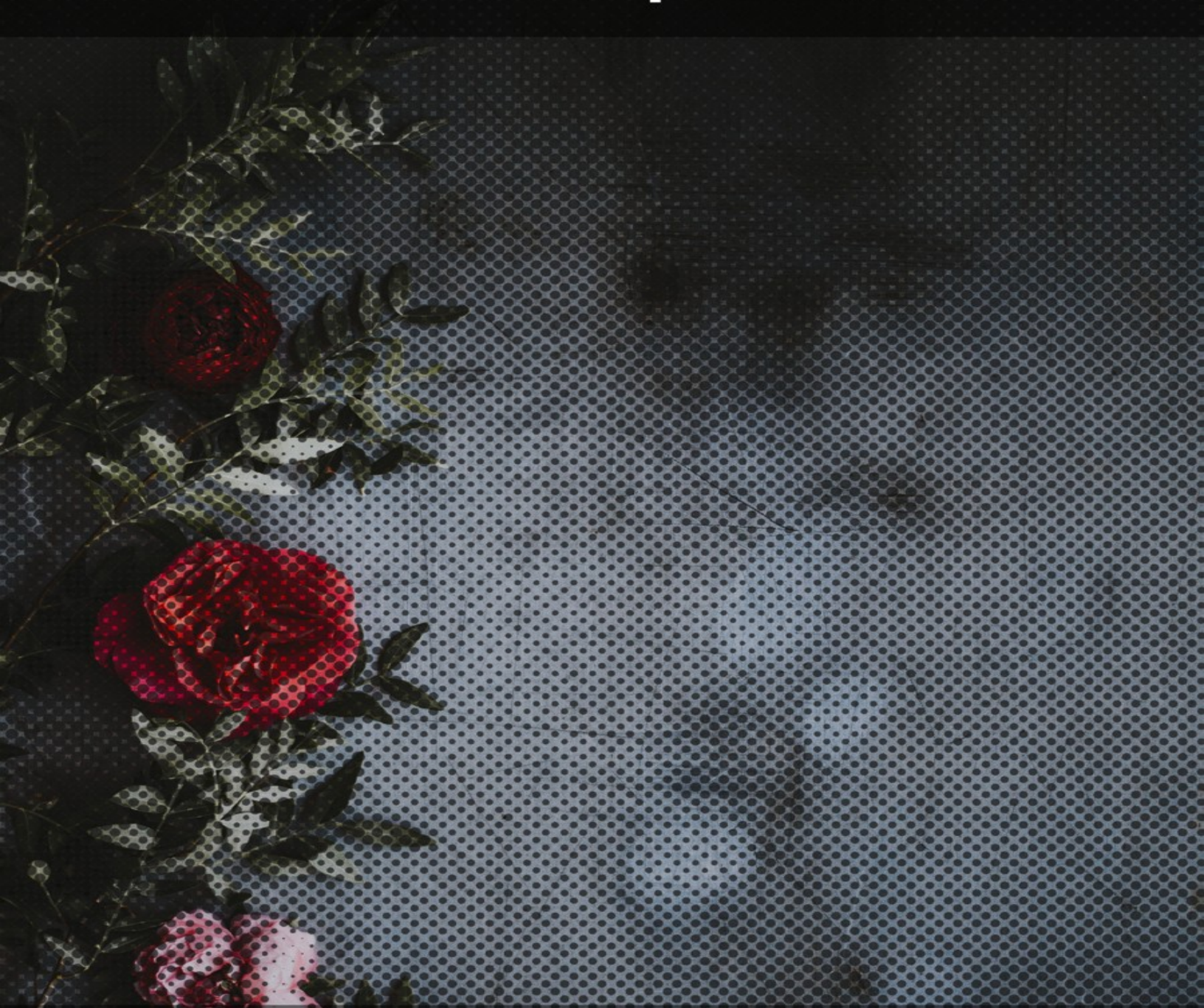


Charles Lamb | Mary Lamb



*Poetry for
children*

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Poetry for children



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THE FIRST TOOTH

THE FIRST TOOTH

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I

SISTER

Through the house what busy joy
Just because the infant boy
Has a tiny tooth to show!
I have got a double row,
All as white and all as small;
Yet no one cares for mine at all.
He can say but half a word,
Yet that single sound's preferr'd

