

**SECTION 224 – Recitation Age 8**

**Lazy Witch** (by Myra Cohn Livingston)

Lazy witch,

What's wrong with you?

Get up and stir your magic brew.

Here's candlelight to chase the gloom.

Jump up and mount your broom

And muster up your charms and spells

And wicked grins and piercing yells.

It's Halloween! There's work to do!

Lazy witch,

What's wrong with you?

OR

**Friends** (by Nigel Gray)

I used to feel lonely every night

until my father said,

“What you need is a special friend  
you can cuddle in your bed.”

First I had a teddy,

then I had a dog,

then I had a panda,

a rabbit and a frog.

Then I had a tiger,

a snake and then a bat,

a lion and an elephant,

a zebra and a cat.

Now my bed is full of friends,

but the problem is, you see,

though none of them feel lonely

there's no room left for me.

**SECTION 223 – Recitation Age 9**

**THE TEACHER TOOK MY TENNIS BALL** (by Libby Hathorn)

The teacher took my tennis ball.  
She took it for the day,  
Just because it broke some glass  
She said I couldn't play.  
I'd like to try the same with her  
When I think she goes too far –  
"Miss Jones," I'd like to say to her,  
"I'm going to take your car.  
No Miss Jones, I'm sorry  
You're not allowed to borrow  
But if you're really, really good,  
You'll get it back tomorrow!  
Maybe."

**OR**

**DADDY FELL INTO THE POND** (by Alfred Noyes)

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.  
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.  
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,  
And there seemed to be nothing beyond.

THEN

Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone's face grew merry and bright,  
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.  
"Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!  
He's crawling out of the duckweed."

Click!

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,  
And doubled up, shaking silently,  
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft  
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.  
O, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond

WHEN

Daddy fell into the pond.

## **SECTION 222 – Recitation Age 10**

### **TARANTULAS** (by Mary King)

I don't mind about tarantulas, do you?  
I don't care  
If they stare  
From my picture-frames  
Or roof.  
I'm aloof  
To the fact  
They are very large  
And act  
As if they might  
Quite conceivably  
Bite.  
I find  
If they know  
You don't mind,  
They are quiet as a mouse;  
Unobtrusive in the house;  
Helpful with flies;  
Friendly and wise -  
  
So,  
I don't mind about tarantulas, do you?

OR

### **HEN** (by Ted Hughes)

Dowdy the Hen  
Has nothing to do  
But peer and peck, and peck and peer  
At nothing.  
  
Sometimes a couple of scratches to right  
Sometimes a couple of scratches to left  
And sometimes a head-up, red-rimmed stare  
At nothing.  
  
A Hen in your pen, O Hen, O when  
Will something happen?  
Nothing to do but brood on her nest  
And wish.  
  
Wish? Wish? What shall she wish for?  
Stealthy fingers  
Under her bum.  
An egg on your dish.

## **SECTION 221 - Recitation Age 11**

### **SNAKE** (by Ian Mudie)

Suddenly the grass before my feet  
shakes and becomes alive.  
The snake  
twists, almost leaps,  
graceful, even in terror,  
smoothness looping back over smoothness,  
slithers away, disappears.  
- And the grass is again still.

And surely, by whatever means of communication  
is available to snakes,  
the word is passed:  
Hey, I just met a man, a monster, too;  
Must have been, oh, seven feet tall.  
So keep away from the long grass,  
it's dangerous there.

OR

### **THE SLOTH** (by Theodore Roethke)

In moving-slow he has no Peer.  
You ask him something in his Ear,  
He thinks about it for a Year;  
  
And then, before he says a Word  
There, upside down (unlike a Bird),  
He will assume that you have Heard –  
  
A most Ex-as-per-at-ing Lug.  
But should you call his manner Smug,  
He'll sigh and give his Branch a Hug;  
  
Then off again to Sleep he goes,  
Still swaying gently by his Toes,  
And you just *know* he knows he knows.

## **SECTION 220 – Recitation Age 12**

### **SILVER** (by Walter de la Mare)

Slowly, silently, now the moon  
Walks the night in her silver shoon;  
This way, and that, she peers, and sees  
Silver fruit upon silver trees;  
One by one the casements catch  
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;  
Couched in his kennel, like a log;  
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;  
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep  
Of doves in silver feathered sleep  
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,  
With silver claws, and silver eye;  
And moveless fish in the water gleam,  
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

OR

### **THE WAITING GAME** (by John Mole)

Nuts and marbles in the toe,  
An orange in the heel,  
A Christmas stocking in the dark  
Is wonderful to feel.

Shadowy, bulging length of leg  
That crackles when you clutch,  
A Christmas stocking in the dark  
Is marvellous to touch.

You lie back on your pillow  
But that shape's still hanging there.  
A Christmas stocking in the dark  
Is very hard to bear.

