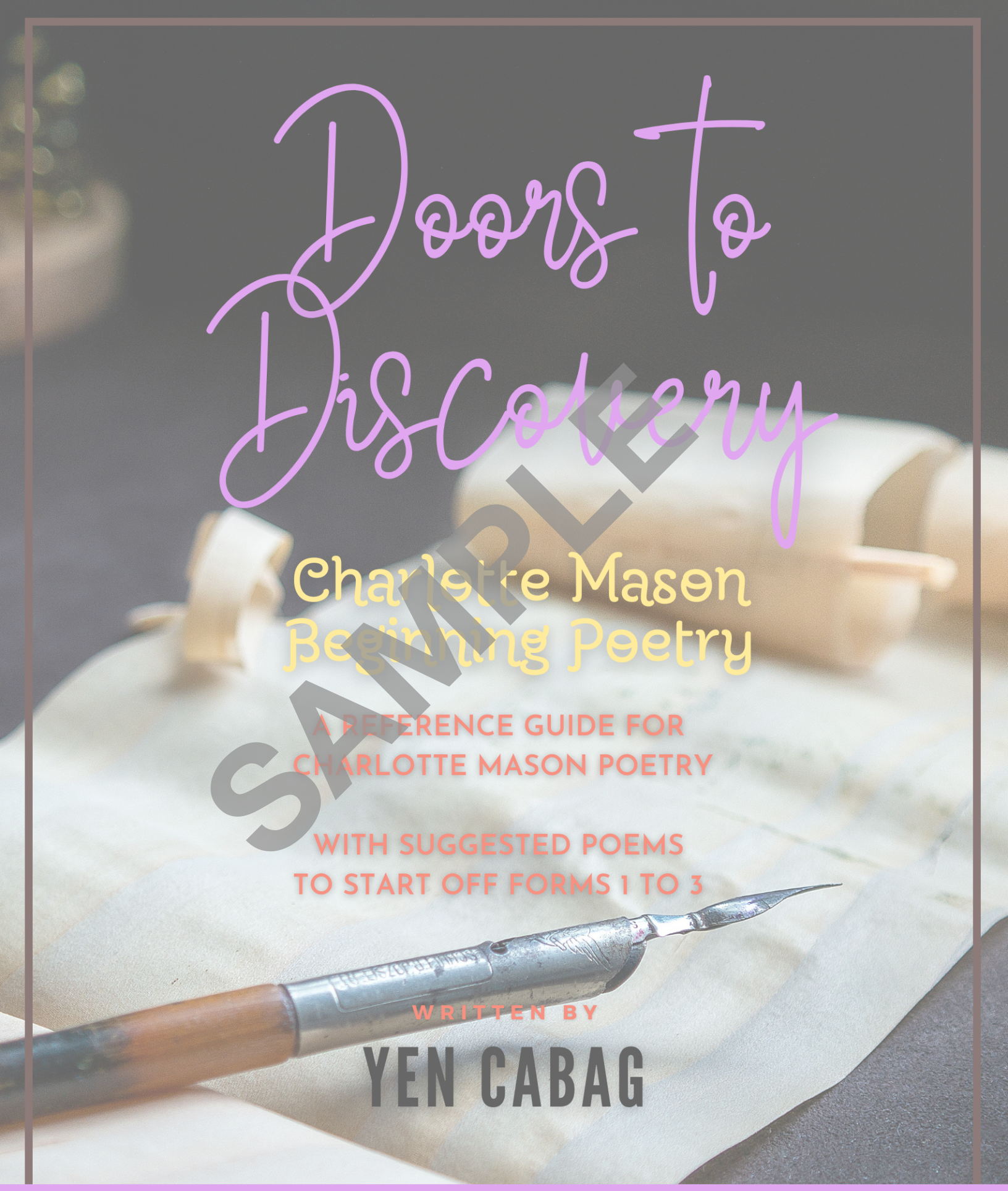

Doors to Discovery

Charlotte Mason Beginning Poetry

A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR CHARLOTTE MASON POETRY

WITH SUGGESTED POEMS TO START OFF FORMS 1 TO 3

WRITTEN BY

YEN CABAG

The first complete guide with practical tips for teaching children poetry based on Charlotte Mason principles

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Doors to Discovery: Charlotte Mason Beginning Poetry

Available on CharlotteMasonPhilippines.Com

Printed in the Philippines.

Contents

Why I Wrote This Book

As a champion for the Charlotte Mason method of education, it's easy to think that we have it all together. But the truth is, we can't always perfect what we set out to do. In our case, I've observed that once in awhile, when we get a bit busy as a family, we can let certain things slide in our weekly schedule. Sometimes, the ones that get the short end of the stick tend to be things like music, art, and poetry.

