

**GRADED POETRY
READERS;
FIFTH YEAR**

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Graded Poetry Readers; Fifth Year by Katherine D. Blake & Georgia Alexander

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KATHERINE D. BLAKE & GEORGIA ALEXANDER

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FIFTH YEAR

EDITED BY

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PRINCIPAL GIRLS' DEPARTMENT PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 6,
NEW YORK CITY

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INTRODUCTION

POETRY is the chosen language of childhood and youth. The baby repeats words again and again for the mere joy of their sound: the melody of nursery rhymes gives a delight which is quite independent of the meaning of the words. Not until youth approaches maturity is there an equal pleasure in the rounded periods of elegant prose. It is in childhood therefore that the young mind should be stored with poems whose rhythm will be a present delight and whose beautiful thoughts will not lose their charm in later years.

The selections for the lowest grades are addressed primarily to the feeling for verbal beauty, the recognition of which in the mind of the child is fundamental to the plan of this work. The editors have felt that the inclusion of critical notes in these little books intended for elementary school children would be not only superfluous, but, in the degree in which critical comment drew the child's attention from the text, subversive of the desired result. Nor are there any notes on methods. The best way to teach children to love a poem is to read it inspiringly to them. The French say: "The ear is the pathway to the heart." A poem should be so read that it will sing itself in the hearts of the listening children.

In the brief biographies appended to the later books the human element has been brought out. An effort has been made to call attention to the education of the poet and his equipment for his life work rather than to the literary qualities of his style.

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You lived alone in the forest tree,
Why, pretty thing, would you not live with me?
I kissed you oft, and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL

SCOTLAND, 1797-1835

Sing on, Blithe Bird!

- 5 I've plucked the berry from the bush, the brown
nut from the tree,
But heart of happy little bird ne'er broken was
by me.
I saw them in their curious nests, close couching,
slyly peer
With their wild eyes, like glittering beads, to
note if harm were near;
I passed them by, and blessed them all; I felt
that it was good
10 To leave unmoved the creatures small whose
home was in the wood.
And here, even now, above my head, a lusty
rogue doth sing,
He pecks his swelling breast and neck, and trims
his little wing.

He will not fly ; he knows full well, while chirp-
ing on that spray,
I would not harm him for a world, or interrupt
his lay.
Sing on, sing on, blithe bird ! and fill my heart
with summer gladness.
It has been aching many a day with measures
full of sadness !

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794-1878

The Gladness of Nature

Is this the time to be cloudy and sad, 5
When our mother Nature laughs around,
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming
ground ?

There are notes of joy from the hangbird and
wren,
And the gossip of swallows through all the 10
sky,
The ground-squirrel gayly chirps by his den,
And the wilding-bee hums merrily by.