1. The following riddles were taken from Archer Taylor 1951. The numbers enclosed in parentheses following the riddles are those assigned by Taylor.

Many eyes and never a nose, one tongue, and about it goes. *Shoe.* (14)

What's this that's got a heart in its head? *Lettuce.* (31)

There is something with a heart in its head. *Peach.* (33)

It first walks on four legs, then on two, then on three legs. *Man.* (46b)

What has an eye, but cannot see? *Needle.* (282)

What has a tongue and can't talk? *Shoe.* (296a)

What has teeth but cannot eat? *Saw.* (298)

What has teeth but does not eat? *Comb.* (299)

White bird featherless/Flew from Paradise,/Perched upon the castle wall;/Up came Lord John landless,/Took it up handless,/And rode away horseless/To the King's white hall. *Snow.* (368)

I have a cock on yonder hill,/I keep him for a wonder,/And every time the cock do crow,/It lightens, hails, and thunders. *A gun.* (380)

Two legs sat on three legs./Up jumped four legs/And grabs one leg. *Man sitting on a three-legged stool; up jump a dog and grabs ham on the table.* (461d)

In spring I am gay,/In handsome array;/In summer more clothing I wear;/When colder it grows,/I fling
off my clothes,/And in winter I quite naked appear.
*A tree.* (587b)

Blackey went into blackey, blackey came out of blackey, and blackey left whitey in blackey. *A black hen went in a black stump and laid a white egg.* (867)

Black and white and red all over. *Newspaper* (1498a)

*A house full, a yard full,/Couldn’t catch a bowl full.* *Smoke.* (1643a)

2. The following examples were drawn from Coffin and Cohen 1974. Page numbers are indicated in parentheses following each text.

What is the best butter on earth? *A goat.* (144)

What is the difference between a pretty girl and a mouse? *One charms the he’s, and the other harms the cheese.* (147)

What is the difference between a jeweler and a jailer? *One sells watches and the other watches cells.* (147)

What has teeth but can’t eat? *A comb.* (143)

3. The next text was taken from Abrahams and Dundes 1972. The page number is indicated in parentheses.

Crooked and straight, which way are you going?
*Croptail every year, what makes you care? Meadow to a brook and the brook’s reply.* (135)

4. The following riddle was collected in Georgia in 1977 by David Stanley from an 85-year-old informant.

White comes out of white, and run white out of white.
*A white dog runs out of a white house and chases a white cow out of a cotton patch.*

5. The following riddle is taken from Maranda 1971a. The page number is indicated in parentheses.

What tree grows without roots? *Human being.* (119)

6. The following riddle is taken from McDowell 1979. The page number is indicated in parentheses.

The tree has only two leaves, what is it? *A man and his ears.* (247)
APPENDIX: THE RIDDLES

The final set of riddles in our corpus are those we have collected from 1976-81. The majority of examples were provided by colleagues and students at the University of Delaware, Temple University, and Texas A&M University. Additional riddles were recorded at a brief riddle session between two seven-year-old children, and the remainder were provided by audience members who approached us after paper presentations at professional meetings. The majority of these riddles were presented to us more than once, and many of these texts are variants of riddles published in scholarly collections. Thus, we feel safe in assuming that they constitute a reasonable sampling of contemporary American riddles in the English language.

What has a mouth but cannot eat? River.
What has an eye that never closes? Needle.
What bird is in the lowest spirits? Bluebird.
What weapon does an angry lover resemble? Crossbow.
When is a black dog not a black dog? When it is a greyhound.
Why is a man clearing a hedge in a single bound like a man snoring? He does it in his sleep (his leap).
When is it hard to get your watch out of your pocket? When it keeps sticking (keeps ticking) there.
What is the difference between a baby and a coat? One you wear, one you were.
What is the difference between a ballet dancer and a duck? One goes quick on her legs, the other goes quack on her legs.
Why is coffee like the soil? It is ground.
When is a rope like a child at school? When taut (taught).
When is a doctor most annoyed? When he is out of patients (patience).
What musical instrument should one not believe? A lyre (liar).
What kind of bow can you never tie? A rainbow.
What kind of cars does a train have? Engineers.
What room can no one enter? A mushroom.
What driver is never arrested? A screwdriver.
On what side of a country church is the graveyard?
The outside.

What miss is most unpopular? Misfortune.

What ship has two mates but no captain? Courtship.

What is the key to a good dinner? Turkey.

What chins are never shaved? Urchins.

What pets make the sweetest music? Trumpets.

What kind of cat do you find in the library? Catalogue.

What are the biggest kind of ants? Giants.

What is the gentlest kind of spur? Whisper.

Why is a goose/duck like an icicle? Both grow down.

When is a boy like a pony? When he is a little horse.

What do you call a man who marries another man? A minister.

Would you rather have an elephant kill you or a gorilla? I'd rather have the elephant kill the gorilla.

When is a man like a snake? When he is rattled.

When is a lamp in bad humor? When it is put out.

What does a person grow if he works hard in his garden? Tired.

What goes most against a farmer's grain? A reaper.

What flowers does a person always carry? Tulips (two lips).

When is a boat like a heap of snow? When it is adrift.

Why is a fish dealer never generous? His business makes him sell fish (selfish).

Why is a mouse like grass? The cattle (cat'll) eat it.

Why can't you starve to death in the desert? Because of the sandwiches (sand which is) there.

What is the difference between a deer fleeing from hunters and a midget witch? One is hunted stag, the other a stunted hag.

What is the difference between a professional musician and one who hears him? One plays for his pay, the other pays for his play.

What is the difference between a donkey and a postage stamp? One you lick with a stick, the other you stick with a lick.

What is the difference between a sewing machine and a kiss? One sews seams nice, the other seems so nice.
What is the difference between a hungry man and a glutton? One longs to eat, the other eats too long.

What makes a road broad? The letter B.

What do the letters x, p, d, n, and c spell? Expediency.

Spell enemy in three letters. NME.

What are the most sensible letters? Y's (wise).

What letters are most provoking? T's (tease).

How many P's (peas) are in a pint? One.

What is the end of everything? G.

What changes a lad into a lady? Y.

What changes a pear into a pearl? L.

What occurs twice in a moment, once in a minute, and never in a thousand years? M.

What part of London is in France? N.

What tune does everyone know? Fortune.

What age is served at breakfast? Sausage.

What state is round at both ends and high in the middle? Ohio.

What plant stands for the number four? IV (ivy).

What must you add to nine to make it six? S (IX).

Add ten to nothing and what animal does it make? OX.

Why is the number nine like a peacock? Remove its tail and it is nothing.

Where is the smallest bridge in the world? On your nose.

What has a bed but never sleeps? A river.

What lock can no key open? A lock of hair.

What vegetable is unpopular on ships? A leek.

When did Moses sleep five in a bed? When he slept with his forefathers.

What toe never gets a corn? Mistletoe.
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