Because I've done this myself, I realize the need for having these resources at our fingertips as close as possible. Yes, some homeschooling parents may have the organizing skill to compile our own poems for the school year, and kudos to these! But for those who don't have the time or the gift of organization, we hope this book will be helpful.

In a way, this book is written for two audiences in mind: First, this is for the newbie Charlotte Mason homeschooler who struggles to know the first thing about how to "do poetry." We hope this book can be a good launching pad for a lifetime of enjoying poetry together as a family.

Second, this book is also for the possibly more experienced CM homeschooler who may have had trouble implementing poetry consistently. If you've been in the same boat as our family has been, perhaps it's hard to get the hang of doing it regularly. We hope this book can be a tool for you to reach for even just once a week, but to keep doing it weekly, so that over time, your appreciation for poetry will also grow. I trust that, looking back, you can remember pleasant memories of having these lines speak to your heart in a way that no other writing can.

How To Use This Book

In our more than a decade of homeschooling, some of the main challenges to doing poetry regularly that I've observed are:

- The poems not being in an accessible place, whether as a hard copy book or as a PDF on a device;
- The poems not being wholly relatable for our child's age, so that it's difficult to sustain interest;
- Poetry not being read regularly enough to develop a love for the musicality of words.

This book hopes to answer these top 3 hindrances to enjoying poetry in a Charlotte Mason homeschool.

First, we've compiled at least one poem for every week of the school year in one PDF, or if you're printing this out, in one book.

Next, we chose poems that seem to be the best fit for our child's age level, divided by Form (Form 1 for Grades 1 to 3, Form 2 for Grades 4 to 6, and Form 3 for High School). The poems are recommended for you to start off in your first year of doing Charlotte Mason poetry: for example, whatever Form your child is in (Grades 1 to 3 is Form 1, Grades 4 to 6 is Form 2, and High School is Form 3) you will use the recommended poems for that particular form. The following year, you will likely be able to do a deep dive into three poets per school year, as is usually recommended for a CM homeschool.

Lastly, we encourage you to read through this book at least once a week; if you can read the poems more than once a week, that's perfectly fine, but the bare minimum that we want to aim for is one poem once a week.

So without further ado, welcome to the world of poetry in a Charlotte Mason homeschool!

The Charlotte Mason Method and Poetry

Poetry is one of the main components of the Charlotte Mason method. Miss Mason was adamant about offering our children a wide curriculum, so first let's lay the foundation for why this was so important to her.

Let's talk about one of her main principles, that the child's mind needs food to grow.

Charlotte Mason Principle: The Child's Mind Needs Food to Grow

When I was growing up, I've always known I was smart—even if I didn't always embrace it. (That's probably a topic for another day, being bullied for being smart!) I used to think that some people are smart while others aren't.

But… it was when I already had kids of my own and researched about and started homeschooling that I stumbled upon the teachings of Charlotte Mason, a Christian educational reformer from the 1800s. Through her principles for education, I learned: everyone had the potential to be fully alive intellectually; we just didn't know it OR how to do it. But families and communities all over the world are now applying her principles to cultivate children's minds to their full potential.

Let's read this quote that perfectly describes how a fully-developed intellect looks like:

I cannot tell you more now of the delightful and illimitable sources of pleasure open to Intellect and his colleagues; but, if you realise at all what has been said, you will be surprised to know that many people live within narrow bounds, and rarely step into either of the great worlds we have been considering. The happiness of the intellectual life comes of knowing and thinking, imagining and perceiving or rather, comes of the range of things which we know and think about, imagine and perceive. Everybody's mind is occupied in these ways about something or other, but many people know and think about small matters. It is quite well to think of these for a little while, but they think about them always, and have no room for the great thoughts which great things bring to us. (Charlotte Mason, vol 4 pg 43-44)

But how do we cultivate our minds? Miss Mason holds that there is only one kind of food for a child's mind:

We know that food is to the body what fuel is to the steam-engine, the sole source of energy; once we realise that the mind too works only as it is fed education will appear to us in a new light… For the mind is capable of dealing with only one kind of food; it lives, grows and is nourished upon ideas only; mere information is to it as a meal of sawdust to the body; there are no organs for the assimilation of the one more than of the other. (Vol 6 pages 105-106)

The Child's Mind Feeds on Ideas

From Miss Mason's words, we see that the mind is capable of growing on only one type of food: ideas. But what are ideas? Let's continue reading:

What is an idea? we ask, and find ourselves plunged beyond our depth. A live thing of the mind, seems to be the conclusion of our greatest thinkers from Plato to Bacon, from Bacon to Coleridge. We all know how an idea 'strikes,' 'seizes,' 'catches hold of,' 'impresses' us and at last, if it be big enough, 'possesses' us; in a word, behaves like an entity. If we enquire into any person's habits of life, mental preoccupation, devotion to a cause or pursuit, he will usually tell us that such and such an idea struck him. This potency of an idea is matter of common recognition. No phrase is more common and more promising than, 'I have an idea'; we rise to such an opening as trout to a well-chosen fly. (Vol 6 page 106)

Here we see that an idea is a "living" thing, something that captures our fancy, seizes our whole being, and affects our daily life.

