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**Classic Poems**  
— for —

**Girls**

Read by  
**Roy McMillan • Laura Paton**  
**Anne-Marie Piazza**  
and **Benjamin Soames**

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|----|--|------|
| 1  | The Lobster Quadrille<br><i>Lewis Carroll, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>                                     | 2:03 |
| 2  | To the Looking-Glass World it was Alice that Said<br><i>Lewis Carroll, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>         | 1:10 |
| 3  | How doth the Little Crocodile<br><i>Lewis Carroll, read by Roy McMillan</i>                                  | 0:28 |
| 4  | The Owl and the Pussycat<br><i>Edward Lear, read by Roy McMillan</i>   | 1:35 |
| 5  | The Nutcrackers and the Sugar Tongs<br><i>Edward Lear, read by Benjamin Soames</i>                           | 3:00 |
| 6  | The Quangle Wangle's Hat<br><i>Edward Lear, read by Benjamin Soames</i>                                      | 2:16 |
| 7  | The Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo<br><i>Edward Lear, read by Roy McMillan</i>   | 5:03 |
| 8  | The Jumblies<br><i>Edward Lear, read by Roy McMillan</i>   | 4:16 |
| 9  | The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and her Dog<br><i>Sarah Catherine Martin, read by Laura Paton</i> | 2:12 |
| 10 | Matilda<br><i>Hilaire Belloc, read by Laura Paton</i>  | 2:08 |
| 11 | A Guinea Pig Song<br><i>Anonymous, read by Laura Paton</i>   | 0:48 |

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| 12 | Two Little Kittens<br><i>Anonymous, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>                    | 1:20 |
| 13 | Eletelephony<br><i>Laura Richards, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>                     | 0:55 |
| 14 | A Good Play<br><i>Robert Louis Stevenson, read by Laura Paton</i>                    | 0:48 |
| 15 | The Rock and the Bubble<br><i>Louisa May Alcott, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>       | 2:53 |
| 16 | Bed in Summer<br><i>Robert Louis Stevenson, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>            | 0:37 |
| 17 | The Star<br><i>Jane Taylor, read by Laura Paton</i>                                  | 1:25 |
| 18 | Weathers<br><i>Thomas Hardy, read by Roy McMillan</i>                                | 1:08 |
| 19 | There was a Little Girl<br><i>Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, read by Laura Paton</i>    | 0:47 |
| 20 | The Spider and the Fly<br><i>Mary Howitt, read by Laura Paton</i>                    | 3:54 |
| 21 | A Tragedy in Rhyme<br><i>Oliver Herford, read by Roy McMillan</i>                    | 2:18 |
| 22 | A Rose has Thorns as well as Honey<br><i>Christina Rossetti, read by Laura Paton</i> | 1:28 |

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|    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 23 | A Birthday<br><i>Christina Rossetti, read by Laura Paton</i>                            | 0:56 |
| 24 | Flint<br><i>Christina Rossetti, read by Laura Paton</i>                                 | 0:33 |
| 25 | Daffodils<br><i>William Wordsworth, read by Benjamin Soames</i>                         | 1:21 |
| 26 | To Mrs Reynold's Cat<br><i>John Keats, read by Roy McMillan</i>                         | 1:04 |
| 27 | Old Meg<br><i>John Keats, read by Laura Paton</i>                                       | 1:40 |
| 28 | A Light Exists in Spring<br><i>Emily Dickinson, read by Anne-Marie Piazza</i>           | 1:06 |
| 29 | The Tyger<br><i>William Blake, read by Roy McMillan</i>                                 | 1:29 |
| 30 | Annabel Lee<br><i>Edgar Allan Poe, read by Roy McMillan</i>                             | 2:58 |
| 31 | The Passionate Shepherd to His Love<br><i>Christopher Marlowe, read by Roy McMillan</i> | 1:24 |
| 32 | The Lady of Shalott<br><i>Alfred Lord Tennyson, read by Laura Paton</i>                 | 7:49 |
| 33 | A Red Red Rose<br><i>Robert Burns, read by Roy McMillan</i>                             | 1:34 |

**Total time: 64:45**

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# Classic Poems — for — Girls

A good poem is a wonderful thing. Like a favourite story, it can take you to new places, fuel your imagination, make you think and make you laugh. Whether short or long, straightforward or nonsensical, rhyming or unstructured, a poem can affect you in many different ways.