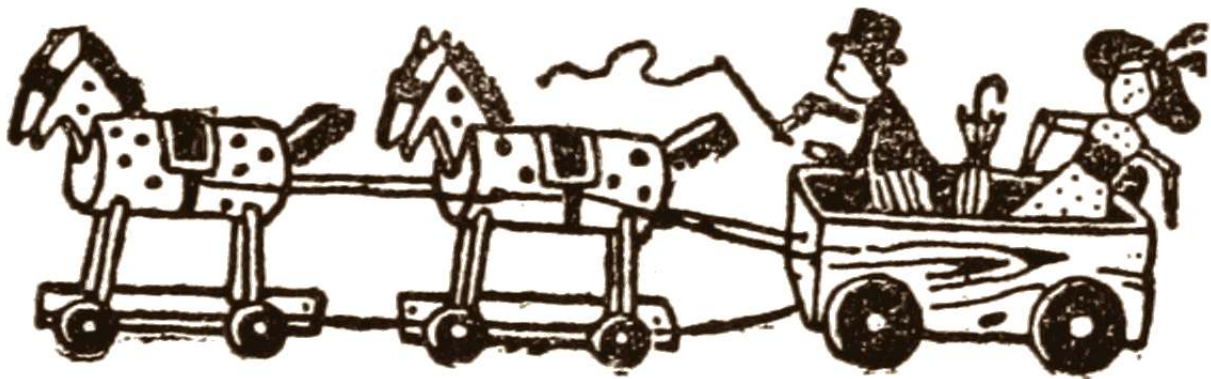
To all the words that I can say
In the longest summer day.
He cannot walk; yet if he put
With mimic motion out his foot,
As if he thought he were advancing,
It's prized more than my best dancing.

