

THE  
BEST LOVED POEMS  
*of*

James Whitcomb Riley

With Illustrations by  
ETHEL FRANKLIN BETTS



BLUE RIBBON BOOKS  
NEW YORK

**THE BEST LOVED POEMS  
OF JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY**



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1887, 1888, 1890, 1892, 1893, 1896, 1898, 1902, 1903, 1904 and 1906  
by

James Whitcomb Riley

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**To**

***The Children of The Old Times and of These***

***With changeless love***





## *WHILE THE HEART BEATS YOUNG*

*W*HILE the heart beats young!—O the  
splendor of the Spring,  
With all her dewy jewels on, is not so fair a  
thing!

*The fairest, rarest morning of the blossom-time  
of May*

*Is not so sweet a season as the season of to-day  
While Youth's diviner climate folds and holds us,  
close caressed,*

*As we feel our mothers with us by the touch of  
face and breast;—*

*Our bare feet in the meadows, and our fancies  
up among*

*The airy clouds of morning—while the heart  
beats young.*

*While the heart beats young and our pulses leap  
and dance,*

*With every day a holiday and life a glad  
romance,—*

*We hear the birds with wonder, and with wonder  
watch their flight—*

*Standing still the more enchanted, both of  
hearing and of sight,*





*When they have vanished wholly,—for, in fancy,  
wing-to-wing  
We fly to Heaven with them; and, returning,  
still we sing  
The praises of this lower Heaven with tireless  
voice and tongue,  
Even as the Master sanctions—while the heart  
beats young.*

*While the heart beats young!—While the heart  
beats young!  
O green and gold old Earth of ours, with azure  
overhung  
And looped with rainbows!—grant us yet this  
grassy lap of thine—  
We would be still thy children, through the shower  
and the shine!  
So pray we, lisping, whispering, in childish love  
and trust,  
With our beseeching hands and faces lifted from  
the dust  
By fervor of the poem, all unwritten and unsung,  
Thou givest us in answer, while the heart beats  
young.*



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