

# Cross-Curricular Cut Literature



## Robert Louis Stevenson



Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was a Scottish novelist, poet, and essayist. As a child he was often sick and suffered all his life from tuberculosis. Forced to stay in bed as a boy, Stevenson began writing poetry and stories to fill his long lonely hours. He published his first essays while he was still at university. His most popular books include *Treasure Island* (1883), *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

- 1 Look at the picture. What has to happen before we can see a shadow of ourselves? Can we always see our shadow? When does our shadow grow bigger/smaller than us?



### — My Shadow —


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 goes 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 behind 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.

### Listening

- 2  What do you expect to read in the poem? Listen and check if your guess was correct.

### Reading

- 3 Read the poem verse by verse and answer the questions.
  - 1 Who is the speaker of the poem? How old do you think he is?
  - 2 What does he find funny about his shadow?
  - 3 Why does he call his shadow 'a coward'? (verse 3)
  - 4 In the last verse the writer can't see his shadow. Why?
  - 5 How does the writer feel about his shadow? Justify your answers with evidence from the text.

### Project

- 4 Draw a scene from *My Shadow* for your class drawing competition.