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pOETRY OUT LOUD

MASTERLIST & Prep material

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INCLUDED:

Acknowledgements

Full Information Packet

Judge Material

Instructions for Competition Day

Master List Catalogue (A-List to Z-List)

Notes for Students:

Browse the Poems.

Find one that speaks to you.

Let that be the method used for selection.

Note on LINKS:

Author’s Name is linked to the Poetry Out Loud Author Page.

The Alphabet on the Cover Page is Linked to the Cover Page of the Letter.

The Masterlist # (for example P17, or M33, etc.) are linked to the individual poem.

PLEASE NOTE THE DETAILED LIST ON THE SIDE LABELED “BACK TO”. THIS ARE LOCATED ON PAGES MOST LIKELY NOT TO BE PRINTED. FOR EASY ACCESS, ALL OTHER PAGES HAVE A LINKED “[X](#COVER)”, WHICH WILL GET THE READER BACK TO THE MAIN COVER PAGE. The X will be placed in the lower left hand corner of each page except for the materlist, letter cover pages and poems themselves, where they will be in a box towards the top of the page.

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This event has a strong tradition of involvement at Tallwood High School, and would not be possible

without the strong support of an excellent staff and department.

For the class by class competitions, the following teachers have been tasked to work as judges:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A1 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

A2 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

A3 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

A4 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

B1 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

B2 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

B3 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

B4 Judge 1 Judge 2 Judge 3

(Accuracy )

Afterschool assignments for the All School Competition will be as follows:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Judges

1

2

3

Accuracy

Furthermore, material provided for this guide which is not from the official Poetry Out Loud website, emerged from the creative mind of Mrs. Jenna Free. Much gratitude for her work on making every year of Poetry Out Loud a success.

Thank you, EDM

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Teachers: The following pages are excellent resources to enhance the

understanding of individual poems, and assist in interpretation of those poems.

Most items are from Poetry Out Loud’s website, however, a “poetry coach” sheet

has been added to allow for feedback from a peer.

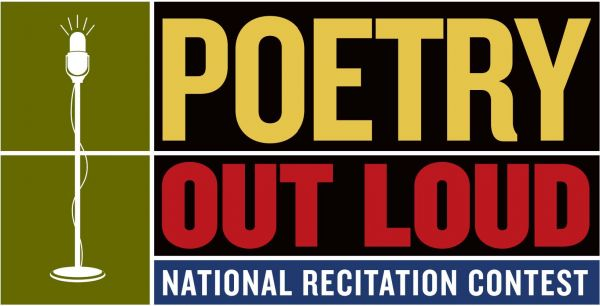
All items are printable, and the use of a print option which prints more than one

page of the manual on one page of printed text is a great paper saving possibility.

Beyond these pages, please find that at the start of each new letter, there is a

suggested lesson.

Thanks, EDM

X

**What****:** Poetry Out Loud Poetry Recitation Contest

**Where:** Tallwood High School… and beyond!

**Why:** POL was created in 2006 by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation *to increase awareness in the art of performing poetry*, with **substantial cash prizes** being awarded to the winners and schools of the winners.

**How:** Choose a poem from the 600 poems on **www.poetryoutloud.org.** Learn about the poem, **memorize the poem**, and present it in class. One winner and one alternate from each class will be chosen to represent us at the THS Preliminaries (see dates below.) In an NDOW-type setting, the students in every English block will recite their poems, and two block winners will be chosen. These 16 students will advance to the THS Finals, where one Tallwood winner (and one alternate) will be chosen to represent THS at the Regional (and hopefully state, then national) Poetry Out Loud Competition!

Will *YOU* be our Tallwood winner??

**DETAILS:**

Class Competitions: dates determined by English teachers

All-Tallwood Preliminaries: Dec 15 & 16 in Schola

(during English class blocks)

All-Tallwood Finals: Dec 17 after school

Regional Finals: January TBD in Norfolk

State Finals: March 13, 2015 in Richmond  
Nationals: April 28-29, 2015 in Washington D.C.

**National Winners:**

1st Place $20,000

2nd Place$10,000

3rd Place: $5,000

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**Poetry Out Loud Details**

**for**

**Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Block: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Day 1 (DATE: )**

**In-class:** Introduction to POL assignment & contest

View past winners’ poems, discuss requirements, & if time, start looking for your poems

**HW:** Go to [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) and choose 3 poems.

**Print a copy of all poems** and bring them to class with you.

**Day 2 (DATE: )**

**In-class:** Context of Poem Activity & Tone Map

Decide which poem is your #1 and #2. Begin practicing aloud with a partner!

**HW:** Completely memorize and POLISH your poem!

**Day 3 (DATE: )**

Presentations! Recite your poem to the class.

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MY SELECTED POEMS

My Name: My Poetry Coach

Class:

Poem 1Title Author Masterlist #

Areas of Strength

Areas to Work On

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

My Name: My Poetry Coach

Class:

Poem 2 Title Author Masterlist #

Areas of Strength

Areas to Work On

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

My Name: My Poetry Coach

Class:

Poem 1Title Author Masterlist #

Areas of Strength

Areas to Work On

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**FAQs**

**How do I choose a poem?**

Poems are listed on the POL website. You can search by title, author, or year. There is a “random poem” button, and also an under-25-lines section. ☺ Look up at least 10 and **choose one that speaks to you!** Ask people you know what their favorite poems are and look those up!

**How is this graded?**

You will receive a grade for your poetry recitation IN CLASS. We will be using the Poetry Out Loud rubric and accuracy chart. Class winners will receive extra credit.

**What if I’m scared of public speaking?**Now is the time to conquer that fear. ☺

**Do I have to dress up?**

Poetry Out Loud rules say that no costumes can be worn. However, it is always a good idea to look professional (at the very least, presentable) when you know you have to speak in front of a group. Most importantly, be comfortable.

**What are some qualities of a strong recitation?**

The competitor appears at ease and comfortable with the audience. He or she engages the audience through physical presence (including appropriate body language), confidence, and eye contact, without appearing artificial. The words are articulate and pronounced correctly. All qualities of the contestant’s physical presence work together to the benefit of the poem.

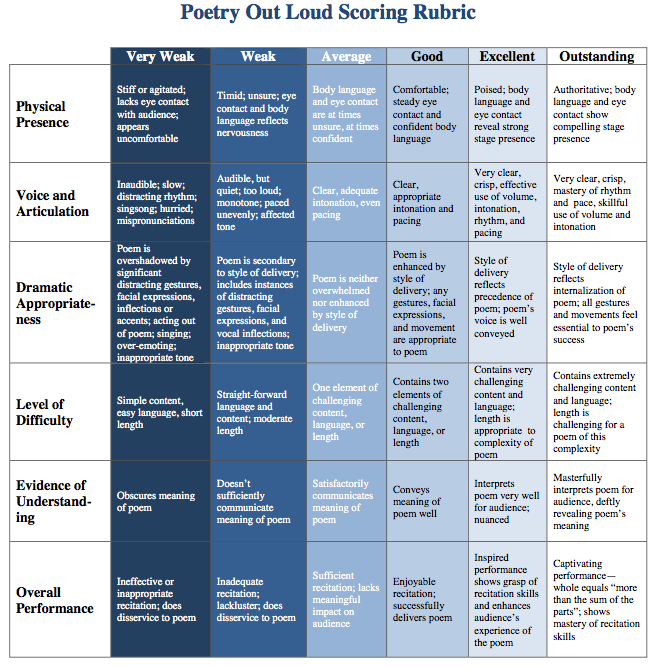
**\*If you are chosen as our class winner,** know that if you advance, you must have 2 poems fully prepared on the Dec 15&16 THS finals. (You will only read #2 in case of a tie for the block champion.)

**\*If you are seriously considering pursuing POL and want to advance, keep this in mind:**

***“****At the state and national finals, students must have 3 poems prepared. One must be 25 lines or fewer, and 1 must be written before the 20th century. The same poem may be used to meet both criteria, and may be the student’s third poem.”*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Poem Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Author\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (maximum of 36 points)

Accuracy Judge’s Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (maximum of 8 points)

[X](#COVER) **FINAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (maximum of 44 points)

**Poetry Out Loud Social Context & Background Activity**

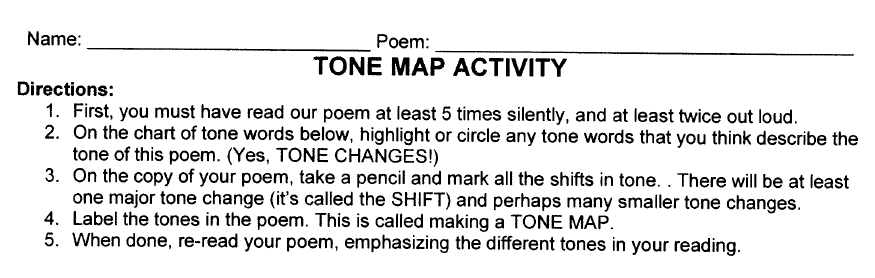
Title of Poem: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Autobiographical info about the author:
2. In what year and country was this poem written? What was going on in history there/then?
3. Who is the SPEAKER of the poem? (name, age, gender, social class, time period, view of world, etc.)
4. What TOPICS are addressed or mentioned in the poem?
5. What is the meaning of the TITLE?
6. What is the THEME or MESSAGE of this poem?

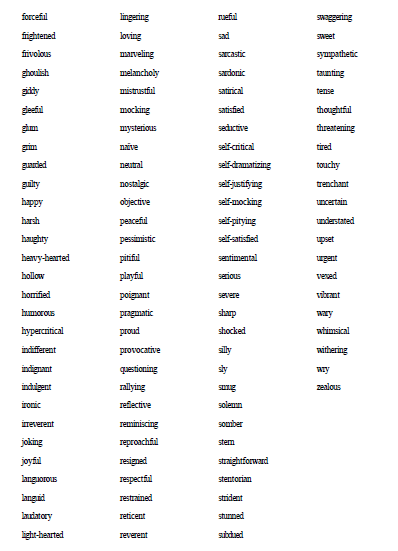
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When done, staple this to the list of tone words and your Tone Map. Submit all three papers together.