And where do we get these living ideas? This is where the generous CM curriculum comes in: we have literature, history, geography, music, art, handicraft, and, last, but not the least, poetry, our subject in this book.

Why We Need Poetry

> *A century ago when Prussia was shipwrecked in the Napoleonic wars it was discovered that not Napoleon but Ignorance was the formidable national enemy; a few philosophers took the matter in hand, and history, poetry, philosophy, proved the salvation of a ruined nation, because such studies make for the development of personality, public spirit, initiative, the qualities of which the State was in need, and which most advance individual happiness and success. On the other hand, the period when Germany made her school curriculum utilitarian marks the beginning of her moral downfall. (vol 6 page 6)*

Reading poetry is like taking a journey into a whole other world, with its layers of meaning that would take years to discover and dig deep into.

Poetry is one of the means by which we hand on the torch of the human spirit. It was Flecker who said, 'It is not the business of the poet to save souls, but to make souls worth saving.' You can't organise poetry, you can't feed it to the child in the curriculum by carefully measured spoonfuls, you can't hold conferences to decide when and where and how exactly it will be administered, but it is none the less important for all that. Poetry is not a school subject. Nor is it a joke, a sort of cheap joke at the expense of young people in love, who are deliriously happy, or young people out of love, who are moody and self-analytic. The joke is threadbare, and it was never one in which a people like the Greeks, who saw in poetry as it were the sustenance of the soul, could have indulged or which the finer type of mi nd in this country approved. Poetry is not a jest, it is part of life, it is the deepest expression of thought and feeling of which certain exceptional minds have been capable, and when we read it is as though we ourselves shared in those thoughts and those emotions. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)

Poetry Is For Enjoyment

As one of the writers on The Parents' Review beautifully puts it:

> *'Poetry is not something to be studied, it is something to be enjoyed.' (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)*

Did you get that? Our primary goal in enjoyment, not necessarily studying it. If we look at the traditional school system, most of us grew up thinking that poetry is something that we study, take apart, analyze to pieces.

…at the very outset I would say that the study of poetry is only important as a means of its enjoyment, and that where children are concerned the first step is to see that they enjoy, after which they will probably take the second step for themselves, namely, the trouble to study those poets whose work needs some preliminary elucidation if it is to be appreciated. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)

From the above passage, we see at least two steps in the study of poetry, with the emphasis on the first step being the crucial one, and the second as something that they will "probably take for themselves":

1. To enjoy
2. To study the poets whose work "needs some preliminary elucidation if it is to be appreciated"

Poetry Impacts Conduct

Do you know that poetry is one of the kinds of mind food that we can feed our children on? But because the Charlotte Mason method tells us not to give our children "predigested" mind food, we choose to offer them poetry as it is, so that they can choose for themselves which material they connect with.

Poetry and Conduct

This education of the feelings, moral education, is too delicate and personal a matter for a teacher to undertake trusting to his own resources. Children are not to be fed morally like young pigeons with predigested food. They must pick and eat for themselves and they do so from the conduct of others which they hear of or perceive. But they want a great quantity of the sort of food whose issue is conduct, and that is why poetry, history, romance, geography, travel, biography, science

and sums must all be pressed into service. No one can tell what particular morsel a child will select for his sustenance. (Vol 6 page 59)

But bear in mind that, although poetry is one source of ideas that deal with conduct, we don't use it (nor do we use stories) as a moral weapon, that is, we don't use them for telling our children moral lessons, and instead just let the ideas connect with them on their own.

