

WORDS RHYMES & RHYTHM PUBLISHERS

RHYMES FOR CHILDREN

TOP 30 POEMS OF THE BRIGITTE POIRSON
POETRY CONTEST (BPPC) MARCH 2019



Edited by
BRIGITTE POIRSON
KUKOGHO IRUESIRI SAMSON

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A child is not a vase to be
filled, but a fire to be lit.

– Montaigne 1533–1592

DEDICATION

This chapbook is dedicated to a very special king-kid – *King Ovie Jidenna Kukogho* – as a token of affection and an invitation to follow the regal path of Poetry one day too.

...also to all the children of the world
and their parents.

...and to all who love children.

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PREFACE

Corroborating Montaigne's luminous assertion, that "a child is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit", the March poets have caught the spirit of being a youngster. They have given birth to artistically magical lines to explore the world of children and conjure up the beauties, worries and memories of childhood.

With acute and cute accuracy, some have created sweet, solemn poems, others deliciously playful pieces, and one even offered a riddle whose solution gives the key to a successful infant life. The March poems are to be savoured like true delicacies.

We hope to see you again on Poetry!

– Brigitte Poirson

MARCH 2019 TOP 10 FINALISTS

SLEEP, SLEEP

Otubelu, Chinazom Chukwudi

SHALL WE SWEAR?

Ololade Akinlabi Ige

LIKE BABIES

Emmanuel Faith

'RAIN! RAIN! GO HER WAY

Akinrinade Funminiyi Isaac

TOY DREAMS: A CHILD KNOWS

Ignatius Inyang Abiaobo

JINGLING LETTERS

Yusuff Abdulbasit

THE PLANTING SEASON OF TIME

Daniel Olatunbosun

RIDDLED

Nuratullah Adedoyinsinuola

A LITTLE BOY'S STORY

Seth Bamidele

LITTLE FEEBLE BRITTLE CHILD

Oyedokun Ibukun Penawd

SLEEP, SLEEP

OTUBELU CHINAZOM CHUKWUDI (**MARCH 2019 WINNER**)



Chinazom Otubelu is a Nigerian poet from Anambra State. The engineering graduate of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) has received several literary awards. He has previously won the BPPC three times: February 2018, August 2017, and May 2016, and was runner-up of the 2016 and 2018 editions of the Albert Jungers Poetry Prize (AJPP).

Sleep, sleep, child of the world, sleep!
The tender stars are about to peep.
Close your eyes, snore gently and rest,
Sniffing the warm embers of mummy's breast.
Dream of the sun and dream of the moon,
Dream of tomorrow, of glory and swoon.
Mumble humble prayers with thy infant lips,
For nights shall no more steal the joy of mummy's hips.

Sleep, sleep, child of the world, sleep!
Daddy's sword is about to creep
Beyond the enemy's bloodthirsty shield,
That his glorious victory may yield
Hope of a new dawn upon thy face,
And thy feet shall fare fair in the coming race.
Dream of the future in the mouth of the sky!

Spread thy young wings, flutter and fly!

Sleep, sleep, child of the world, sleep!
The days of despair shall melt and weep
Like soldiers mourning the spoils of war.
The sky shall tremble and the rains shall pour
Streams of living waters to fill thy broken cup.
Dream not of wild dogs, but of a tender, charming pup
Sucking gold trinkets in the stead of blistered bone.
Dream of tomorrow, of raging fire and brimstone!

Sleep, sleep, child of the world, sleep!
Dream big, plan big, grow big!
And let these words of mine mould you into shape!

SHALL WE SWEAR?

LOLOLADE AKINLABI IGE

Shall we swear
by the thin eyes of the moon
that when the then gleaming noon
was buried into the coffin of darkness,
we didn't listen to Granny's tales with raptness?

Shall we swear
by the fragments of the sand
that we didn't fiddle with the sand
in a play with characters of three
beneath the chunky Iroko tree?

Shall we swear
by the multitude drips of the rain
that we didn't hop around in the rain
in our untethered panties and shorts
till we became frigid and shot?

Shall we swear
by the conjugated foams of the mattress
that we didn't desecrate the mattress
with litres of fermented urine
very concentrated like gin?

