

# **Riley Farm–Rhymes**

James Whitcomb Riley



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# Riley Farm–Rhymes

## James Whitcomb Riley

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- OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM
- ROMANCIN'

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and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

INSCRIBED WITH ALL GRATEFUL ESTEEM  
TO THE GOOD OLD–FASHIONED PEOPLE

The deadnin' and the thicket's jes' a b'ilin' full o' June,  
From the rattle o' the cricket, to the yaller–hammer's tune;  
And the catbird in the bottom and the sap–suck on the  
snag,  
Seems's ef they cain't—od–rot–'em!—jes' do nothin' else  
but brag!

There' music in the twitter o' the bluebird and the jay,  
And that sassy little critter jes' a–peckin' all the day;

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

There' music in the "flicker," and there' music in the  
thrush,  
And there' music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in the  
brush!—

There' music all around me!—And I go back—in a dream  
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep:—And, in the  
stream  
That used to split the medder wher' the dandy lions  
grewed,  
I stand knee—deep, and redder than the sunset down the  
road.

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## THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

The orchard lands of Long Ago!  
O drowsy winds, awake, and blow  
The snowy blossoms back to me,  
And all the buds that used to be!  
Blow back along the grassy ways  
Of truant feet, and lift the haze  
Of happy summer from the trees  
That trail their tresses in the seas  
Of grain that float and overflow  
The orchard lands of Long Ago!

Blow back the melody that slips  
In lazy laughter from the lips  
That marvel much if any kiss  
Is sweeter than the apple's is.  
Blow back the twitter of the birds—  
The lisp, the titter, and the words  
Of merriment that found the shine  
Of summer—time a glorious wine  
That drenched the leaves that loved it so,  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

O memory! alight and sing  
Where rosy—bellied pippins cling,  
And golden russets glint and gleam,  
As, in the old Arabian dream,  
The fruits of that enchanted tree  
The glad Aladdin robbed for me!  
And, drowsy winds, awake and fan  
My blood as when it overran  
A heart ripe as the apples grow  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

## WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in  
the shock,  
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin'  
turkey—cock,  
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the  
hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it's then's the times a feller is a—feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful  
rest,  
As he leaves the house, bare—headed, and goes out to feed  
the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock.

They's something kindo' harty—like about the atmsfere  
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is  
here—  
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the  
trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'—birds and buzzin' of the  
bees;  
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the  
haze  
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days  
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the  
morn;  
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome—like, but still  
A—preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;  
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—  
O, it sets my hart a—clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the cellar—floor in red and yeller heaps;  
And your cider—makin's over, and your wimmern—folks  
is through  
With their mince and apple—butter, and theyr souse and



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sausage, too! ...

I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be  
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around  
on ME—

I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole—indurin'  
flock—

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

## WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

In Spring, when the green gits back in the trees,  
And the sun comes out and STAYS,  
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,  
And you think of yer bare–foot days;  
When you ORT to work and you want to NOT,  
And you and yer wife agrees  
It's time to spade up the garden–lot,  
When the green gits back in the trees  
Well! work is the least o' MY ideas  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees  
Is a–buzzin' aroun' ag'in  
In that kind of a lazy go–as–you–please  
Old gait they bum roun' in;  
When the groun's all bald whare the hay–rick stood,  
And the crick's riz, and the breeze  
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,  
And the green gits back in the trees,—  
I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,  
The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail–feathers o' Wintertime  
Is all pulled out and gone!  
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,  
And the swet it starts out on  
A feller's forred, a–gittin' down  
At the old spring on his knees—  
I kindo' like jest a–loaferin' roun'  
When the green gits back in the trees—  
Jest a–potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

## WET—WEATHER TALK

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men ginerly, to all intents—  
Although they're apt to grumble some—  
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,  
And takes things as they come—  
That is, the commonality  
Of men that's lived as long as me  
Has watched the world enough to learn  
They're not the boss of this concern.

With SOME, of course, it's different—  
I've saw YOUNG men that knowed it all,  
And didn't like the way things went  
On this terrestchul ball;—  
But all the same, the rain, some way,  
Rained jest as hard on picnic day;  
Er, when they railyly WANTED it,  
It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existunce, dry and wet  
Will overtake the best of men—  
Some little skift o' clouds'll shet  
The sun off now and then.—  
And mayby, whilse you're wundern who  
You've fool—like lent your umbrell' to,  
And WANT it—out'll pop the sun,  
And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggervates the farmers, too—  
They's too much wet, er too much sun,  
Er work, er waitin' round to do  
Before the plowin' 's done:  
And mayby, like as not, the wheat,  
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,  
Will ketch the storm—and jest about  
The time the corn's a—jintin' out.

These—here CY—CLONES a—foolin' round—  
And back'ard crops!—and wind and rain!—  
And yit the corn that's wallerd down  
May elbow up again!—

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

They hain't no sense, as I can see,  
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be  
A—faultin' Natchur's wise intents,  
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.

## THE BROOK—SONG

Little brook! Little brook!  
You have such a happy look—  
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and  
curve and crook—  
And your ripples, one and one,  
Reach each other's hands and run  
Like laughing little children in the sun!