Bringing Up Lovers of Beauty

If there's one thing that exposing our children to poetry does, it's to help bring them up as lovers of beauty. Take a look at this passage:

When I see a child, boy or girl, full of all that health, energy and intelligence which augurs well for the future of certain children and which is a sort of promise written in their faces, I have always a dual ambition for them; that they should grow up to be good athletes and they should be lovers of poetry. Neither ambition is enough in itself: the athlete with a stunted, limited mind, unable to adventure outside a certain range, his very achievement limited to the time that youth and health last, is, despite all our admiration for his prowess, only half a man. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)

How to Introduce Poetry

1. No coercion allowed!

The first important point to remember when we start to introduce poetry to our children and/or family is this: we're not allowed to force a child to like a poem! Let's take a look at this passage from a The Parents' Review article:

Granted then the importance of poetry, how are we going to introduce it to the child? You will never make a girl or boy like a poem against their will. You will never bully them into it, or argue them into it. You may convert them by indirect means, by infecting them by your own zest—take care that such zest is genuine, children are never converted by shams—but you can't beat poetry into them, and you will be disappointed if you try. In fact it is a very immoral proceeding indeed if you do try, nearly as immoral as trying to bludgeon someone into accepting your religious convictions under pretence of saving their soul. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308-321)

2. Enthusiasm is key, but do not exaggerate praise.

Yes, we want to show our enthusiasm, but make sure it's not fake enthusiasm. Children can smell hypocrisy a mile a way, and when it comes to appreciation for poetry, we can't fake it.

Poetry and religion are the two things to which sham appreciation or sham loyalty are forbidden. They touch the soul so intimately that anything that is forced or insincere in our attitude towards them destroys their usefulness for us. *It is my settled conviction that the only enthusiasms we can convey are the vital enthusiasms which we ourselves have felt. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)*

But what if we don't already appreciate poetry? What can we do? Let's continue reading:

If you do not like poetry there is an obvious remedy: introduce the child and the poem and leave them to make friends for themselves. They may, or they may not, but you can never make things

better by your interference. And in introducing people it is generally a mistake to praise too much beforehand. You may only establish a distaste. In the same way it is a mistake, even when you like it, to praise a poem too eloquently. After all the child is entitled to form its own opinion. We don't all like the same hats, the same clothes, the same puddings, why should we like the same poems? The better I like a poem the less inclined I feel to speak about it. It is one of these significant experiences in life about which one wants to remain silent. To drag it into the glare of publicity is to lose some of those very qualities which made it precious. If then I share it with someone else the most I feel inclined to say—imitating for once the taciturn English—is, 'I like this, do you?' or 'This is rather fine,' or 'I remember how much this moved me when I first read it.' And when the poem is read I have no inclination to spoil it by my adulation. I never like those people who gush after a concert. Silence is the best praise of all. And how wise children are in this respect! They will say more in a word or in a speechless pause than we can ever express by our chattering. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)

3. Encourage them to remain quiet enough to enjoy it.

Then, it's important that the child or children be able to stay quiet long enough to enjoy the poems. The good thing is that we usually start with relatively short poems, so it doesn't require that much time to remain quiet.

Is it possible to inculcate a love of poetry in a large class of thirty, and how? I have never been confronted with the problem myself, and I hope I never will. But I still believe it would be possible. ***First by convincing them that poetry is neither a jest nor a hideous task, then by persuading them to remain quiet enough to enjoy it…*** *(The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)*

4. Introduce them to good poetry suitable to their age and letting it do the rest.

Next, this is most important: use good quality poetry that are suitable to the child's age.

…and finally by doing what Miss Mason always advocated, introducing them to good poetry of a sort suitable to their age and leaving it to do the rest. I don't say mass methods of introduction

are the best. I would like presently to see the same children enjoying other poems in a more solitary, slightly less Fascist manner.

5. Get someone who reads well read the poem aloud; ***do not mangle the poem by dividing the verses among different people to read aloud.***

Take a look at this description of an example of a best practice related to reading a poem aloud:

And, by the way, never declaim a poem to a class. It generally makes the poem, and it very often makes you look slightly absurd. Read it aloud if you like, or get one of the class who reads well to do so. If you get the whole class in turn to read a verse, the poem may suffer excruciating tortures in the process and be spoilt. But what I have found effective with younger children, especially where ballad poetry is concerned, is to let the alternative verses be read in unison, chanted so to speak by the whole class, and if you lead this Greek chorus yourself you will find that the metre does not get too mangled and that everyone is given an opportunity of enjoying the rhythm of the poem and giving expression to it themselves. (The Parents' Review, 1936, pp. 308–321)

6. Understand varied capacity among children.

Last but not the least, remember Miss Mason's principle, "A child is born a person." Every child has a different capacity for poetry.

In the same way I am sure minds can be enriched to-day by the learning of poetry, provided the poetry is good enough. Of course, capacity varies enormously. Some children find it easy, others find it desperately hard. I think one must just temper the wind to the shorn lamb, encouraging those with good memories to store them well and not spoiling poetry for others by driving them too hard. I was once guileless enough to suggest to a class that they should choose for themselves the poems they would learn by heart. (Vol 6 page 59)

How We Do Poetry in the Charlotte Mason Method

Here are some practical tips for doing poetry in a Charlotte Mason homeschool:

1. Read it aloud daily

First, we start by reading the poems aloud to our children, but soon they will be able to read it aloud themselves.