Shall we swear
by the keen edges of our teeth
that we didn't hurl our teeth
with seven dungs on the rusty roof,
a superstition to sprout teeth without proof?

We all crawled like these babies
before we ripened into men and ladies!

Glossary

Iroko: a species of trees, revered for its physical quality in
Yoruba land

LIKE BABIES

EMMANUEL FAITH

Babies are blazing beams of beauty,
A sizzling scenery to behold
With sparkling smiles, boisterous bounty
And hearty laughter laced with gold.

They yell and scream their thoughts and worry,
Letting their fears out in scares.
In delight, they bounce, hale, hearty.
In pain, they wail to show their fears.

Babies do not die in pretence
Or wear a mask with different shades.
They enjoy life's gift, its full essence
And cry out when they're going through Hades.

Shouldn't we all be little children,
Innocuous, with no restraint?
But we have grown into men and women
Shackled with callous constraint.

Like babies, let us spill out our feelings,
And rejoice and be glad in glee.
In being like a child lies our healing
And resplendent joy that spreads in spree.

RAIN! RAIN! GO HER WAY

AKINRINADE FUNMINIYI ISAAC

When March rain falls
On city walls,
The children play
In dry hay.
Only poor Jane
Stays in the rain.

Like every street tout,
The children shout
With their tongues out:
"Rain! Rain! Go her way,
Call her again, another day!
The rich children want to play".

My little Paul,
Love one, love all.
Like them, don't brawl:
"Rain! Rain! Go her way,
Call her again, another day!
The rich children want to play"

TOY DREAMS: A CHILD KNOWS

IGNATIUS INYANG ABIAOBO

"Every day is a blessing",
a child's heart will always sing,
fresh from the fight at moonlight,
open to the beauty of a new light
which calls lovingly his inner name.

Slowly, days catch up with him,
Yet, he is true to the charms of a little being,
Every second owns a memory,
from mother's breast to calligraphy,
from nursery rhymes to muddy days.

His innocence is sweet and soothing
like fruit cakes ready for serving,
and when his lips say they love you,
his heart is sure to do too,
for a child is as wise as new days.

His prints are as old as the date of life,
a witness to his tint of playful strife
with crayons and building blocks,
water colours and puzzle clocks,
mud and delicious grassy meals.

A child's mind is like sweet music,
oddly flavoured and mildly elastic.
Like a better put stitch in time,
it dances like the fire of fine wine,
seducing every heart to a love bath.

Like toys living in small homes,
dreams take flesh, a child knows.

JINGLING LETTERS

YUSUFF ABDULBASIT

A for Apple, A for Apple!
Missus Rose reads and raps with her wand .
B for Bubble, B for Bubble!
Tiny pebbles tumble in the pond.

C for Cackle, C for Cackle!
A cute, sweet baby tries to laugh too.
D for Dazzle, D for Dazzle!
Six zebras flash their stripes in the zoo.

E for Eagle, E for Eagle!
Will you bring me the moon, strong bird?
J for Jingle, J for Jingle!
A-B-C-D tinkle in my head...

THE PLANTING SEASON OF TIME

DANIEL OLATUNBOSUN

Now is the planting season of time:
when I am young, strong and hopeful.
To cultivate now is for me prime,
for work against time's will is wasteful.

This is the time I should think of the future:
when pace and space are my friends,
not when my pact with strength reaches rupture,
when the beginning begins to end.

The is the time to colour tomorrow,
for she comes bright to those who care.
To avoid regrets charged with sorrow,
I'll face fears others wouldn't dare...

This is the time to buy greatness
with the currency of youthful energy,
learning and working in aptness,
avoiding laziness, fleeing lethargy.

This season has no other kind,
for it is the only season of time.
No other chance will you ever find
but the planting season of time.

RIDDLED

NURATULLAH ADEDOYINSINUOLA

You think I never do, but I think.
Think what I think, so you would not sink.
You sink even when you think you think.
I am the link to minds that are pure.
And to broken hearts, I am the cure.

My lakes can be sorrowful at times.
And my oceans can wipe away frowns.
My valley would help if you don't slew.
In times of gains I do bring the blues.
In times of pains I do come with clues.

