shatter’d and sunder’d.

**Charge of the Light Brigade (Continued)**

Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to the right of them,  
Cannon to the left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volleyed and thundered:  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came through the jaws of death  
Back from the mouth of hell,  
All that was left of them--  
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?  
Oh, the wild charge they made!  
All the world wondered.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade--  
Noble six hundred!

Degree of Difficulty: 5

**Clock-O'-Clay \****John Clare*

In the cowslip pips I lie,  
Hidden from the buzzing fly,  
While green grass beneath me lies,  
Pearled with dew like fishes' eyes,  
Here I lie, a clock-o'-clay,  
Waiting for the time o' day.

While grassy forests quakes surprise,  
And the wild wind sobs and sighs,  
My gold home rocks as like to fall,  
On its pillars green and tall;  
When the pattering rain drives by  
Clock-o'-clay keeps warm and dry.

Day by day and night by night,  
All the week I hide from sight;  
In the cowslip pips I lie,  
In rain and dew still warm and dry;  
Day and night and night and day,  
Red, black-spotted clock-o'clay.

My home shakes in wind and showers,  
Pale green pillar topped with flowers,  
Bending at the wild wind's breath,  
Till I touch the grass beneath;  
Here I live, lone clock-o'-clay,  
Watching for the time of day.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

## **The Concord Hymn**

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled.  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;  
A like the conqueror silent sleeps;  
And time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream with seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
We set today a votive stone,  
That memory may their deed redeem,  
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit that made those heroes dare  
To die, and leave their children free,  
Bid time and Nature gently spare  
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

### **Crossing the Bar**

*Alfred Tennyson*

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have cross'd the bar.

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**Drop a Pebble in the Water***James W. Foley*

Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash, and it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples, circling on and on and on,  
Spreading, spreading from the center, flowing on out to the sea,  
And there is no way of telling where the end is going to be.

Drop a pebble in the water: in a minute you forget,  
But there's little waves a-flowing and there's ripples circling yet,  
And those little waves a-flowing to a great big wave have grown;  
You've disturbed a might river just by dropping a stone.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute it is gone;  
But there's a half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on.  
They keep spreading, spreading, spreading from the center as they go,  
And there is no way to stop them, once you've started them to flow.

Drop an unkind word, or careless: in a minute you forget;  
But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's ripples circling yet,  
And perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of tears you've stirred,  
And disturbed a life was happy 'ere you dropped that unkind word.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: just a flash and it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on and on and on,  
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each splashing, dashing wave  
Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind word you gave.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness: in a minute you forget;  
But there's gladness still a-swelling, and there's joy a-circling yet,  
And you've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet music can be heard  
Over miles and miles of water just by dropping one kind word.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

### **The Dying Christian to His Soul**

*Alexander Pope*

Vital spark of heavenly flame,  
Quit, O quit this mortal frame!  
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,  
O, the pain, the bliss of dying!  
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life.

Hark!---they whisper; angels say:---  
“Sister spirit, come away!”  
What is this absorbs me quite?  
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,  
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?  
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears;  
Heaven opens on my eye; my ears  
With sounds seraphic ring;---  
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!  
“O Grave, where is thy victory?  
O Death, where is thy sting?”

Degree of Difficulty: 2

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**Easter Wings**

*George Herbert*

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more  
Till he became  
Most poor:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this Thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin;  
And still with sickness and shame  
Thou didst so punish sin,  
That I became  
Most thin.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel this day thy victory;  
For; if I imp my wing on Thine,  
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Degree of Difficulty: 1

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**Excelsior***Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed  
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device  
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,  
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,  
And like a silver clarion rung  
The accents of that unknown tongue,  
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light  
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;  
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,  
And from his lips escaped a groan,  
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;  
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,  
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"  
And loud that clarion voice replied  
Excelsior!

"O stay," the maiden said, "and rest  
Thy weary head upon this breast!"  
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,  
But still he answered with a sigh,  
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!  
Beware the awful avalanche!"  
This was the peasant's last Good-night,  
A voice replied, far up the height,  
Excelsior!