Little brook, sing to me:  
Sing about a bumblebee  
That tumbled from a lily—bell and grumbled  
mumblingly,  
Because he wet the film  
Of his wings, and had to swim,  
While the water—bugs raced round and  
laughed at him!

Little brook—sing a song  
Of a leaf that sailed along  
Down the golden—braided centre of your current  
swift and strong,  
And a dragon—fly that lit  
On the tilting rim of it,  
And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing—how oft in glee  
Came a truant boy like me,  
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting  
melody,  
Till the gurgle and refrain  
Of your music in his brain  
Wrought a happiness as keen to him  
as pain.

Little brook—laugh and leap!  
Do not let the dreamer weep:  
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in  
softest sleep;  
And then sing soft and low  
Through his dreams of long ago—

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Sing back to him the rest he used to  
know!

## THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER

The summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin'  
locus' trees;  
And the clover in the pastur is a big day fer the bees,  
And they been a—swiggin' honey, above board and on the  
sly,  
Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they fly.  
The flicker on the fence—rail 'pears to jest spit on his  
wings  
And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;  
And the hoss—fly is a—whettin'—up his forelegs fer biz,  
And the off—mare is a—switchin' all of her tale they is.

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up the  
plow—  
Oh, they bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not  
a—carin' how;  
So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on the  
wing—  
But theyr peaceabler in pot—pies than any other thing:  
And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy rest,  
She's as full of tribbeleration as a yellor—jacket's nest;  
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a—shinin'  
right,  
Seems to kindo'—sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to—day,  
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,  
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is greener  
still;  
It may rain again to—morry, but I don't think it will.  
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drowneded  
out,  
And propha—sy the wheat will be a failure, without doubt;  
But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,  
Will be on hands onc't more at the 'leventh hour, I bet!

Does the medder—lark complane, as he swims high and  
dry  
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?  
Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappointed way,  
Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?  
Is the chipmuck's health a—failin'?—Does he walk, er does  
he run?  
Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare just like they've  
allus done?

## Riley Farm–Rhymes

Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs er  
voice?  
Ort a mortul be complainin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;  
The June is here this morning, and the sun is shining hot.  
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,  
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur away!  
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,  
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;  
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,  
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer me  
and you.



**"MYLO JONES'S WIFE"**

"Mylo Jones's wife" was all  
I heerd, mighty near, last Fall—  
Visitun relations down  
T'other side of Morgantown!  
Mylo Jones's wife she does  
This and that, and "those" and "thus"!—  
Can't 'bide babies in her sight—  
Ner no childern, day and night,  
Whoopin' round the premises—  
NER NO NOTHIN' ELSE, I guess!

Mylo Jones's wife she 'lows  
She's the boss of her own house!—  
Mylo—consequences is—  
Stays whare things seem SOME like HIS,—  
Uses, mostly, with the stock—  
Coaxin' "Old Kate" not to balk,  
Ner kick hoss—flies' branes out, ner  
Act, I s'pose, so much like HER!  
Yit the wimmern—folks tells you  
She's PERFECTION.—Yes they do!

Mylo's wife she says she's found  
Home hain't home with MEN—FOLKS round  
When they's work like HERN to do—  
Picklin' pears and BUTCHERN, too,  
And a—rendern lard, and then  
Cookin' fer a pack of men  
To come trackin' up the flore  
SHE'S scrubbed TEL she'll scrub no MORE!—  
Yit she'd keep things clean ef they  
Made her scrub tel Jedgmunt Day!

Mylo Jones's wife she sews  
Carpet—rags and patches clothes  
Jest year IN and OUT!—and yit  
Whare's the livin' use of it?  
She asts Mylo that.—And he  
Gits back whare he'd ruther be,  
With his team;—jest PLOWS—and don't  
Never sware—like some folks won't!  
Think ef HE'D CUT LOOSE, I gum!  
'D he'p his heavenly chances some!

Mylo's wife don't see no use,

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

Ner no reason ner excuse  
Fer his pore relations to  
Hang round like they allus do!  
Thare 'bout onc't a year—and SHE—  
She jest GA'NTS 'em, folks tells me,  
On spiced pears!—Pass Mylo one,  
He says "No, he don't chuse none!"  
Workin'men like Mylo they  
'D ort to have MEAT ev'ry day!

Dad—burn Mylo Jones's wife!  
Ruther rake a blame caseknife  
'Crost my wizen than to see  
Sich a womern rulin' ME!—  
Ruther take and turn in and  
Raise a fool mule—colt by hand'  
MYLO, though—od—rot the man!—  
Jest keeps ca'm—like some folks CAN—  
And 'lows sich as her, I s'pose,  
Is MAN'S HE'PMEET'—Mercy knows!

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and  
John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest—time  
comes on,—  
And THEN, I want to say to you, we NEEDED he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you'd a—seen the way the crops turned  
out!

A better quarter—section ner a richer soil warn't found  
Than this—here old—home place o' ourn fer fifty miles  
around!—  
The house was small—but plenty—big we found it from  
the day  
That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went  
away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother more'n  
me—  
That's natchurul; but BOTH of us was proud as proud  
could be;  
Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon  
bright,  
And seemed in work as well as play to take the same de—  
light.