My first letter is the first letter
In the third word of the above line.
In the fourth word of this line below,
My rest will solve this riddle better,
As the second, fourth and last letter.

A LITTLE BOY'S STORY

SETH BAMIDELE

Stupid, stupid little brat,
Better off than you, is a rat!
Not a chance that you'll pass,
Said my teacher with a broken eyeglass.

Wasteful, wasteful naughty boy,
Can you do without spoiling a toy?
Always playing around like a clown,
Said my father with a frown.

Lazy-looking little lad, your grades are so poor,
And your stupidity is of amazing grandeur.
A child ought to let his parents get a nice nap!
Said my mother with a scourging slap.

Riding roughly round the park
With my confidence in need of a spark,
I met a creature that made me freeze like ice.
Scary, but it had beautiful, burning, blue eyes.

Sweet and gentle-looking boy, it said,
Why is your face dull and red?
Who has made you look so crappy?
You're the fairest of all and deserve to be happy!

Oh, fair creature, Nature's beauty was my muse!
Silly they think I am, so they starved my pocket
Till I learnt how to properly use a bucket.

Worry not, oh child, twinkle like a star,

Because this is what you really are!
I shall give you intelligence no man has seen
And help you do your chores behind the scene.

LITTLE FEEBLE BRITTLE CHILD

OYEDOKUN IBUKUN PENAWD

Little, little, brittle boy
Crying rhythms to the soil,
Your mind is just so coy!
Let no human make you coil!

Feeble, feeble, fragile girl
Crawling, staying among shirts,
Your soul has made you pearl!
Do not stay down like skirts!

Little, little, gentle lad
Loving solace in the sand,
Your skin can stay unclad!
Let no grown-up make you sad!

Feeble, feeble, fragile lass
Growing, springing at a glance,
Mom and Dad are first in class!
Let them beat before you dance.

Little Feeble Brittle Child
Having worries by the side,
Growing up might not be mild:
You just have to flip the slide!

REMINISCENCE

EDAKI TIMOTHY

I remember when I was but a boy
And I thought the world was just a toy,
So we carved a train of happiness and joy,
I and my young friend, Roy.

Then I always wondered how I was born.
Did I come in the stars or fall from the sun?
Did I smile excitedly or wear a look that said forlorn?
Did I come with a crown or maybe two little horns?

I remember when pain became my only friend
And loneliness the sole one that would lend.
Only mother knew how my soul to bend
Into shapes that made it easy to mend.

When life threw at me its hardest brick
And joy was a hard pill to lick,
Sister was the one who through the storm would pick
A little child and set him straight with a gentle kick.

Childhood was an art that weaned me to strength
Of a young man with knowledge of life's depth,
Of its ups and downs, highs and lows, doubt and creed,
And how a great tree begins with a deeply sown seed.

THE LAST BIT

BETIKU AYOKUNLE SAMUEL

Smirks, laughter, sniggers and giggles.
Tense nerves, wide eyes staring at a riddle.

For the umpteenth time, Aunty yells again,
"Simplify this simple sum! Have you no brain?"

Eyes screwed in another effort to solve the sum;
The problem sits still. Unyielding. Burdensome.

Am I to multiply the problem or add to it?
To subtract from it also seems so fit.

White nemesis in hand, raised to the board.
Slow, sluggish, tense scribblings. The pupils get bored.

Aunty gets bored too. Swift cane strokes kiss my back.
Smirks, sniggers and giggles...and another crack.

I scream. Crying. Sniffing. I admit,
"Aunty...Aunty...I don't know it."

I writhe as furious Aunty wields the whip again.
The last bit of love for sums dissolves in the pain.

I SEE

IZUCHUKWU SAVIOUR OTUBELU

I see the birds up in the sky.
I wish I were a bird to fly so high.
I see palm trees dancing in the breeze.
I wish I were the snow to make them freeze.

I see the mice sleeping in the sun.
I wish I were a cat to make them run.
I see grandpa's wall clock strike five o'clock.
I wish I were a clock to go tick tock.

I see the teacher's cane striking me bare.
I wish I were grown up, as free as air.
I see an injured girl crying in the rain.
I wish I were a doctor to soothe her pain.

