Literary Heroes

Fourth Grade Unit 6

**Poetry**

**Poems**

**Why Dragons?**

The smoke still hangs heavily over the meadow,

Circling down from the mouth of the cave,

While kneeling in prayer, full armored and haloed,

The lone knight is feeling uncertainly brave.

The promise of victory sung in the churches,

Is hardly a murmur out here in the air.

All that he hears is the thud of this faint heart

Echoing growls of the beast in its lair.

The steel of his armor would flash in the sunlight,

Except that the smoke has quite hidden the sky.

The red of the cross on his breast should sustain him,

Except - he suspects - it's a perfect bull's-eye.

The folk of the village who bet on the outcome

Have somehow all fled from the scene in dismay.

They'll likely return in a fortnight or longer,

He doubts that they'll be of much help on this day.

And then - with a scream - the fell beast of the cavern

Flings its foul body full out of the cave.

The knight forgets prayers and churches and haloes

And tries to remember just how to be brave.

The webs on the wings of the dragon are reddened,

With blood or with sunlight, the knight is not sure.

The head of the beast is a silver-toothed nightmare,

Its tongue drips a poison for which there's no cure.

He thrusts his sword and he pokes with his gauntlets,

He knees with he poleyn, kicks out with his greave.

He'd happily give all the gold in his pocket

If only the dragon would quietly leave.

There's smoke and there's fire, there's wind and there's growling.

There's screams from the knights, and his sobs and his cries.

And when the smoke clears, there's the sound of dry heaving

As one of the two of them messily dies.

Of course it's the knight who has won this hard battle,

Who wins in a poem beaten out on a forge

Of human devising and human invention.

BUT:

If there's no dragon - then there's no Saint George.

* Jane Yolen

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| **Robin Hood and Little John**  **When Robin Hood was about twenty years old, *With a hey down down and a down*  He happend to meet Little John,  A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade, For he was a lusty young man.**  **Though he was calld Little, his limbs they were large,  And his stature was seven foot high; Where-ever he came, they quak'd at his name,  For soon he would make them to fly.**  **How they came acquainted, I'll tell you in brief,  If you will but listen a while; For this very jest, amongst all the rest,  I think it may cause you to smile.**  **Bold Robin Hood said to his jolly bowmen,  Pray tarry you here in this grove;  And see that you all observe well my call,  While thorough the forest I rove.**  **We have had no sport for these fourteen long days,  Therefore now abroad will I go; Now should I be beat, and cannot retreat,  My horn I will presently blow.**  **Then did he shake hands with his merry men all,  And bid them at present good b'w'ye; Then, as near a brook his journey he took, A stranger he chancd to espy.**  **They happend to meet on a long narrow bridge, And neither of them would give way; Quoth bold Robin Hood, and sturdily stood,  I'll show you right Nottingham play.**  **With that from his quiver an arrow he drew; A broad arrow with a goose-wing: The stranger reply'd, I'll liquor thy hide, If thou offerst to touch the string.**  **Quoth bold Robin Hood, Thou dost prate like an ass, For were I to bend but my bow, I could send a dart quite thro thy proud heart,  Before thou couldst strike me one blow.**  **'Thou talkst like a coward,' the stranger reply'd; 'Well armd with a long bow, you stand,  To shoot at my breast, while I, I protest,  Have nought but a staff in my hand.'**  **'The name of a coward,' quoth Robin, 'I scorn,  Wherefore my long bow I'll lay by; And now, for thy sake, a staff I will take,  The truth of thy manhood to try.'**  **Then Robin Hood stept to a thicket of trees,  And chose him a staff of ground oak; Now this being done, away he did run  To the stranger, and merrily spoke:**  **Lo! see my staff, it is lusty and tough,  Now here on the bridge we will play; Whoever falls in, the other shall win  The battel, and so we'll away.**  **'With all my whole heart,' the stranger reply'd; 'I scorn in the least to give out;'  This said, they fell to't without more dispute,  And their staffs they did flourish about.**  **And first Robin he gave the stranger a bang,  So hard that it made his bones ring: The stranger he said, This must be repaid,  I'll give you as good as you bring.**  **So long as I'm able to handle my staff,  To die in your debt, friend, I scorn:  Then to it each goes, and followd their blows, As if they had been threshing of corn.**  **The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,  Which caused the blood to appear; Then Robin, enrag'd, more fiercely engag'd,  And followd his blows more severe.**  **So thick and fast did he lay it on him,  With a passionate fury and ire,  At every stroke, he made him to smoke,  As if he had been all on fire.**  **O then into fury the stranger he grew,  And gave him a damnable look,  And with it a blow that laid him full low,  And tumbled him into the brook**  **'I prithee, good fellow, a where art thou now?'  The stranger, in laughter, he cry'd; Quoth bold Robin Hood, Good faith, in the flood,  And floating along with the tide.**  **I needs must acknow ledge thou art a brave soul; With thee I'll no longer contend; For needs must I say, thou hast got the day,  Our battle shall be at an end.   Then unto the bank he did presently wade,  And pulled himself out by a thorn; Which done, at the last, he blowed a loud blast  Straitway on his fine bugle-horn.**  **The eccho of which through the valleys did fly,  At which his stout bowmen appeared,  All clothed in green, most gay to be seen; So up to their master they steered.**  **'0 what's the matter?' quoth William Stutely; 'Good master, you are wet to the skin:'  'No matter,' quoth he; 'the lad which you see,  In fighting, hath tumbled me in.'**  **'He shall not go scot-free,' the others reply'd; So straight they were seizing him there,  To duck him likewise; but Robin Hood cries,  He is a stout fellow, forbear.**  **There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not afraid; These bowmen upon me do wait; There's threescore and nine; if thou wilt be mine,  Thou shalt have my livery straight.**  **And other accoutrements fit for a man; Speak up, jolly blade, never fear; I'll teach you also the use of the bow,  To shoot at the fat fallow-deer.**  **'0 here is my hand,' the stranger reply'd,  'I'll serve you with all my whole heart; My name is John Little, a man of good mettle; Nere doubt me, for I'll play my part;'**  **His name shall be altered,' quoth William Stutely,  'And I will his godfather be; Prepare then a feast, and none of the least,  For we will be merry,' quoth he.**  **They presently fetched in a brace of fat does,  With humming strong liquor likewise; They loved what was good; so, in the green wood,  This pretty sweet babe they baptize.**  **He was, I must tell you, but seven foot high,  And, may be, an ell in the waste; A pretty sweet lad; much feasting they had; Bold Robin the christening grac'd.**  **With all his bowmen, which stood in a ring, And were of the Nottingham breed; Brave Stutely comes then, with seven yeomen,  And did in this manner proceed.**  **'This infant was called John Little,' quoth he,  'Which name shall be changed anon; The words we'll transpose, so where-ever he goes, His name shall be calld Little John.'**  **They all with a shout made the elements ring, So soon as the office was ore;  To feasting they went, with true merriment,  And tippld strong liquor galore.**  **Then Robin he took the pretty sweet babe,  And cloathd him from top to the toe  In garments of green, most gay to be seen,  And gave him a curious long bow.**  **'Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best,  And range in the greenwood with us; Where we'll not want gold nor silver, behold,  While bishops have ought in their purse.**  **'We live here like squires, or lords of renown,  Without ere a foot of free land; We feast on good cheer, with wine, ale, and beer,  And everything at our command.'**  **Then music and dancing did finish the day; At length, when the sun waxed low,  Then all the whole train the grove did refrain,  And unto their caves they did go.**  **And so ever after, as long as he lived,  Although he was proper and tall,  Yet nevertheless, the truth to express,  Still Little John they did him call.**   * Anonymous |