[X](#COVER)



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**(Example Tone Map):**  **Mother to Son** By Langston HughesWell, son, I'll tell you: straightforward  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.   
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,   
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor-- Angry?  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I'se been a-climbin' on,   
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So boy, don't you turn back.   
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.   
Don't you fall now --  
For I'se still goin', honey,  
I'se still climbin',   
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

discouraged

accepting

Confident, proud

rallying

Encouraging, urgent

Confident, empowered

reflective

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Attributes of Speech

Presentation and Public Speaking Tips

Becoming a great public speaker involves becoming sufficient in many different areas. The good news is that public speaking can be practiced and you only need to start with one area at a time. Pick one to work on today.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attribute** | **What does it mean?** | **Bad example** | **Good example** | **How to:** |
| **Volume** | How loudly or softly you are speaking. | Someone says, “I can’t hear you!” | The audience doesn’t notice the volume when it’s correct. | It is less common, but still ineffective, when people talk too loudly. |
| **Tone** | The pitch (highness and lowness of your voice.) | Monotone voice | Vocal emphasis placed on important words. “With feeling!” | Get excited about what you are presenting! |
| **Pace** | How quickly or slowly you are speaking. | Speaking super quickly (usually due to nerves.) Less frequent: speaking toooo slooooooww. | A speaker who knows his/her content and audience well. | Take a deep breath every so often. |
| **Eye**  **Contact** | Where you are looking in the room as you speak. | Looking down, at your notes, only at the teacher the whole time. | Looking to all sides of the room throughout. | Pick 3-4 people in different areas of the room to look to. |
| **Body**  **Movement** | Where and how you moved using your presentation. (Includes body language). | Swaying back and forth, distracting hand motions | Hand motions that help explain points and emotions. | Recognize motions you make often. Do them sparingly. |
| **Presence**  **& Poise** | Your “stage presence.”  The total package. | Slouching, indifference, self-depreciating comments. | Facing the class, using the techniques in this column. | Practice public speaking; it will come more naturally. And relax. |
| **Professionalism** | Acting appropriately to the situation. | Lots of slang, constant giggling, commenting to friends in audience, | Using proper speech and grammar, dressing nicely, appearing clean, smiling ☺ | Learn when to switch from “neighborhood talk” to “school/work talk.” |

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**Judge Material**

**All Judging Material Should Come from the following PDF**

**(via the Official Poetry Out Loud Website)**

[**http://www.poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/e68b8897c0/POL%20Judge's%20Guide%202014-15%20FINAL%20TEST.pdf**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/uploads/fl/e68b8897c0/POL%20Judge's%20Guide%202014-15%20FINAL%20TEST.pdf)

**Judging Criteria, Scoresheet and Rubric can be found in Points 4 and 5 of the manual.**

**Accuracy Judge Criteria and Scoresheet are in Points 7 and 8 of the manual.**

**Please Note: This guide may be updated yearly. Please ensure the accuracy of the manual.**

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**INSTRUCTIONS for Days of Competition**

***(Please refer to most recent correspondence for final instructions)***

**Block by Block Competitions**

**Afterschool Competition**

**District Competition**

**State and National Competitions**

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**Masterlist A-List Through Z-List**

Organized by Title of Poem

Please refer to [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) for official poems, biographical information, and other browsing options. If there is an error of any kind, the website’s information trumps this booklet.

For ease of printing out poems, and ease of locating items, this masterlist is organized with the first letter of the poem’s title and the order it appears in the list.

Please be aware that the Navigation search function on most Word programs can easily locate a poem in this edition.

In subsequent years, when items are taken off the list, or items are added to the list, the masterlist should be verified and/or altered against the future list provided by Poetry Out Loud.

Please note the Updated date on the header to ensure the most recent edition of the Masterlist.

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**POL A-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**A1**](#A1)[**A2**](#A2)[**A3**](#A3)[**A4**](#A4)[**A5**](#A5)[**A6**](#A6)[**A7**](#A7)[**A8**](#A8)[**A9**](#A9)[**A10**](#A10)[**A11**](#A11)[**A12**](#A12)[**A13**](#A13)

[**A14**](#A14)[**A15**](#A15)[**A16**](#A16)[**A17**](#A17)[**A18**](#A18)[**A19**](#A19)[**A20**](#A20)[**A21**](#A21)[**A22**](#A22)[**A23**](#A23)[**A24**](#A24)[**A25**](#A25)[**A26**](#A26)

[**A27**](#A27)[**A28**](#A28)[**A29**](#A29)[**A30**](#A30)[**A31**](#A31)[**A32**](#A32)[**A33**](#A33)[**A34**](#A34)[**A35**](#A35)[**A36**](#A36)[**A37**](#A37)[**A38**](#A38)[**A39**](#A39)

[**A40**](#A40)[**A41**](#A41)[**A42**](#A42)[**A43**](#A43)[**A44**](#A44)[**A45**](#A45)[**A46**](#A46)[**A47**](#A47)[**A48**](#A48)[**A49**](#A49)[**A50**](#A50)[**A51**](#A51)[**A52**](#A52)

**A53 A54 A55 A56 A57 A58 A59 A60 A61 A62 A63 A64 A65**

**A66 A67 A68 A69 A70 A71 A72 A73 A74 A75 A76 A77 A78**

**A79 A80 A81 A82 A83 A84 A85 A86 A87 A88 A89 A90 A91**

**A92 A93 A94 A95 A96 A97 A98 A99 A100 A101 A102 A103 A104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**A1. Abandoned Farmhouse By** [**Ted Kooser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ted-kooser)

[X](#COVER)

He was a big man, says the size of his shoes

on a pile of broken dishes by the house;

a tall man too, says the length of the bed

in an upstairs room; and a good, God-fearing man,

says the Bible with a broken back

on the floor below the window, dusty with sun;

but not a man for farming, say the fields

cluttered with boulders and the leaky barn.

A woman lived with him, says the bedroom wall

papered with lilacs and the kitchen shelves

covered with oilcloth, and they had a child,

says the sandbox made from a tractor tire.

Money was scarce, say the jars of plum preserves

and canned tomatoes sealed in the cellar hole.

And the winters cold, say the rags in the window frames.

It was lonely here, says the narrow country road.

Something went wrong, says the empty house

in the weed-choked yard. Stones in the fields

say he was not a farmer; the still-sealed jars

in the cellar say she left in a nervous haste.

And the child? Its toys are strewn in the yard

like branches after a storm—a rubber cow,

a rusty tractor with a broken plow,

a doll in overalls. Something went wrong, they say.

Ted Kooser, "Abandoned Farmhouse" from *Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1980 by Ted Kooser. Reprinted by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems* (Zoland Books, 1980)

**A2. Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight By** [**Vachel Lindsay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/vachel-lindsay)

[X](#COVER)

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state

That here at midnight, in our little town

A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,

Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards

He lingers where his children used to play,

Or through the market, on the well-worn stones

He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,

A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl

Make him the quaint great figure that men love,

The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.

He is among us:—as in times before!

And we who toss and lie awake for long

Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.

Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?

Too many peasants fight, they know not why,

Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.

He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.

He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now

The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn

Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free;

The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,

Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,

That all his hours of travail here for men

Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace

That he may sleep upon his hill again?

**A3. Across the Bay By** [**Donald Davie**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/donald-davie)

[X](#COVER)

﻿A queer thing about those waters: there are no

Birds there, or hardly any.

I did not miss them, I do not remember

Missing them, or thinking it uncanny.

The beach so-called was a blinding splinter of limestone,

A quarry outraged by hulls.

We took pleasure in that: the emptiness, the hardness

Of the light, the silence, and the water’s stillness.

But this was the setting for one of our murderous scenes.

This hurt, and goes on hurting:

The venomous soft jelly, the undersides.

We could stand the world if it were hard all over.

Donald Davie, "Across the Bay" from *Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1985 by Donald Davie. Reprinted by permission of Carcanet Press, Ltd.﻿

Source: *Selected Poems* (Carcanet Press Ltd, 1985)

**A4. Actaeon By** [**A. E. Stallings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ae-stallings)

The hounds, you know them all by name.

You fostered them from purblind whelps

At their dam’s teats, and you have come

To know the music of their yelps:

High-strung Anthee, the brindled bitch,

The blue-tick coated Philomel,

And freckled Chloe, who would fetch

A pretty price if you would sell—

All fleet of foot, and swift to scent,

Inexorable once on the track,

Like angry words you might have meant,

But do not mean, and can’t take back.

There was a time when you would brag

How they would bay and rend apart

The hopeless belling from a stag.

You falter now for the foundered hart.

Desires you nursed of a winter night—

Did you know then why you bred them—

Whose needling milk-teeth used to bite

The master’s hand that leashed and fed them?

A.E. Stallings, “Actaeon” from *Hapax.* Copyright © 2003, 2006 by A. E. Stallings. Reprinted with the permission of Northwestern University Press, www.nupress.northwestern.edu/.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (May 2003).

**A5. Adam's Curse By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

[X](#COVER)

We sat together at one summer’s end,

That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,

And you and I, and talked of poetry.

I said, ‘A line will take us hours maybe;

Yet if it does not seem a moment’s thought,

Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.

Better go down upon your marrow-bones

And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones

Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;

For to articulate sweet sounds together

Is to work harder than all these, and yet

Be thought an idler by the noisy set

Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen

The martyrs call the world.’

And thereupon

That beautiful mild woman for whose sake

There’s many a one shall find out all heartache

On finding that her voice is sweet and low

Replied, ‘To be born woman is to know—

Although they do not talk of it at school—

That we must labour to be beautiful.’

I said, ‘It’s certain there is no fine thing

Since Adam’s fall but needs much labouring.

There have been lovers who thought love should be

So much compounded of high courtesy

That they would sigh and quote with learned looks

Precedents out of beautiful old books;

Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.’

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;

We saw the last embers of daylight die,

And in the trembling blue-green of the sky

A moon, worn as if it had been a shell

Washed by time’s waters as they rose and fell

About the stars and broke in days and years.

I had a thought for no one’s but your ears:

That you were beautiful, and that I strove

To love you in the old high way of love;

That it had all seemed happy, and yet we’d grown

As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

**A6. Adlestrop By** [**Edward Thomas**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edward-thomas)

[X](#COVER)

Yes. I remember Adlestrop—

The name, because one afternoon

Of heat the express-train drew up there

Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.