I see the antelopes running uptown.
I wish I were a hunter to shoot them down.
I see two boys fighting atop a hill.
I wish I were God to make the world still.

I see my daddy riding on his bike.
I wish I were at the beach with my friend Mike.
I see my mummy cooking in the heat.
"No more wishes, little one, it's time to eat!"

COW THAT HAS NO TAIL (OCTAVE)

MCCOY MAJOR GOLDING

Let sleeping children have no fear and find no need to
doubt,
For every time, as they sleep, Angels do guard their beds.
In the midst of night, when the darkest spirits are out,
They shall not near the room and never lay hand on the
feeble heads,
For God, whose eyes' apples are the children, will always
care for them;
And when they need a hand or want to pray, the Lord is
with them,
He, the guide and guard of kids, their hope that never
fails,
God is always there to care for the cows that own no
tails...

AS I GROW

ANUOLUWA SONEYE OLUSEGUN

I am a little teapot
Held fragile by the handle.
I am a little teapot,
Mama's cute damsel.

I am little Jack or Jill
Happy hopping up the hill,
Hurrying home, papa to see,
Hurray, on the laps of mama be.

I am Mary's little lamb
turned blah blah black sheep,
The shade of a kid
Plagued by his father's whip.

Sometimes,
I pray death to be born again
Into a home of twinkling stars.
Let this pain go away!
Little me wants to play.

TODDLERS

AYINDE OLUWATOBI STEPHEN

To, To, To Toddlers,
The ones who babel out words with love.
The ones who don't take a grudge like us.
The ones whose smiles open a thousand doors!

To, To, To Toddlers,
The ones who give with all innocence.
The ones whose minds are filled with no nonsense.
The ones who are tabula rasa!

To, To, To Toddlers,
The ones whose skins are soft like cotton balls.
The ones whose eyes show a glitter of hope.
The ones who bring joy to an abandoned world!

PETER CLOWN

KOLAWOLE SAMAD ENIFENI

He came to the farmland of Thorn,
Peter Clown, and ate all his corn.
Master Thorn said no;
His wife hurt a toe.
Peter Clown was left but to turn.

And in the humble home of Sloke,
Peter Clown, he cracked his joke.
Sloke laughed his heart off,
And blew his nose off,
And the dirt did make Sloke to choke.

The police found him a judge.
Peter Clown, he did want to dodge.
He smashed up a glass,
And tore off a gas.
The police stormed out from the lodge.

In the town, the same story went
Of a man impeached: what an event!
The town had a stick,
Peter had a trick,
And the town was made to lament.

To a church he surely did go.
Peter clown tried a trick to show.
He rang up a bell,
And blinked eyes in cell.
The police caught up with him though.

SON-NET FOR A CHILD

TEMIDAYO OPEYEMI JACOB

A child is at heart a diamond
that can't be found just anywhere—
not even in the world beyond—
This makes him a wonder so rare.

He is young, with a snappy mind
created with seeds of greatness.
His brightness is one of a kind.
The face of the sun is a witness.

He's a stone that can't be broken—
not even love or hatred can break it.
His strength can't be left unspoken
as he gives it to kings who need it.

Only a lunatic won't want to own
the ideal beauty of this gemstone.

THE NIGHTMARES OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

KOLADE MALIK ADEMOLA

I was always wanting under our baobab trees
Where kids from other homes listened to my father's
stories,
For mother would have sat me in a corner of her room
Telling me how father played Bimpe's strings to his doom.

Every dawn, we woke up to the chaos of morning,
Father spewed and mother's silence nursed his mourning.
Whips lashed my back, father's only way of forewarning
About the farm if it wasn't tilted before the day became
sunny.

In my pastime, I tried to enjoy the cadence of silence,
Slit my wrist to see if I could strike a balance
Between living, leaving and treating father with deference,
But father's indifference threw me into convalescence.

My father's house brought my childhood a plethora of
feeling.
Every night, rather than lullaby lulling me to slumbering,
I counted repetitively to sleep the lines on the barn's ceiling.