Reading Aloud.—He should have practice, too, in reading aloud, for the most part, in the books he is using for his term's work. These should include a good deal of poetry, to accustom him to the delicate rendering of shades of meaning, and especially to make him aware that words are beautiful in themselves, that they are a source of pleasure, and are worthy of our honour; and that a beautiful word deserves to be beautifully said, with a certain roundness of tone and precision of utterance. Quite young children are open to this sort of teaching, conveyed, not in a lesson, but by a word now and then. (Vol 1 page 227)

2. Recite it regularly (and memorize without labor)

We recite poetry regularly, which can result in committing the poems to memory.

Memorising.—Recitation and committing to memory are not necessarily the same thing, and it is well to store a child's memory with a good deal of poetry, learnt without labour. Some years ago I chanced to visit a house, the mistress of which had educational notions of her own, upon which she was bringing up a niece. She presented me with a large foolscap sheet written all over with the titles of poems, some of them long and difficult: Tintern Abbey, for example. She told me that her niece could repeat to me any of those poems that I liked to ask for, and that she had never learnt a single verse by heart in her life. The girl did repeat several of the poems on the list, quite beautifully and without hesitation; and then the lady unfolded her secret. She thought she had made a discovery, and I thought so too. She read a poem through to E.; then the next day, while the little girl was making a doll's frock, perhaps, she read it again; once again the next day, while E.'s hair was being brushed. She got in about six or more readings, according to the length of the

poem, at odd and unexpected times, and in the end E. could say the poem which she had not learned.

I have tried the plan often since, and found it effectual. The child must not try to recollect or to say the verse over to himself, but, as far as may be, present an open mind to receive an impression of interest. Half a dozen repetitions should give children possession of such poems as 'Dolly and Dick,' 'Do you ask what the birds say?' 'Little lamb, who made thee?' and the like. The gains of such a method of learning are, that the edge of the child's enjoyment is not taken off by weariful verse by verse repetitions, and, also, that the habit of making mental images is unconsciously formed. (Vol 1 page 225-226)

3. Offer the best quality poetry.

Lastly, remember to offer the best quality poetry for your children. Even in poetry, we say no to twaddle!

Let the child lie fallow till he is six, and then, in this matter of memorising, as in others, attempt only a little, and let the poems the child learns be simple and within the range of his own thought and imagination. At the same time, when there is so much noble poetry within a child's compass, the pity of it, that he should be allowed to learn twaddle! (Vol 1 page 226)

How to Memorize Poems the Charlotte Mason Way

Perhaps you have recollections of memorizing poems when you were in school. Most likely, you would repeat a line over and over until you could commit it to memory and recall it at will. But do you know that the Charlotte Mason method of recitation and memorizing poems is "learnt without labour"?

Miss Mason encourages children aged 9 and above to have, as part of their daily readings "a good deal of poetry," and this has many purposes and results in our children's education. But for the purposes of this post, let's take a lookat what she says about poetry and reciting them:

Memorising.—Recitation and committing to memory are not necessarily the same thing, and it is well to store a child's memory with a good deal of poetry, learnt without labour. (Vol 1, page 224)

So what does it mean to memorize poems—a good deal of them, too!—without conscious effort?

Charlotte Mason's Poetry Memorization Tips

Do note that what we are talking about here is poetry memorization, and not necessarily the overall study of poetry. Let's take a look at how Miss Mason describes the process:

Some years ago I chanced to visit a house, the mistress of which had educational notions of her own, upon which she was bringing up a niece. She presented me with a large foolscap sheet written all over with the titles of poems, some of them long and difficult: Tintern Abbey, for example. She told me that her niece could repeat to me any of those poems that I liked to ask for, and that she had never learnt a single verse by heart in her life. The girl did repeat several of the poems on the list, quite beautifully and without hesitation; (Vol 1 page 224)

Isn't this a picture of how we want our children to be reciting poetry from heart?

For our family movie a coulpe of years ago, we started watching Anne with an "E" on Netflix, (based, in my opinion, very loosely on Anne of Green Gables, one of our favorite living books!) and one of my favorite scenes was when Anne was reciting poetry at the train station to get some money. Well, come to think of it, whenever and wherever she was reciting poetry were ALL my favorite scenes! Despite the fact that I found the series deviating a lot from the plot points in the book series, I felt that the actress really portrayed Anne in a very convincing manner, and these poetry recitations especially brought to life our beloved bubbly and imaginative Anne Shirley in real flesh and blood.

