

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK  
SONGS OF  
CHILDHOOD

& SELECTIONS FROM PEACOCK PIE

Walter De La Mare

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COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED



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# SONGS OF CHILDHOOD

WITH SELECTIONS FROM PEACOCK PIE

By  
Walter De La Mare

With Illustrations by  
Estrella Canziani

LIVING BOOK PRESS

2017

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## SLEEPYHEAD

As I lay awake in the white moonlight,  
I heard a sweet singing in the wood—  
    'Out of bed,  
    Sleepyhead,  
Put your white foot now,  
    Here are we,  
    'Neath the tree,  
Singing round the root now!'

I looked out of window in the white moonlight,  
The trees were like snow in the wood—  
    'Come away  
    Child and play,  
Light with the gnomies;  
    In a mound,  
    Green and round—  
That's where their home is!  
    'Honey-sweet,  
    Curds to eat,  
Cream and frumenty,  
    Shells and beads,  
    Poppy seeds,  
You shall have plenty.'

But soon as I stooped in the dim moonlight  
To put on my stocking and my shoe,  
The sweet, sweet singing died sadly away,  
And the light of the morning peeped through:  
Then instead of the gnomies there came a red robin  
To sing of the buttercups and dew.



O DEAR ME!

Here are crocuses, white, gold, grey!  
'O dear me!' says Marjorie May;  
Flat as a platter the blackberry blows:  
    'O dear me!' says Madeleine Rose;  
The leaves are fallen, the swallows flown:  
    'O dear me!' says Humphrey John;  
Snow lies thick where all night it fell:  
    'O dear me!' says Emmanuel.



## BLUEBELLS

Where the bluebells and the wind are,  
Fairies in a ring I spied,  
And I heard a little linnet  
Singing near beside.

Where the primrose and the dew are,  
Soon were sped the fairies all:  
Only now the green turf freshens,  
And the linnets call.

## LOVELOCKS

I watched the Lady Caroline  
Bind up her dark and beauteous hair;  
Her face was rosy in the glass,  
And 'twixt the coils her hands would pass,  
White in the candleshine.

Her bottles on the table lay,  
Stoppered yet sweet of violet;  
Her image in the mirror stooped  
To view those locks as lightly looped  
As cherry-boughs in May.

The snowy night lay dim without,  
I heard the Waits their sweet song sing;  
The window smouldered keen with frost;  
Yet still she twisted, sleeked and tossed  
Her beauteous hair about.



## A-TISHOO

Sneeze, Pretty, Sneeze, Dainty,  
Else the Elves will have you sure;  
Sneeze, Light-of-Seven-Bright-Candles,  
See they're tipping at the door;  
Their wee feet in measure falling,  
All their little voices calling—  
Sneeze, or never come no more!  
'A-Tishoo!'





## TARTARY

If I were Lord of Tartary,  
Myself and me alone,  
My bed should be of ivory,  
Of beaten gold my throne;  
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,  
And in my forests tigers haunt,  
And in my pools great fishes slant  
Their fins athwart the sun.



If I were Lord of Tartary,  
    Trumpeters every day  
To all my meals should summon me,  
    And in my courtyards bray;  
And in the evenings lamps should shine,  
Yellow as honey, red as wine,  
While harp, and flute, and mandoline,  
    Made music sweet and gay.



If I were Lord of Tartary,  
I'd wear a robe of beads,  
White, and gold, and green they'd be—  
And small, and thick as seeds;  
And ere should wane the morning-star,  
I'd don my robe and scimitar,  
And zebras seven should draw my car  
Through Tartary's dark glades.



Lord of the fruits of Tartary,  
Her rivers silver-pale!  
Lord of the hills of Tartary,  
Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!  
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,  
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,  
Her bird-delighting citron-trees  
In every purple vale!

## THE BUCKLE

I had a silver buckle,  
I sewed it on my shoe,  
And 'neath a sprig of mistletoe  
I danced the evening through!

I had a bunch of cowslips,  
I hid 'em in a grot,  
In case the elves should come by night  
And me remember not.

I had a yellow riband,  
I tied it in my hair,  
That, walking in the garden,  
The birds might see it there.

I had a secret laughter,  
I laughed it near the wall:  
Only the ivy and the wind  
May tell of it at all.





