

## The longest journey in the world

"Last one into bed  
has to switch out the light."  
It's just the same every night.  
There's a race.  
I'm ripping off my trousers and shirt –  
he's kicking off his shoes and socks.

"My sleeve's stuck."  
"This button's too big for its button-hole."  
"Have you hidden my pyjamas?"  
"Keep your hands off mine."  
If you win  
you get where it's safe  
before the darkness comes –  
but if you lose  
if you're last  
you know what you've got coming up is  
the journey from the light switch  
to your bed.  
It's the Longest Journey in the World.

"You're last tonight," my brother says.  
And he's right.  
There is nowhere so dark  
as that room in the moment  
after I've switched out the light.

There is nowhere so full of dangerous things –  
things that love dark places –  
things that breathe only when you breathe  
and hold their breath when I hold mine.  
So I have to say:  
"I'm not scared."  
That face, grinning in the pattern on the wall  
isn't a face –  
"I'm not scared."



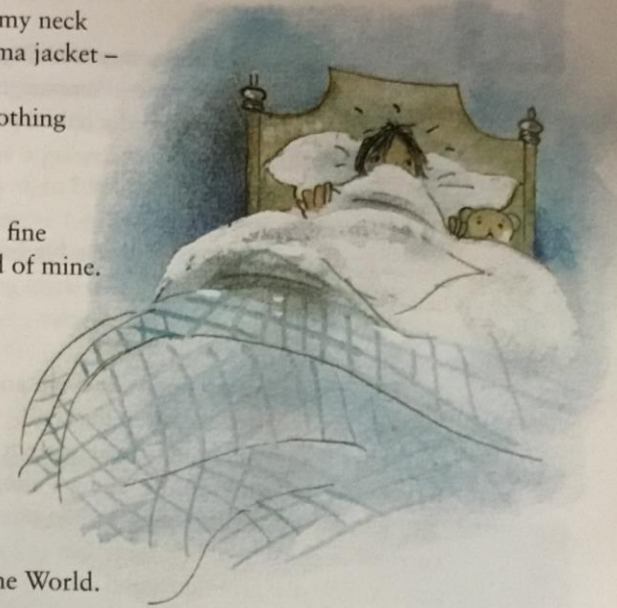
That prickle on the back of my neck  
is only the label on my pyjama jacket –  
"I'm not scared."  
That moaning-moaning is nothing  
but water in a pipe –  
"I'm not scared."

Everything's going to be just fine  
as soon as I get into that bed of mine.  
Such a terrible shame  
it's always the same  
it takes so long  
it takes so long  
it takes so long  
to get there.

From the light switch  
to my bed.

It's the Longest Journey in the World.

*Michael Rosen*



Answer in sentences.

- 1 What was the game that the two boys played every night?
- 2 Why was it so frightening to be the loser?
- 3 Why was it so wonderful to be the winner?
- 4 Which verbs in the first verse suggest undressing very quickly?
- 5 What caused the moaning-moaning sound that could be heard in the room?
- 6 What was the boy really thinking each time he said, "I'm not scared"?
- 7 What do you think the boy is doing while he says:  
"it takes so long / it takes so long / it takes so long"?
- 8 What do you think the boy does at the words "to get there"?