



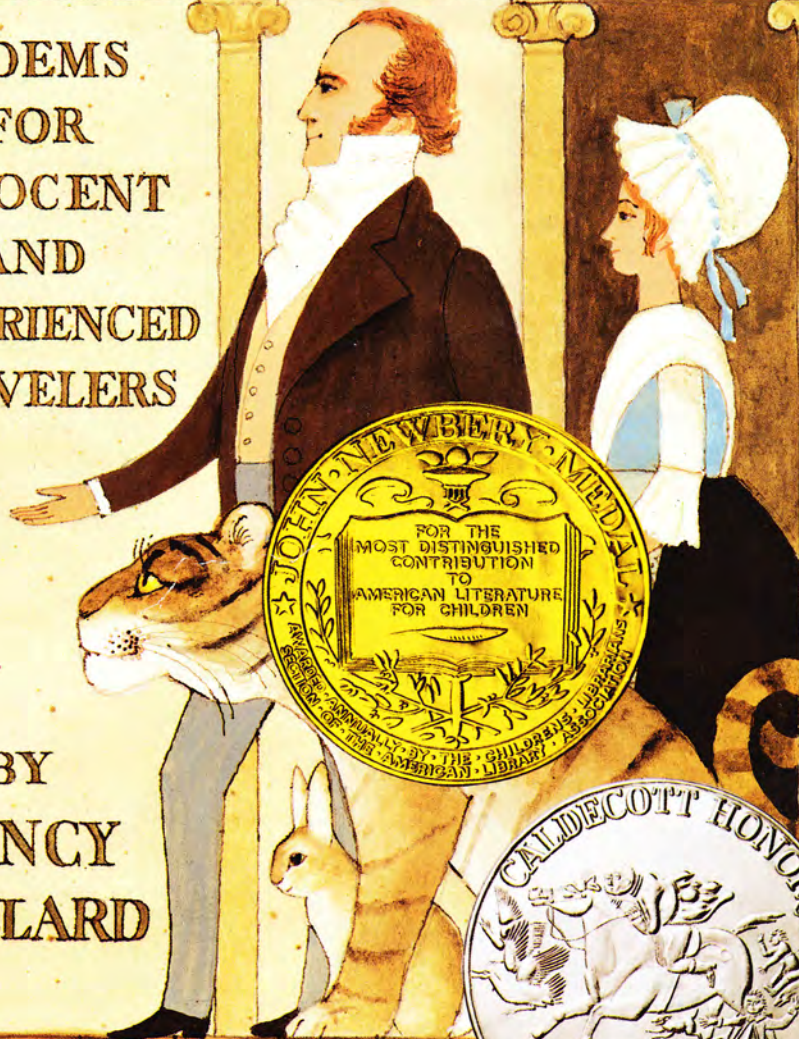
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GOODWILL

