

Selected poems from Every Thing On It, by Shel Silverstein

“The Ball Game”

The elephant played second base,  
And the laughing hyena played third.

The two little leeches sat out in the bleachers,  
Quite shocked by the language they heard.

The kangaroo leapt and the crocodile wept  
Because they would not let him play.  
And the ring-tailed rat, he kept swinging the bat  
Till the poor bat flew up and away.

The spider was fit with a fielder’s mitt,  
But couldn’t catch a fly at all,  
As the octopus pitched and the hen sat and twitched  
And tried to hatch the ball.

The porcupine umped and the kangaroo jumped  
As the snail was out stealing third  
On a throw from the snake just in time to awake  
The sleeping Palatapus bird.

The trout, he struck out, but the yak took a whack  
And hit one out into the lake.

A *homer*... it’s *gone*... No, the pelican yawned  
And swallowed the ball by mistake.

“Jimmy-Jack-John”

“Oh, where are you goin’, my Jimmy-Jack-John,  
With only the moon for your light?”

“I’m goin’ ‘round in search of the dawn,  
And I’ll prob’ly be gone most the night.”

“Oh, why are you cryin’, my Jimmy-Jack-John,  
And why do you stare out to see?”

“I’m thinkin’ that over the waves of the pond  
The dawn lies a-waitin’ forme.”

“But why do you wander, my Jimmy-Jack-John,  
a-roamin’ in search of the blue?  
Just wrap yourself tight in this blanket of night  
And the dawn will come to you.”

“The Dance of the Shoes”

Were you there for the dance of the shoes  
When they skipped in a column of twos—  
From the closet they crept  
And they jumped, skipped, and leapt  
Doin’ the dance of the shoes:  
And the high heels clicked  
And the football cleats kicked  
And the sandals flip-flopped

And the clogs clipped and clopped  
And the button shoes creaked  
And the sneakers just sneaked  
And the baby shoes skipped  
And the slippers both slipped  
And the ballet shoes jumped  
And the hunting shoes clumped?  
They started at seven and danced until ten,  
When they all tiptoed back to the closet again.  
Oh the dance of the shoes,  
Now they stand in a row  
Lookin' proper and right  
And actin' just like  
They've been there all night.

"Riddle"

Listen to my song  
I'm the strongest of the strong  
I can make a giant cry  
Who or what am I?

(An onion)

“Small Zoo”

The squeakin' mouse and the honkin' moose,

The nestin' grouse and the ganderin' goose,

The swingin' monkey and the spoutin' whale,

The kickin' donkey and the crawlin' snail,

The lumberin' ox and the hoppin' hare,

The sly ol' fox and the big brown bear,

The snappin' shark and the flyin' loon,

The singin' lark and the bold baboon,

The swimmin' sole and the great gorilla,

The diggin' mole and the armadillo,

The kangaroo and the nibblin' rat,

The cockatoo and the flappin' bat,

The porcupine and the polliwog,

The jungle lion and the croakin' frog,

The roarin' tiger and the deer...

Ain't here.