He allus went a—whistlin' round the place, as glad at heart  
As robins up at five o'clock to git an airly start;  
And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up  
to say—  
"Jest listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds  
to—day!"

High—sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin' turn,—  
He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to learn:  
He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal—minute here  
Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And READ! w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read  
and spell;  
And "The Childern of the Abbey"—w'y, he knowed that  
book as well  
At fifteen as his parents!—and "The Pilgrim's Prog—  
ress," too—  
Jest knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em through  
and through.

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

At eighteen, Mother 'lowed the boy must have a better  
chance—  
That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;  
And John he j'ined his mother, and they ding—donged and  
kep' on,  
Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that he was  
gone.

But—I missed him—w'y, of course I did!—The Fall and  
Winter through  
I never built the kitchen—fire, er split a stick in two,  
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel—  
pin,  
But what I thought o' John, and wished that he was home  
ag'in.

He'd come, sometimes—on Sund'ys most—and stay the  
Sund'y out;  
And on Thanksgivin'—Day he 'peared to like to be about:  
But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller than  
before,  
And didn't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any  
more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with a sigh,  
He was tryin' to raise side—whiskers, and had on a striped  
tie,  
And a standin'—collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as bone;  
And a breast—pin, and a watch and chain and plug—hat of  
his own.

But when Spring—weather opened out, and John was to  
come home  
And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see him  
come,  
But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun went  
down,  
When he bragged of "a position" that was offered him in  
town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of course I  
will," says he.—  
"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life fer  
me;  
I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light and  
gay,  
"And town's the place fer ME, and I'm a—goin' right  
away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the gate,

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

A—pleadin' and a—cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.  
I was tranquiller, and told her 'twarn't no use to worry  
so,  
And onclasped her arms from round his neck round mine  
—and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about  
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it out;—  
I simply retch out, trimbly—like, and tuk the boy's hand,  
And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd under—  
stand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty  
lonesome, shore!  
With me a—workin' in the field, and Mother at the door,  
Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more and  
more—  
Her only son nine miles away, a—clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes the  
boy would write  
A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,  
And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—  
Though his business was confinin', he was gittin' used  
to it.

And sometimes he would write and ast how I was gittin'  
on,  
And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was gone;  
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the stock,  
And talk on fer a page er two jest like he used to talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed he  
would git home,  
Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—But  
DIDN'T come:—  
We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade  
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was why  
he stayed.

And then he quit a—writin' altogether: Not a word—  
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to town  
and heard  
What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to in—  
quire  
If they could buy their goods there less and sell their  
produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore away,  
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanksgivin'—  
Day!

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite fergit,  
The wind a—howlin' round the house—it makes me creepy  
yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a—twistin' at the  
prongs  
Of a green scrub—ellum forestick with a vicious pair of  
tongs,  
And Mother sayin', "DAVID! DAVID!" in a' undertone,  
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad—words  
unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to—morrow," Mother  
said,  
A—tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn  
head,—  
"And the mince—meat I'm a—mixin' is perfection mighty  
nigh;  
And the pound—cake is delicious—rich—" "Who'll eat  
'em?" I—says—I.

"The cramberries is drippin'—sweet," says Mother, runnin'  
on,  
P'tendin' not to hear me;—"and somehow I thought of  
John  
All the time they was a—jellin'—fer you know they allus  
was  
His favorITE—he likes 'em so!" Says I "Well, s'pose  
he does?"

"Oh, nothin' much!" says Mother, with a quiet sort o'  
smile—  
"This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after  
while!"  
And as I turnt and looked around, some one riz up and  
leant  
And putt his arms round Mother's neck, and laughed in  
low content.

"It's ME," he says—"your fool—boy John, come back to  
shake your hand;  
Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you un—  
derstand  
How dearer yit than all the world is this old home that  
we  
Will spend Thanksgivin' in fer life—jest Mother, you  
and me!"

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest—time  
comes on;

## Riley Farm–Rhymes

And then, I want to say to you, we NEED sich he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops turn  
out!

## A CANARY AT THE FARM

Folks has be'n to town, and Sahry  
Fetched 'er home a pet canary,—  
And of all the blame', contrary,  
    Aggervatin' things alive!  
I love music—that's I love it  
When it's free—and plenty of it;—  
But I kindo' git above it,  
    At a dollar—eighty—five!

Reason's plain as I'm a—sayin',—  
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'  
Out yer money, and a—payin'  
    Fer a wilder—cage and bird,  
When the medder—larks is wingin'  
Round you, and the woods is ringin'  
With the beautifullest singin'  
    That a mortal ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'.—So I tell her  
He's a purty little feller,  
With his wings o' creamy—yeller,  
    And his eyes keen as a cat;  
And the twitter o' the critter  
Tears to absolutely glitter!  
Guess I'll haf to go and git her  
    A high—priceter cage 'n that!



## WHERE THE CHILDREN USED TO PLAY

The old farm—home is Mother's yet and mine,  
And filled it is with plenty and to spare,—  
But we are lonely here in life's decline,  
Though fortune smiles around us everywhere:  
    We look across the gold  
    Of the harvests, as of old—  
The corn, the fragrant clover, and the hay  
    But most we turn our gaze,  
    As with eyes of other days,  
To the orchard where the children used to play.