**Excelsior! (Continued)**

At break of day, as heavenward  
The pious monks of Saint Bernard  
Uttered oft-repeated prayer,  
A voice cried through the startled air  
Excelsior!

A traveler, by faithful hound,  
Half-buried in the snow was found,  
Still grasping in his hand of ice  
That banner with the strange device  
Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,  
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,  
And from the sky, serene and far,  
A voice fell, like a falling star,  
Excelsior!

Degree of Difficulty: 5

**Fear**

*Martha Snell Nicholson*

How strange that we who are the sons of God  
Should be familiar with the face of fear,  
So sure that every cloud will bring a storm,  
So fearful lest tomorrow be not clear.

We shrink from woes which never come to pass,  
Mere phantoms, with no substance and no strength;  
But even if they had, would not our Lord provide  
His strength to meet the need of each day's length?

Children of God, with quaking, craven hearts  
Consumed by the corrosive power of dread!...  
And yet He holds us in His hallowed hand,  
And counts the very hairs upon our head.

What strong firm bulwarks He has build around  
The daily lives of those He holds so dear:  
The blessed Holy Spirit in our hearts,  
His guardian angels ever hovering near

Lest we should dash our feet against a stone,  
The unseen hosts of God camp round about.  
We dwell there safely in His secret place,  
And still we tremble, wracked with fear and doubt!

O child of God, it is so safe, so sweet  
To trust the One who never knew defeat!

Degree of Difficulty: 3

**The Fish***Elizabeth Bishop*

I caught a tremendous fish  
And held him beside the boat  
Half out of water, with my hook  
Fast in a corner of his mouth.  
He didn't fight.  
He hadn't fought at all.  
He hung a greening weight,  
Battered and venerable  
And homely. Here and there  
His brown skin hung in strips  
Like ancient wallpaper,  
And its pattern of darker brown  
Was like wallpaper:  
Shapes like full-blown roses  
Stained and lost through age.  
He was speckled with barnacles,  
Fine resettes of lime,  
And infested with tiny white sea-lice,  
And underneath two or three  
Rags of green weed hung down.  
While his gills were breathing in  
The terrible oxygen  
-the frightening gills,  
Fresh and crisp with blood,  
That can cut so badly-  
I thought of the coarse white flesh  
Packed in like feathers,  
The big bones and the little bones,  
The dramatic reds and blacks  
Of his shiny entrails,  
And the pink swim-bladder  
Like a big peony.  
I looked into his eyes  
Which were far larger than mine  
But shallower, and yellowed,  
The irises backed and packed  
With tarnished tinfoil  
Seen through the lenses  
Of old scratched isinglass.

**The Fish (Continued)**

They shifted a little, but not  
To return my stare.  
-It was more like the tipping  
Of an object toward the light.  
I admired his sullen face,  
The mechanism of his jaw,  
And then I saw  
That from his lower lip  
-if you could call it a lip  
Firm, wet, and weaponlike,  
Hung five old pieces of fish-line,

Or four and a wire leader  
With the swivel still attached,  
With all their five big hooks  
Grown firmly in his mouth.  
A green line, frayed at the end  
Where he broke it, two heavier lines,  
And a fine black thread  
Still crimped from the strain and snap  
When it broke and he got away.  
Like medals with their ribbons  
Frayed and wavering,  
A five-haired beard of wisdom  
Trailing from his aching jaw.  
I stared and stared  
And victory filled up  
The little rented boat,  
From the pool of bilge  
Where oil had spread a rainbow  
Around the rusted engine  
To the bailer rusted orange,  
The sun-cracked thwarts,  
The oarlocks on their strings,  
The gunnels- until everything  
Was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!  
And I let the fish go.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