So how do we do this? Let's continue reading in Miss Mason's Volume 1 on Home Education:

…and then the lady unfolded her secret. She thought she had made a discovery, and I thought so too. She read a poem through to E.; then the next day, while the little girl was making a doll's frock, perhaps, she read it again; once again the next day, while E.'s hair was being brushed. She got in about six or more readings, according to the length of the poem, at odd and unexpected times, and in the end E. could say the poem which she had not learned. (Vol. 1 page 224)

Do you see it? The child, from constant repetition, even just once per day, would slowly but surely, soon find the poem ingrained in her memory, so that she could repeat it herself, at will, without having to commit it to memory by sheer effort!

How Do We Choose Poems to Memorize for a CM Homeschool?

Again, before we jump the gun and compile all our favorite poems for our child to memorize, listen to this:

…Let the poems the child learns be simple and within the range of his own thought and imagination. At the same time, when there is so much noble poetry within a child's compass, the pity of it, that he should be allowed to learn twaddle! (Vol 1, page 226)

This tells me that the poems we introduce to our children have to be done according to their range of understanding and imagination. This is why, for younger children, we normally recommend poems relating to play and childhood.

Easy Steps for Poetry Memorization in a Charlotte Mason Homeschool

So let's lay out those steps in three simple steps:

Step 1. Pick a poem to recite over the course of several weeks. Many families pick 12 weeks to have one poem to enjoy together over one term.

Step 2. Read the poem aloud, only once, to your child, everyday. If possible, read the poem aloud at different times in the day, even when your child is doing something else.

Step 3. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 for the next poem for the next term.

Doesn't that sound very doable? Perhaps one way to make it even easier is to have your poem printed out on cardstock and placed in a very accessible spot. That way, you can just pick it up as you go through your day and read it aloud instantly!

Let's close with what Miss Mason observed about this process of learning a poem:

I have tried the plan often since, and found it effectual. The child must not try to recollect or to say the verse over to himself, but, as far as may be, present an open mind to receive an impression of interest. Half a dozen repetitions should give children possession of such poems as 'Dolly and Dick,' 'Do you ask what the birds say?' 'Little lamb, who made thee?' and the like. The gains of such a method of learning are, that the edge of the child's enjoyment is not taken off by weariful verse by verse repetitions, and, also, that the habit of making mental images is unconsciously formed. (Vol 1, pages 224-225)

Enjoyable Poem Memory Work

Charlotte Mason poetry study and memorization are a must-have as another source of beautiful, living ideas, and we hope this post helps take away some of the trepidation that some families feel at the thought of doing "poetry'!

Through the gentle way that we read aloud poems for our children's poem memory work, we believe we can do away with the tediousness of rote memory while cultivating a love for words and imaginative thinking!

Suggested Poems for FORM 1

1. The Moon

Eliza Lee Follen

O, look at the moon!
She is shining up there;
O mother, she looks
Like a lamp in the air.
Last week she was smaller,
And shaped like a bow;
But now she's grown bigger,
And round as an O.

Pretty moon, pretty moon,
How you shine on the door,
And make it all bright
On my nursery floor!
You shine on my playthings,
And show me their place,
And I love to look up
At your pretty bright face.
And there is a star
Close by you, and maybe
That small twinkling star
Is your little baby.

2. The Star

Ann and Jane Taylor

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark;
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

3. The Cow

Robert Louis Stevenson

The friendly cow all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

4. The Swing

Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown—
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

5. My Shadow

Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

6. Block City

Robert Louis Stevenson

What are you able to build with your blocks?
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,
There I'll establish a city for me:
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,
And a harbour as well where my vessels may ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,
And steps coming down in an orderly way
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!
And see, on the steps of my palace, the kings
Coming and going with presents and things!

Now I have done with it, down let it go!
All in a moment the town is laid low.
Block upon block lying scattered and free,
What is there left of my town by the sea?

Yet as I saw it, I see it again,
The kirk and the palace, the ships and the men,
And as long as I live and where'er I may be,
I'll always remember my town by the sea.

7. Foreign Lands

Robert Louis Stevenson

Up into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;
The dusty roads go up and down
With people tramping in to town.

If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairy land,
Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive.

===SAMPLE CUT OFF HERE ===

=== SAMPLE CONTINUES ===

Suggested Poems for FORM 2

1. A Wish

Samuel Rogers

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow oft beneath my thatch
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch
And share my meal, a welcome guest.
Around my ivied porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
And Lucy at her wheel shall sing
In russet gown and apron blue.
The village church among the trees,
Where first our marriage vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze,
And point with taper spire to Heaven.