O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
    We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
    To the orchard where the children used to play

Our sloping pasture—lands are filled with herds;  
The barn and granary—bins are bulging o'er:  
The grove's a paradise of singing birds—  
The woodland brook leaps laughing by the door  
    Yet lonely, lonely still,  
    Let us prosper as we will,  
Our old hearts seem so empty everyway—  
    We can only through a mist  
    See the faces we have kissed  
In the orchard where the children used to play.

O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
    We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
    To the orchard where the children used to play.

## GRIGGSBY'S STATION

Pap's got his patten—right, and rich as all creation;  
But where's the peace and comfort that we all had  
before?

Le's go a—visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a—livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity  
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on the  
stairs,  
And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city! city!  
city!—  
And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!

Climb clean above the roof and look from the steeple,  
And never see a robin, nor a beech or ellum tree!  
And right here in ear—shot of at least a thousan' people,  
And none that neighbors with us or we want to go and  
see!

Le's go a—visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where the latch—string's a—hangin' from the door,  
And ever' neighbor round the place is dear as a relation—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit—and—bilin',  
A—drivin' up from Shallor Ford to stay the Sunday  
through;  
And I want to see 'em hitchin' at their son—in—law's and  
pilin'  
Out there at 'Lizy Ellen's like they ust to do!

I want to see the piece—quilts the Jones girls is makin';  
And I want to pester Laury 'bout their freckled hired  
hand,  
And joke her 'bout the widower she come purt' nigh  
a—takin',  
Till her Pap got his pension 'lowed in time to save his  
land.

Le's go a—visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where they's nothin' aggervatin' any more,  
Shet away safe in the woods around the old location—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see Marindy and he'p her with her sewin',

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

And hear her talk so lovin' of her man that's dead and  
gone,  
And stand up with Emanuel to show me how he's  
growin',  
And smile as I have saw her 'fore she putt her mournin'  
on.

And I want to see the Samples, on the old lower eighty,  
Where John, our oldest boy, he was tuk and burried  
—for  
His own sake and Katy's,—and I want to cry with Katy  
As she reads all his letters over, writ from The War.

What's in all this grand life and high situation,  
And nary pink nor hollyhawk a—bloomin' at the door?—  
Le's go a—visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

## KNEE—DEEP IN JUNE

### I

Tell you what I like the best—  
'Long about knee—deep in June,  
'Bout the time strawberries melts  
On the vine,—some afternoon  
Like to jes' git out and rest,  
And not work at nothin' else'

### II

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—  
Needn't fence it in fer me!—  
Jes' the whole sky overhead,  
And the whole airth underneath—  
Sorto' so's a man kin breathe  
Like he ort, and kindo' has  
Elbow—room to keerlessly  
Sprawl out len'thways on the grass  
Where the shadders thick and soft  
As the kivvers on the bed  
Mother fixes in the loft  
Allus, when they's company!

### III

Jes' a—sorto' lazin' there—  
S'lazy, 'at you peek and peer  
Through the wavin' leaves above,  
Like a feller 'at's in love  
And don't know it, ner don't keer!  
Ever'thing you hear and see  
Got some sort o' interest—  
Maybe find a bluebird's nest  
Tucked up there conveyently  
Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be  
Up some other apple—tree!  
Watch the swallers skootin' past  
'Bout as peert as you could ast,  
Er the Bob—white raise and whiz

Where some other's whistle is

IV

Ketch a shadder down below,  
And look up to find the crow—  
Er a hawk,—away up there,  
'Pearantly FROZE in the air!—  
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat  
Over ever' chick she's got,  
Suddent-like!—and she knows where  
That-air hawk is, well as you!—  
You jes' bet yer life she do!—  
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,  
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

V

Pee-wees' singin', to express  
My opinion, 's second class,  
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;  
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,  
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;  
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,  
In them base-ball clothes o' his,  
Sportin' round the orchard jes'  
Like he owned the premises!  
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,  
But flat on yer back, I guess,  
In the shade's where glory is!  
That's jes' what I'd like to do  
Stiddy fer a year er two!

VI

Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in  
Work 'at kindo' goes ag'in'  
My convictions!—'long about  
Here in June especially!—  
Under some old apple-tree,  
Jes' a-restin' through and through  
I could git along without  
Nothin' else at all to do  
Only jes' a-wishin' you  
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,

KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

And June was eternity!

VII

Lay out there and try to see  
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—  
    Tumble round and souse yer head  
In the clover—bloom, er pull  
    Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes  
    And peek through it at the skies,  
    Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,  
    Maybe, smilin' back at you  
In betwixt the beautiful  
    Clouds o' gold and white and blue.  
Month a man kin raily love  
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

VIII

March ain't never nothin' new!  
Aprile's altogether too  
    Brash fer me! and May—I jes'  
    'Bominate its promises,  
Little hints o' sunshine and  
Green around the timber—land—  
    A few blossoms, and a few  
    Chip—birds, and a sprout er two,—  
    Drap asleep, and it turns in  
    'Fore daylight and SNOWS ag'in!—  
But when JUNE comes—Clear my th'out  
    With wild honey!—Rench my hair  
In the dew! and hold my coat!  
    Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—  
June wants me, and I'm to spare!  
Spread them shadders anywhere,  
I'll git down and waller there,  
    And obleeged to you at that!