**Grandpapa's Spectacles***Author Unknown*

Grandpapa's spectacles cannot be found;  
He has searched all the rooms, high and low, 'round and 'round;  
Now he calls to the young ones, and what does he say?  
"Ten cents for the child who will find them today."  
Then Henry and Nelly and Edward all ran,  
And a most thorough hunt for the glasses began,  
And dear little Nell, in her generous way,  
Said: "I'll look for them, Grandpa, without any pay."  
All through the big Bible she searches with care  
That lies on the table by Grandpapa's chair.  
They feel in his pockets, they peep in his hat,  
They pull out the sofa, they shake out the mat.  
Then down on all fours, like two good natured bears,  
Go Henry and Ed under tables and chairs,  
'Til, quite out of breath,  
Ed is heard to declare He believes that those glasses are not anywhere.  
But Nelly, who, leaning on Grandpapa's knee,  
Was thinking most earnestly where they could be,  
Looked suddenly up in the kind, faded eyes,  
And her own shining brown ones grew big with surprise.  
She clapped both her hands—all her dimples came out—  
She turned to the boys with a bright roguish shout  
"You may leave off your looking, both Henry and Ed,  
For there are the glasses on Grandpapa's head!"

Degree of Difficulty: 2

**In Time of Silver Rain**

*Langston Hughes*

In time of silver rain  
The earth Puts forth new life again,  
Green grasses grow  
And flowers lift their heads,  
And over all the plain  
The wonder spreads  
Of life, Of life, Of life!  
In time of silver rain  
The butterflies  
Lift silken wings To catch a rainbow cry, and trees put forth  
New leaves to sing In joy beneath the sky  
As down the roadway Passing boys and girls Go singing, too,  
In time of silver rain  
When spring  
And life are new.

Degree of Difficulty: 1

**Jabberwocky***Lewis Carroll*

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought--  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One two! And through and throughout  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mom raths outgrabe.

Degree of Difficulty: 5

Classical Christian Speech Meet

## **Jarrangulli**

*Roland Robinson*

Hear that tree-lizard singin' out,  
*Jarrangulli* He's singin' out for  
rain.

He's in a hole up in that tree. He wants  
the rain to fill that hole right up an' cover  
him with rain. That water will last him till  
the drought comes on again.

It's comin' dry when he sings out,

Jarranguli

Soon as ever he sings out,  
*Jarrangulli*, he's sure to  
bring the rain.

That feller, he's the real rain-lizard.  
He's just the same as them black cockatoos, they're  
the fellers for the rain.

He's deadly poison. He's Jarranguli.  
He'll bite you sure enough. You climb that  
tree an' put your hand over that hole, he'll  
bite you sure enough.  
He's black an' painted with white stripes.  
*Jarrangulli*  
He's singin' out for rain.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

## **Johnny Appleseed**

*Rosemary and Stephen V. Bené*

Of Jonathan Chapman  
Two things are known  
That he loved apples, That  
he walked alone.

At seventy-odd He was  
gnarled as could be. But  
ruddy and sound  
As a good apple tree.

For fifty years over  
Of harvest and dew,  
He planted his apples  
Where no apples grew.

The winds of the prairie  
Might blow through his rags,  
But he carried his seeds In  
the best deerskin bags.

From old Ashtabula  
To frontier Fort Wayne  
He planted and pruned  
And he planted again.

He had not a hat  
To encumber his head.  
He wore a tin pan  
On his white hair instead.

He nested with owl,  
And with bear cub and 'possum,  
And knew all his orchards,  
Root, tendril and blossom.

**Johnny Appleseed (continued)**

A fine old man,  
As ripe as a pippin,  
His heart still light,  
And his step still skipping.

The stalking Indian,  
The beast in its lair  
Did no hurt  
While he was there.

For they could tell,  
As wild things can  
That Jonathan Chapman  
Was God's own man.

Why did he do it?  
We do not know.  
He wished that apples  
Might root and grow.

He has no statue  
He has no tomb.  
He has his apple trees  
Still in bloom.

Consider, consider,  
Think well upon  
The marvelous story  
Of Appleseed John.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

**Last Words Before Winter***Louis Untermeyer*

Farewell, flocks,  
Farewell. But let me find you  
Safe in your stall and barn and box  
With your winter's tale behind you.

Farewell my cattle (both);  
I leave you just as loath  
As though you were a hundred head,  
Instead  
Of two-and-a-half –  
Two cows and a calf.