2. Voices of the Air

Katherine Mansfield

But then there comes that moment rare
When, for no cause that I can find,
The little voices of the air
Sound above all the sea and wind.

The sea and wind do then obey
And sighing, sighing double notes
Of double basses, content to play
A droning chord for the little throats—

The little throats that sing and rise
Up into the light with lovely ease
And a kind of magical, sweet surprise
To hear and know themselves for these—

For these little voices: the bee, the fly,
The leaf that taps, the pod that breaks,
The breeze on the grass-tops bending by,
The shrill quick sound that the insect makes.

3. The Brook

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I come from haunts of coot and hern
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

I chatter over stony ways
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

4. The Dream-Ship

Eugene Field

When the world is fast asleep,
  Along the midnight skies—
As though it were a wandering cloud—
  The ghostly dream-ship flies.

An angel stands at the dream-ship's helm,
  An angel stands at the prow,
And an angel stands at the dream-ship's side
  With a rue-wreath on her brow.

The other angels, silver-crowned,
  Pilot and helmsman are,
And the angel with the wreath of rue
  Tosseth the dreams afar.

The dreams they fall on rich and poor;
  They fall on young and old;
And some are dreams of poverty,
  And some are dreams of gold.

And some are dreams that thrill with joy,
  And some that melt to tears;
Some are dreams of the dawn of love,
  And some of the old dead years.

On rich and poor alike they fall,
  Alike on young and old,
Bringing to slumbering earth their joys
  And sorrows manifold.

The friendless youth in them shall do
   The deeds of mighty men,
And drooping age shall feel the grace
   Of buoyant youth again.

The king shall be a beggarman—
   The pauper be a king—
In that revenge or recompense
   The dream-ship dreams do bring.

So ever downward float the dreams
   That are for all and me,
And there is never mortal man
   Can solve that mystery.
But ever onward in its course
   Along the haunted skies—
As though it were a cloud astray—
   The ghostly dream-ship flies.

Two angels with their silver crowns
   Pilot and helmsman are,
And an angel with a wreath of rue
   Tosseth the dreams afar.

5. Star of the East

Eugene Field

Star of the East, that long ago
  Brought wise men on their way
Where, angels singing to and fro,
  The Child of Bethlehem lay—
Above that Syrian hill afar
Thou shinest out to-night, O Star!
Star of the East, the night were drear
  But for the tender grace
That with thy glory comes to cheer
  Earth's loneliest, darkest place;
For by that charity we see
Where there is hope for all and me.
Star of the East! show us the way
  In wisdom undefiled
To seek that manger out and lay
  Our gifts before the child—
To bring our hearts and offer them
Unto our King in Bethlehem!

6. The Children's Hour

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Between the dark and the daylight,
    When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
    That is known as the Children's Hour.
I hear in the chamber above me
    The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
    And voices soft and sweet.
From my study I see in the lamplight,
    Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
    And Edith with golden hair.
A whisper, and then a silence:
    Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
    To take me by surprise.
A sudden rush from the stairway,
    A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
    They enter my castle wall!
They climb up into my turret
    O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
    They seem to be everywhere.
They almost devour me with kisses,
    Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
    In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!
Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
    Because you have scaled the wall,

Such an old mustache as I am
    Is not a match for you all!
I have you fast in my fortress,
    And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
    In the round-tower of my heart.
And there will I keep you forever,
    Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
    And moulder in dust away!

7. Excelsior

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!
His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!
In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!
"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!
"Oh stay," the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!
"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last Good-night,
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
        Excelsior!
A traveller, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device,
        Excelsior!
There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell like a falling star,
        Excelsior!

===SAMPLE CUT OFF HERE ===

=== SAMPLE CONTINUES ===

Suggested Poems for FORM 3

1. Nature

Henry David Thoreau.

O nature! I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy quire,—
To be a meteor in the sky,
Or comet that may range on high;
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low;
Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.
In some withdrawn, unpublic mead
Let me sigh upon a reed,
Or in the woods, with leafy din,
Whisper the still evening in.
Some still work give me to do,—
Only—be it near to you!
For I'd rather be thy child
And pupil, in the forest wild,
Than be the king of men elsewhere,
And most sovereign slave of care.

2. Stanzas

C.P. Cranch.

Thought is deeper than all speech,
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught.
We are spirits clad in veils:
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.
Heart to heart was never known;
Mind with mind did never meet;
We are columns left alone
Of a temple once complete.
Like the stars that gem the sky,
Far apart, though seeming near,
In our light we scattered lie;
All is thus but starlight here.
What is social company
But a babbling summer stream?
What our wise philosophy
But the glancing of a dream?
Only when the sun of love
Melts the scattered stars of thought;
Only when we live above
What the dim-eyed world hath taught;
Only when our souls are fed
By the Fount which gave them birth,
And by inspiration led,
Which they never drew from earth,
We, like parted drops of rain
Swelling till they meet and run,
Shall be all absorbed again,
Melting, flowing into one.

