



Michael Rosen poems

Poems by Michael Rosen for
use in the classroom

Age 8-14

CFE levels second and third

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Poems

Boogy Woogy Buggy

I glide as I ride
in my boogy woogy buggy
take the corners wide
just see me drive
I'm an easy speedy baby
doing the baby buggy jive

I'm in and out the shops
I'm the one that never stops
I'm the one that feels
the beat of the wheels
all that air
in my hair
I streak down the street
between the feet that I meet.

No one can catch
my boogy woogy buggy
no one's got the pace
I rule this place

I'm a baby who knows
I'm a baby who goes, baby, *goes*.

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Do I know you?

I'm lost
I'm lost
I don't know where I am
I'm a sock in a washing machine
A strawberry in some jam
I'm a letter in a book
I'm the bubble in some fizz
I'm a pebble on a beach
I'm a question in a quiz
I don't know where you are
You don't know where you are
You don't know when I is

I don't know how you was
You don't know who I wiz.

So find me
Find me
Ask me who I am
Get me out the washing machine
Fish me out the jam
Open up the book
Let out all the fizz
Let's walk on the beach
And I'll answer your quiz
Then I'll know where you are
You'll know when I is
I'll know how you was
And you'll know who I wiz.

This poem was especially written for Michael Rosen's appearance on the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour in 2008.

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Don't

Don't do,
Don't do,
Don't do that.
Don't pull faces,
Don't tease the cat.

Don't pick your ears,
Don't be rude at school.
Who do they think I am?

Some kind of fool?

One day
They'll say
Don't put toffee in my coffee
don't pour gravy on the baby
don't put beer in his ear
don't stick your toes up his nose.

Don't put confetti on the spaghetti
and don't squash peas on your knees.

Don't put ants in your pants
don't put mustard in the custard

don't chuck jelly at the telly

and don't throw fruit at a computer
don't throw fruit at a computer.

Don't what?

Don't throw fruit at a computer.

Don't what?

Don't throw fruit at a computer.

Who do they think I am?

Some kind of fool?

Don't taken from *Mustard, Custard, Grumble Belly and Gravy* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Quentin Blake. (Andre Deutsch 1985, Bloomsbury 2006). Text copyright © Michael Rosen, 1985.

Washing Up

On Sundays,
my mum and dad said,
'Right, we've cooked the dinner,
you two can wash it up,'
and then they went off to the front room.

So then we began.
First there was the row about who
was to wash and who was to dry.
My brother said, 'You're too slow at washing,
I have to hang about waiting for you,'
so I said,
'You always wash, it's not fair.'

'Hard cheese,' he says,
'I'm doing it.'
So that was that.

'Whoever dries has to stack the dishes,'
he says,
so that's me stacking the dishes
while he's getting the water ready.

Now,

quite often we used to have mustard
with our Sunday dinner
and we didn't have it out of a tube,
one of us used to make it with the powder
in an eggcup
and there was nearly always
some left over.

Anyway,
my brother
he'd be washing up by now
and he's standing there at the sink
his hands in the water,
I'm drying up,
And suddenly he goes,
'Quick, quick quick
come over here
quick, you'll miss it
quick, you'll miss it.'
'What?' I say, 'What?'
'Quick, quick. In here,
in the water.'
I say,
'What? What?'
'Give us your hand,' he says
and he grabs my hand
then my finger,
'What?' I say,
'That,' he says,
and he pulls my finger under the water
and stuffs it into the eggcup
with left-over blobs of old mustard
stuck to the bottom.
It's all slimey
'Oh Horrible.'

I was an idiot to have believed him.

So I go on drying up.

Suddenly
I feel a little speck of water on my neck.
I look up at the ceiling.
Where'd that come from?

I look at my brother
he's grinning all over his big face.

'Oy, cut that out,'
He grins again
sticks his finger under the water
in the bowl and
flicks.
Plip.
'Oy, that got me right on my face.'
'Did it? did it? did it?'
He's well pleased.

So now it's my turn
I've got the drying up cloth, haven't I?
And I've been practising for ages
on the kitchen door handle.
Now he's got his back to me
washing up
and
out goes the cloth, like a whip, it goes
right on the –
'Ow – that hurt. I didn't hurt *you*.'
Now it's me grinning.

So he goes,
'All right, let's call it quits.'
'OK,' I say, 'one-all. Fairy squarey.'

So, I go on drying up.
What I don't know it that
he's got the Fairy Liquid bottle under the
water
boop boop boop boop boop boop
it's filling up
with dirty soapy water
and next thing it's out of the water
and he's gone sqeeesh
and squirted it right in my face.

'Got you in the mush,' he goes.

'Right, that it,' I say,

'I've had enough.'
And I go upstairs and get
this old bicycle cape I've got,
one of those capes you can wear when you ride a bicycle in the rain.

So I come down in that
and I say,
'OK I'm ready for anything you've got now.
You can't get me now, can you?'

So next thing he's got the little
washing-up brush
and it's got little bits of meat fat
and squashed peas stuck in it
and he's come up to me
and he's in, up, under the cape with it
working it round and round
under my jumper, and under my chin.