Farewell, my apple trees;  
You have learned what it is to freeze,  
With the drift on your knees.  
But, oh, beware  
Those first kind of days, the snare  
Of the too promising air,  
The cost  
Of over-sudden trust –  
And then the killing frost.

Farewell, beloved acres.  
I leave you in the hands  
Of one whose earliest enterprise was lands –  
Your Maker's.

Yard, hutch, and house, farewell.  
It is for you to tell  
How you withstood the great, white wolf, whose fell  
Is softer than a lambskin's  
But whose breath is death.  
Farewell,, hoof, claw, and wing,  
Finned, furred, and feathered thing,  
Till Spring.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**Manners***Elizabeth Bishop*

My grandfather said to me as we  
sat on the wagon seat, "Be sure  
to remember to always speak to  
everyone you meet."

We met a stranger on foot.  
My grandfather's whip tapped his hat. "Good  
day, sir. Good day. A fine day." And I said it  
and bowed where I sat.

Then we overtook a boy we knew with his  
big pet crow on his shoulder. "Always offer  
everyone a ride; don't forget that when you  
get older," my grandfather said. So Willy  
climbed up with us, but the crow gave a  
"Caw!" and flew off. I was worried. How  
would he know where to go?

But he flew a little way at a time from  
fence post to fence post, ahead; and  
when Willy whistled he answered. "A  
fine bird," my grandfather said,

"and he's well brought up. See, he answers  
nicely when he's spoken to. Man or beast,  
that's good manners. Be sure that you both  
always do."

When automobiles went by, the dust  
hid the people's faces, but we shouted,  
"Good day! Good day! Fine day!" at the  
top of our voices.

When we came to Hustler Hill, he  
said that the mare was tired, so  
we all got down and walked, as  
our good manners required.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

**My Kingdom***Louisa May Alcott*

A little kingdom I possess  
Where thoughts and feelings dwell.  
And very hard I find the task  
    Of governing it well;  
For passion tempts and troubles me,  
    A wayward will misleads,  
And selfishness its shadow casts  
On all my words and deeds.  
How can I learn to rule myself,  
    To be the child I should,  
Honest and brave, nor ever tire  
    Of trying to be good?  
How can I keep a sunny soul  
    To shine along life's way?  
How can I tune my little heart  
    To sweetly sing all day?  
Dear Father, help me with the love  
    That casteth out my fear,  
Teach me to lean on Thee, and feel  
    That Thou are very near,  
That no temptation is unseen,  
    No childish grief too small,  
Since Thou, with patience infinite,  
    Doth soothe and comfort  
all. I do not ask for any crown  
    But that which all may win,  
Nor seek to conquer any world,  
Except the one within.  
Be Thou my guide until I find,  
    Led by a tender hand,  
Thy happy kingdom in myself,  
    And dare to take command.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**O Captain! My Captain!***Walt Whitman*

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
    But O heart! heart! heart!  
    O the bleeding drops of red,  
    Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
    But I, with mournful tread,  
    Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

**The Pearl***Ernestine Cobern Beyer*

Among the fish that swim and swish beneath the stormy sea  
There lived a little oyster, and most melancholy, he!  
Inside his clammy cloister, weeping sadly was the oyster.  
And this made him even moister than an oyster ought to be!

His brother-fish said "Pooh and pish. He isn't worth a pin!"  
"Poor fish" they often called him with a patronizing grin.  
And it has to be admitted that the teasing title fitted,  
For the oyster, humble-witted, didn't own a single "fin!"

In sad distress he would, I guess, have lived his life in vain  
If something had not happened, to the oyster's happy gain:  
One morning, something nicked him. Some gritty sand had pricked him!  
To wall it up, its victim built a pearl around the pain!

Thus did he do what we can, too, if we but have the wit:  
He turned bad luck to good-and yet his shell remained a fit.  
He'd say, when he was feted, that his pearl was overrated;  
"Shucks!" he often shyly stated; "It just took a little grit!"

Degree of Difficulty: 2

**Pied Beauty**

*Gerard Manley Hopkins*

GLORY be to God for dappled things—  
    For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;  
    For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
    Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;  
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.  
All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
    Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
    With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; He  
fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.