No one left and no one came

On the bare platform. What I saw

Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,

And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,

No whit less still and lonely fair

Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang

Close by, and round him, mistier,

Farther and farther, all the birds

Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

Source: *Poems* (1917)

**A7. Advice to a Prophet By** [**Richard Wilbur**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-wilbur)

[X](#COVER)

When you come, as you soon must, to the streets of our city,

Mad-eyed from stating the obvious,

Not proclaiming our fall but begging us

In God’s name to have self-pity,

Spare us all word of the weapons, their force and range,

The long numbers that rocket the mind;

Our slow, unreckoning hearts will be left behind,

Unable to fear what is too strange.

Nor shall you scare us with talk of the death of the race.

How should we dream of this place without us?—

The sun mere fire, the leaves untroubled about us,

A stone look on the stone’s face?

Speak of the world’s own change. Though we cannot conceive

Of an undreamt thing, we know to our cost

How the dreamt cloud crumbles, the vines are blackened by frost,

How the view alters. We could believe,

If you told us so, that the white-tailed deer will slip

Into perfect shade, grown perfectly shy,

The lark avoid the reaches of our eye,

The jack-pine lose its knuckled grip

On the cold ledge, and every torrent burn

As Xanthus once, its gliding trout

Stunned in a twinkling. What should we be without

The dolphin’s arc, the dove’s return,

These things in which we have seen ourselves and spoken?

Ask us, prophet, how we shall call

Our natures forth when that live tongue is all

Dispelled, that glass obscured or broken

In which we have said the rose of our love and the clean

Horse of our courage, in which beheld

The singing locust of the soul unshelled,

And all we mean or wish to mean.

Ask us, ask us whether with the worldless rose

Our hearts shall fail us; come demanding

Whether there shall be lofty or long standing

When the bronze annals of the oak-tree close.

Richard Wilbur, “Advice to a Prophet” from *Collected Poems 1943-2004.* Copyright © 2004 by Richard Wilbur. Reprinted with the permission of Harcourt, Inc. This material may not be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Collected Poems 1943-2004* (2004)

**A8. The Affliction of Richard By** [**Robert Bridges**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-bridges)

[X](#COVER)

Love not too much. But how,

When thou hast made me such,

And dost thy gifts bestow,

How can I love too much?

Though I must fear to lose,

And drown my joy in care,

With all its thorns I choose

The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,

Didst kill my childish trust,

That breach with toil did I

Repair, because I must:

And spite of frighting schemes,

With which the fiends of Hell

Blaspheme thee in my dreams,

So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,

What marvel in me wrought

Shall quite exculpate thee,

I have no shadow of thought.

What am I that complain?

The love, from which began

My question sad and vain,

Justifies thee to man.

**A9. After a Rainstorm By** [**Robert Wrigley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-wrigley)

Because I have come to the fence at night,

the horses arrive also from their ancient stable.

They let me stroke their long faces, and I note

in the light of the now-merging moon

how they, a Morgan and a Quarter, have been

by shake-guttered raindrops

spotted around their rumps and thus made

Appaloosas, the ancestral horses of this place.

Maybe because it is night, they are nervous,

or maybe because they too sense

what they have become, they seem

to be waiting for me to say something

to whatever ancient spirits might still abide here,

that they might awaken from this strange dream,

in which there are fences and stables and a man

who doesn’t know a single word they understand.

Poem copyright ©2010 by Robert Wrigley from his most recent book of poetry, *Beautiful Country*, Penguin Books, 2010.

**A10. After Apple-Picking By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

[X](#COVER)

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree

Toward heaven still,

And there's a barrel that I didn't fill

Beside it, and there may be two or three

Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.

But I am done with apple-picking now.

Essence of winter sleep is on the night,

The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.

I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight

I got from looking through a pane of glass

I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough

And held against the world of hoary grass.

It melted, and I let it fall and break.

But I was well

Upon my way to sleep before it fell,

And I could tell

What form my dreaming was about to take.

Magnified apples appear and disappear,

Stem end and blossom end,

And every fleck of russet showing clear.

My instep arch not only keeps the ache,

It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.

I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin

The rumbling sound

Of load on load of apples coming in.

For I have had too much

Of apple-picking: I am overtired

Of the great harvest I myself desired.

There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,

Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.

For all

That struck the earth,

No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,

Went surely to the cider-apple heap

As of no worth.

One can see what will trouble

This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.

Were he not gone,

The woodchuck could say whether it's like his

Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,

Or just some human sleep.

**A11. After the Gentle Poet Kobayashi Issa By** [**Robert Hass**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-hass)

[X](#COVER)

New Year’s morning—

everything is in blossom!

I feel about average.

A huge frog and I

staring at each other,

neither of us moves.

This moth saw brightness

in a woman’s chamber—

burned to a crisp.

Asked how old he was

the boy in the new kimono

stretched out all five fingers.

Blossoms at night,

like people

moved by music

Napped half the day;

no one

punished me!

Fiftieth birthday:

From now on,

It’s all clear profit,

every sky.

Don’t worry, spiders,

I keep house

casually.

These sea slugs,

they just don’t seem

*Japanese*.

Hell:

Bright autumn moon;

pond snails crying

in the saucepan.

Robert Hass, “After the Gentle Poet Kobayashi Issa” from *Field Guide.* Copyright © 1973 by Robert Hass. Reprinted with the permission of Yale University Press, http://www.yale.edu/yup/.

Source: *Field Guide* (1973)

**A12. After working sixty hours again for what reason By** [**Bob Hicok**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/bob-hicok)

[X](#COVER)

The best job I had was moving a stone

from one side of the road to the other.

This required a permit which required

a bribe. The bribe took all my salary.

Yet because I hadn’t finished the job

I had no salary, and to pay the bribe

I took a job moving the stone

the other way. Because the official

wanted his bribe, he gave me a permit

for the second job. When I pointed out

that the work would be best completed

if I did nothing, he complimented

my brain and wrote a letter

to my employer suggesting promotion

on stationery bearing the wings

of a raptor spread in flight

over a mountain smaller than the bird.

My boss, fearing my intelligence,

paid me to sleep on the sofa

and take lunch with the official

who required a bribe to keep anything

from being done. When I told my parents,

they wrote my brother to come home

from university to be slapped

on the back of the head. Dutifully,

he arrived and bowed to receive

his instruction, at which point

sense entered his body and he asked

what I could do by way of a job.

I pointed out there were stones

everywhere trying not to move,

all it took was a little gumption

to be the man who didn’t move them.

It was harder to explain the intricacies

of not obtaining a permit to not

do this. Just yesterday he got up

at dawn and shaved, as if the lack

of hair on his face has anything

to do with the appearance of food

on an empty table.

"After working sixty hours again for what reason" from *Insomnia Diary*, by Bob Hicok, ©2004. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Insomnia Diary* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004)

**A13. Ah! Why, Because the Dazzling Sun By** [**Emily Brontë**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-bronte)

[X](#COVER)

Ah! why, because the dazzling sun

Restored my earth to joy

Have you departed, every one,

And left a desert sky?

All through the night, your glorious eyes

Were gazing down in mine,

And with a full heart's thankful sighs

I blessed that watch divine!

I was at peace, and drank your beams

As they were life to me

And revelled in my changeful dreams

Like petrel on the sea.

Thought followed thought—star followed star

Through boundless regions on,

While one sweet influence, near and far,

Thrilled through and proved us one.

Why did the morning rise to break

So great, so pure a spell,

And scorch with fire the tranquil cheek

Where your cool radiance fell?

Blood-red he rose, and arrow-straight,

His fierce beams struck my brow;

The soul of Nature sprang elate,

But mine sank sad and low!

My lids closed down—yet through their veil

I saw him blazing still;

And bathe in gold the misty dale,

And flash upon the hill.

I turned me to the pillow then

To call back Night, and see

Your worlds of solemn light, again

Throb with my heart and me!

It would not do—the pillow glowed

And glowed both roof and floor,

And birds sang loudly in the wood,

And fresh winds shook the door.

The curtains waved, the wakened flies

Were murmuring round my room,

Imprisoned there, till I should rise

And give them leave to roam.

O Stars and Dreams and Gentle Night;

O Night and Stars return!

And hide me from the hostile light

That does not warm, but burn—

That drains the blood of suffering men;

Drinks tears, instead of dew:

Let me sleep through his blinding reign,

And only wake with you!

Source: *The Longman Anthology of Poetry* (2006)

**A14. The Albatross By** [**Kate Bass**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kate-bass)

[X](#COVER)

When I know you are coming home

I put on this necklace:

glass beads on a silken thread,

a blue that used to match my eyes.

I like to think I am remembering you.

I like to think you don’t forget.

The necklace lies heavy on my skin,

it clatters when I reach down

to lift my screaming child.

I swing her, roll her in my arms until she forgets.

The beads glitter in the flicker of a TV set

as I sit her on my lap

and wish away the afternoon.

I wait until I hear a gate latch lift

the turn of key in lock.

I sit amongst toys and unwashed clothes,

I sit and she fingers the beads until you speak

in a voice that no longer seems familiar, only strange.

I turn as our child tugs at the string.

I hear a snap and a sound like falling rain.

Kate Bass, “The Albatross” from *The Pasta Maker*. Copyright © 2003 by Kate Bass. Reprinted by permission of The Poetry Business.  
  
Source: *The Pasta Maker* (2003)

**A15. All Hallows’ Eve By** [**Dorothea Tanning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dorothea-tanning)

Be perfect, make it otherwise.

Yesterday is torn in shreds.

Lightning’s thousand sulfur eyes

Rip apart the breathing beds.

Hear bones crack and pulverize.

Doom creeps in on rubber treads.

Countless overwrought housewives,

Minds unraveling like threads,

Try lipstick shades to tranquilize

Fears of age and general dreads.

Sit tight, be perfect, swat the spies,

Don’t take faucets for fountainheads.

Drink tasty antidotes. Otherwise

You and the werewolf: newlyweds.

Dorothea Tanning, “All Hallows’ Eve” from *Coming to That*. Copyright © 2011 by Dorothea Tanning. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press.

Source: *Coming to That* (Graywolf Press, 2011)

**A16. All This and More By** [**Mary Karr**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-karr)

[X](#COVER)

The Devil’s tour of hell did not include

a factory line where molten lead

spilled into mouths held wide,

no electric drill spiraling screws

into hands and feet, nor giant pliers

to lower you into simmering vats.

Instead, a circle of light

opened on your stuffed armchair,

whose chintz orchids did not boil and change,

and the Devil adjusted

your new spiked antennae

almost delicately, with claws curled

and lacquered black, before he spread

his leather wings to leap

into the acid-green sky.