/page breaks/

But today, with adulthood, the banes have become
histories
As they no longer haunt me. Neither is father the sceneries
Of the nightmares of my childhood memories.

KITE AMBITION

HUSSANI ABDULRAHIM

Nostalgia stinks at the feet of the man
who did not sow to soil a careful plan.
Now he gazes at the sky
and wonders where rainbows lie.

He still dreams a lot, this man,
of a boy in a little clan,
whose ambition floundered like his kite.
He flew, flew, and reached the mountain's height.

Suddenly, things lost their allure.
The stream could no longer match his thirst.
Dishes of mother he failed to savour.
Dreams of a distant land he nursed.

I wish to tread new lands,
I wish to hold new hands;
I've got a plan in my head.
I yearn for my own bread.

But strange lands are citadels of uncertainties;
Feet are prone to dry wells or slip into fall-pits.

He said, "I'll go and be a man."
Indeed, he did become a man:
he found the sun's nasty heat
and homesickness in his heartbeat.

Nostalgia stinks at the feet of this man
who did not sow to soil a careful plan.

Now he gazes at the sky
and wonders where rainbows lie.

TAKE THE TRUTH

AKOR AGADA NATHANIEL

The day I cried
Was when I lied
To that poor child.

Calling him a dullard,
Acting like a lizard,
Was indeed a hazard.

Please let him know
Of a better tomorrow
When he will grow

And take his place
With poise and grace,
Winning in life's race.

Please tell little Amanda
She can become Chimamanda
By being a reader.

SCHOOLING MY LITTLE GIRL IN RHYME

OTHUKE UMIKORO

pumpkin, remember life is math
& we are languages in many spellings.
everyone is a star baked with feelings.
people are rivers
running through each other: like silvers
they are all precious & equal from birth.

remember, giving is how we unburden
the world; it's how we deactivate her fears
& make her laugh for many rosy years;
know that there are days you will fall
but like dust, rise; like the iroko, stand tall!
for victory sweet is never sudden.

LITTLE JOHN

ADIE LAWRENCE AGBOH

Morning bells ring out loud.
Night-time hears and goes away.
Little John gives a frown
Then rises like a snail.

Mother chides him into tears.
Breakfast time wipes them off.
John will stay for mother's care.
Father says: "delay no more".

Trees retreat on each side.
Clouds follow from above.
Little John wants to cry.
Soon he smiles like the sun.

"I'll be back to take you home.
"Goodbye, son, we'll meet again"
"Goodbye, dad, soon take me home!"
Little John does weep again.

WAITING FOR BLOOM DAY

WISDOM NEMI OTIKOR

Little bird, little bird
Wondering when to take flight,

Little bird, little bird
Waiting for the time to be right,

Do not sit still and cry,
Do not hide or remain shy!

Grow like a bud into a flower,
Glow till your sparks none can overpower!

Little bird, little bird,
Your wings surely will take flight
When the time is truly right.

ACCOUNTABILITY

OLUWA SEUN TIWISTAR

There is a reality called accountability.
I talk of the account of how you use your ability.
There are abilities you're going to account for.
It may be one, two, three or four...

If it's sleeping, wake it!
If it's cold, apply heat!
If it's crawling, paddle up!
For even a lame man can reach the mountain top.

Your ability has the ability to bless
And to give peace to the oppressed.
Your ability can sting dead minds better than a scorpion.
It can earn from the world a standing ovation.

So dig, dig, dig, till you see water all around!
Till, till, till, till you see water all around!
The seed are there waiting to sprout.
Just till, till, till, till you see water all around!

Those who think they have zero ability
Are the ones usually embedded with hero abilities
So, dig, dig, dig with agility!
Remember, there's a reality called accountability.

WEEP NOT MY LITTLE CHILD

BLESSING OMEIZA OJO

(Verse)

Mum cares not for your existence.
Not even the shadow of your essence
could make her stay with you
when your lives were in waterloo.

(Chorus)

Weep not, oh, my little child,
even though mother has gone wild.
In time, your worries will be exiled.

(Verse)

Lie on my warm back
and peace of mind, you'll never lack.
Hold on to my counsel
and you'll walk unharmed through the aisle.