Poetry is a form of art, a very *old* form of art, in fact. Many people believe that the first poems were spoken aloud ('recited') or sung. They were used as parts of religious ceremonies, to bring luck, and to keep a record of important historical events.

On this recording is a selection of classic poems, all of which have been read for many years – centuries even – and are still enjoyed today. Hopefully you'll like them too. They cover many different subjects, from the daring escape of a

nutcracker and a pair of sugar-tongs, to a lost bride, to a medieval curse. Listen to the rhythm of the poems and where the beats are placed: this is why poetry is best read aloud. A great reader brings the words to life, and can inspire you to consider the poem in a different light.

It's fun to imagine these poets reading their own words aloud as they wrote, trying to make sure they used language that would entertain, make you sad, surprised – any feeling you can think of. When the right words are used in the right combination, the effects can be magical.

Two poets who really knew how to combine words to fantastic effect were Lewis Carroll (1832–1898) and Edward Lear (1812–1888). They were both writing in the nineteenth century, and both wrote nonsense verse. If you love the sound of

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made-up words and funny phrases (perhaps you're a fan of *Alice in Wonderland*), the chances are that you'll like *The Lobster Quadrille* (Lewis Carroll) and *The Nutcracker and the Sugar-Tongs* (Edward Lear). Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear liked to imagine how animals and objects would behave if they could talk, laugh and argue, like we do. Here is the fifth verse of *The Nutcracker and the Sugar-Tongs*:

The Frying-pan said, 'It's an awful delusion!'  
The Tea-kettle hissed and grew black in the face;  
And they all rushed downstairs in the wildest confusion,  
To see the great Nutcracker-Sugar-tong race.  
And out of the stable, with screamings and laughter,  
(Their ponies were cream-coloured, speckled with brown,)  
The Nutcrackers first, and the Sugar-tongs after,  
Rode all round the yard, and then all round the town.

These eight lines are a great example of how the pace of a poem can fit together really well with the story it's telling. Here, we're galloping along, carried by clever, quick rhymes, just before the nutcracker and the sugar-tongs quickly jump onto two ponies and ride off into the distance!

Another poem in which the poet brings unusual objects to life is *The Rock and the Bubble*, by Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888), the American writer best known for *Little Women*. Here, a headstrong bubble refuses to move out of the way of a great rock. You can probably guess what's going to happen! It's a poem with a moral: stubbornness doesn't help you in the end. But more interesting than the moral is the way that the poet manages to craft a really convincing conversation within the constraints of the rhyme scheme.

This rhyme scheme is quite traditional: the second and fourth lines of each verse rhyme, as in *The Nutcracker and the Sugar-tongs*. In *The Rock and the Bubble* though, each verse is just four lines long, so you might think that the conversation between the rock and the bubble

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wouldn't flow very well with so many breaks. But by keeping the rhymes simple and clear, Alcott makes the conversation seem natural:

'Now, make way, make way;  
For the waves are strong,  
And their rippling feet  
Bear me fast along.'

But the great rock stood  
Straight up in the sea:  
It looked gravely down,  
And said pleasantly –

'Little friend, you must  
Go some other way;  
For I have not stirred  
This many a long day.'