## THE HARE

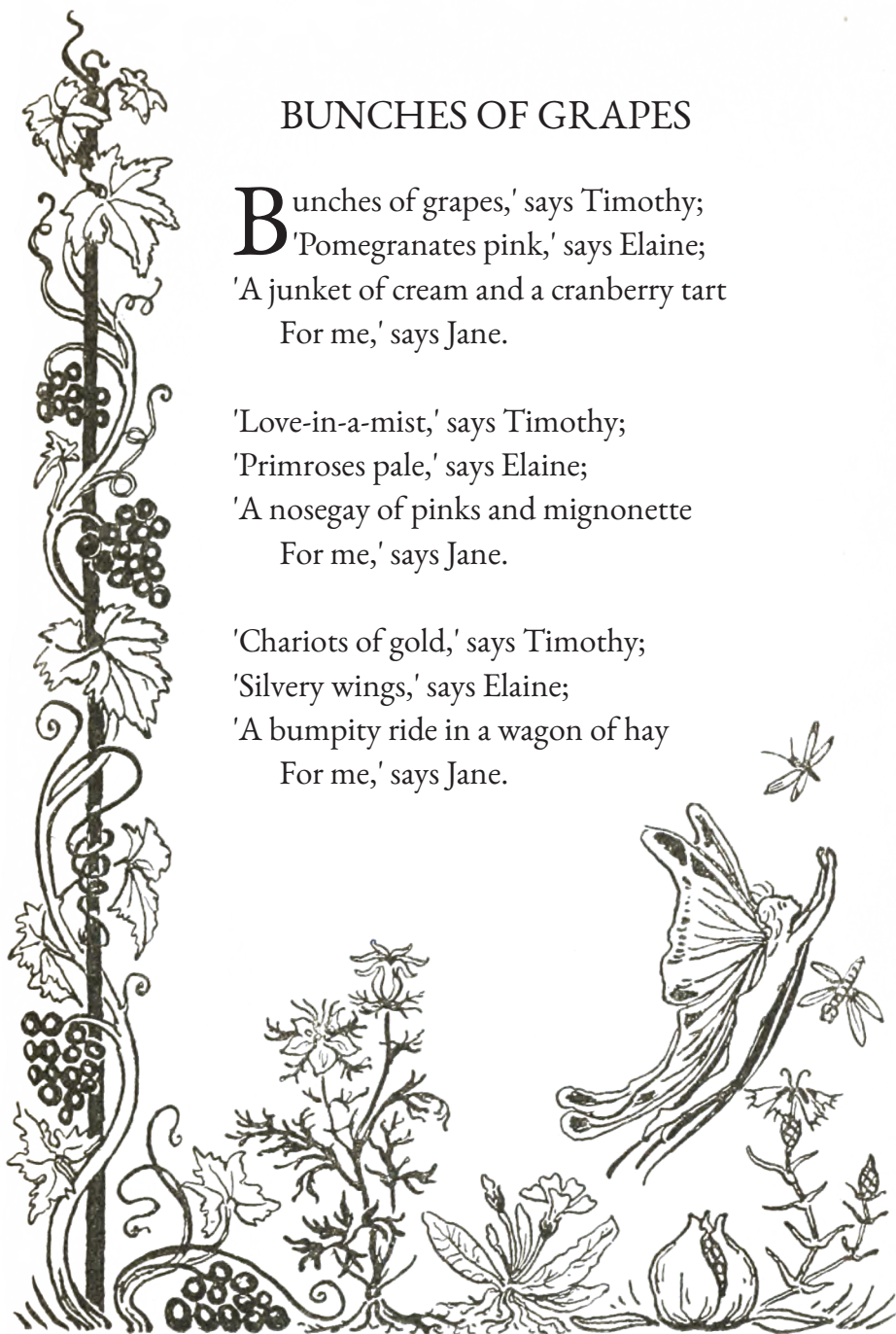
In the black furrow of a field  
I saw an old witch-hare this night;  
And she cocked her lissome ear,  
And she eyed the moon so bright,  
And she nibbled o' the green;  
And I whispered 'Whsst! witch-hare,'  
Away like a ghostie o'er the field  
She fled, and left the moonlight there.

## BUNCHES OF GRAPES

**B**unches of grapes,' says Timothy;  
'Pomegranates pink,' says Elaine;  
'A junket of cream and a cranberry tart  
For me,' says Jane.

'Love-in-a-mist,' says Timothy;  
'Primroses pale,' says Elaine;  
'A nosegay of pinks and mignonette  
For me,' says Jane.

'Chariots of gold,' says Timothy;  
'Silvery wings,' says Elaine;  
'A bumpity ride in a wagon of hay  
For me,' says Jane.



## JOHN MOULDY

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,  
Deep down twenty steps of stone;  
In the dusk he sat a-smiling,  
Smiling there alone.

He read no book, he snuffed no candle;  
The rats ran in, the rats ran out;  
And far and near, the drip of water  
Went whisp'ring about.

The dusk was still, with dew a-falling,  
I saw the Dog-star bleak and grim,  
I saw a slim brown rat of Norway  
Creep over him.

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,  
Deep down twenty steps of stone;  
In the dusk he sat a-smiling,  
Smiling there alone.



## THE FLY

**H**ow large unto the tiny fly  
Must little things appear!—  
A rosebud like a feather bed,  
Its prickles like a spear;

A dewdrop like a looking-glass,  
A hair like golden wire;  
The smallest grain of mustard-seed  
As fierce as coals of fire;

A loaf of bread, a lofty hill;  
A wasp, a cruel leopard;  
And specks of salt as bright to see  
As lambkins to a shepherd.



## SONG

O for a moon to light me home!  
O for a lanthorn green!  
For those sweet stars the Pleiades,  
That glitter in the twilight trees;  
O for a lovelorn taper! O  
For a lanthorn green!

O for a frock of tartan!  
O for clear, wild, grey eyes!  
For fingers light as violets,  
'Neath branches that the blackbird frets;  
O for a thistly meadow! O  
For clear, wild grey eyes!

O for a heart like almond boughs!  
O for sweet thoughts like rain!  
O for first-love like fields of grey,  
Shut April-buds at break of day!  
O for a sleep like music!  
For still dreams like rain!



