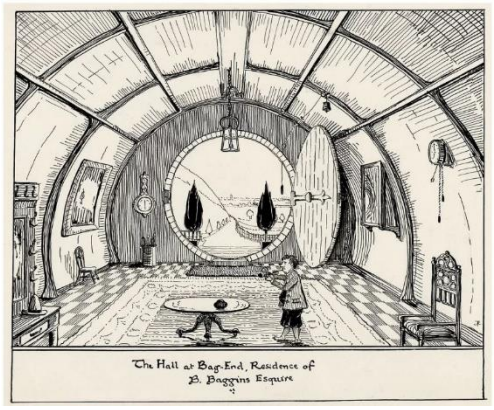
Quotes from his Books

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

> It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.



Never laugh at live dragons.

> Deeds will not be less valiant because they are unpraised.

Such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere.

> Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens.

Many that live deserve death and some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be so eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the wise cannot see all ends.

> “I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo.
> “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.'

"I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend."

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.

It is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule."

> Many are the strange chances of the world,' said Mithrandir, 'and help oft shall come from the hands of the weak when the Wise falter."

It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him.

> "Sorry! I don't want any adventures, thank you. Not Today. Good morning! But please come to tea – any time you like! Why not tomorrow? Good bye!"

Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow,
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow.
None has ever caught him yet, for Tom, he is the master:
His songs are stronger songs, and his feet are faster

J.R.R. Tolkien on literature and his own stories

Children are capable, of course, of literary belief, when the storymaker's art is good enough to produce it. That state of mind has been called "willing suspension of disbelief." But this does not seem to me a good description of what happens. What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful "sub-creator." He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is "true:" it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore, believe it, while you are, as it were, inside.

-On Fairy Stories

At one time, it was a dominant view that all such matter was derived from "nature myths." The Olympians were personifications of the sun, of dawn of nigh, and so on, and all the stories told about them were originally myths (allegories would have been a better word) of the greater elemental changes and processes of nature. Epic, heroic legend, saga, then localized these stories in real places and humanized them by attributing them to ancestral heroes, mightier than men and yet already men. And finally these legends, dwindling down, became folk-tales, *Marchen*, fairy-stories – nursery tales.

-On Fairy Stories

The dweller in the quiet and fertile plains may hear of the tormented hills and the unharvested sea and long for them in his heart. For the heart is hard though the body be soft.

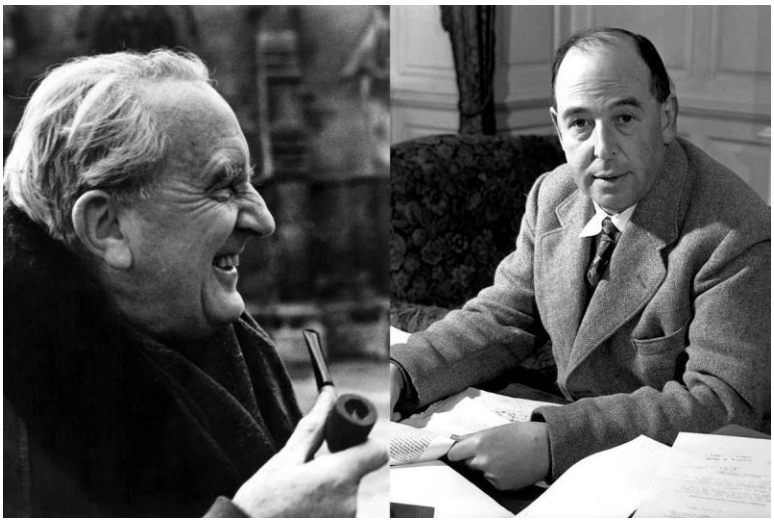
I was insensitive to poetry, and skipped it if it came in tales. Poetry I discovered much later in Latin and Greek, and especially through being made to try and translate English verse into Classical verse. A real taste for fairy-stories was wakened by philology on the threshold of manhood, and quickened to full life by war.

Some who have read the book, or at any rate have reviewed it, have found it boring, absurd, or contemptible; and I have no cause to complain, since I have similar opinions of their works, or of the kinds of writing that they evidently prefer. – Foreward to Lord of the Rings

The invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows." (The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien)

C.S. Lewis' review of The Hobbit:

It must be understood that this is a children's book only in the sense that the first of many readings can be undertaken in the nursery. Alice (in Wonderland) is read gravely by children and with laughter by grown-ups; The Hobbit, on the other hand, will be funniest to its youngest readers, and only years later, at a tenth or a twentieth reading, will they begin to realise what deft scholarship and profound reflection have gone to make everything in it so ripe, so friendly, and in its own way so true. Prediction is dangerous: but The Hobbit may well prove a classic. (1937)



C.S. Lewis' review of The Fellowship of the Rings:

Almost central to the theme of the books is the contrast between the Hobbits (or "the Shire") and the appalling destiny to which some of them are called, the terrifying discovery that the humdrum happiness of the Shire, which they had taken for granted as something normal, is in reality a sort of local and temporary accident, that its existence depends on being protected by powers which Hobbits dare not imagine, that any Hobbit may find himself forced out of the Shire and caught up in that high conflict. More strangely still, the event of that conflict between strongest things may come to depend on him, who is almost the weakest.

This book is too original and too opulent for any final judgement on a first reading. But we know at one that it has done things to us. We are not quite the same men. And though we must ration ourselves in our re-readings, I have little doubt that the book will soon take its place among the indispensables. (1954-1955)