Many of the poems in this collection call to mind beautiful images. Christina Rossetti (1830–1894), the nineteenth-century poet who wrote a lot of romantic poetry (as well as the poem *In the Bleak Midwinter*, on which the famous Christmas carol is based), was inspired by the natural world around her. This comes

across in many of her poems, including *A Rose has Thorns as well as Honey*. From the title, you can tell that there's a deeper meaning to the poem. A rose is beautiful, but it also has a deadly side. And the names of certain flowers can make you feel differently about them as well:

A wind-flower suggests a sigh;  
Love-lies-bleeding makes me sad;  
And poppy-juice would drive me mad

In the end, it is holly, 'bold and jolly', that brings the poet happiness. Perhaps it's because holly has nothing to hide.

Just as you might be inspired to write a poem after listening to this recording, all the poets here have been inspired by other writers who were producing works long before them. Fairy-tales, gothic literature (writing which often focused on horror, romance and fancy), mythology – all have provided inspiration. In this way, poetry enables some of the most amazing stories of the past to live on and be enjoyed by us, our children, and even our children's children.

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*The Lady of Shalott* by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), is the penultimate poem in this collection. It was inspired by the medieval legend of Elaine of Astolat, a woman who fell in love with Lancelot, one of the Knights of the Round Table. In the poem, the lady of Shalott has been put under a curse that means she must stay locked in a tower and never look out of the window at the outside world. She can only look in a mirror. However, in the thirteenth verse:

Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

She has seen Lancelot in her mirror, looked out of the window to find him, and must now die. It's a beautiful poem, and it inspired John William Waterhouse's painting, also named *The Lady of Shalott*. This hangs in the Tate gallery in London. You could listen to the poem and then go to see the painting, or look it up!

At nineteen nine-line verses, *The Lady of Shalott* is the longest poem in this

collection, but it's worth listening to all the way through: like all the poems here, it's been chosen for the way in which the poet uses language to such exciting effect. This really comes across when the poems are read aloud. I hope you agree when you've heard this recording!

### **Notes by Frances Taffinder**





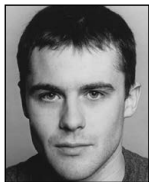
**Roy McMillan** is a director, writer, actor and abridger. For Naxos AudioBooks he has read *The Body Snatcher and Other Stories*, *Bulldog Drummond*, *The French Revolution – In a Nutshell*, *Cathedrals – In a Nutshell* and the introductions to works by Nietzsche and the ancient Greeks. He has directed readings of Hardy, Hopkins, Kipling, Milton and Blake; Austen, Murakami, Conrad and Bulgakov, among many others; and has written podcasts and sleevenotes, as well as biographies of Milton and Poe. He has also directed plays for BBC Radio 3 and 4.



**Laura Paton** trained at LAMDA where she won the St Phillip's Prize for Poetry and the Michael Warre Award. She has toured the UK extensively in productions as varied as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. Other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks include *Orlando*, *Anna Karenina* and *Grimms' Fairy Tales*.



**Anne-Marie Piazza** graduated from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in 2008, having played Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Doris, Diana and Isabel in *The American Clock*. Other theatre roles include Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* (Durham Castle) and Kate in *Kiss Me Kate* (Gala Theatre). She has also appeared in the National Youth Theatre and Kneehigh's *Hanging Around*. Her work for BBC Radio 4 includes *The Archers* and the plays *I Believe I Have Genius* and *The Day They Wouldn't Take it Anymore*.



**Benjamin Soames** trained at LAMDA. He appeared in the popular TV series *Sharpe* and toured worldwide in the acclaimed Cheek by Jowl production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, directed by Declan Donnellan. He has read *The Tale of Troy*, *The Adventures of Odysseus*, *More Tales from the Greek Legends*, *Great Rulers of Ancient Rome*, *Stories from Shakespeare: The Plantagenets* and featured in *From Shakespeare – with love* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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## Credits

Poems compiled by Frances Taffinder  
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London  
Edited and mastered by Sarah Butcher