## SEPTEMBER DARK

### I

The air falls chill;  
The whippoorwill  
Pipes lonesomely behind the hill:  
The dusk grows dense,  
The silence tense;  
And lo, the katydids commence.

### II

Through shadowy rifts  
Of woodland, lifts  
The low, slow moon, and upward drifts,  
While left and right  
The fireflies' light  
Swirls eddying in the skirts of Night.

### III

O Cloudland, gray  
And level, lay  
Thy mists across the face of Day!  
At foot and head,  
Above the dead,  
O Dews, weep on uncomforted!

## THE CLOVER

Some sings of the lily, and daisy, and rose,  
And the pansies and pinks that the Summertime  
throws  
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays  
Blinkin' up at the skyes through the sunshiney days;  
But what is the lily and all of the rest  
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest  
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew  
Of the sweet clover—blossoms his babyhood knew?  
I never set eyes on a clover—field now,  
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,  
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as plane  
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;  
And I wunder away in a bare—footed dream,  
Whare I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam  
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love  
Ere it wept ore the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part  
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;  
And wharever it blossoms, oh, thare let me bow  
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;  
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,  
To go out in the clover and tell it good—bye,  
And lovin'ly nestle my face in its bloom  
While my soul slips away on a breth of perfume



## OLD OCTOBER

Old October's purt' nigh gone,  
And the frosts is comin' on  
Little HEAVIER every day—  
Like our hearts is thataway!  
Leaves is changin' overhead  
Back from green to gray and red,  
Brown and yellor, with their stems  
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;  
And the balance of the trees  
Gittin' balder every breeze—  
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!  
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

I love Old October so,  
I can't bear to see her go—  
Seems to me like losin' some  
Old—home relative er chum—  
'Pears like sorto' settin' by  
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh  
Was a—passin' out o' sight  
Into everlastin' night!  
Hickernuts a feller hears  
Rattlin' down is more like tears  
Drappin' on the leaves below—  
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about  
Old October knocks me out!—  
I sleep well enough at night—  
And the blamedest appetite  
Ever mortal man possessed,—  
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—  
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,  
'Tles and limbers up my jaws  
Fer raal service, sich as new  
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—  
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout  
Old October knocks me out!

## OLD—FASHIONED ROSES

They ain't no style about 'em,  
And they're sorto' pale and faded,  
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,  
Would be lonesomer, and shaded  
With a good 'eal blacker shadder  
Than the morning—glories makes,  
And the sunshine would look sadder  
Fer their good old—fashion' sakes,

I like 'em 'cause they kindo'—  
Sorto' MAKE a feller like 'em!  
And I tell you, when I find a  
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,  
It allus sets me thinkin'  
O' the ones 'at used to grow  
And peek in thro' the chinkin'  
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,  
And how she ust to love 'em—  
When they wuzn't any other,  
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!  
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,  
Whispered with a smile and said  
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em  
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a—sayin',  
They ain't no style about 'em  
Very gaudy er displaying  
But I wouldn't be without 'em,—  
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,  
And the hollyhawks and sich,  
Than the hummin'—bird 'at noses  
In the roses of the rich.

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

I come upon it suddenly, alone—  
A little pathway winding in the weeds  
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my own,  
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,  
Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,  
I take the path that leads me as it may—  
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden—whirring quail,  
Is startled by my step as on I fare—  
A garter—snake across the dusty trail  
Glances and—is not there.

Above the arching jimson—weeds flare twos  
And twos of sallow—yellow butterflies,  
Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose  
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts  
Itself astride a cross—road dubiously,  
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts  
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile  
Out of the public highway, still I go,  
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian—file,  
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long—lost boy that went  
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,  
And was not found again, though Heaven lent  
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.  
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise  
But well might miss their glitter in the light  
Of tears in mother—eyes!

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—  
My avant—courier must be obeyed!  
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,  
Invites me to invade

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide  
Clambers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,  
And stumbles down again, the other side,  
To gambol there awhile

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead  
I see it running, while the clover-stalks  
Shake rosy fists at me, as though they said—  
"You dog our country—walks

"And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—  
We will not suffer tamely what you do,  
And warn you at your peril,—for we'll sic  
Our bumblebees on you!"

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—  
The more determined on my wayward quest,  
As some bright memory a moment dawns  
A morning in my breast—

Sending a thrill that hurries me along  
In faulty similes of childish skips,  
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song  
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o'er pasture wealth—  
Erratic wanderings through dead'ning-lands,  
Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,  
Put berries in my hands:

Or the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—  
Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,  
Goes gayly dancing o'er a deep bayou  
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o'er a limpid pool  
Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,  
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool  
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,  
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where  
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,  
Or wildly oars the air,

As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—  
The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—  
Swings pivoting about, with wary look  
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

To where the pathway enters in a realm  
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign  
Of towering oak and elm.

