

The Mewlips

The Shadows where the Mewlips dwell
Are dark and wet as ink,
And slow and softly rings their bell,
As in the slime you sink.

You sink into the slime, who dare
To knock upon their door,
While down the grinning gargoyles stare
And noisome waters pour.

Beside the rotting river-strand
The drooping willows weep,
And gloomily the gorcrows stand
Croaking in their sleep.

Over the Merlock Mountains a long and weary way,
In a mouldy valley where the trees are grey,
By a dark pool's borders without wind or tide,
Moonless and sunless, the Mewlips hide.



The cellars where the Mewlips sit
Are deep and dank and cold
With single sickly candle lit;
And there they count their gold.

Their walls are wet, their ceilings drip;
Their feet upon the floor
Go softly with a squish-flap-flip,
As they sidle to the door.

They peep out slyly; through a crack
Their feeling fingers creep,
And when they've finished, in a sack
Your bones they take to keep.

Beyond the Merlock Mountains, a long and lonely road,
Through the spider-shadows and the marsh of Tode,
And through the wood of hanging trees and gallows-
weed,
You go to find the Mewlips - and the Mewlips feed.

The Mewlips is a nonsensical but eerie hobbit poem, appearing in the work *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* by J.R.R. Tolkien. It concerns the *Mewlips*, an imaginary race of evil creatures that feed on passers by, collecting their bones in a sack. The poem describes the long and lonely road needed to reach the Mewlips.

1. What impression of The Mewlips does Tolkien create?
2. Select five words that reflect the atmosphere.
3. Find examples of: alliteration and onomatopoeia.
4. Select one stanza and draw pictures to represent the imagery created.
5. How does Tolkien use language to make The Mewlips seem menacing?
6. Write the next two stanzas in the same style.