



When I was a Bird (1916)

By Katherine Mansfield

I climbed up the karaka tree
Into a nest all made of leaves
But soft as feathers
I made up a song that went on singing all by itself
And hadn't any words, but got sad at the end.
There were daisies in the grass under the tree.
I said just to try them:
"I'll bite off your heads and give them to my little children to eat."
But they didn't believe I was a bird
They stayed quite open.
The sky was like a blue nest with white feathers
And the sun was the mother bird keeping it warm.
That's what my song said: though it hadn't any words.
Little Brother came up the path, wheeling his barrow
I made my dress into wings and kept very quiet
Then when he was quite near I said: "sweet – sweet"
For a moment he looked quite startled –
Then he said: "Pooh, you're not a bird; I can see your legs."
But the daisies didn't really matter
And Little Brother didn't really matter –
I felt *just* like a bird.