A puritanic quiet here reviles  
The almost whispered warble from the hedge.  
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files  
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my sombre way  
Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom  
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day  
Bursts into sudden bloom,

And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,  
Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled.  
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face  
Dimples a smiling world.

And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,  
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,  
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,  
The old log cabin gleams.

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on  
A down your alley—way, and run before  
Among the roses crowding up the lawn  
And thronging at the door,—

And carry up the echo there that shall  
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay  
The household out to greet the prodigal  
That wanders home to—day.

## WORTERMELON TIME

Old wortermelon time is a—comin' round again,  
And they ain't no man a—livin' any tickleder'n me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

Oh! it's in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,  
And it's thare they'll lay and waller in the sunshine and  
the dew  
Tel they wear all the green streaks clean off of theyr  
breast;  
And you bet I ain't a—findin' any fault with them; ain't  
you?

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;  
And they don't need much 'tendin', as ev'ry farmer  
knows;  
And when they ripe and ready fer to pluck from the vine,  
I want to say to you theyr the best fruit that grows.

It's some likes the yeller—core, and some likes the red.  
And it's some says "The Little Californy" is the best;  
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my head,  
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting—sprout," of the west

You don't want no punkins nigh your wortermelon  
vines—  
'Cause, some—way—another, they'll spile your melons,  
shore;—  
I've seed 'em taste like punkins, from the core to the rines,  
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before

But your melons that's raised right and 'tended to with  
care,  
You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's  
pride and joy,  
And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a air  
As ef each one of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound  
When you split one down the back and jolt the halves  
in two,  
And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—  
And you says unto your sweethart, "Oh, here's the  
core fer you!"

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,  
Espeshally the childern, and watch theyr high delight  
As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,  
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched  
appetite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see 'em eat—  
A slice of wortermelon's like a frenchharp in theyr  
hands,  
And when they "saw" it through theyr mouth sich music  
can't be beat—  
'Cause it's music both the sperit and the stummick  
understands.

Oh, they's more in wortermelons than the purty-colored  
meat,  
And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter squshed  
betwixt

The up'ard and the down'ard motions of a feller's teeth,  
And it's the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood  
mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away  
To the summertime of youth; and again I see the dawn,  
And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,  
And the dusk and dew a-fallin', and the night a-comin'  
on.

And thare's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves and  
trees,  
And the stars a-peekin' down on us as still as silver  
mice,  
And us boys in the wortermelons on our hands and knees,  
And the new-moon hangin' ore us like a yellor-cored  
slice.

Oh! it's wortermelon time is a-comin' round again,  
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

## UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

Up and down old Brandywine,  
In the days 'at's past and gone—  
With a dad—burn hook—and line  
And a saplin' pole—swawn!  
I've had more fun, to the square  
Inch, than ever ANYwhere!  
Heaven to come can't discount MINE  
Up and down old Brandywine!

Hain't no sense in WISHIN'—yit  
Wisht to goodness I COULD jes  
"Gee" the blame' world round and git  
Back to that old happiness!—  
Kindo' drive back in the shade  
"The old Covered Bridge" there laid  
'Crosst the crick, and sorto' soak  
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no DREAM  
'At I'm wantin',—but THE FAC'S  
As they wuz; the same old stream,  
And the same old times, i jacks!—  
Gim me back my bare feet—and  
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!  
And let hottest dog—days shine  
Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees  
'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,  
Kindo' curdled with the breeze  
And the yallerhammer's tune;  
And the smokin', chokin' dust  
O' the turnpike at its wusst—  
SATURD'YS, say, when it seems  
Road's jes jammed with country teams!—

Whilse the old town, fur away  
'Crosst the hazy pastur'—land,  
Dozed—like in the heat o' day  
Peaceful' as a hired hand.  
Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor  
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar  
With yer blame percession—line—  
Up and down old Brandywine!



Souse me and my new straw—hat  
Off the foot—log!—what I care?—  
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—  
Like the old Clown ust to wear.  
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old  
Gin—u—wine raal crown o' gold!—  
Keep yer KING ef you'll gim me  
Jes the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'—worms! er steal  
My best "goggle—eye!"—but you  
Can't lay hands on joys I feel  
Nibblin' like they ust to do!  
So, in memory, to—day  
Same old ripple lips away  
At my "cork" and saggin' line,  
Up and down old Bradywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,  
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift  
Out sunfish from daylight till  
Dewfall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"  
And give US a chance—and then  
Kindo' fish back home again,  
Ketchin' 'em jes left and right  
Where WE hadn't got "a bite!"

Er, 'way windin' out and in,—  
Old path th'ough the iurnweeds  
And dog—fennel to yer chin—  
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds  
And cat—tails, smack into where  
Them—air woods—hogs ust to scare  
Us clean 'crosst the County—line,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam  
It 'ud coax us funder still  
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,  
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—  
Where, I'spect, "The Freeport crowd"  
Never WARMED to us er 'lowed  
We wuz quite so overly  
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared like ever'thing—  
Fur away from home as THERE—  
Had more RELISH—like, i jing!—  
Fish in stream, er bird in air!  
O them rich old bottom—lands,  
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!

