Gollum

eyes. They seem to stare awhile and then slowly fade out and disappear and shine out again in another place. Sometimes they shine down from above. Some of them are bulbous.)

BILBO. Now I remember. The goblins!
ECHO. 'Oblins, 'oblins--oblins--'oblins.
BILBO. And what are those awful eyes watching me for? (Lowers voice.) I was on Dori's back and someone tackled him and he dropped me!
ECHO. 'Opped me--'opped me--'opped me--'opped me.
BILBO (frightened, to the eyes). Keep away from me, eyes! I wonder what happened to the Dwarves? I hope the goblins didn't get them! (Gasps.) My sword! (Holding it up.) It hardly glows. That means the Goblins aren't near and yet they're still around. Ugh! What a nasty smell! Go away, you horrible eyes! (Realizing, stage whisper.) I know where I am. I'm still in the goblin's cave! They smell that way and these may be just the eyes of bats and mice and toads and slimy things like that. (More naturally.) Cheer up, Bilbo. Fear always helps the thing you're afraid of. You're alive and you've been in holes before. You live in one. This is just an ordinary, black, foul, disgusting hole. So blah! (The eyes begin to flicker out, pair by pair, until all are gone. BILBO brightens further.) If this place were aired and decorated it would be nice and cozy. So now I'll just figure out how to get out of here. (BILBO crawls around on his hands and knees toward stage R.) Seems to be a lake over here--no use heading that way. Ouch! Something hurt my knee---- (Picks up small object.) It's a ring! Someone's lost a ring. Well, finders keepers. I'll just stick it in my pocket so I

don't lose it myself. (Pockets ring. Lights come up a little.) I can see better now. (Stands and turns toward stage L.)

(An unobtrusive black rubber float is pulled on stage R. On it sits a slimy creature, dressed in black tights or a shiny rubber diving suit, touched up with vaseline to make it glisten, complete with cap, goggles painted a pale watery green. He sits with a leg dangling over each side of the raft, or with knees bent, and holds a short paddle as if rowing.)

GOLLUM (making a swallowing sound as he is pulled on). Gollum! Gollum!
BILBO (whirling around). What's that!
GOLLUM. It's me--Gollum!
BILBO (peering nervously in Gollum's direction). Who's there?
GOLLUM (in full view now). Bless us and splash us, my preciousss! Here's something to eat! (Guttural.) Gollum!
BILBO (brandishing his blade, while shaking and backing off). Stay back!
GOLLUM (swaying his head from side to side as he talks). What's he got in his handses, hmmm?
BILBO (as fiercely as possible). A sword, an Elvish blade! It came out of Gondolin.
GOLLUM (taken aback, hissing). S-s-s-s-s What iss he, my preciousss? Hic! (More politely.) Whom have we the pleasure of meeting?
BILBO (rapidly). I am Mr. Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit. I've lost the Dwarves and the Wizard and I don't know where I am--but then I don't want to know where I am. The only thing I want to know is how to get out of here!
GOLLUM (hissing). S-s-s-s-s s'pose we sits here

and chats with it a bitsy, my preciousss----
A Bagginsess! (Rubs his stomach.) It likes riddles, p'raps it does, does it? S-s-s-s-s.

BILBO. You mean me?

GOLLUM. Yesssss----

BILBO. Well, I'd love to, but I'm expected somewhere else---- (To himself.) I hope. (To GOLLUM.) So if you'd kindly direct me to the nearest exit----

GOLLUM (cutting in). S-s-s-s-s stop. First a riddle, yesss?

BILBO (resigned). Very well, if you insisssst! After you----

GOLLUM. S-s-s-s-s say,
What has roots as noboby sees,
Is taller than trees,
Up, up it goes,
And yet never grows?

BILBO. Easy! Mountain. Now if you'll kindly----

GOLLUM (cutting in). S-s-s-s-s so does it guess easy? It must have a competition with us, my preciouss. If we wins we eats if--it tastes better if we earns it. If it wins we shows it the way out. Yessss.

BILBO (resigned). Well--all right. Only, how many of them are you? Who's this "Precious" you keep talking to?

GOLLUM. Our Preciousss Self! We has to talk to someone, doesn't we? We are alone here--forever.

BILBO. So, I see. It's a dreadful place.

GOLLUM. We likes it! We generally passes the time feasting on fishesss and gobbling goblins. S-s-s.

BILBO. Goblins! Ick! I didn't think anyone ate them!

GOLLUM. We acquired the taste. Hic! S-s-s-s-s. (Impatient.) Your turn. Riddle! Riddle!

BILBO. Just a minute---- (Thinking hard.) Ah! --
Thirty white horses on a red hill,
First they champ,
Then they stamp,
Then they stand still.

GOLLUM. Easy! Teethes! Teethes! My preciouss, but we has only six. Now! Ssssss.
Voiceless it cries,
Wingless flutters,
Toothless bites,
Mouthless mutters.

BILBO. Half a moment! (Straining.) Wind!
Wind, of course!

GOLLUM (disappointed). Sssssssss. Your turns!

BILBO. Uh--
A box without hinges, key or lid,
Yet golden treasure inside is hid.

GOLLUM (having great difficulty). S-s-s-s-s. (Whispers.) What iss it? Sssssss. (Takes a fish out of his pocket and wipes his brow with it.)

BILBO. Well--what is it? The answer's not a kettle boiling over, as you seem to think from the noise you are making!

GOLLUM. Give us a chance; let it give us a chance, my preciousss----

BILBO. Well?

GOLLUM (wiping his brow with fish; suddenly). Eggses! Eggses it is! Sssssssss--here's a choice one!
Alive without breath,
As cold as death;
Never thirsty, ever drinking,
All in mail, never clinking!

BILBO (stumped). Ahem--ahem--well now. Just a minute----

GOLLUM (starting to emerge from the raft). S-s-s-s-s-s-s.

BILBO (panic-stricken). Wait! I gave you a long