So your head became a tv hull,

a gargoyle mirror. Your doppelganger

sloppy at the mouth

and swollen at the joints

enacted your days in sinuous

slow motion, your lines delivered

with a mocking sneer. Sometimes

the frame froze, reversed, began

again: the red eyes of a friend

you cursed, your girl child cowered

behind the drapes, parents alive again

and puzzled by this new form. That’s why

you clawed your way back to this life.

Mary Karr, “All This and More” from *The Devil's Tour.* Copyright © 1993 by Mary Karr. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.  
  
Source: *The Devil's Tour* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993)

**A17. America By** [**Claude McKay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/claude-mckay)

[X](#COVER)

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,

And sinks into my throat her tiger’s tooth,

Stealing my breath of life, I will confess

I love this cultured hell that tests my youth.

Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,

Giving me strength erect against her hate,

Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.

Yet, as a rebel fronts a king in state,

I stand within her walls with not a shred

Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.

Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,

And see her might and granite wonders there,

Beneath the touch of Time’s unerring hand,

Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

Claude McKay, "America" from *Liberator* (December 1921). Courtesy of the Literary Representative for the Works of Claude McKay, Schombourg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tildeen Foundations. Source: *Liberator* (The Library of America, 1921)

**A18. American Smooth By** [**Rita Dove**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

We were dancing—it must have

been a foxtrot or a waltz,

something romantic but

requiring restraint,

rise and fall, precise

execution as we moved

into the next song without

stopping, two chests heaving

above a seven-league

stride—such perfect agony,

one learns to smile through,

ecstatic mimicry

being the *sine qua non*

of American Smooth.

And because I was distracted

by the effort of

keeping my frame

(the leftward lean, head turned

just enough to gaze out

past your ear and always

smiling, smiling),

I didn’t notice

how still you’d become until

we had done it

(for two measures?

four?)—achieved flight,

that swift and serene

magnificence,

before the earth

remembered who we were

and brought us down. ﻿

Rita Dove, “American Smooth” from *American Smooth*. Copyright © 2004 by Rita Dove. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.﻿ Source: *American Smooth﻿* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004)

**A19. The American Soldier By** [**Philip Freneau**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-freneau)

[X](#COVER)

A Picture from the Life  
To serve with love,  
And shed your blood,  
Approved may be above,  
But here below  
(Example shew,)  
‘Tis dangerous to be good.  
  
--Lord Oxford

Deep in a vale, a stranger now to arms,

Too poor to shine in courts, too proud to beg,

He, who once warred on *Saratoga’s* plains,

Sits musing o’er his scars, and wooden leg.

Remembering still the toil of former days,

To other hands he sees his earnings paid;--

*They* share the due reward—*he* feeds on praise.

Lost in the abyss of want, misfortune’s shade.

Far, far from domes where splendid tapers glare,

‘Tis his from dear bought *peace* no wealth to win,

Removed alike from courtly cringing ‘squires,

The great-man’s *Levee*, and the proud man’s grin.

Sold are those arms which once on Britons blazed,

When, flushed with conquest, to the charge they came;

That power repelled, and *Freedom’s* fabrick raised,

She leaves her soldier—*famine and a name!*

Source: (1809)

**A20. American Solitude By** [**Grace Schulman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/grace-schulman)

[X](#COVER)

“The cure for loneliness is solitude.”   
—Marianne Moore

Hopper never painted this, but here

on a snaky path his vision lingers:

three white tombs, robots with glassed-in faces

and meters for eyes, grim mouths, flat noses,

lean forward on a platform, like strangers

with identical frowns scanning a blur,

far off, that might be their train.

Gas tanks broken for decades face Parson’s

smithy, planked shut now. Both relics must stay.

The pumps have roots in gas pools, and the smithy

stores memories of hammers forging scythes

to cut spartina grass for dry salt hay.

The tanks have the remove of local clammers

who sink buckets and stand, never in pairs,

but one and one and one, blank-eyed, alone,

more serene than lonely. Today a woman

rakes in the shallows, then bends to receive

last rays in shimmering water, her long shadow

knifing the bay. She slides into her truck

to watch the sky flame over sand flats, a hawk’s

wind arabesque, an island risen, brown

Atlantis, at low tide; she probes the shoreline

and beyond grassy dunes for where the land

might slope off into night. Hers is no common

emptiness, but a vaster silence filled

with terns’ cries, an abundant solitude.

Nearby, the three dry gas pumps, worn

survivors of clam-digging generations,

are luminous, and have an exile’s grandeur

that says: In perfect solitude, there’s fire.

One day I approached the vessels

and wanted to drive on, the road ablaze

with dogwood in full bloom, but the contraptions

outdazzled the road’s white, even outshone

[X](#COVER)

a bleached shirt flapping alone

on a laundry line, arms pointed down.

High noon. Three urns, ironic in their outcast

dignity—as though, like some pine chests,

they might be prized in disuse—cast rays,

spun leaf—covered numbers, clanked, then wheezed

and stopped again. Shadows cut the road

before I drove off into the dark woods.

Grace Schulman, “American Solitude” from *Days of Wonder: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2002 by Grace Schulman. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved, [www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com](http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com).

Source: *Days of Wonder: New and Selected Poems* (2002)

**A21. Amor Mundi By** [**Christina Rossetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christina-rossetti)

“Oh where are you going with your love-locks flowing

On the west wind blowing along this valley track?”

“The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,

We shall escape the uphill by never turning back.”

So they two went together in glowing August weather,

The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and right;

And dear she was to dote on, her swift feet seemed to float on

The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

“Oh what is that in heaven where gray cloud-flakes are seven,

Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy skirt?”

“Oh that’s a meteor sent us, a message dumb, portentous,

An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt.”

“Oh what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers grow thickly,

Their scent comes rich and sickly?”—“A scaled and hooded worm.”

“Oh what’s that in the hollow, so pale I quake to follow?”

“Oh that’s a thin dead body which waits the eternal term.”

“Turn again, O my sweetest,—turn again, false and fleetest:

This beaten way thou beatest I fear is hell’s own track.”

“Nay, too steep for hill-mounting; nay, too late for cost-counting:

This downhill path is easy, but there’s no turning back.”

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983)

**A22. Analysis of Baseball By** [**May Swenson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/may-swenson)

[X](#COVER)

It’s about Ball fits

the ball, mitt, but

the bat, not all

and the mitt. the time.

Ball hits Sometimes

bat, or it ball gets hit

hits mitt. (pow) when bat

Bat doesn’t meets it,

hit ball, and sails

bat meets it. to a place

Ball bounces where mitt

off bat, flies has to quit

air, or thuds in disgrace.

ground (dud) That’s about

or it the bases

fits mitt. loaded,

about 40,000

Bat waits fans exploded.

for ball

to mate. It’s about

Ball hates the ball,

to take bat’s the bat,

bait. Ball the mitt,

flirts, bat’s the bases

late, don’t and the fans.

keep the date. It’s done

Ball goes in on a diamond,

(thwack) to mitt, and for fun.

and goes out It’s about

(thwack) back home, and it’s

to mitt. about run.

May Swenson, “Analysis of Baseball” from *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Boston: Atlantic/Little Brown, 1978). Copyright © 1978 by May Swenson. Reprinted with the permission of The Literary Estate of May Swenson.

Source: *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Little Brown and Company, 1978)

**A23. And Soul By** [**Eavan Boland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eavan-boland)

[X](#COVER)

My mother died one summer—

the wettest in the records of the state.

Crops rotted in the west.

Checked tablecloths dissolved in back gardens.

Empty deck chairs collected rain.

As I took my way to her

through traffic, through lilacs dripping blackly

behind houses

and on curbsides, to pay her

the last tribute of a daughter, I thought of something

I remembered

I heard once, that the body is, or is

said to be, almost all

water and as I turned southward, that ours is

a city of it,

one in which

every single day the elements begin

a journey towards each other that will never,

given our weather,

fail—

the ocean visible in the edges cut by it,

cloud color reaching into air,

the Liffey storing one and summoning the other,

salt greeting the lack of it at the North Wall and,

as if that wasn't enough, all of it

ending up almost every evening

inside our speech—

*coast canal ocean river stream* and now

*mother* and I drove on and although

the mind is unreliable in grief, at

the next cloudburst it almost seemed

they could be shades of each other,

the way the body is

of every one of them and now

they were on the move again—fog into mist,

mist into sea spray and both into the oily glaze

that lay on the railings of

the house she was dying in

as I went inside.

“And Soul” from DOMESTIC VIOLENCE by Eavan Boland. Copyright ©2007 by Eavan Boland. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *Domestic Violence* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2007)

**A24. Anecdote of the Jar By** [**Wallace Stevens**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wallace-stevens)

[X](#COVER)

I placed a jar in Tennessee,

And round it was, upon a hill.

It made the slovenly wilderness

Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,

And sprawled around, no longer wild.

The jar was round upon the ground

And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.

The jar was gray and bare.

It did not give of bird or bush,

Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar" from Collected Poems. Copyright 1923, 1951, 1954 by Wallace Stevens. Reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. Source: *Collected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1954)

**A25. Angels By** [**B. H. Fairchild**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/b-h-fairchild)

Elliot Ray Neiderland, home from college

one winter, hauling a load of Herefords

from Hogtown to Guymon with a pint of

Ezra Brooks and a copy of Rilke’s *Duineser*

*Elegien*

on the seat beside him, saw the ass-end

of his semi gliding around in the side mirror

as he hit ice and knew he would never live

to see graduation or the castle at Duino.

In the hospital, head wrapped like a gift

(the nurses had stuck a bow on top), he said

four flaming angels crouched on the hood, wings

spread so wide he couldn’t see, and then

the world collapsed. We smiled and passed a flask

around. Little Bill and I sang *Your Cheatin’*

*Heart*

and laughed, and then a sudden quiet

put a hard edge on the morning and we left.

*Siehe, ich lebe*, *Look, I’m alive*, he said,

leaping down the hospital steps. The nurses

waved, white dresses puffed out like pigeons

in the morning breeze. We roared off in my Dodge,

*Behold, I come like a thief!* he shouted to the town

and gave his life to poetry. He lives, now,

in the south of France. His poems arrive

by mail, and we read them and do not understand.

B. H. Fairchild, “Angels” from *The Arrival of the Future.* Copyright © 2000 by B. H. Fairchild. Reprinted with the permission of Alice James Books.Source: *The Arrival of the Future* (Alice James Books, 2000)

**A26. The Animals By** [**Josephine Jacobsen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/josephine-jacobsen)

[X](#COVER)

At night, alone, the animals came and shone.