Riley Farm—Rhymes

Wortermelons—MASTER—MINE!  
Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop—paws!—Lumps o' raw  
Gold and green,—jes oozy th'ough  
With ripe yaller—like you've saw  
Custard—pie with no crust to:  
And jes GORGES o' wild plums,  
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs  
Clean up to his elbows! MY!—  
ME SOME MORE ER LEM ME DIE!

Up and down old Brandywine! ...  
Stripe me with pokeberry—juice!—  
Flick me with a pizenvine  
And yell "Yip!" and lem me loose!  
—Old now as I then wuz young,  
'F I could sing as I HAVE sung,  
Song 'ud surely ring DEE—VINE  
Up and down old Brandywine!

## WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY

When country roads begin to thaw  
In mottled spots of damp and dust,  
And fences by the margin draw  
Along the frosty crust  
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When morning—time is bright with sun  
And keen with wind, and both confuse  
The dancing, glancing eyes of one  
With tears that ooze and ooze—  
And nose—tips weep as well as they,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow—bird  
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,  
And through the hedge the moan is heard  
Of kine that fain would graze  
In grasses new, I smile and say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When knotted horse—tails are untied,  
And teamsters whistle here and there.  
And clumsy mitts are laid aside  
And choppers' hands are bare,  
And chips are thick where children play,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,  
And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,  
And fragrant hints of sugar—camps  
Astray in every breeze,—  
When early March seems middle May,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When coughs are changed to laughs, and when  
Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,  
And all our blood thaws out again  
In streams of ecstasy,  
And poets wreak their roundelay,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

Riley Farm–Rhymes

## A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

Oh! tell me a tale of the airly days—  
Of the times as they ust to be;  
"Piller of Fi—er" and "Shakespeare's Plays"  
Is a' most too deep fer me!  
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,  
Of the good old—fashioned ways,  
When speech run free as the songs of birds  
'Way back in the airly days.

Tell me a tale of the timber—lands—  
Of the old—time pioneers;  
Somepin' a pore man understands  
With his feelins's well as ears.  
Tell of the old log house,—about  
The loft, and the puncheon flore—  
The old fi—er—place, with the crane swung out,  
And the latch—string through the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—  
They don't need no excuse!—  
Don't tech 'em up like the poets does,  
Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—  
Say they was 'leven in the fambily—  
Two beds, and the chist, below,  
And the trundle—beds that each helt three,  
And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back—door  
Tel the echoes all halloo,  
And the childern gethers home onc't more,  
Jest as they ust to do:  
Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,  
With Tomps and Elias, too,  
A—marchin' home, with the fife and drums  
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low  
As the moan of the whipperwill,  
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,  
All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:  
Blow and call tel the faces all  
Shine out in the back—log's blaze,  
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall  
As they did in the airly days.



## OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

I

In the jolly winters  
Of the long—ago,  
It was not so cold as now—  
O! No! No!  
Then, as I remember,  
Snowballs to eat  
Were as good as apples now.  
And every bit as sweet!

II

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead—and—gone,  
Bub was warm as summer,  
With his red mitts on,—  
Just in his little waist—  
And—pants all together,  
Who ever hear him growl  
About cold weather?

III

In the jolly winters  
Of the long—ago—  
Was it HALF so cold as now?  
O! No! No!  
Who caught his death o' cold,  
Making prints of men  
Flat—backed in snow that now's  
Twice as cold again?

IV

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead—and—gone,  
Startin' out rabbit—huntin'—

Riley Farm—Rhymes

Early as the dawn,—  
Who ever froze his fingers,  
Ears, heels, or toes,—  
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?  
Nobody knows!

V

Nights by the kitchen—stove,  
Shellin' white and red  
Corn in the skillet, and  
Sleepin' four abed!  
Ah! the jolly winters  
Of the long—ago!  
We were not as old as now—  
O! No! No!



## JUNE

O queenly month of indolent repose!  
I drink thy breath in sips of rare perfume,  
As in thy downy lap of clover–bloom  
I nestle like a drowsy child and doze  
The lazy hours away. The zephyr throws  
The shifting shuttle of the Summer's loom  
And weaves a damask–work of gleam and gloom  
Before thy listless feet. The lily blows  
A bugle–call of fragrance o'er the glade;  
And, wheeling into ranks, with plume and spear,  
Thy harvest–armies gather on parade;  
While, faint and far away, yet pure and clear,  
A voice calls out of alien lands of shade:—  
All hail the Peerless Goddess of the Year!

## THE TREE—TOAD

"S cur'ous—like," said the tree—toad,  
"I've twittered fer rain all day;  
And I got up soon,  
And hollered tel noon—  
But the sun, hit blazed away,  
Tell I jest clumb down in a crawfish—hole,  
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

"Dozed away fer an hour,  
And I tackled the thing agin:  
And I sung, and sung,  
Tel I knowed my lung  
Was jest about give in;  
And THEN, thinks I, ef hit don't rain NOW,  
They's nothin' in singin', anyhow!

"Onc't in a while some farmer  
Would come a—drivin' past;  
And he'd hear my cry,  
And stop and sigh—  
Tel I jest laid back, at last,  
And I hollered rain tel I thought my th'oat  
Would bust wide open at ever' note!

