

A Make-Believe *(an excerpt)*

I will think as thinks the rabbit: –

Oh, delight
In the night
When the moon
Sets the tune
To the woods!
And the broods
All run out,
Frisk about,
Go and come,
Beat the drum –
Here in groups,
There in troops!
Now there's one!
Now it's gone!
There are none!

And now they are dancing like chaff!
I look, and I laugh,
But sit by my door, and keep to my habit –
A wise, respectable, clean-furred old
rabbit!

Now I'm going,
Business calls me out–
Going, going,
Very knowing,
Slow, long-heeled, and stout,
Loping, lumbering,
Nipping, numbering,
Head on this side and on that,
Along the pathway footed flat,
Through the meadow, through the heather,
Through the rich dusky weather –
Big stars and little moon!

I, the king the rest call Mappy,
Canter on, composed and happy,
Till I come where there is plenty
For a varied meal and dainty.

Is it cabbage, I grab it;
Is it parsley, I nab it;
Is it carrot, I mar it;
The turnip I turn up
And hollow and swallow;
A lettuce? Let us eat it!
A beetroot? Let's beat it!
If you are juicy,
Sweet sir, I will use you!
For all kinds of corn-crop
I have a born crop!

Are you a green top?
You shall be gleaned up!
Sucking and feazing,
Crushing and squeezing
All that is feathery,
Crisp, not leathery,
Juicy and bruisy –
All comes proper
To my little hopper
Still on the dance,
Driven by hunger and drouth!

All is welcome to my crunching,
Finding, grinding,
Milling, munching,
Gobbling, lurching,
Fore-toothed, three-lipped mouth –
Eating side way, round way, flat way,
Eating this way, eating that way,
Every way at once!

Hark to the rain! –
Pattering, clattering,
The cabbage leaves battering,
Down it comes amain!–
Home we hurry
Hop and scurry,
And in with a flurry!
Hustling, jostling
Out of the airy land
Into the dry warm sand;
Our family white tails,
The last of our vitals,
Following hard with a whisk to them,
And with a great sense of risk to them!

Hear to it pouring!
Hear the thunder roaring
Far off and up high,
While we all lie
So warm and so dry
In the mellow dark,
Where never a spark,
White or rosy or blue,
Of the sheeting, fleeting,
Forking, frightening,
Lashing lightning
Ever can come through!

Let the wind chafe
In the trees overhead,
We are quite safe
In our dark, yellow bed!

Let the rain pour!
It never can bore
A hole in our roof –
It is waterproof!
So is the cloak
We always carry,
We furry folk,
In sandhole or quarry!
It is perfect bliss
To lie in a nest
So soft as this,
All so warmly drest!
No one to flurry you!
No one to hurry you!
No one to scurry you!
Holes plenty to creep in!
All day to sleep in!
All night to roam in!
Gray dawn to run home in!
And all the days and nights to come after –
All the to-morrows for hind-legs and
laughter!

Now the rain is over,
We are out again,
Every merry, leaping rover,
On his right leg and his wrong leg,
On his doubled, shortened long leg,
Floundering amain!
Oh, it is merry
And jolly – yes, very!

~ *George MacDonald* ~