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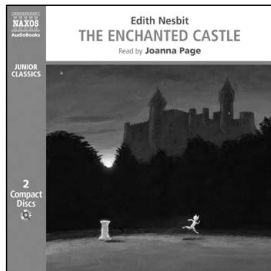
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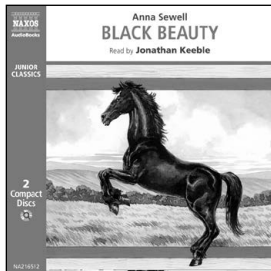
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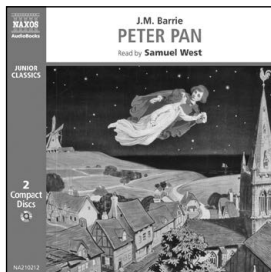
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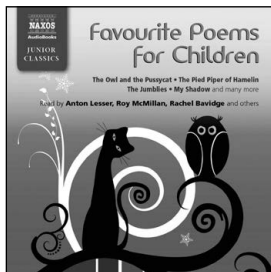
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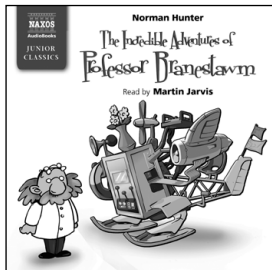
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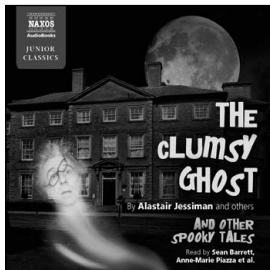
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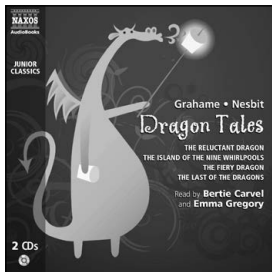
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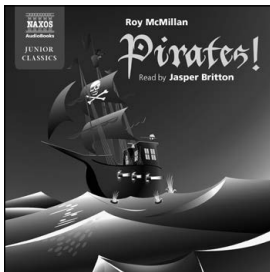
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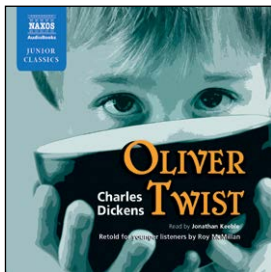
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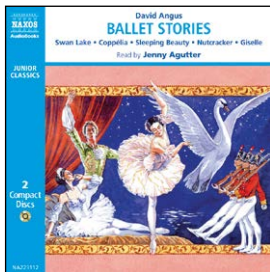
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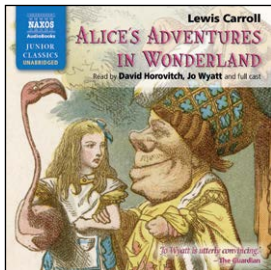
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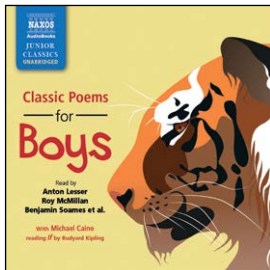
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# Classic Poems — for — Girls

By **Lewis Carroll • John Keats • Christina Rossetti et al.**


Read by **Roy McMillan • Laura Paton • Anne-Marie Piazza  
and Benjamin Soames**

*Classic Poems for Girls* is a collection of over 25 funny, whimsical and moving poems for 5–10-year olds, designed to fuel the imagination. From the adventures of the Jumblies, who sail away in a sieve, to the sticky end of a girl named Matilda, to the courtship of a maiden who lived long ago in a kingdom by the sea, there's a poem to suit any feeling or mood. Seasoned Naxos AudioBooks readers Roy McMillan, Laura Paton, Anne-Marie Piazza, and Benjamin Soames work their magic on the works of Edward Lear, Louisa May Alcott, Christina Rossetti and many more.

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