Degree of Difficulty: 1

**The Potter**

*Norman P. Woodruff*

Today as I watched the potter  
He molded a beautiful vase.  
As he picked up the clay to shape it,  
Each particle fell into place.  
It seemed as if he crushed it and pressed it  
Every flaw had dissolved in his hands;  
And soon he had fashioned a vessel,  
Exactly as first he had planned.

Then I saw him open an oven  
And the vessel was placed in the heat.  
The surface began to harden;  
To glisten and shine as a sheet.  
So often we're placed in the furnace,  
We're tried and crushed to pure gold.  
As a potter turns out his vessel,  
So our lives are shaped I am told.

Now I thought as I saw him in action,  
How God molds our lives every day,  
How He irons out all our defects  
And works every blemish away.  
Then I prayed, "Oh, may I be pliant,  
That I may be easily bent,  
That I may fit into the pattern,  
Of the mission for which I am sent."

Degree of Difficulty: 2

**The Pup***Edgar A. Guest*

He tore the curtains yesterday,  
And scratched the paper on the wall;  
Ma's boots, too, have gone astray—  
She says she left them in the hall;  
He tugged the tablecloth and broke  
A fancy saucer and a cup;  
Though Bud and I think it a joke  
Ma scolds a lot about the pup.  
The sofa pillows are a sight,  
The rugs are looking somewhat frayed,  
And there is ruin, left and right  
That little Boston bull has made.  
He slept on Buddy's counterpane—  
Ma found him there when she woke up.  
I think it needless to explain  
She scolds a lot about the pup.  
And yet he comes and licks her hand  
And sometimes climbs into her lap  
And there, Bud lets me understand,  
He very often takes his nap.  
And Bud and I have learned to know  
She wouldn't give the rascal up:  
She's really fond of him, although  
she scolds a lot about the pup.

Degree of Difficulty: 1

**The Star-Spangled Banner**

*Francis Scott Key*

O! say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming!  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;  
O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the  
land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;  
'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion A  
home and a country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps, pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave O'er  
the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land  
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just, And this be our  
motto—"*In God is our trust*":

And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

**Thy Will Be Done***Helen Steiner Rice*

Do you want what you want when you want it?  
Do you pray and expect a reply?  
And when it's not instantly answered,  
Do you feel that God passed you by?  
Well, prayers that are prayed in this manner  
Are really not prayers at all,  
For you can't go to God in a hurry  
And expect Him to answer your call ...  
For prayers are not meant for obtaining  
What we selfishly wish to acquire,  
For God in His wisdom refuses  
The things that we wrongly desire.  
Don't pray for freedom from trouble,  
Or ask that life's trials pass you by,

Instead pray for strength and for courage  
To meet life's "dark hours" and not cry  
That God was not there when you called Him,  
And He turned a deaf ear to your prayer  
And just when you needed Him most,  
He left you alone in despair ...  
Wake up! You are missing completely  
The reason and purpose for prayer,  
Which is really to keep us contented  
That God holds us safe in His care.  
And God only answers our pleadings  
When He knows that our wants fill a need,  
And whenever "our will" becomes "His will"  
There is no prayer that God does not heed.

Degree of Difficulty: 3

Classical Christian Speech Meet

**The Touch of the Master's Hand***Myra Welch*

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer  
Thought it scarcely worth his while  
To waste much time on the old violin,  
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good folks?" he cried,  
"Who'll start the bidding for me?  
"A dollar, one dollar"—then "Two! Only two!  
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;  
And going for three"—But no,  
From the room far back, a gray-haired man  
Came forward and picked up the bow;

Then wiping the dust from the old violin,  
And tightening the loosened strings,  
He played a melody pure and sweet  
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer,  
With a voice that was quiet and low,  
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"  
And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?  
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?  
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,  
And going, and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,  
"We do not understand  
What changed its worth?"  
Swift came the reply.  
"The touch of the master's hand."

**The Touch of the Master's Hand (Continued)**

And many a man with life out of tune,  
And battered and scarred with sin,  
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,  
Much like the old violin.

A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,  
A game — and he travels on;  
He's "going" once and "going" twice—  
He's "going" and almost "gone!"

