

# When We Were Very Young



A.A. Milne  
*with the original  
illustrations by E.H. Shepard, in colour*

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to  
*Christopher Robin Milne*  
Or, as he prefers to call himself,  
**Billy Moon**  
this book  
which owes so much to him  
is now  
humbly offered





## JUST BEFORE WE BEGIN

At one time (but I have changed my mind now) I thought I was going to write a little Note at the top of each of these poems, in the manner of Mr William Wordsworth, who liked to tell his readers where he was staying, and which of his friends he was walking with, and what he was thinking about, when the idea of writing his poem came to him. You will find some lines about a swan here, if you get as far as that, and I should have explained to you in the Note that Christopher Robin, who feeds this swan in the mornings, has given him the name of 'Pooh'. This is a very fine name for a swan, because, if you call him and he doesn't come (which is a thing swans are good at), then you can pretend that you were just saying 'Pooh!' to show how little you wanted him. Well, I should have told you that there are six cows who come down to Pooh's lake every afternoon to drink, and of course they say 'Moo' as they come. So I thought to myself one fine day, walking with my friend Christopher Robin, 'Moo rhymes with Pooh! Surely there is a bit of poetry to be got out of that?' Well, then, I began to think about the swan on his lake; and at first I thought how lucky it was that his name was Pooh; and then I didn't think about that any more . . . and the poem came quite differently from what I intended . . . and all I can say for it now is that, if it

hadn't been for Christopher Robin, I shouldn't have written it; which, indeed, is all I can say for any of the others. So this is why these verses go about together, because they are all friends of Christopher Robin; and if I left out one because it was not quite like the one before, then I should have to leave out the one before because it was not quite like the next, which would be disappointing for them.

Then there is another thing. You may wonder sometimes who is supposed to be saying the verses. Is it the Author, that strange but uninteresting person, or is it Christopher Robin, or some other boy or girl, or Nurse, or Hoo? If I had followed Mr Wordsworth's plan, I could have explained this each time; as it is, you will have to decide for yourselves. If you are not quite sure, then it is probably Hoo. I don't know if you have ever met Hoo, but he is one of those curious children who look four on Monday, and eight on Tuesday, and are really twenty-eight on Saturday; and you never know whether it is the day when he can pronounce his 'r's'. He had a great deal to do with these verses. In fact, you might almost say that this book is entirely the unaided work of Christopher Robin, Hoo, and Mr Shepard, who drew the pictures. They have said 'Thank you' politely to each other several times, and now they say it to you for taking them into your house. 'Thank you so much for asking us. We've come.'

A. A. M.

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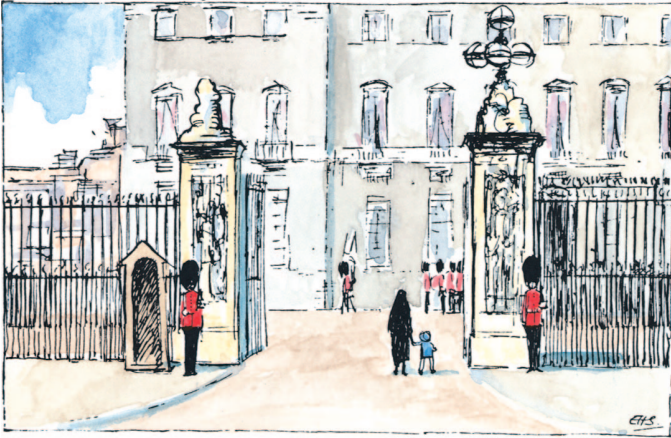


## CORNER-OF-THE-STREET



Down by the corner of the street,  
Where the three roads meet,  
And the feet  
Of the people as they pass go 'Tweet-tweet-tweet',  
Who comes tripping round the corner of the street?  
One pair of shoes which are Nurse's;  
One pair of slippers which are Percy's . . .  
Tweet! Tweet! Tweet!

# BUCKINGHAM PALACE



They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
Alice is marrying one of the guard.  
'A soldier's life is terrible hard,'

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
We saw a guard in a sentry-box.  
'One of the sergeants looks after their socks,'

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
We looked for the King, but he never came.  
'Well, God take care of him, all the same,'

Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
They've great big parties inside the grounds.  
'I wouldn't be King for a hundred pounds,'  
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
A face looked out, but it wasn't the King's.  
'He's much too busy a-signing things,'  
Says Alice.

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace –  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
'Do you think the King knows all about *me*?'  
'Sure to, dear, but it's time for tea,'  
Says Alice.



# HAPPINESS



John had  
Great Big  
Waterproof  
Boots on;  
John had a  
Great Big  
Waterproof  
Hat;  
John had a  
Great Big  
Waterproof  
Mackintosh –  
And that  
(Said John)  
Is  
That.