A VISIT TO

WILLIAM BLAKE'S INN

POEMS
FOR
INNOCENT
AND
EXPERIENCED
TRAVELERS

BY
NANCY
WILLARD



647
THRIFTBOOKS
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ILLUSTRATED BY ALICE AND MARTIN PROVENSEN

FOR RALPH, WHO BUILT THE INN,
AND FOR ERIC, WHO LOVES BLAKE

Design by Barbara DuPree Knowles



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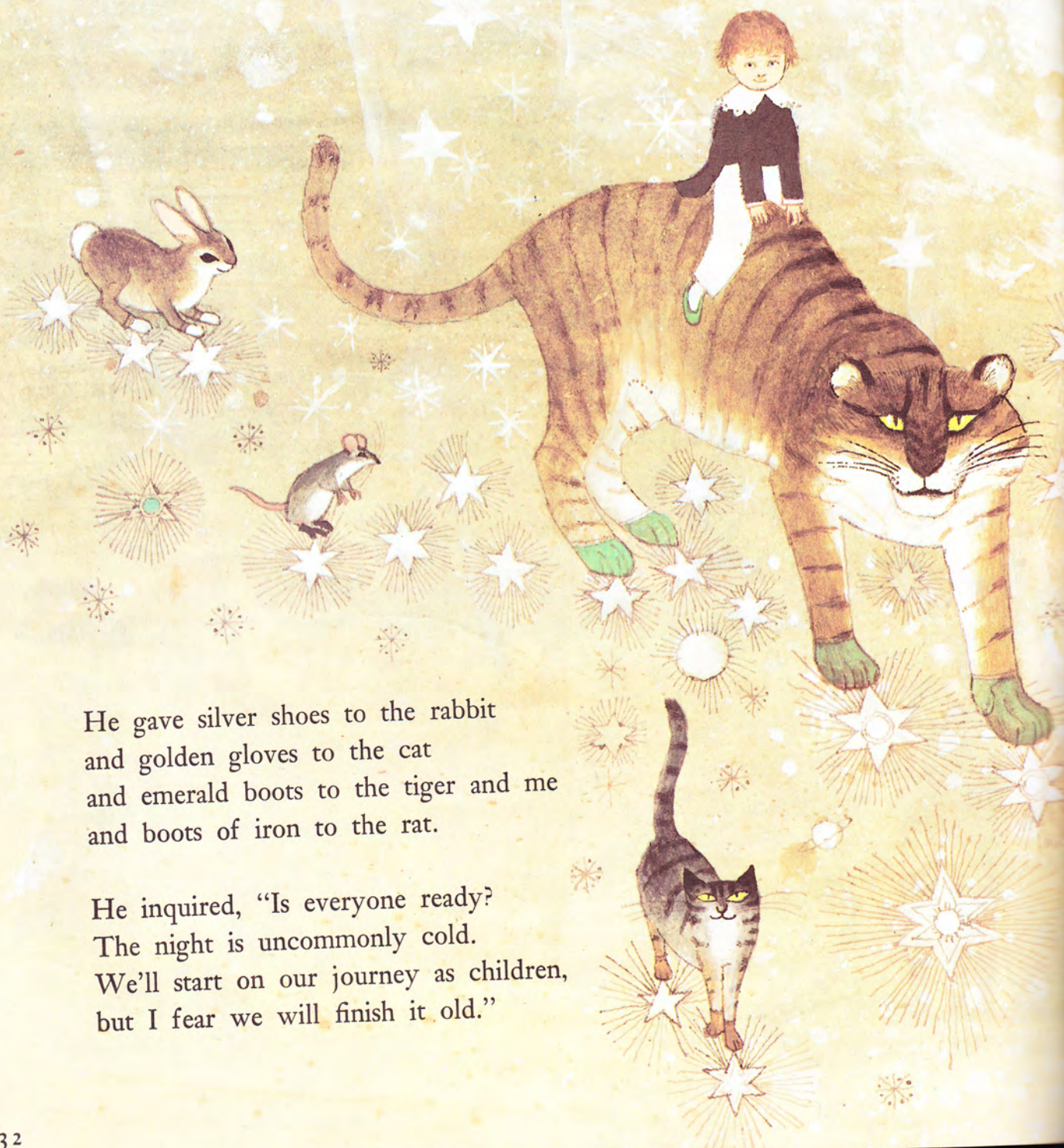
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BLAKE LEADS A WALK ON THE MILKY WAY



He gave silver shoes to the rabbit
and golden gloves to the cat
and emerald boots to the tiger and me
and boots of iron to the rat.

He inquired, "Is everyone ready?
The night is uncommonly cold.
We'll start on our journey as children,
but I fear we will finish it old."



He hurried us to the horizon
where morning and evening meet.
The slippery stars went skipping
under our hapless feet.

“I’m terribly cold,” said the rabbit.
“My paws are becoming quite blue,
and what will become of my right thumb
while you admire the view?”

“The stars,” said the cat, “are abundant
and falling on every side.
Let them carry us back to our comforts.
Let us take the stars for a ride.”

“I shall garland my room,” said the tiger,
“with a few of these emerald lights.”
“I shall give up sleeping forever,” I said.
“I shall never part day from night.”

The rat was sullen. He grumbled
he ought to have stayed in his bed.
“What’s gathered by fools in heaven
will never endure,” he said.

Blake gave silver stars to the rabbit
and golden stars to the cat
and emerald stars to the tiger and me
but a handful of dirt to the rat.

THE TIGER ASKS BLAKE FOR A BEDTIME STORY

William, William, writing late
by the chill and sooty grate,
what immortal story can
make your tiger roar again?

When I was sent to fetch your meat
I confess that I did eat
half the roast and all the bread.
He will never know, I said.

When I was sent to fetch your drink,
I confess that I did think
you would never miss the three
lumps of sugar by your tea.

Soon I saw my health decline
and I knew the fault was mine.
Only William Blake can tell
tales to make a tiger well.

Now I lay me down to sleep
with bear and rabbit, bird and sheep.
If I should dream before I wake,
may I dream of William Blake.



