

# My Shadow

by Robert Louis Stevenson *from A Child's Garden of Verses*

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!

**Questions**

1. Why does the shadow grow tall sometimes and little sometimes?
2. What does “nursie” mean?
3. Find two words in the poem that rhyme.
4. Do you think the shadow is a coward? Why or why not?

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**Vocabulary List**

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Funniest
2. Shoots
3. Little
4. Notion
5. Fool
6. Coward

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**Context Clues**

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "The **funniest** thing about him is the way he likes to grow—"  
a. most unusual    b. most surprising    c. most confusing    d. most worrisome
  
2. "For he sometimes **shoots** up taller like an india-rubber ball..."  
a. aims    b. points    c. grows    d. pretends
  
3. "And he sometimes gets so **little** that there's none of him at all."  
a. tiny    b. invisible    c. weak    d. light
  
4. "He hasn't got a **notion** of how children ought to play..."  
a. rule    b. book    c. idea    d. guide
  
5. "And can only make a **fool** of me in every sort of way."  
a. king    b. clown    c. picture    d. story
  
6. "He stays so close beside me, he's a **coward** you can see..."  
a. weak person    b. fearful person    c. silly person    d. smart person