The darkness whirled but silent shone the animals:

The lion the man the calf the eagle saying

Sanctus which was and is and is to come.

The sleeper watched the people at the waterless wilderness’ edge;

The wilderness was made of granite, of thorn, of death,

It was the goat which lightened the people praying.

The goat went out with sin on its sunken head.

On the sleeper’s midnight and the smaller after hours

From above below elsewhere there shone the animals

Through the circular dark; the cock appeared in light

Crying three times, for tears for tears for tears.

High in the frozen tree the sparrow sat. At three o’clock

The luminous thunder of its fall fractured the earth.

The somber serpent looped its coils to write

In scales the slow snake-music of the red ripe globe.

To the sleeper, alone, the animals came and shone,

The darkness whirled but silent shone the animals.

Just before dawn the dove flew out of the dark

Flying with green in her beak; the dove also had come.

Josephine Jacobsen, “The Animals” from *In the Crevice of Time: New and Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1995 by Josephine Jacobsen. Reproduced with the permission of The Johns Hopkins University Press.  
  
Source: *In the Crevice of Time: New and Selected Poems* (1995)

**A27. The animals in that country By** [**Margaret Atwood**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-atwood)

[X](#COVER)

In that country the animals

have the faces of people:

the ceremonial

cats possessing the streets

the fox run

politely to earth, the huntsmen

standing around him, fixed

in their tapestry of manners

the bull, embroidered

with blood and given

an elegant death, trumpets, his name

stamped on him, heraldic brand

because

(when he rolled

on the sand, sword in his heart, the teeth

in his blue mouth were human)

he is really a man

even the wolves, holding resonant

conversations in their

forests thickened with legend.

In this country the animals

have the faces of

animals.

Their eyes

flash once in car headlights

and are gone.

Their deaths are not elegant.

They have the faces of

no-one.

Margaret Atwood, “The animals in that country” from *Selected Poems 1965-1975.* Copyright © 1974, 1976 by Margaret Atwood. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.Source: *Selected Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976)

**A28. Anne Rutledge By** [**Edgar Lee Masters**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-lee-masters)

[X](#COVER)

Out of me unworthy and unknown

The vibrations of deathless music;

“With malice toward none, with charity for all.”

Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,

And the beneficent face of a nation

Shining with justice and truth.

I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,

Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,

Wedded to him, not through union,

But through separation.

Bloom forever, O Republic,

From the dust of my bosom! Source: *Spoon River Anthology* (1916)

**A29. Another Feeling By** [**Ruth Stone**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ruth-stone)

Once you saw a drove of young pigs

crossing the highway. One of them

pulling his body by the front feet,

the hind legs dragging flat.

Without thinking,

you called the Humane Society.

They came with a net and went for him.

They were matter of fact, uniformed;

there were two of them,

their truck ominous, with a cage.

He was hiding in the weeds. It was then

you saw his eyes. He understood.

He was trembling.

After they took him, you began to suffer regret.

Years later, you remember his misfit body

scrambling to reach the others.

Even at this moment, your heart

is going too fast; your hands sweat.

Reprinted from *In the Dark*, Copper Canyon Pr, 2004, by permission of the author and pub. Source: *In the Dark* (2004)

**A30. Anthem for Doomed Youth By** [**Wilfred Owen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wilfred-owen)

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Source: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen, edited by Jon Stallworthy* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)

**A31. Apollo By** [**Elizabeth Alexander**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-alexander)

[X](#COVER)

We pull off

to a road shack

in Massachusetts

to watch men walk

on the moon. We did

the same thing

for three two one

blast off, and now

we watch the same men

bounce in and out

of craters. I want

a Coke and a hamburger.

Because the men

are walking on the moon

which is now irrefutably

not green, not cheese,

not a shiny dime floating

in a cold blue,

the way I'd thought,

the road shack people don't

notice we are a black

family not from there,

the way it mostly goes.

This talking through

static, bounces in space-

boots, tethered

to cords is much

stranger, stranger

even than we are.

Elizabeth Alexander, “Apollo” from *Poetry* (April 1992). Reprinted with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (April 1992).

**A32. An Apology For Her Poetry By** [**Margaret Cavendish**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-cavendish)

[X](#COVER)

I language want to dress my fancies in,

The hair's uncurled, the garment's loose and thin.

Had they but silver lace to make them gay,

They'd be more courted than in poor array;

Or, had they art, would make a better show;

But they are plain; yet cleanly do they go.

The world in bravery doth take delight,

And glistering shows do more attract the sight:

And every one doth honor a rich hood,

As if the outside made the inside good.

And every one doth bow and give the place,

Not for the man's sake but the silver lace.

Let me intreat in my poor book's behalf,

That all will not adore the golden calf.

Consider, pray, gold hath no life therein,

And life, in nature, is the richest thing.

Be just, let Fancy have the upper place,

And then my verses may perchance find grace.

Source: *The Cavalier and His Lady* ()

**A33. The Appalachian Book of the Dead By** [**Charles Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-wright)

[X](#COVER)

Sunday, September Sunday ... Outdoors,

Like an early page from The Appalachian Book of the Dead,

Sunlight lavishes brilliance on every surface,

Doves settle, surreptitious angels, on tree limb and box branch,

A crow calls, deep in its own darkness,

Something like water ticks on

Just there, beyond the horizon, just there, steady clock ...

*Go in fear of abstractions ...*

Well, possibly. Meanwhile,

They *are* the strata our bodies rise through, the sere veins

Our skins rub off on.

For instance, whatever enlightenment there might be

Housels compassion and affection, those two tributaries

That river above our lives,

Whose waters we sense the sense of

late at night, and later still.

Uneasy, suburbanized,

I drift from the lawn chair to the back porch to the dwarf orchard

Testing the grass and border garden.

A stillness, as in the passageways of Paradise,

Bell jars the afternoon.

Leaves, like *ex votos,* hang hard and shine

Under the endlessness of heaven.

Such skeletal altars, such vacant sanctuary.

It always amazes me

How landscape recalibrates the stations of the dead,

How what we see jacks up

the odd quotient of what we don’t see,

How God’s breath reconstitutes our walking up and walking down.

First glimpse of autumn, stretched tight and snicked, a bad face lift,

Flicks in and flicks out,

a virtual reality.

Time to begin the long division.

Charles Wright, “The Appalachian Book of the Dead” from *Black Zodiac.* Copyright © 1997 by Charles Wright. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Source: *Black Zodiac* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1997)

**A34. The Applicant By** [**Sylvia Plath**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sylvia-plath)

[X](#COVER)

First, are you our sort of a person?

Do you wear

A glass eye, false teeth or a crutch,

A brace or a hook,

Rubber breasts or a rubber crotch,

Stitches to show something's missing? No, no? Then

How can we give you a thing?

Stop crying.

Open your hand.

Empty? Empty. Here is a hand

To fill it and willing

To bring teacups and roll away headaches

And do whatever you tell it.

Will you marry it?

It is guaranteed

To thumb shut your eyes at the end

And dissolve of sorrow.

We make new stock from the salt.

I notice you are stark naked.

How about this suit——

Black and stiff, but not a bad fit.

Will you marry it?

It is waterproof, shatterproof, proof

Against fire and bombs through the roof.

Believe me, they'll bury you in it.

Now your head, excuse me, is empty.

I have the ticket for that.

Come here, sweetie, out of the closet.

Well, what do you think of *that*?

Naked as paper to start

But in twenty-five years she'll be silver,

In fifty, gold.

A living doll, everywhere you look.

It can sew, it can cook,

It can talk, talk, talk.

It works, there is nothing wrong with it.

You have a hole, it's a poultice.

You have an eye, it's an image.

My boy, it's your last resort.

Will you marry it, marry it, marry it.

Sylvia Plath, "The Applicant" from *The Collected Poems*. Copyright © 2008 by Sylvia Plath. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems* (Faber and Faber, 1989)

**A35. April Love﻿ By** [**Ernest Dowson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ernest-dowson)

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We have walked in Love's land a little way,

We have learnt his lesson a little while,

And shall we not part at the end of day,

With a sigh, a smile?

A little while in the shine of the sun,

We were twined together, joined lips, forgot

How the shadows fall when the day is done,

And when Love is not.

We have made no vows--there will none be broke,

Our love was free as the wind on the hill,

There was no word said we need wish unspoke,

We have wrought no ill.

So shall we not part at the end of day,

Who have loved and lingered a little while,

Join lips for the last time, go our way,

With a sigh, a smile?

**A36. April Midnight﻿ By** [**Arthur Symons**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arthur-symons)

Side by side through the streets at midnight,

Roaming together,

Through the tumultuous night of London,

In the miraculous April weather.

Roaming together under the gaslight,

Day’s work over,

How the Spring calls to us, here in the city,

Calls to the heart from the heart of a lover!

Cool to the wind blows, fresh in our faces,

Cleansing, entrancing,

After the heat and the fumes and the footlights,

Where you dance and I watch your dancing.

Good it is to be here together,

Good to be roaming,

Even in London, even at midnight,

Lover-like in a lover’s gloaming.

You the dancer and I the dreamer,

Children together,

Wandering lost in the night of London,

In the miraculous April weather.

**A37. Aria By** [**David Barber**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-barber)

[X](#COVER)

What if   it were possible to vanquish

All this shame with a wash of   varnish

Instead of wishing the stain would vanish?

What if   you gave it a glossy finish?

What if   there were a way to burnish

All this foolishness, all the anguish?

What if   you gave yourself   leave to ravish

All these ravages with famished relish?

What if   this were your way to flourish?

What if   the self   you love to punish —

Knavish, peevish, wolfish, sheepish —

Were all slicked up in something lavish?

Why so squeamish? Why make a fetish

Out of everything you must relinquish?

Why not embellish what you can’t abolish?

What would be left if   you couldn’t brandish

All the slavishness you’ve failed to banish?

What would you be without this gibberish?

What if   the true worth of the varnish

Were to replenish your resolve to vanquish

Every vain wish before you vanish?

**A38. The Arrow and the Song By** [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

I shot an arrow into the air,

It fell to earth, I knew not where;

For, so swiftly it flew, the sight

Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,

It fell to earth, I knew not where;

For who has sight so keen and strong,

That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak

I found the arrow, still unbroke;

And the song, from beginning to end,

I found again in the heart of a friend.