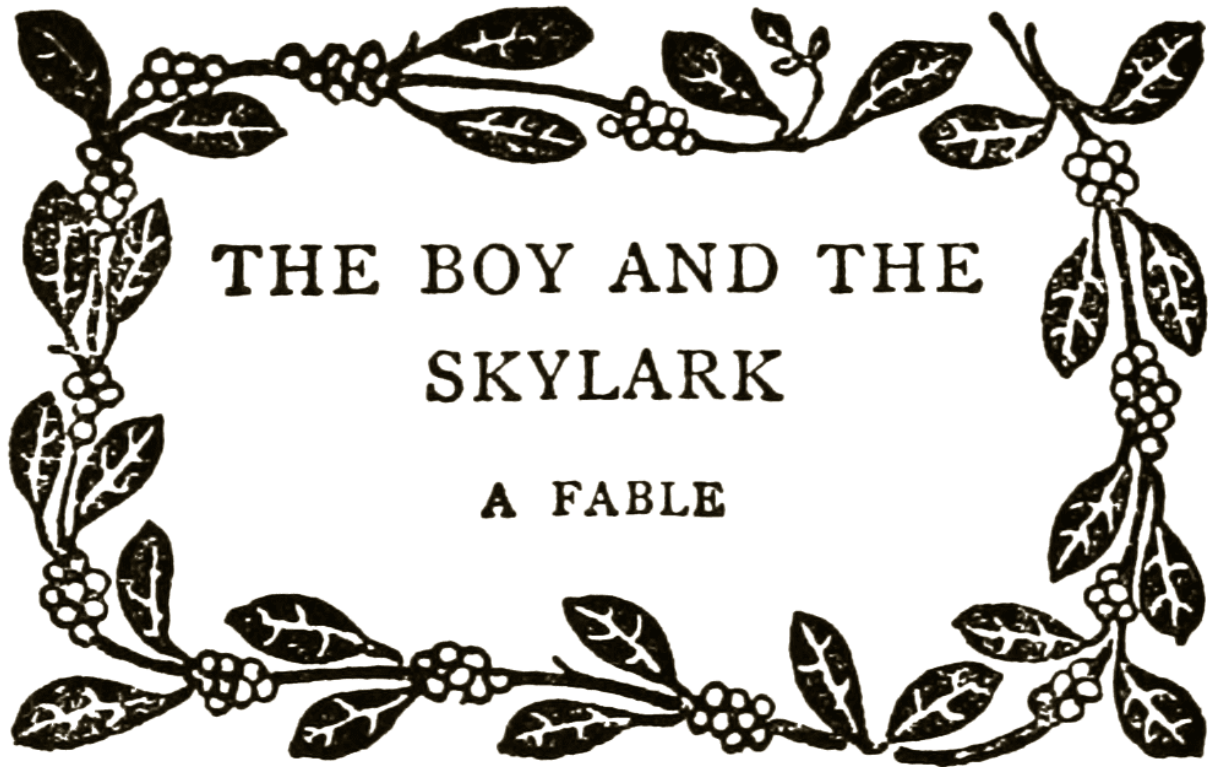
BROTHER

Sister, I know you jesting are,
Yet O! of jealousy beware.



If the smallest seed should be
In your mind, of jealousy,
It will spring and it will shoot
Till it bear the baneful fruit.
I remember you, my dear,
Young as is this infant here.
There was not a tooth of those
Your pretty even ivory rows,
But as anxiously was watch'd
Till it burst its shell new-hatch'd
As if it a phoenix were,
Or some other wonder rare.
So when you began to walk—
So when you began to talk—
As now, the same encomiums pass'd
'Tis not fitting this should last
Longer than our infant days;
A child is fed with milk and praise.





THE BOY AND THE SKYLARK

A FABLE

THE BOY AND THE SKYLARK A FABLE

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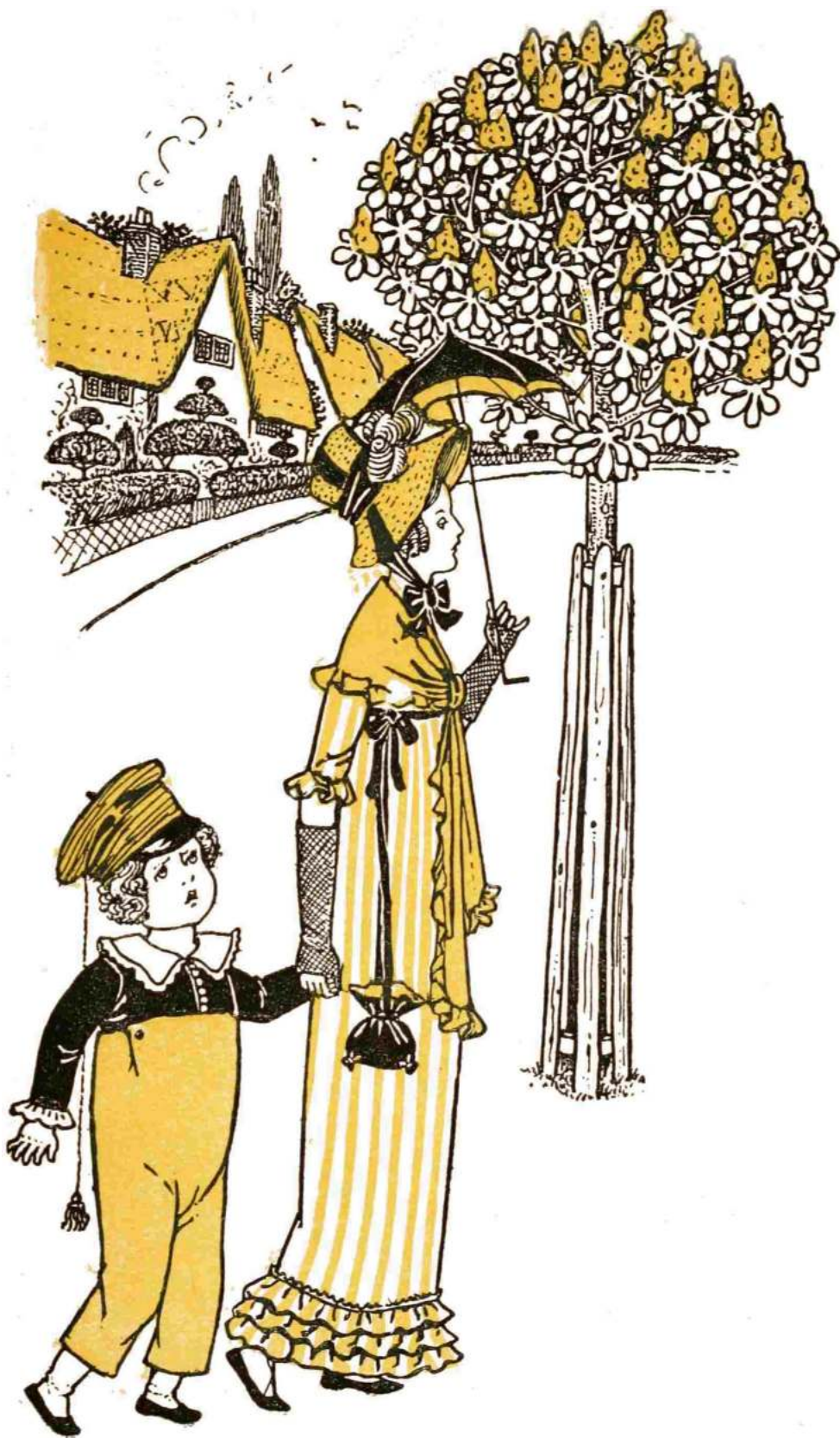
II