(Chorus)

Weep not, oh, my little child,
even though mother has gone wild.
In time, your worries will be exiled.

STRIVING TO THREAD THE PATH OF CHILDHOOD AGAIN

OJO ADEWALE IYANDA

In my father's house where yesterday lives,
A pleasant tale on the lips of its air is childhood.
Can I escape through the window of Adulthood?
Maturity has jingled me over; I have been deceived.

I miss the memories bottled in my father's passage,
The sincere joy kept under the skirt of a new day,
The guided freedom I enjoyed under his steps,
The beautiful grief I wore when his stripes my back pepped.

I savour the souvenir of my walking on my knees,
When I hid under the shadow of father's mountainous
valley.
Now, I have lost peace on the thighs of adulthood: a dance
of shame,
Slurring groans my witness: I live in chains.

I want to go back to my father's court,
A country dedicated to white thoughts
Where tough people melt under sincere smiles,
Where children sing songs of hope amidst shattered dreams,

Where I was baptised into the realm of possibility
By swearing with my father's balls,
Where I would be drooling in praise with sumptuous
scores.
Will these melodious memories again be my reality?

In my father's house,

Tear-soaked cheeks are brightened by the sun of love,
Filthy bodies are clothed with a wrapper of endurance
Darkened souls are immersed in showers of light,
Broken spirits are healed in His rest.
But are we ready to tread the path of childhood again?

STRANGERS & I

SHEHU ABDUS-SALAM ALADODO

Do not be free with strangers,
with strangers,
with strangers.
Do not be free with strangers.
Proceed with caution.

They might demand seclusion,
seclusion, seclusion.
They might demand seclusion.
Employ discretion.

They might demand to hug you,
to hug you,
to hug you.
They might demand to hug you.
Decline with a smile.

They might demand to peck you,
to peck you,
to peck you.
They might demand to peck you.
Spurn with a grin.

They might demand to touch you,
to touch you,
to touch you.
They might demand to touch you,
Repulse with a smirk.

Do not be free with strangers,

with strangers,
with strangers.
Do not be free with strangers,
Proceed with caution.

SONG OF HOPE: FOR SUFFERING CHILDREN

IZANG ALEXANDER

Like a flame on a burning candle,
Let your soul with hope be kindled,
Sing to your broken heart some hymn,
Lift it up to court veiled by the seraphim!

The days do seem darker than night.
Soon shall the Daystar shed his light.
Bored and encircled are you by gloom.
Look up, the birds sing of coming bloom!

Lifeless does life lie like some dry bone.
Friendless, forlorn, lonely and alone...
Cheer up, take heart and weave a smile!
The nectar of grace shall wipe the bile!

For life's journey is ascent to a pyramid,
Full of risings and fallings like David.
But because you're souls after God's heart,
Singing the Psalm of hope must be the art.

RHYMES FOR CHILDREN

ADESOKAN TOSIN OLAIDE

Not for children,
The pangs and humiliation!
Let them be fearless with a pen,
Even when they are given a simple composition!

Play with children; don't let them feel sad.
Tell them to be snappy
After doing something bad.
Give nothing to them, but let them be happy.

Tell the children about realities.
When they have work, tell them not to play.
Give them the right mentalities.
Show them the heavenly way.

Scold the children when they are wrong.
Call them later and show them their flaws.
Teach them how to be strong
Whenever they see animals with claws.

Sing to them rhymes for children.
They deserve nothing but the best.
Let them go and play with Uncle Ben.
Let them feel like the rest.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this chapbook.

The [Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest \(BPPC\)](#) is a monthly writing contest aimed at rewarding the under-appreciated talent of young nigerian poets. It was instituted in February 2015 in honor of [Brigitte Poirson](#), a French poet, editor, and lecturer, who has over the years worked assiduously to promote and support of African poetry. You too can be a part of the BPPC initiative by [entering your poems for any of the monthly editions](#).

Also note that any writer can have their works published on our platforms by simply [REGISTERING HERE](#) and submitting entries. We receive fiction (short stories) for [GRIOTS](#), poetry for [WRR POETRY](#) and non-fiction (essays on writing, book reviews, interviews with other witters, etc.) for [AUTHORPEDIA](#).

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