**A39. Ars Poetica By** [**Archibald MacLeish**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/archibald-macleish)

[X](#COVER)

A poem should be palpable and mute

As a globed fruit,

Dumb

As old medallions to the thumb,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone

Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless

As the flight of birds.

\*

A poem should be motionless in time

As the moon climbs,

Leaving, as the moon releases

Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,

Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time

As the moon climbs.

\*

A poem should be equal to:

Not true.

For all the history of grief

An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love

The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean

But be.

Archibald MacLeish, “Ars Poetica” from *Collected Poems 1917-1982.* Copyright © 1985 by The Estate of Archibald MacLeish. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 1926).

**A40. The Art Room By** [**Shara McCallum**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/shara-mccallum)

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*for my sisters*

Because we did not have threads

of turquoise, silver, and gold,

we could not sew a sun nor sky.

And our hands became balls of fire.

And our arms spread open like wings.

Because we had no chalk or pastels,

no toad, forest, or morning-grass slats

of paper, we had no colour

for creatures. So we squatted

and sprang, squatted and sprang.

Four young girls, plaits heavy

on our backs, our feet were beating

drums, drawing rhythms from the floor;

our mouths became woodwinds;

our tongues touched teeth and were reeds.

“The Art Room” is from the book *Song of Thieves*, by Shara McCallum, © 2003. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Song of Thieves* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003)

**A41. An Arundel Tomb By** [**Philip Larkin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-larkin)

[X](#COVER)

Side by side**Side by side** To see a recent photograph of this tomb of the Earl and Countess of Arundel that Larkin is describing, [click here.](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/images/features/Larkin-Arundel-460.jpg) , their faces blurred,

The earl and countess lie in stone,

Their proper habits**habits** Clothes vaguely shown

As jointed armour, stiffened pleat,

And that faint hint of the absurd—

The little dogs under their feet.

Such plainness of the pre-baroque **pre-baroque** In Larkin’s pronunciation, the phrase rhymes with 'shock.' The Baroque period, exemplified by ornamentation, followed the Renaissance. This tomb was sculpted in the Middle Ages.

Hardly involves the eye, until

It meets his left-hand gauntlet**gauntlet** An armored glove, worn in the Middle Ages, still

Clasped empty in the other; and

One sees, with a sharp tender shock,

His hand withdrawn, holding her hand.

They would not think to lie so long.

Such faithfulness in effigy**effigy** A sculptured likeness

Was just a detail friends would see:

A sculptor’s sweet commissioned grace

Thrown off in helping to prolong

The Latin names around the base.

They would not guess how early in

Their supine**supine** On their backs stationary voyage

The air would change to soundless damage,

Turn the old tenantry away;

How soon succeeding eyes begin

To look, not read. Rigidly they

Persisted, linked, through lengths and breadths

Of time. Snow fell, undated. Light

Each summer thronged the glass. A bright

Litter of birdcalls strewed the same

Bone-riddled ground. And up the paths

The endless altered people came,

Washing at their identity.

Now, helpless in the hollow of

An unarmorial age, a trough

Of smoke in slow suspended skeins**skeins** Used figuratively, a skein is a quantity of thread

Above their scrap of history,

Only an**Only an** When first published in June 1956 in the *London Magazine*, the line began: Only their attitude remains:

Time has transfigured them into

Untruth. The stone fidelity

They hardly meant has come to be

Their final blazon**blazon** Both a coat of arms, and a public proclamation, and to prove

Our almost-instinct almost true:

What will survive of us is love.

Philip Larkin, “An Arundel Tomb” from *Collected Poems.* Used by permission of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Philip Larkin.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1988)

**A42. As Children Know By** [**Jimmy Santiago Baca**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jimmy-santiago-baca)

[X](#COVER)

Elm branches radiate green heat,

blackbirds stiffly strut across fields.

Beneath bedroom wood floor, I feel earth—

bread in an oven that slowly swells,

simmering my Navajo blanket thread-crust

as white-feathered and corn-tasseled

Corn Dancers rise in a line, follow my calf,

vanish in a rumple and surface at my knee-cliff,

chanting. Wearing shagged buffalo headgear,

Buffalo Dancer chases Deer Woman across

Sleeping Leg mountain. Branches of wild rose

trees rattle seeds. Deer Woman fades into hills

of beige background. Red Bird

of my heart thrashes wildly after her.

What a stupid man I have been!

How good to let imagination go,

step over worrisome events,

those hacked logs

tumbled about

in the driveway.

Let decisions go!

Let them blow

like school children’s papers

against the fence,

rattling in the afternoon wind.

This Red Bird

of my heart thrashes within the tidy appearance

I offer the world,

topples what I erect, snares what I set free,

dashes what I’ve put together,

indulges in things left unfinished,

and my world is left, as children know,

left as toys after dark in the sandbox.

"As Children Know" by Jimmy Santiago Baca, from *Black Mesa Poems*. Copyright © 1989 by Jimmy Santiago Baca. Used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp., [www.ndpublishing.com](http://www.ndpublishing.com/).

Source: *Black Mesa Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1989)

**A43. As Kingfishers Catch Fire By** [**Gerard Manley Hopkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerard-manley-hopkins)

[X](#COVER)

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;

As tumbled over rim in roundy wells

Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's

Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:

Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;

Selves — goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,

Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

I say móre: the just man justices;

Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces;

Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —

Chríst — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,

Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his

To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Source: *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985)

**A44. At Cross Purposes By** [**Samuel Menashe**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/samuel-menashe)

**1**

Is this writing mine

Whose name is this

Did I underline

What I was to miss?

**2**

An upheaval of leaves

Enlightens the tree

Rooted it receives

Gusts on a spree

**3**

Beauty makes me sad

Makes me grieve

I see what I must leave

**4**

Scaffold, gallows

Do whose will

Who hallows wood

To build, kill

**5**

Blind man, anvil

No hammer strikes

Your eyes are spikes

Samuel Menashe, “At Cross Purposes” from *Samuel Menashe: New and Selected Poems*, edited by Christopher Ricks, published by The Library of America, 2005. Copyright © 2004 by Samuel Menashe. Used by permission of the author.Source: *Samuel Menashe: New and Selected Poems* (The Library of America, 2005)

**A45. At Melville’s Tomb By** [**Hart Crane**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hart-crane)

[X](#COVER)

Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge

The dice of drowned men’s bones he saw bequeath

An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,

Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,

The calyx of death’s bounty giving back

A scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph,

The portent wound in corridors of shells.

Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,

Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,

Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;

And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive

No farther tides ... High in the azure steeps

Monody shall not wake the mariner.

This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

Hart Crane, “At Melville’s Tomb” from *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane by Hart Crane*, edited by Marc SImon. Copyright © 1933, 1958, 1966 by Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright © 1986 by Marc Simon. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing.Source: *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane* (Liveright Pub Corporation, 2001)

**A46. At the New Year By** [**Kenneth Patchen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-patchen)

In the shape of this night, in the still fall

of snow, Father

In all that is cold and tiny, these little birds

and children

In everything that moves tonight, the trolleys

and the lovers, Father

In the great hush of country, in the ugly noise

of our cities

In this deep throw of stars, in those trenches

where the dead are, Father

In all the wide land waiting, and in the liners

out on the black water

In all that has been said bravely, in all that is

mean anywhere in the world, Father

In all that is good and lovely, in every house

where sham and hatred are

In the name of those who wait, in the sound

of angry voices, Father

Before the bells ring, before this little point in time

has rushed us on

Before this clean moment has gone, before this night

turns to face tomorrow, Father

There is this high singing in the air

Forever this sorrowful human face in eternity’s window

And there are other bells that we would ring, Father

Other bells that we would ring.

Kenneth Patchen, “At the New Year” from *Collected Poems*. Copyright © 1939 by Kenneth Patchen. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.Source: *Collected Poems* (New Directions Pub Corp, 1939)

**A47. At the Vietnam Memorial By** [**George Bilgere**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-bilgere)

[X](#COVER)

The last time I saw Paul Castle

it was printed in gold on the wall

above the showers in the boys’

locker room, next to the school

record for the mile. I don’t recall

his time, but the year was 1968

and I can look across the infield

of memory to see him on the track,

legs flashing, body bending slightly

beyond the pack of runners at his back.

He couldn’t spare a word for me,

two years younger, junior varsity,

and hardly worth the waste of breath.

He owned the hallways, a cool blonde

at his side, and aimed his interests

further down the line than we could guess.

Now, reading the name again,

I see us standing in the showers,

naked kids beneath his larger,

comprehensive force—the ones who trail

obscurely, in the wake of the swift,

like my shadow on this gleaming wall.

George Bilgere, “At the Vietnam Memorial” from *Big Bang.* Copyright © 1999 by George Bilgere. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Beech Press, [www.copperbeechpress.com](http://www.copperbeechpress.com).Source: *Poetry* (June 1995).

**A48. Author’s Prayer By** [**Ilya Kaminsky**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ilya-kaminsky)

If I speak for the dead, I must leave

this animal of my body,

I must write the same poem over and over,

for an empty page is the white flag of their surrender.

If I speak for them, I must walk on the edge

of myself, I must live as a blind man

who runs through rooms without

touching the furniture.

Yes, I live. I can cross the streets asking “What year is it?”

I can dance in my sleep and laugh

in front of the mirror.

Even sleep is a prayer, Lord,

I will praise your madness, and

in a language not mine, speak

of music that wakes us, music

in which we move. For whatever I say

is a kind of petition, and the darkest

days must I praise.

Ilya Kaminsky, “Author’s Prayer” from *Dancing in Odessa*. Copyright © 2004 by Ilya Kaminsky. Reprinted by permission of Tupelo Press.Source: *Dancing in Odessa* (Tupelo Press, 2004)

**A49. The Author to Her Book By** [**Anne Bradstreet**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-bradstreet)

[X](#COVER)

Thou ill-form’d offspring of my feeble brain,

Who after birth didst by my side remain,

Till snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,

Who thee abroad, expos’d to publick view,

Made thee in raggs, halting to th’ press to trudge,

Where errors were not lessened (all may judg).

At thy return my blushing was not small,

My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,

I cast thee by as one unfit for light,

Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight;

Yet being mine own, at length affection would

Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:

I wash’d thy face, but more defects I saw,

And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.