3. The Poison Tree

William Blake

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole;
In the morning glad I see;
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

4. A Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
    "Life is but an empty dream!" --
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
    And things are not what they seem.
Life is real! Life is earnest!
    And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art, to dust returnest,"
    Was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
    Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
    Find us farther than to-day.
Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
    And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
    Funeral marches to the grave.
In the world's broad field of battle,
    In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
    Be a hero in the strife!
Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
    Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, -- act in the living Present!
    Heart within, and God o'erhead!
Lives of great men all remind us
    We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
    Footprints on the sands of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another,
    Sailing o'er life's solemn main,

A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
    Seeing, shall take heart again.
Let us, then, be up and doing,
    With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
    Learn to labor and to wait.

5. Children

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Come to me, O ye children!
    For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
    Have vanished quite away.
Ye open the eastern windows,
    That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
    And the brooks of morning run.
In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
    In your thoughts the brooklet's flow
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
    And the first fall of the snow.
Ah! what would the world be to us
    If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
    Worse than the dark before.
What the leaves are to the forest,
    With the light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
    Have been hardened into wood,-
That to the world are children;
    Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
    Then reaches the trunks below.
Come to me, O ye children!
    And whisper in my ear
What the birds and wings are singing
    In your sunny atmosphere.
For what are all our contrivings,
    And the wisdom of our books,

When compared with your caresses,
    And the gladness of your looks?
Ye are better than all the ballads
    That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
    And all the rest are dead.

6. The Day is Done

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

7. The Dreams

Eugene Field

Two dreams came down to earth one night
  From the realm of mist and dew;
One was a dream of the old, old days,
  And one was a dream of the new.
One was a dream of a shady lane
  That led to the pickerel pond
Where the willows and rushes bowed themselves
  To the brown old hills beyond.
And the people that peopled the old-time dream
  Were pleasant and fair to see,
And the dreamer he walked with them again
  As often of old walked he.
Oh, cool was the wind in the shady lane
  That tangled his curly hair!
Oh, sweet was the music the robins made
  To the springtime everywhere!
Was it the dew the dream had brought
  From yonder midnight skies,
Or was it tears from the dear, dead years
  That lay in the dreamer's eyes?
The other dream ran fast and free,
  As the moon benignly shed
Her golden grace on the smiling face
  In the little trundle-bed.
For 't was a dream of times to come—
  Of the glorious noon of day—
Of the summer that follows the careless spring
  When the child is done with play.
And 't was a dream of the busy world
  Where valorous deeds are done;

Of battles fought in the cause of right,
  And of victories nobly won.
It breathed no breath of the dear old home
  And the quiet joys of youth;
It gave no glimpse of the good old friends
  Or the old-time faith and truth.
But 't was a dream of youthful hopes,
  And fast and free it ran,
And it told to a little sleeping child
  Of a boy become a man!
These were the dreams that came one night
  To earth from yonder sky;
These were the dreams two dreamers dreamed—
  My little boy and I.
And in our hearts my boy and I
  Were glad that it was so;
He loved to dream of days to come,
  And I of long ago.
So from our dreams my boy and I
  Unwillingly awoke,
But neither of his precious dream
  Unto the other spoke.
Yet of the love we bore those dreams
  Gave each his tender sign;
For there was triumph in his eyes—
  And there were tears in mine!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Based in Iloilo City, Yen Cabag is a homeschooling mom, writer, entrepreneur, and Charlotte Mason coach, trainer, and advocate, who loves reading, storytelling, and creating just about anything—from kitchen concoctions to stories, articles, songs, curriculum, and crochet pieces!

Growing up, her daily diet included a dose of Sweet Valley Twins, Sweet Valley Kids, and Sweet Valley High, only falling in love with classic books when she started learning and applying the Charlotte Mason philosophy in their homeschool and family life. Since then, her husband Mark has also jumped on the bandwagon, devouring books left and right, despite not having enjoyed it in his younger years. (Score for living books!)

Yen's favorite me-time activity is digging for treasure in one of the many branches of Booksale, while the family also loves hiking/camping up in their mountain home.

Yen and Mark are also champions for fostering and adoption, with two of their three boys coming into the family through this beautiful gift.

Yen graduated magna cum laude for B.S. in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, and went on to become a licensed teacher. She has also taken up units in Master's in School Management.

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