

**Mrs. Malone**  
**by Eleanor Farjeon**

Mrs. Malone  
Lived hard by a wood  
All on her lonesome  
As nobody should.

With her crust on a plate  
And her pot on the coal  
And none but herself  
To converse with, poor soul.

In a shawl and a hood  
She got sticks out-o'-door,  
On a bit of old sacking  
She slept on the floor,

And nobody, nobody  
Asked how she fared,  
Or knew how she managed,  
For nobody cared.

Why make a pother  
About an old crone?  
What for should they bother  
With Mrs. Malone?

One Monday in winter  
With snow on the ground  
So thick that a footstep  
Fell without sound,

She heard a faint frostbitten  
Peck on the pane  
And went to the window  
To listen again.

There sat a cock-sparrow  
Bedraggled and weak,  
With half-open eyelids  
And ice on his beak.

She threw up the sash  
And she took the bird in,  
And mumbled and fumbled it  
Under her chin.

'Ye're all of a smother,  
Ye're fair overblown!  
I've room fer another,'  
Said Mrs. Malone.

Come Tuesday while eating  
Her dry morning slice  
With the sparrow a-picking  
( 'Ain't company nice!')

She heard on her doorpost  
A curious scratch,  
And there was a cat  
With its claw on the latch.

It was hungry and thirsty  
And thin as a lath,  
It mewed and it mowed  
On the slithery path.

She threw the door open  
And warmed up some pap,  
And huddled and cuddled it  
In her old lap.

'There, there, little brother,  
Ye poor skin-an'-bone,  
There's room fer another,'  
Said Mrs. Malone.

Come Wednesday while all of them  
Crouched on the mat  
With a crumb for the sparrow,  
A sip for the cat,

There was wailing and whining  
Outside in the wood,  
And there sat a vixen  
With six of her brood.

She was haggard and ragged  
And worn to a shred,  
And her half-dozen babies  
Were only half-fed,

But Mrs. Malone, crying  
'My! ain't they sweet!'  
Happed them and lapped them  
And gave them to eat.

'You warm yerself, mother,  
Ye're cold as a stone!  
There's room fer another,'  
Said Mrs. Malone.

Come Thursday a donkey  
Stepped in off the road  
With sores on his withers  
From bearing a load.

Come Friday when icicles  
Pierced the white air  
Down from the mountainside  
Lumbered a bear.

For each she had something,  
If little, to give —  
'Lord knows, the poor critters  
Must all of 'em live.'

She gave them her sacking,  
Her hood and her shawl,  
Her loaf and her teapot —  
She gave them her all.

What with one thing and t'other  
Me family's grown,  
And there's room fer another,'  
Said Mrs. Malone.

Come Saturday evening  
When time was to sup  
Mrs. Malone  
Had forgot to sit up.

The cat said meow,  
And the sparrow said peep,  
The vixen, she's sleeping,  
The bear, let her sleep.

On the back of the donkey  
They bore her away,  
Through trees and up mountains  
Beyond night and day,

Till come Sunday morning  
They brought her in state  
Through the last cloudbank  
As far as the Gate.

"Who is it,' asked Peter,  
'You have with you there?'  
And donkey and sparrow,  
Cat, vixen, and bear

Exclaimed, 'Do you tell us  
Up here she's unknown?  
It's our mother, God bless us!  
It's Mrs. Malone

Whose havings were few  
And whose holding was small  
And whose heart was so big  
It had room for us all.'

Then Mrs. Malone  
Of a sudden awoke,  
She rubbed her two eyeballs  
And anxiously spoke:

'Where am I, to goodness,  
And what do I see?  
My dears, let's turn back,  
This ain't no place fer me!'

But Peter said, 'Mother  
Go in to the Throne.  
There's room for another  
One, Mrs. Malone.'