# THE CHRISTENING



What shall I call  
My dear little dormouse?  
His eyes are small,  
But his tail is e-nor-mouse.

I sometimes call him Terrible John,  
'Cos his tail goes on –  
And on –  
And on.  
And I sometimes call him Terrible Jack,  
'Cos his tail goes on to the end of his back.  
And I sometimes call him Terrible James,  
'Cos he says he likes me calling him names. . . .

But I think I shall call him Jim,  
'Cos I *am* fond of him.

## PUPPY AND I



I met a Man as I went walking;  
We got talking,  
Man and I.  
'Where are you going to, Man?' I said  
(I said to the Man as he went by).  
'Down to the village, to get some bread.  
Will you come with me?' 'No, not I.'

I met a Horse as I went walking;  
We got talking,  
Horse and I.  
'Where are you going to, Horse, to-day?'  
(I said to the Horse as he went by).  
'Down to the village to get some hay.  
Will you come with me?' 'No, not I.'



I met a Woman as I went walking;  
We got talking,  
Woman and I.  
'Where are you going to, Woman, so early?'  
(I said to the Woman as she went by).  
'Down to the village to get some barley.  
Will you come with me?' 'No, not I.'



I met some Rabbits as I went walking;  
We got talking,  
Rabbits and I.  
'Where are you going in your brown fur coats?'  
(I said to the Rabbits as they went by).  
'Down to the village to get some oats.  
Will you come with us?' 'No, not I.'



I met a Puppy as I went walking;  
We got talking,  
Puppy and I.  
'Where are you going this nice fine day?'  
(I said to the Puppy as he went by).  
'Up in the hills to roll and play.'  
'I'll come with you, Puppy,' said I.



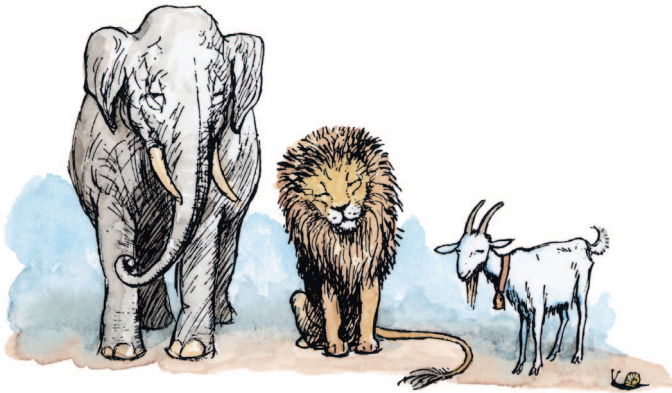


# TWINKLETOES



When the sun  
Shines through the leaves of the apple-tree,  
When the sun  
Makes shadows of the leaves of the apple-tree,  
Then I pass  
On the grass  
From one leaf to another  
From one leaf to its brother  
Tip-toe, tip-toe!  
Here I go!

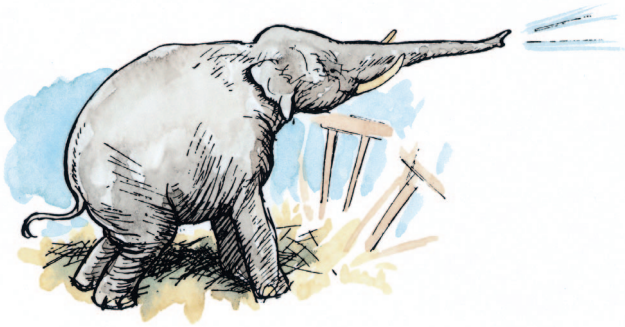
# THE FOUR FRIENDS



Ernest was an elephant, a great big fellow,  
Leonard was a lion with a six-foot tail,  
George was a goat, and his beard was yellow,  
And James was a very small snail.

Leonard had a stall, and a great big strong one,  
Ernest had a manger, and its walls were thick,  
George found a pen, but I think it was the wrong one,  
And James sat down on a brick.





Ernest started trumpeting, and cracked his manger,  
Leonard started roaring, and shivered his stall,  
James gave the huffle of a snail in danger  
And nobody heard him at all.

Ernest started trumpeting and raised such a rumpus,  
Leonard started roaring and trying to kick,  
James went a journey with the goat's new compass  
And he reached the end of his brick.

Ernest was an elephant and very well-intentioned,  
Leonard was a lion with a brave new tail,  
George was a goat, as I think I have mentioned,  
But James was only a snail.



## LINES AND SQUARES



Whenever I walk in a London street,  
I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;  
And I keep in the squares,  
And the masses of bears,  
Who wait at the corners all ready to eat  
The sillies who tread on the lines in the street,  
Go back to their lairs,  
And I say to them, 'Bears,  
Just look how I'm walking in all of the squares!'