So that makes me really wild
and I make a grab for anything that'll
hold water; dip it in the sink
and fling it at him.

What I don't know is that
while I went upstairs to get the cape
he's got a secret weapon ready.

It's his bicycle pump,
He's loaded it with the dirty washing-up water
By sucking it all in.
He picks it up,
and it's squirt again.
All over my hair.

Suddenly the door opens.
'Have you finished the ...?'
It's Mum AND Dad.

'Just look at this.
Look at the pair of them.'

And there's water all over the floor
all over the table

and all we've washed up is
two plates and the mustard pot.

My dad says,
'You can't be trusted to do anything you're asked,
can you.'

He always says that.

Mind you, the floor was pretty clean
After we had mopped it all up.

Washing Up taken from *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here* by Michael Rosen and
illustrated by Quentin Blake (Andrew Deutsch 1983, Puffin 2006). Text © Michael
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Chocolate Cake

I love chocolate cake.
And when I was a boy
I loved it even more.

Sometimes we used to have it for tea
and Mum used to say,
'If there's any left over
you can have it to take to school
tomorrow to have at playtime.'
And the next day I would take it to school
wrapped in tin foil
open it up at playtime and sit in the
corner of the playground
eating it,
you know how the icing on top
is all shiny and it cracks as you
bite into it
and there's that other kind of icing in
the middle
and it sticks to your hands and you
can lick your fingers
and lick your lips
oh it's lovely.
yeah.

Anyway,
once we had this chocolate cake for tea

and later I went to bed
but while I was in bed
I found myself waking up
licking my lips
and smiling.
I woke up proper.
'The chocolate cake.'
It was the first thing
I thought of.
I could almost see it
so I thought,
what if I go downstairs
and have a little nibble, yeah?

It was all dark
everyone was in bed
so it must have been really late
but I got out of bed,
crept out of the door

there's always a creaky floorboard, isn't there?

Past Mum and Dad's room,

careful not to tread on bits of broken toys
or bits of Lego
you know what it's like treading on Lego
with your bare feet,

Yowwww
Shhhhhhh

downstairs
into the kitchen
open the cupboard
and there it is
all shining.

So I take it out of the cupboard
put it on the table
and I see that
there's a few crumbs lying about on the plate,
so I lick my finger and run my finger all over the crumbs
scooping them up

and putting them into my mouth.

ooooooooommmmmmmmm

nice.

Then

I look again

and on one side where it's been cut,
it's all crumbly.

So I take a knife

I think I'll just tidy that up a bit,
cut off the crumbly bits
scoop them all up
and into the mouth

ooooooooommm mmmm

nice.

Look at the cake again.

That looks a bit funny now,
one side doesn't match the other
I'll just even it up a bit, eh?

Take the knife

and slice.

This time the knife makes a little cracky noise
as it goes through that hard icing on the top.

A whole slice this time,

into the mouth.

Oh the icing on top
and the icing in the middle
ohhhhhh oooo mmmmmm.

But now

I can't stop myself.

Knife –

I just take any old slice at it
and I've got this great big chunk
and I'm cramming it in

what a greedy pig
but it's so nice,

and there's another
and another and I'm squealing and I'm smacking my lips
and I'm stuffing myself with it
and
before I know
I've eaten the lot.

The whole lot.
I look at the place.
It's all gone.

Oh no
they're bound to notice, aren't they,
a whole chocolate cake doesn't just disappear
does it?

What shall I do?

I know. I'll wash the plate up,
and the knife

and put them away and maybe no one
will notice, eh?

So I do that
and creep creep creep
back to bed
into bed
doze off
licking my lips
with a lovely feeling in my belly.
Mmmmmmmmmmm.

In the morning I get up,
downstairs,
have breakfast,
Mum's saying,
'Have you got your dinner money?'
and I say,
'Yes.'
'And don't forget to take some chocolate cake with you.'

I stopped breathing.

'What's the matter,' she says,
'you normally jump at chocolate cake?'

I'm still not breathing,
and she's looking at me very closely now.

She's looking at me just below my mouth.

'What's that?' she says.

'What's what?' I say.

'What's that there?'

'Where?'

'There,' she says, pointing at my chin.

'I don't know,' I say.

'It looks like chocolate,' she says.

'It's not chocolate cake is it?'

No answer.

'Is it?'

'I don't know.'

She goes to the cupboard

looks in, up, top, middle, bottom,

turns back to me.

'It's gone.

It's gone.

You haven't eaten it, have you?'

'I don't know.'

'You don't know? You don't know if you've eaten a whole
chocolate cake or not?'

When? When did you eat it?'

So I told her,

and she said

well what could she say?

'That;s the last time I give you any cake to take
to school.

Now go. Get out

no wait

not before you've washed your dirty sticky face.'

I went upstairs

looked in the mirror

and there it was,

just below my mouth,

a chocolate smudge.

The give-away.

Maybe she'll forget about it by next week.

Chocolate Cake taken from *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Quentin Blake (Andrew Deutsch 1983, Puffin 2006). Text © Michael Rosen, 1983. Reproduced by kind permission of Penguin Books Ltd.