“A wicked action fear to do,
When you are by yourself; for though
You think you can conceal it,
A little bird that’s in the air
The hidden trespass shall declare
And openly reveal it.”

Richard this saying oft had heard,
Until the sight of any bird

Would set his heart a-quaking;
He saw a host of winged spies
For ever o'er him in the skies,
Note of his actions taking.

This pious precept, while it stood
In his remembrance, kept him good
When nobody was by him;
For though no human eye was near,
Yet Richard still did wisely fear
The little bird should spy him.



But best resolves will sometimes sleep;
Poor frailty will not always keep
From that which is forbidden;
And Richard one day, left alone,
Laid hands on something not his own,
And hoped the theft was hidden.

His conscience slept a day or two,
As it is very apt to do,
When we with pain suppress it;
And though at times a slight remorse
Would raise a pang, it had not force
To make him yet confess it.

When on a day, as he abroad
Walk'd by his mother, in their road
He heard a skylark singing;
Smit with the sound, a flood of tears
Proclaim'd the superstitious fears
His inmost bosom wringing.

His mother, wondering, saw him cry,
And fondly ask'd the reason why?
Then Richard made confession,
And said, he fear'd the little bird
He singing in the air had heard
Was telling his transgression.

The words which Richard spoke below,
As sounds by nature upwards go,
Were to the skylark carried:
The airy traveller with surprise,

To hear his sayings, in the skies
On his mid-journey tarried.

His anger then the bird express'd:
"Sure, since the day I left the nest,
I ne'er heard folly utter'd
So fit to move a skylark's mirth,
As what this little son of earth
Hath in his grossness mutter'd.

"Dull fool! to think we sons of air
On man's low actions waste a care,
His virtues or his vices;
Or soaring on the summer gales
That we should stoop to carry tales
Of him or his devices!

"Mistaken fool! man needs not us
His secret merits to discuss,
Or spy out his transgression;
When once he feels his conscience stirr'd,
That voice within him is the *bird*
That moves him to confession."



THE RAINBOW

THE RAINBOW

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III

After the tempest in the sky,
How sweet yon rainbow to the eye!
Come, my Matilda, now while some
Few drops of rain are yet to come,
In this honeysuckle bower
Safely shelter'd from the shower,
We may count the colours o'er.
Seven there are, there are no more;
Each in each so finely blended,
Where they begin, or where are ended,
The finest eye can scarcely see.

A fixed thing it seems to be;
But, while we speak, see how it glides
Away, and now observe it hides
Half of its perfect arch; now we
Scarce any part of it can see.
What is colour? If I were
A natural philosopher,
I would tell you what does make
This meteor every colour take;

