**The Cry of the Children**

By [Elizabeth Barrett Browning](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/elizabeth-barrett-browning)

*"Pheu pheu, ti prosderkesthe m ommasin, tekna;"  
[[Alas, alas, why do you gaze at me with your eyes, my children.]]—Medea.*

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,

And we cannot run or leap —

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely

To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping —

We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,

Through the coal-dark, underground —

Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron

In the factories, round and round.

1. What is the poem about? Who is talking and what sort of feelings are described?
2. The poem begins with an epigraph. What is an epigraph and what role does it serve? In this particular poem, where does it come from and what’s the suggested theme?
3. How is the physical pain of the children expressed in the poem?
4. Find the imagery of the poem. Is it a positive or a negative one? What sort of feelings dos this imagery provoke?
5. According to you, which verses of the poem portray best the suffering of these children? Discuss.
6. Is there such a thing as Child Exploitation these days? What types are there? What can be done to stop it?