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd  
Never can quite understand,  
The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought  
By the touch of the Master's hand.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

Classical Christian Speech Meet

## **The Trial of Derek Drew**

*Allan Ahlberg*

The charges:

Derek Drew:

- For leaving his reading book at home.
- For scribbling his handwriting practice.
- For swinging on the pegs in the cloakroom.
- For sabotaging the girls' skipping.
- For doing disgusting things with his dinner.

Also charged

Mrs. Alice Drew (nee Alice Jukes):

For giving birth to Derek Drew.

Mr. Dennis Drew:

For aiding and abetting Mrs. Drew.

Mrs. Muriel Drew and Mr. Donald Drew;

For giving birth to Dennis Drew, etc.

Mrs. Jane Jukes and Mr. Paul Jukes:

For giving birth to Alice Jukes, etc.

Previous generations of the Drew and Juke families:

for being born, etc., etc.

Witnesses

'He's always forgetting his book.' Mrs. Pine.

'He can write neatly, if he wants to.' Ditto.

'I seen him on the pegs, Miss!'

'And me!' 'And me!' Friends of the accused.

'He just kept jumpin' in the rope!' Eight third grade girls.

In Miss Hodge's class.

'It was disgusting!' Mrs. Foot (dinner lady).

For the defense

'I was never in the cloakroom!' Derek Drew.

**The Case of Derek Drew (Continued)**

Mitigating circumstances

This boy is ten years old.

He asks for 386 other charges to be taken into consideration.

'He's not like this at home,' his mother says.

The verdict:

Guilty.

The sentence:

Life!

And do his handwriting again.

Degree of Difficulty: 4

**Warren's Address to the American Soldiers***John Pierpont*

Stand! the ground's your own, my braves!  
Will ye give it up to slaves?  
Fear ye foes who kill for hire?  
Will ye to your homes retire?  
Look behind you! they're afire!  
    And, before you, see  
Who have done it!—From the vale  
On they come!—And will ye quail?—  
Leaden rain and iron hail  
Let their welcome be!

In the God of battles trust!  
Die we may,—and die we must;  
But, O, where can dust to dust  
    Be consigned so well,  
As where Heaven its dews shall shed  
On the martyred patriot's bed,  
And the rocks shall raise their head,  
    Of his deeds to tell!

Degree of Difficulty: 3

**The Wind and the Moon***George Macdonald*

Said the Wind to the Moon, "I will blow you out,  
You stare  
In the air  
Like a ghost in a chair,  
Always looking what I am about—  
I hate to be watched; I'll blow you out."

The Wind blew hard, and out went the Moon.  
So, deep  
On a heap  
Of clouds to sleep,  
Down lay the Wind, and slumbered soon,  
Muttering low, "I've done for that Moon."

He turned in his bed; she was there again!  
On high  
In the sky, With her one ghost eye,  
The Moon shone white and alive and plain.  
Said the Wind, "I will blow you out again."

The Wind blew hard, and the Moon grew dim.  
"With my sledge,  
And my wedge,  
I have knocked off her edge!  
If only I blow right fierce and grim,  
The creature will soon be dimmer than dim."

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.  
"One puff  
More's enough  
To blow her to snuff!  
One good puff more where the last was bred,  
And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go the thread."



## **The World We Make**

*Alfred Grant Walton*

We make the world in which we live  
By what we gather and what we give  
By our daily deeds and the things we say,  
By what we keep or we cast away.

We make our world by the beauty we see  
In a skylark's song or a lilac tree, In a  
butterfly's wing, in the pale moon's rise,  
And the wonder that lingers in midnight skies.

We make our world by the life we lead,  
By the friends we have, by the books we read,  
By the pity we show in the hour of care,  
By the loads we lift and the love we share.

We make our world by the goals we pursue,  
By the heights we seek and the higher view,  
By hopes and dreams that reach the sun  
And a will to fight till the heights are won.

What is the place in which we dwell,  
A hut or a palace, a heaven or hell  
We gather and scatter, we take and we give,  
We make our world—and there we live.

Degree of Difficulty: 3