Playing with Words

Fifth Grade Unit 1

**Poems**

**Casey at the Bat**

The Outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day:  
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play.  
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,  
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest  
Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;  
They thought, if only Casey could get but a whack at that -  
We'd put up even money, now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,  
And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake;  
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,  
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,  
And Blake, the much despis-ed, tore the cover off the ball;  
And when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,  
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from 5,000 throats and more there rose a lusty yell;  
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;  
It knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,  
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;  
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.  
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped-  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,  
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;  
And its likely they'd a-killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;  
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud;  
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;  
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.  
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,  
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;  
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,  
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;  
But there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey has struck out.

* Earnest Lawrence Thayer

**The Echoing Green**

The sun does arise,

And make happy the skies.

The merry bells ring

To welcome the spring.

The skylark and thrush,

The birds of the bush,

Sing louder around,

To the bells’ cheerful sound,

While our sports shall be seen

On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair

Does laugh away care,

Sitting under the oak,

Among the old folk.

They laugh at our play,

And soon they all say:

‘Such, such were the joys

When we all, girls and boys,

In our youth-time were seen

On the echoing green.’

Till the little ones weary

No more can be merry;

The sun does descend,

And our sports have an end.

Round the laps of their mother

Many sisters and brothers,

Like birds in their nest,

Are ready for rest;

And sport no more seen

On the darkening green.

* William Blake

**Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf**

As soon as Wolf began to feel  
That he would like a decent meal,  
He went and knocked on Grandma's door.  
When Grandma opened it, she saw  
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,  
And Wolfie said, ``May I come in?''  
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,  
``He's going to eat me up!'' she cried.

And she was absolutely right.  
He ate her up in one big bite.  
But Grandmamma was small and tough,  
And Wolfie wailed, ``That's not enough!  
I haven't yet begun to feel  
That I have had a decent meal!''  
He ran around the kitchen yelping,  
``I've got to have a second helping!''  
Then added with a frightful leer,  
``I'm therefore going to wait right here  
Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood  
Comes home from walking in the wood.''  
He quickly put on Grandma's clothes,  
(Of course he hadn't eaten those).  
He dressed himself in coat and hat.  
He put on shoes, and after that  
He even brushed and curled his hair,  
Then sat himself in Grandma's chair.  
In came the little girl in red.  
She stopped. She stared. And then she said,

``What great big ears you have, Grandma.''  
``All the better to hear you with,'' the Wolf replied.  
``What great big eyes you have, Grandma.''  
said Little Red Riding Hood.  
``All the better to see you with,'' the Wolf replied.

He sat there watching her and smiled.  
He thought, I'm going to eat this child.  
Compared with her old Grandmamma  
She's going to taste like caviar.

Then Little Red Riding Hood said, ``But Grandma,  
what a lovely great big furry coat you have on.''

``That's wrong!'' cried Wolf. ``Have you forgot  
To tell me what BIG TEETH I've got?  
Ah well, no matter what you say,  
I'm going to eat you anyway.''  
The small girl smiles. One eyelid flickers.  
She whips a pistol from her knickers.  
She aims it at the creature's head  
And bang bang bang, she shoots him dead.  
A few weeks later, in the wood,  
I came across Miss Riding Hood.  
But what a change! No cloak of red,  
No silly hood upon her head.  
She said, ``Hello, and do please note  
My lovely furry wolfskin coat.''

* Roald Dahl

**Eletelephony**

If I am blind and need someone  
To keep me safe from harm,  
It matters not the race to me  
Of the one who takes my arm.  
If I am saved from drowning  
As I grasp and grope,  
I will not stop to see the face  
Of the one who throws the rope.  
Or if out on some battlefield  
I’m falling faint and weak,  
The one who gently lifts me up  
May any language speak.  
We sip the water clear and cool,  
No matter the hand that gives it.  
A life that’s lived worthwhile and fine,  
What matters the one who lives it?

* Elma Stukey

**My Shadow**

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.  
  
The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow--  
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes goes so little that there's none of him at all.  
  
He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.  
He stays so close behind me, he's a coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!  
  
One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

* Robert Louis Stevenson