I stretched thy joynts to make thee even feet,

Yet still thou run’st more hobling then is meet;

In better dress to trim thee was my mind,

But nought save home-spun Cloth, i’ th’ house I find.

In this array ’mongst Vulgars mayst thou roam.

In Criticks hands, beware thou dost not come;

And take thy way where yet thou art not known,

If for thy Father askt, say, thou hadst none:

And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,

Which caus’d her thus to send thee out of door.

Source: *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet* (1981)

**A50. Auto-Lullaby By** [**Franz Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/franz-wright)

Think of   a sheep

knitting a sweater;

think of   your life

getting better and better.

Think of   your cat

asleep in a tree;

think of   that spot

where you once skinned your knee.

Think of   a bird

that stands in your palm.

Try to remember

the Twenty-first Psalm.

Think of   a big pink horse

galloping south;

think of   a fly, and

close your mouth.

If   you feel thirsty, then

drink from your cup.

The birds will keep singing

until they wake up.

NOTES: This poem originally appeared in "[Poetry Not Written for Children that Children Might Nevertheless Enjoy](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poetrymagazine/article/246328)," by Lemony Snicket.“Auto-Lullaby” is reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.Source: *Poetry* (September 2013).

**A51. An Autumn Sunset By** [**Edith Wharton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edith-wharton)

[X](#COVER)

I

Leaguered in fire

The wild black promontories of the coast extend

Their savage silhouettes;

The sun in universal carnage sets,

And, halting higher,

The motionless storm-clouds mass their sullen threats,

Like an advancing mob in sword-points penned,

That, balked, yet stands at bay.

Mid-zenith hangs the fascinated day

In wind-lustrated hollows crystalline,

A wan Valkyrie whose wide pinions shine

Across the ensanguined ruins of the fray,

And in her hand swings high o’erhead,

Above the waster of war,

The silver torch-light of the evening star

Wherewith to search the faces of the dead.

II

Lagooned in gold,

Seem not those jetty promontories rather

The outposts of some ancient land forlorn,

Uncomforted of morn,

Where old oblivions gather,

The melancholy unconsoling fold

Of all things that go utterly to death

And mix no more, no more

With life’s perpetually awakening breath?

Shall Time not ferry me to such a shore,

Over such sailless seas,

To walk with hope’s slain importunities

In miserable marriage? Nay, shall not

All things be there forgot,

Save the sea’s golden barrier and the black

Close-crouching promontories?

Dead to all shames, forgotten of all glories,

Shall I not wander there, a shadow’s shade,

A spectre self-destroyed,

So purged of all remembrance and sucked back

Into the primal void,

That should we on the shore phantasmal meet

I should not know the coming of your feet?

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (The Library of America, 1993)

**A52. Awaking in New York By** [**Maya Angelou**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/maya-angelou)

[X](#COVER)

Curtains forcing their will

against the wind,

children sleep,

exchanging dreams with

seraphim. The city

drags itself awake on

subway straps; and

I, an alarm, awake as a

rumor of war,

lie stretching into dawn,

unasked and unheeded.

Maya Angelou, “Awaking in New York” from *Shaker, Why Don’t You Sing?* Copyright © 1983 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (1994)

**POL B-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**B1**](#B1)[**B2**](#B2)[**B3**](#B3)[**B4**](#B4)[**B5**](#B5)[**B6**](#B6)[**B7**](#B7)[**B8**](#B8)[**B9**](#B9)[**B10**](#B10)[**B11**](#B11)[**B12**](#B12)[**B13**](#B12)

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[**B40**](#B40)[**B41**](#B41)[**B42**](#B42)[**B43**](#B43)[**B44**](#B44)[**B45**](#B45)[**B46**](#B46)[**B47**](#B47) **B48 B49 B50 B51 B52**

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**B79 B80 B81 B82 B83 B84 B85 B86 B87 B88 B89 B90 B91**

**B92 B93 B94 B95 B96 B97 B98 B99 B100 B101 B102 B103 B104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

**Consider multiple works of one author. How does/doesn’t that author use the techniques discussed earlier? What is the overall effect of these techniques?**

**Select ONE Poet from the following.**

**Select THREE Poems from that poet.**

**Robert Frost, Emily Dickenson, Rita Dove Sara Teasdale, Howard Nemerov**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **P O E T**  **Focus**  **Poet’s Name** | **Technique 1** | **Technique 2** | **Technique 3** |
| **Poem 1** |  |  |  |
| **Poem 2** |  |  |  |
| **Poem 3** |  |  |  |

**B1. Backdrop addresses cowboy** By [Margaret Atwood](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-atwood)

Starspangled cowboy

sauntering out of the almost-

silly West, on your face

a porcelain grin,

tugging a papier-mâché cactus

on wheels behind you with a string,

you are innocent as a bathtub

full of bullets.

Your righteous eyes, your laconic

trigger-fingers

people the streets with villains:

as you move, the air in front of you

blossoms with targets

and you leave behind you a heroic

trail of desolation:

beer bottles

slaughtered by the side

of the road, bird-

skulls bleaching in the sunset.

I ought to be watching

from behind a cliff or a cardboard storefront

when the shooting starts, hands clasped

in admiration,

but I am elsewhere.

Then what about me

what about the I

confronting you on that border,

you are always trying to cross?

Margaret Atwood, “Backdrop addresses cowboy” from *Selected Poems 1965-1975.* Copyright © 1974, 1976 by M. Atwood. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co. All rights reserved. Source: *Selected Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976)

I am the horizon

you ride towards, the thing you can never lasso

I am also what surrounds you:

my brain

scattered with your

tincans, bones, empty shells,

the litter of your invasions.

I am the space you desecrate

as you pass through.

**B2. The Bad Old Days** By [Kenneth Rexroth](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-rexroth)

The summer of nineteen eighteen

I read *The Jungle* and *The*

*Research Magnificent.* That fall

My father died and my aunt

Took me to Chicago to live.

The first thing I did was to take

A streetcar to the stockyards.

In the winter afternoon,

Gritty and fetid, I walked

Through the filthy snow, through the

Squalid streets, looking shyly

Into the people’s faces,

Those who were home in the daytime.

Debauched and exhausted faces,

Starved and looted brains, faces

Like the faces in the senile

And insane wards of charity

Hospitals. Predatory

Faces of little children.

Then as the soiled twilight darkened,

Under the green gas lamps, and the

Sputtering purple arc lamps,

The faces of the men coming

Home from work, some still alive with

The last pulse of hope or courage,

Some sly and bitter, some smart and

Silly, most of them already

Broken and empty, no life,

Only blinding tiredness, worse

Than any tired animal.

The sour smells of a thousand

Suppers of fried potatoes and

Fried cabbage bled into the street.

I was giddy and sick, and out

Of my misery I felt rising

A terrible anger and out

Of the anger, an absolute vow.

Today the evil is clean

And prosperous, but it is

Everywhere, you don’t have to

Take a streetcar to find it,

And it is the same evil.

And the misery, and the

Anger, and the vow are the same.

Kenneth Rexroth, “The Bad Old Days” from *The Collected Shorter Poems*. Copyright © 1966 by Kenneth Rexroth. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm). Source: *The Collected Shorter Poems* (1966)

**B3. Banneker** By [Rita Dove](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

What did he do except lie

under a pear tree, wrapped in

a great cloak, and meditate

on the heavenly bodies?

*Venerable*, the good people of Baltimore

whispered, shocked and more than

a little afraid. After all it was said

he took to strong drink.

Why else would he stay out

under the stars all night

and why hadn’t he married?

But who would want him! Neither

Ethiopian nor English, neither

lucky nor crazy, a capacious bird

humming as he penned in his mind

another enflamed letter

to President Jefferson—he imagined

the reply, polite and rhetorical.

Those who had been to Philadelphia

reported the statue

of Benjamin Franklin

before the library

his very size and likeness.

A wife? No, thank you.

At dawn he milked

the cows, then went inside

and put on a pot to stew

while he slept. The clock

he whittled as a boy

still ran. Neighbors

woke him up

with warm bread and quilts.

At nightfall he took out

his rifle—a white-maned

figure stalking the darkened

breast of the Union—and

shot at the stars, and by chance

one went out. Had he killed?

*I assure thee, my dear Sir!*

Lowering his eyes to fields

sweet with the rot of spring, he could see

a government’s domed city

rising from the morass and spreading

in a spiral of lights....

NOTES: Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), first black man to devise an almanac and predict a solar eclipse accurately, was also appointed to the commission that surveyed and laid out what is now Washington, D.C. Rita Dove, “Banneker” from *Museum* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1983). Copyright © 1983 by Rita Dove. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Museum* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1983)

**B4. Barber** By [Larry Bradley](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/larry-bradley)

Learn from the man who spends much of his life speaking

             To the back of your head knowing what it means to follow

The razor’s edge along a worn strop or random thoughts

             As they spring so invisibly from the mind to a mouth

Who shouldered soldiers in two wars and fled fire fields

             Undecorated who fathered once but was fatherless forever

And who works his sentiments in deeper into your scalp

             Under a sign on the knotty-pine walls whose rubric reads

*quot homines, tot sententiae* which means he sees

             In you his suffering smells of horehound tonics and gels

Pillow heads and powders and a floor full of snippings

             Swept neatly every evening into a pile for the field mice

All those roundabout hours only a man who fixes his tie

             To clip crabgrass crowding a lady’s grave could believe

With a certain clean devotion and who would never for one

             Moment dream of hurting you when your back was turned

**B5. A Barred Owl** By [Richard Wilbur](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-wilbur)

The warping night air having brought the boom

Of an owl’s voice into her darkened room,

We tell the wakened child that all she heard

Was an odd question from a forest bird,

Asking of us, if rightly listened to,

“Who cooks for you?” and then “Who cooks for you?”

Words, which can make our terrors bravely clear,

Can also thus domesticate a fear,

And send a small child back to sleep at night

Not listening for the sound of stealthy flight

Or dreaming of some small thing in a claw

Borne up to some dark branch and eaten raw.

**B6. Barter** By [Sara Teasdale](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sara-teasdale)

Life has loveliness to sell,

      All beautiful and splendid things,

Blue waves whitened on a cliff,

      Soaring fire that sways and sings,

And children's faces looking up

Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,

      Music like a curve of gold,

Scent of pine trees in the rain,

      Eyes that love you, arms that hold,

And for your spirit's still delight,

Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,

      Buy it and never count the cost;

For one white singing hour of peace

      Count many a year of strife well lost,

And for a breath of ecstasy

Give all you have been, or could be.

