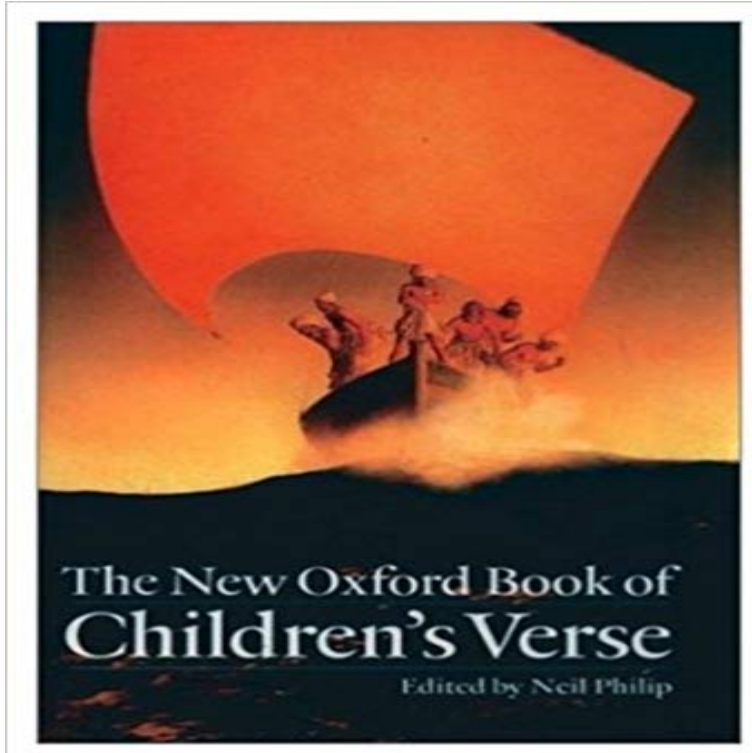


The New Oxford Book of Childrens Verse (Oxford Books of Verse)



The world of childrens poetry is as diverse and as miraculous as the human imagination itself, a land where owls and pussy-cats set to sea in beautiful pea-green boats, and tigers burn bright in the forests of the night. It embraces word play, parody, nonsense, lullaby, and elegy, and ranges from brief nursery rhymes to long narratives. It can be utterly silly, but it also recognizes that if childrens lives are full of wonder and delight, they are also fraught with worries, disappointments, and moments of sadness. The best childrens poets come to terms with grief as well as joy. Now, in *The New Oxford Book of Childrens Verse*, Neil Philip has surveyed and mapped this delightfully protean landscape, in a book that spans some two hundred and fifty years, from Isaac Watts, the first true childrens poet, to such classic figures as Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, and A. A. Milne, to scores of contemporary writers, such as Richard Wilbur, Sandra Cisneros, and Jack Prelutsky. The range of poems is remarkable. Young readers will find long narratives such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellows *Paul Reveres Ride* (Listen, my children, and you shall hear / Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere) and Robert Brownings *Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Rats! / They fought the dogs and killed the cats) as well as Mick Gowars *Rat Trap*, a political satire that parodies Brownings poem. The book also includes many miniature gems, such as Ogden Nashs *The Eel* (I dont mind eels / Except at meals, / And the way they feels) and Hughes Mearnss *The Little Man* (As I was walking up the stair / I met a man who wasnt there; / He wasnt there again today. / I wish, I wish hed stay away). There is of course much zany verse, such as Hilaire Bellocs *Jim, Who Ran Away from His Nurse, and was Eaten by a Lion* (Now, just imagine how it feels / When first your toes and then your heels, / And then by gradual degrees, / Your shins and ankles, calves

and knees, / Are slowly eaten, bit by bit. / No wonder Jim detested it!), Eugene Fields classic The Duel (The gingham dog and the calico cat / Side by side on the table sat), and A.A. Milnes Disobedience (James James / Morrison Morrison / Weatherby George Dupree / Took great / Care of his Mother, / Though he was only three). And Philip has also included many thought-provoking poems, such as Langston Hughess Childrens Rhymes (By what sends / the white kids / I aint sent: / I know I cant / be President), Countee Cullens Incident (Now I was eight and very small, / And he was no whit bigger, / And so I smiled, but he poked out / His tongue, and called me, Nigger), and Theodore Roethkes My Papas Waltz (The whiskey on your breath / Could make a small boy dizzy; / But I hung on like death: / Such waltzing was not easy). Ranging from Lewis Carrolls Jabberwocky, to Robert Frosts The Pasture, to John Updikes January, here is an anthology that captures the full breadth of childrens verse in English. It will delight children of all ages, and launch the young on a life-long appreciation of poetry.

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