

# WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUN'KIN

*James Whitcomb Riley*

When the frost is on the pun'kin  
and the fodder's in the shock,  
And you har' th' kyouck and gobble  
of the struttin' turkey-cock,  
And the clackin' of the guineys,  
and the cluckin' of the hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer  
as he tiptoes on the fence;

O, it's then's the time a feller  
is a-feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him  
from a night of peaceful rest,  
As he leaves the house, bareheaded,  
and goes out to feed the stock,  
When the frost is on the pun'kin  
and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kind o'harty-like  
about the atmusfere  
When the heat of summer's over  
and the coolin' fall is here-  
Of course we miss the flowers,  
and the blossoms on the trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds  
and buzzin' of the bees;

But the air's so appetizin';  
and the landscape through the haze  
Of a crisp and sunny morning  
of the airly autumn days  
Is a pictur' that no painter  
has the colourin' to mock--  
When the frost is on the pun'kin  
and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russet  
of the tassels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves  
as golden as the morn;  
The stubble in the furries  
– kind o' lonesome-like, but still  
A-preachin' sermons to us  
of the barns they growed to fill;

The strawstack in the medder,  
and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below  
--the clover overhead!--  
O, it sets my hart a-clickin'  
like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the pun'kin  
and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered,  
and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the cellar-floor  
in red and yaller heaps;  
And your cider-makin's over,  
and your wimmen-folks is through  
With theyr mince and apple-butter,  
and theyr souse and sausage, too!...

I don't know how to tell it  
--but if such a thing could be  
As the Angels wantin' boardin',  
and they'd call around on me –  
I'd want to 'commodate 'em  
--all the whole-endurin' flock--  
When the frost is on the pun'kin  
and the fodder's in the shock.