

# My Shadow

By Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow-  
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.  
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

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1. Who is 'he' in the poem?

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2. What do we call the device we use to give human characteristics to something that isn't human? Can you find two examples of this in the poem?

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3. How many rhyming couplets are there in the poem?

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4. Why is the way the shadow grows 'not at all like proper children'?

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5. Use the text to help explain what a coward is. How do you know?

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6. Who does the boy mean when using the word 'nursie'?

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7. Does the language in the poem indicate that this is an old or modern poem? Give two examples to back up your answer.

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8. In the final verse, which line gives the scientific reason as to why the boy can't see his shadow when he goes outside? Explain your choice.

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