So try to get to sleep again  
And chase the hours away.  
A Christmas stocking in the dark  
Must wait for Christmas day.

## **SECTION 219 – Recitation Age 13**

### **NOTHING** (by Julie Holder)

He thought he heard  
A footstep on the stair,  
'It's nothing,' he said to himself,  
'Nothing is there.'  
He thought then he heard  
A snuffling in the hall,  
'It's nothing,' he said again,  
'Nothing at all.'  
But he didn't open the door  
In case he found nothing  
Standing there,  
On foot or tentacle or paw.  
Timidly quiet he kept to his seat  
While nothing stalked the house  
On great big feet.  
It was strange though  
And he'd noticed this  
When on his own before,  
Nothing stalked throughout the house  
But never through his door.  
The answer he thought,  
Was very plain. It was because there was  
nothing there-  
Again!

OR

### **MY PRAYING MANTIS** (by John Lyons)

I once had a mantis as a pet.  
A praying mantis; you must not forget,  
is the tiger of the insect world,  
hungry, fierce and extremely bold;  
and if you are an insect, keep away  
should a mantis be lurking where you play.  
Anyway, my mantis was my very best friend.  
He sat on my shoulder, and I did defend  
his insect's right to stay with me,  
protect him from people's curiosity;  
for they thought it very strange  
the way his body was arranged:  
For a start, his neck was very long,  
and his heart-shaped head did not belong  
to that thin neck and bulbous abdomen  
or toothed arms as strong as ten,  
wings which gave him speed in flight  
when he attacked and with delight  
grabbed a cockroach for his supper,  
tore and ate it with his choppers.  
However, one day, Phoebe, the neighbour's cat,  
gobbled up my mantis and that was that.

**SECTION 218 – Recitation Age 14**

**THE BROWN SNAKE** (by Douglas Stewart)

I walked to the green gum-tree  
Because the day was hot;  
A snake could be anywhere  
But that time I forgot.

The Duckmaloi lazed through the valley  
In amber pools like tea  
From some old fosicker's billy,  
And I walked under the tree.

Blue summer smoked on Bindo,  
It lapped me ward in its waves,  
And when that snake hissed up  
Under the shower of leaves

High, high as my waist,  
Rearing with lightning's tongue,  
So brown with heat like the fallen  
Dry sticks it hid among,

I thought the earth itself  
Under the green gum-tree,  
All in the sweet of summer,  
Reached out to strike at me.

OR

**MOUSE** (By Kenneth Mackenzie)

A small mouse  
comes every night  
to clean my house  
by moonlight.

When in my bed  
I sleep sound,  
like someone dead,  
it glides around

the four walls,  
the earthen floor.  
No crumb falls  
unaccounted for.

Starlight or storm,  
it matters not:  
the dawn's alarm,  
the creaking cot

trouble it less  
than that I may  
rudely miss  
supper one day.

My floor is clean,  
my table clear:  
my mouse has been  
gleaning here.

It cannot be  
so very fat

My poverty

must see to that –

but then I know

it cannot be lean:

my house is so

uncommon clean!

## **SECTION 217 – Recitation Age 15**

### **'A HAND IN OCHRE'** (by Neroli Roberts)

Her tribe has vanished with daughters and sons  
All her people lie under the sand.  
Nothing to prove that she'd ever lived,  
But the faint outline of a stencilled hand.

In earth-red ochre, or charcoal line,  
So many caves with the same mute sign.  
I trace the shape with a pensive finger.  
Why do I linger?  
An ancient sadness chills this place.  
That's why I stop and pause.  
Dark sister without name or face,  
I place my hand on yours.

The long unmeasured years divide us,  
Too late, too late for meeting;  
But in this quiet forsaken cave  
Hands touch  
    - in Greeting....

**OR**

### **CAVE PAINTING** (by Douglas Stewart)

Look there are dark hands in the black rock,  
Man's hands, woman's hands, child's hands hiding in a cave,  
Shadows of hands, but with such a living look  
They seem to waver and beckon, they seem to move  
in a language of gesture startling and piercing as speech.,  
Up from the green water here we clambered  
say the hands and the bodies of the hands, to hold and to touch,  
And here we camped, and here we shall be remembered.

And they are so close and yet so far and wild  
They seem to breathe and speak for all humanity  
Who made their camp so, man and woman and child,  
And flowed with the green river down to infinity;  
And beautifully and terribly they wave  
In the black rock like hands alive in a grave.



**CHAMPIONSHIP RECITATION – 15 to 18 years**

**DEATH THE LEVELLER** (By James Shirley)

The glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things;  
There is no armour against Fate;  
Death lays his icy hands on kings:  
Sceptre and Crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:  
But their strong nerves at last must yield;  
They tame but one another still:  
Early or late  
They stoop to Fate,  
And must give up their murmuring breath  
When they, pale captives creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!  
Upon Death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds.  
Your heads must come  
To the cold tomb:  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.