

**Children's Poetry Bookshelf National Write-A-Poem Competition**  
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**My Mother Saw a Dancing Bear**

My mother saw a dancing bear  
By the schoolyard, a day in June.  
The keeper stood with chain and bar  
And whistle-pipe, and played a tune.

And bruin lifted up its head  
And lifted up its dusty feet,  
And all the children laughed to see  
It caper in the summer heat.

They watched as for the Queen it died.  
They watched it march. They watched it halt.  
They heard the keeper as he cried,  
'Now, roly-poly!' 'Somersault!'

And then, my mother said, there came  
The keeper with a begging-cup,  
The bear with burning coat of fur,  
Shaming the laughter to a stop.

They paid a penny for the dance,  
But what they saw was not the show;  
Only, in bruin's aching eyes,  
Far-distant forests, and the snow.

Charles Causley