**Robin Hood and Maid Marian**

**A bonny fine maid of a noble degree,   
*With a hey down down a down down*  
Maid Marian called by name,  
Did live in the North, of excellent worth,   
For she was a gallant dame.   
  
For favour and face, and** [**beauty**](http://www.notable-quotes.com/b/beauty_quotes.html) **most rare,   
Queen Helen she did excel;  
For Marian then was praised of all men   
That did in the country dwell.   
  
'Twas neither Rosamond nor Jane Shore,   
Whose beauty was clear and bright,  
That could surpass this country lass,   
Beloved of lord and knight.   
  
The Earl of Huntington, nobly born,   
That came of noble blood,  
To Marian went, with a good intent,   
By the name of Robin Hood.   
  
With kisses sweet their red lips meet,   
For she and the earl did agree;  
In every place, they kindly embrace,   
With love and sweet unity.   
  
But fortune bearing these lovers a spite,   
That soon they were forced to part,  
To the merry green wood then went Robin Hood,   
With a sad and sorrowfull heart.   
  
And Marian, poor soul, was troubled in mind,   
For the absence of her friend;  
With finger in eye, she often did cry,   
And his person did much commend.   
  
Perplexed and vexed, and troubled in mind,   
She dressed herself like a page,  
And ranged the wood to find Robin Hood   
The bravest of men in that age.   
  
With quiver and bow, sword, buckler and all,   
Thus armed was Marian most bold,  
Still wandering about to find Robin out,   
Whose person was better then gold.   
  
But Robin Hood, he himself had disguised,   
And Marian was strangely attir'd,  
That they proved foes, and so fell to blows,   
Whose valour bold Robin admir'd,   
  
They drew out their swords, and to cutting they went,  
At least an hour or more,  
That the blood ran apace from bold Robins face,   
And Marian was wounded sore.   
  
'O hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,  
'And thou shalt be one of my string,  
To range in the wood with bold Robin Hood,   
To hear the sweet nightingall sing.'   
  
When Marian did hear the voice of her love,   
Her self she did quickly discover,  
And with kisses sweet she did him greet,   
Like to a most loyal lover.   
  
When bold Robin Hood his Marian did see,   
Good lord, what clipping was there!  
With kind embraces, and jobbing of faces,   
Providing of gallant cheer.   
  
For Little John took his bow in his hand,   
And wandering in the wood,  
To kill the deer, and make good cheer,   
For Marian and Robin Hood.**

**A stately banquet they had full soon,   
All in a shaded bower,  
Where venison sweet they had to eat,   
And were merry that present hour.   
  
Great flagons of wine were set on the board,   
And merrily they drunk round  
Their boules of sack, to strengthen the back,   
Whilst their knees did touch the ground.   
  
First Robin Hood began a health   
To Marian his onely dear,  
And his yeomen all, both comely and tall,   
Did quickly bring up the rear.   
  
For in a brave vein they tossed off their bouls,   
Whilst thus they did remain,  
And every cup, as they drunk up,   
They filled with speed again.   
  
At last they ended their merryment,   
And went to walk in the wood,  
Where Little John and Maid Marian   
Attended on bold Robin Hood.   
  
In solid content together they lived,   
With all their yeomen gay;  
They lived by their hands, without any lands,   
And so they did many a day.   
  
But now to conclude, an end I will make   
In time, as I think it good,  
For the people that dwell in the North can tell   
Of Marian and bold Robin Hood.**

* Anonymous