



Michael Rosen wrote this poem to celebrate the launch of the Story Museum project in June 2005. How many books and authors can you find?

**'Twas brillig and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in - '**

Who said that?  
As I was about to begin?

I had a sense that someone -  
I'm not sure who -  
Put words in my mouth  
As I began to speak to you.

I'll try again and say:  
Welcome to you all  
Thank you for coming  
And being with us in this hall.

I'd like to begin  
**'O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!'**  
That voice again?  
What can I say?

Have you ever seen  
A certain Scottish play  
Where a certain thane  
Seemed to slay

Any noble or king  
In the way of the throne?  
And this same thane  
Was wont (1) to moan

And (2) to get visions  
Of a bloke he had slain  
And to get these visions  
Again and again?

You remember the one?  
Looking all gaunt  
Staring at the ghost  
And yelling, 'avaunt!'

Now there's a thought -  
What IS 'avaunt'?  
Avaunt - an odd word  
That rhymes with haunt.

Now don't me wrong  
I'm not the credulous sort  
But I have the feeling,  
I have the thought

That we're not alone.  
You may find this risible:  
But do we have guests  
Who've come...invisible?

Now, I don't suppose  
I'm someone you'd thank  
If I informed you  
That I can hear a **tank**.

No, not the army kind  
Or anything tawdry  
I mean one belonging  
To the **Reverend Awdry**.

Attached to an engine -  
And they all had names:  
**Gordon, Henry  
Thomas and James**.

Was one called **Graham**?  
I think it was **Greene**  
That's greene with an 'e'  
Not Graham I mean.

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And he had an **Engine**  
Not Harry or Ted  
I don't know its name  
But it was **little** and **red**.

Wassat?! That noise?  
Coming from that hole  
A mouse? A wombat?  
A snake? A **mole**?

Excuse me madam  
Am I driving you batty?  
I don't want to **badger** you  
Or make you **ratty**

But could you move  
Out of the road?  
I'm afraid to say  
You're sitting on a **toad**.

Am I imagining it?  
Would I? Could I do that?  
Imagine an animal  
As common as a **cat**?

But not really as common  
A **cat** as all that  
Because this is a **cat**  
That would wear a **hat**.

But he's not here, that **cat**  
with all his depravity  
Nor is that other one  
The one called **Macavity**,

Who was never there.  
O my! O eureka  
Who's that?  
Not **Mr Majeika**?

No. My mind is racing,  
Going faster and faster  
It's no one to worry about:  
Is it **Demon** or **Headmaster**?

And you sir, an American  
I'd posit.  
Did you see a **lion**  
and a **witch** in the closet?

You look to me like  
Some kind of ex-hippy.  
Who lived on an **island**  
In the **Mississippi**.

But does talking of rivers  
Make you feel queasy?  
As if your liver was great,  
**Grey-green** and **greasy**?

**Just so**. I'm someone  
Who can sympathise  
But then I know someone  
Who **can't stop telling lies**.

There she is! you have to pity  
the poor creature.  
Was she the one who had  
A **horrible teacher**?

So horrible, in fact  
She tried to make  
A **boy in her class**  
**Eat a whole chocolate cake**.

Not the same girl?  
I must be seeing things:  
**Parallel worlds;**  
**professors** and **rings**.

What was that noise?  
It sounded like a cough.  
Perhaps it came from  
Some old scholar or **prof**

Who likes reading Beowulf,  
but then can't stop it.  
Never lets up -  
- can't kick the **hobbit**.

Is that the same **don**  
I find hard to trust  
Who I think is researching  
Some kind of **dust**?

Impossible! But then  
It was only last week  
That I'm sure I heard  
**A statue speak**.

**Wilde** talk, I know  
But ever since  
I've been sure the statue  
Was of a **prince**.

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D'you know who I mean  
Have you heard of him?  
I may be wrong  
But I think he's called **Tim**.

Lovely **little** chap  
Kept **going to sea**  
Just like those others...  
It's coming back to me

Ah yes, **they were stranded**  
**Did they get back?**  
**Ralph and Piggy**  
**And choirboy Jack.**

Was **Tom** there too?  
And were his **school days**  
really the best?  
It's all a haze.

Did you hear that music?  
Reminds me of my uncle  
Who's that singing?  
Not Simon and Garfunkel?

Not now, not here?  
At this time of night?  
Singing about things  
That are supposed to be **bright?**

This conjuring-up lark -  
It's becoming a habit.  
If you paid me a **Fiver**  
I'd pull out a **rabbit**.

You'd call a rabbit  
A jumper not a jogger  
But if it was dogged  
You could call it **Dogger**

Is this a **Dogger** I see before me?  
Or a little baby?  
Or can it be a machine  
Like an **astrolabie?**

In my mind's eye  
I can see it's for someone  
Someone **little**  
Called **Lewis, my son**.

**Lewis?** Are you there?  
Is that your name?  
Is that you?  
Are you the same?

No answer.  
It's not his name, you see  
But I can see him  
By the **Tumtum tree**

He's been on the river  
In a boat, you know,  
But now it's over  
He's got to go.

But no, he won't  
Though he knows he ought  
Instead **he stands**  
**In uffish thought.**

I may be wrong  
But if you look  
I think you can see  
He's writing a book.

I can see that it's about:  
Someone who's **red**.  
Who's shouting very loudly  
**'Off with his head!'**

Crazy stuff -  
And what a scream!  
But sad to say  
It's all been a dream.

So that's it, folks  
That's it my friends  
You've had the story  
This is where it ends...

...unless you can imagine  
Some house or place  
Where books have a life  
And writers have a face.

With that thought  
I wish you goodnight.  
May your dreams be true  
And your pants not tight.

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