"But I FETCHED her!—O \_I\_ FETCHED her!—  
'Cause a little while ago,  
As I kindo' set,  
With one eye shet,  
And a—singin' soft and low,  
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,  
A—sayin',—'EF YOU'LL JEST HUSH I'LL RAIN!'"

## A SONG OF LONG AGO

A song of Long Ago:  
Sing it lightly—sing it low—  
Sing it softly—like the lispings of the lips we  
    used to know  
When our baby—laughter spilled  
From the glad hearts ever filled  
With music blithe as robin ever trilled!

Let the fragrant summer breeze,  
And the leaves of locust—trees,  
And the apple—buds and blossoms, and the  
    wings of honey—bees,  
All palpitate with glee,  
Till the happy harmony  
Brings back each childish joy to you and me.

Let the eyes of fancy turn  
Where the tumbled pippins burn  
Like embers in the orchard's lap of tangled  
    grass and fern,—  
There let the old path wind  
In and out and on behind  
The cider—press that chuckles as we grind.

Blend in the song the moan  
Of the dove that grieves alone,  
And the wild whirl of the locust, and the  
    bumble's drowsy drone;  
And the low of cows that call  
Through the pasture—bars when all  
The landscape fades away at evenfall.

Then, far away and clear,  
Through the dusky atmosphere,  
Let the wailing of the killdee be the only  
    sound we hear:  
O sad and sweet and low  
As the memory may know  
Is the glad—pathetic song of Long Ago!

## OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I have jest about decided  
It 'ud keep a town–boy hoppin'  
Fer to work all winter, choppin'  
Fer a' old fireplace, like I did!  
Lawz! them old times wuz contrary!—  
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared–like  
WOULDN'T break!—and I wuz skeered–like  
Clean on into FEB'UARY!  
Nothin' ever made me madder  
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'  
In a' extra forestick, say'in',  
"Groun'–hog's out and seed his shadder!"

## ROMANCIN'

I' b'en a—kindo' "musin'," as the feller says, and I'm  
About o' the conclusion that they hain't no better  
time,  
When you come to cipher on it, than the times we ust to  
know  
When we swore our first "dog—gone—it" sorto' solum—like  
and low!

You git my idy, do you?—LITTLE tads, you understand—  
Jest a—wishin' thue and thue you that you on'y wuz a  
MAN.—  
Yit here I am, this minit, even sixty, to a day,  
And fergittin' all that's in it, wishm' jest the other way!

I hain't no hand to lectur' on the times, er dimonstrate  
Whare the trouble is, er hector and domineer with Fate,—  
But when I git so flurried, and so pestered—like and blue,  
And so rail owdacious worried, let me tell you what I  
do!—

I jest gee—haw the hosses, and onhook the swingle—tree,  
Whare the hazel—bushes tosses down theyr shadders over  
me;  
And I draw my plug o' navy, and I climb the fence, and  
set  
Jest a—thinkin' here, i gravy' tel my eyes is wringin'—wet!

Tho' I still kin see the trouble o' the PRESUNT, I kin see—  
Kindo' like my sight wuz double—all the things that  
UST to be;  
And the flutter o' the robin and the teeter o' the wren  
Sets the willer—branches bobbin' "howdy—do" thum Now  
to Then!

The deadnin' and the thicket's jest a—bilin' full of June,  
From the rattle o' the cricket, to the yallar—hammer's  
tune;  
And the catbird in the bottom, and the sapsuck on the  
snag,  
Seems ef they can't—od—rot 'em!—jest do nothin' else  
but brag!

They's music in the twitter of the bluebird and the jay,  
And that sassy little critter jest a—peckin' all the day;  
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in the

## Riley Farm—Rhymes

thrush,  
And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in the  
brush!

They's music all around me!—And I go back, in a dream  
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep,—and in the  
stream  
That list to split the medder whare the dandy lions  
gowed,  
I stand knee—deep, and redder than the sunset down the  
road.

Then's when I' b'en a—fishin'!—And they's other fellers,  
too,  
With theyr hick'ry—poles a—swishin' out behind 'em; and  
a few  
Little "shiners" on our stringers, with theyr tails tip—  
toein' bloom,  
As we dance 'em in our fingers all the happy journey  
home.

I kin see us, true to Natur', thum the time we started out,  
With a biscuit and a 'tater in our little "roundabout"!—  
I kin see our lines a—tanglin', and our elbows in a jam,  
And our naked legs a—danglin' thum the apern o' the dam.

I kin see the honeysuckle climbin' up around the mill,  
And kin hear the worter chuckle, and the wheel a—growl—  
in' still;  
And thum the bank below it I kin steal the old canoe,  
And jest git in and row it like the miller ust to do.

W'y, I git my fancy focussed on the past so mortul plane  
I kin even smell the locus'—blossoms bloomin' in the lane;  
And I hear the cow—bells clinkin' sweeter tunes 'n  
"Money—musk"  
Fer the lightnin' bugs a—blinkin' and a—dancin' in the dusk.

And when I've kep' on "musin'," as the feller says, tel I'm  
Firm—fixed in the conclusion that they haint no better  
time,  
When you come to cipher on it, than the old times,—I  
de—clare  
I kin wake and say "dog—gone—it" jest as soft as any  
prayer!