Richard Wilbur, "A Barred Owl" from *Mayflies: New Poems and Translations*. Copyright © 2000 by Richard Wilbur.  Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Source: *Mayflies: New Poems and Translations* (Harcourt Inc., 2000)

**B7. Battle-Hymn of the Republic** By [Julia Ward Howe](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/julia-ward-howe)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;

He hath loosed the fatal lightning of his terrible swift sword:

      His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;

They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;

I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.

      His Day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:

“As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;

Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,

      Since God is marching on.”

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;

He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat:

Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!

      Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:

As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,

      While God is marching on.

**B8. Battlefield** By [Mark Turcotte](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-turcotte)

Back when I used to be Indian

I am standing outside the

pool hall with my sister.

She strawberry blonde. Stale sweat

and beer through the

open door. A warrior leans on his stick,

fingers blue with chalk.

Another bends to shoot.

His braids brush the green

felt, swinging to the beat

of the jukebox. We move away.

Hank Williams falls again

in the backseat of a Cadillac.

I look back.

A wind off the distant hills lifts my shirt,

brings the scent

of wounded horses.

**B9. Baudelaire** By [Delmore Schwartz](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/delmore-schwartz)

When I fall asleep, and even during sleep,

I hear, quite distinctly, voices speaking

Whole phrases, commonplace and trivial,

Having no relation to my affairs.

Dear Mother, is any time left to us

In which to be happy? My debts are immense.

My bank account is subject to the court’s judgment.

I know nothing. I cannot know anything.

I have lost the ability to make an effort.

But now as before my love for you increases.

You are always armed to stone me, always:

It is true. It dates from childhood.

For the first time in my long life

I am almost happy. The book, almost finished,

Almost seems good. It will endure, a monument

To my obsessions, my hatred, my disgust.

Debts and inquietude persist and weaken me.

Satan glides before me, saying sweetly:

“Rest for a day! You can rest and play today.

Tonight you will work.” When night comes,

My mind, terrified by the arrears,

Bored by sadness, paralyzed by impotence,

Promises: “Tomorrow: I will tomorrow.”

Tomorrow the same comedy enacts itself

With the same resolution, the same weakness.

I am sick of this life of furnished rooms.

I am sick of having colds and headaches:

You know my strange life. Every day brings

Its quota of wrath. You little know

A poet’s life, dear Mother: I must write poems,

The most fatiguing of occupations.

I am sad this morning. Do not reproach me.

I write from a café near the post office,

Amid the click of billiard balls, the clatter of dishes,

The pounding of my heart. I have been asked to write

“A History of Caricature.” I have been asked to write

“A History of Sculpture.” Shall I write a history

Of the caricatures of the sculptures of you in my heart?

Although it costs you countless agony,

Although you cannot believe it necessary,

And doubt that the sum is accurate,

Please send me money enough for at least three weeks.

Delmore Schwartz, “Baudelaire” from *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge.* Copyright © 1967 by Delmore Schwartz. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation,[www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm). Source: *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1967)

**B10. 'Be Music, Night'** By [Kenneth Patchen](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-patchen)

Be music, night,

That her sleep may go

Where angels have their pale tall choirs

Be a hand, sea,

That her dreams may watch

Thy guidesman touching the green flesh of the world

Be a voice, sky,

That her beauties may be counted

And the stars will tilt their quiet faces

Into the mirror of her loveliness

Be a road, earth,

That her walking may take thee

Where the towns of heaven lift their breathing spires

O be a world and a throne, God,

That her living may find its weather

And the souls of ancient bells in a child's book

Shall lead her into Thy wondrous house

Kenneth Patchen, “Be Music, Night” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright 1943 by Kenneth Patchen. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Collected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1967)

**B11. The Bearer** By [Hayden Carruth](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hayden-carruth)

Like all his people he felt at home in the forest.

The silence beneath great trees, the dimness there,

The distant high rustling of foliage, the clumps

Of fern like little green fountains, patches of sunlight,

Patches of moss and lichen, the occasional

Undergrowth of hazel and holly, was he aware

Of all this? On the contrary his unawareness

Was a kind of gratification, a sense of comfort

And repose even in the strain of running day

After day. He had been aware of the prairies.

He had known he hated the sky so vast, the wind

Roaring in the grasses, and the brightness that

Hurt his eyes. Now he hated nothing; nor could he

Feel anything but the urgency that compelled him

Onward continually. "May I not forget, may I

Not forget," he said to himself over and over.

When he saw three ravens rise on their awkward

Wings from the forest floor perhaps seventy-five

Ells ahead of him, he said, "Three ravens,"

And immediately forgot them. "May I not forget,"

He said, and repeated again in his mind the exact

Words he had memorized, the message that was

Important and depressing, which made him feel

Worry and happiness at the same time, a peculiar

Elation. At last he came to his people far

In the darkness. He smiled and spoke his words,

And he looked intently into their eyes gleaming

In firelight. He cried when they cried. No rest

For his lungs. He flinched and lay down while they

Began to kill him with clubs and heavy stones.

Hayden Carruth, “The Bearer” from *Collected Shorter Poems, 1946-1991*. Copyright © 1992 by Hayden Carruth. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271,[www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org/). Source: *Poetry* (October/November 1987).

**B12. Beautiful Wreckage** By [W.D. Ehrhart](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wd-ehrhart)

What if I didn’t shoot the old lady

running away from our patrol,

or the old man in the back of the head,

or the boy in the marketplace?

Or what if the boy—but he didn’t

have a grenade, and the woman in Hue

didn’t lie in the rain in a mortar pit

with seven Marines just for food,

Gaffney didn’t get hit in the knee,

Ames didn’t die in the river, Ski

didn’t die in a medevac chopper

between Con Thien and Da Nang.

In Vietnamese, Con Thien means

*place of angels*. What if it really was

instead of the place of rotting sandbags,

incoming heavy artillery, rats and mud.

What if the angels were Ames and Ski,

or the lady, the man, and the boy,

and they lifted Gaffney out of the mud

and healed his shattered knee?

What if none of it happened the way I said?

Would it all be a lie?

Would the wreckage be suddenly beautiful?

Would the dead rise up and walk?

W. D.  Ehrhart, "Beautiful Wreckage" from *Beautiful Wreckage: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1999 by W. D.  Ehrhart.  Reprinted by permission of Adastra Press. Source: *Beautiful Wreckage: New & Selected Poems* (1999)

**B13. Becoming a Redwood** By [Dana Gioia](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dana-gioia)

Stand in a field long enough, and the sounds

start up again. The crickets, the invisible

toad who claims that change is possible,

And all the other life too small to name.

First one, then another, until innumerable

they merge into the single voice of a summer hill.

Yes, it’s hard to stand still, hour after hour,

fixed as a fencepost, hearing the steers

snort in the dark pasture, smelling the manure.

And paralyzed by the mystery of how a stone

can bear to be a stone, the pain

the grass endures breaking through the earth’s crust.

Unimaginable the redwoods on the far hill,

rooted for centuries, the living wood grown tall

and thickened with a hundred thousand days of light.

The old windmill creaks in perfect time

to the wind shaking the miles of pasture grass,

and the last farmhouse light goes off.

Something moves nearby. Coyotes hunt

these hills and packs of feral dogs.

But standing here at night accepts all that.

You are your own pale shadow in the quarter moon,

moving more slowly than the crippled stars,

part of the moonlight as the moonlight falls,

Part of the grass that answers the wind,

part of the midnight’s watchfulness that knows

there is no silence but when danger comes.

Dana Gioia, “Becoming a Redwood” from *The Gods of Winter.* Copyright © 1991 by Dana Gioia. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org/). Source: *The Gods of Winter: Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1991)

**B14. Before the Birth of One of Her Children** By [Anne Bradstreet](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-bradstreet)

All things within this fading world hath end,

Adversity doth still our joyes attend;

No ties so strong, no friends so dear and sweet,

But with death’s parting blow is sure to meet.

The sentence past is most irrevocable,

A common thing, yet oh inevitable.

How soon, my Dear, death may my steps attend,

How soon’t may be thy Lot to lose thy friend,

We are both ignorant, yet love bids me

These farewell lines to recommend to thee,

That when that knot’s untied that made us one,

I may seem thine, who in effect am none.

And if I see not half my dayes that’s due,

What nature would, God grant to yours and you;

The many faults that well you know I have

Let be interr’d in my oblivious grave;

If any worth or virtue were in me,

Let that live freshly in thy memory

And when thou feel’st no grief, as I no harms,

Yet love thy dead, who long lay in thine arms.

And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains

Look to my little babes, my dear remains.

And if thou love thyself, or loved’st me,

These o protect from step Dames injury.

And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,

With some sad sighs honour my absent Herse;

And kiss this paper for thy loves dear sake,

Who with salt tears this last Farewel did take.

**B15. Beginning** By [James Wright](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-wright)

The moon drops one or two feathers into the field.

The dark wheat listens.

Be still.

Now.

There they are, the moon's young, trying

Their wings.

Between trees, a slender woman lifts up the lovely shadow

Of her face, and now she steps into the air, now she is gone

Wholly, into the air.

I stand alone by an elder tree, I do not dare breathe

Or move.

I listen.

The wheat leans back toward its own darkness,

And I lean toward mine.

James Wright, “Beginning” from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose.* Copyright © 1990 by James Wright. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. Source: *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose* (1990)

**B16. Bells for John Whiteside’s Daughter** By [John Crowe Ransom](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-crowe-ransom)

There was such speed in her little body,

And such lightness in her footfall,

It is no wonder her brown study

Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.

We looked among orchard trees and beyond

Where she took arms against her shadow,

Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud

Dripping their snow on the green grass,

Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,

Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little

Lady with rod that made them rise

From their noon apple-dreams and scuttle

Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready,

In one house we are sternly stopped

To say we are vexed at her brown study,

Lying so primly propped.

John Crowe Ransom, “Bells for John Whiteside’s Daughter” from *Selected Poems, Revised and Enlarged Edition.*Copyright 1924, 1927, 1934, 1939, 1945, © 1962, 1963 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. Source: *Selected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1969)

**B17. Bent to the Earth** By [Blas Manuel De Luna](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/blas-manuel-de-luna)

They had hit Ruben

with the high beams, had blinded

him so that the van

he was driving, full of Mexicans

going to pick tomatoes,

would have to stop. Ruben spun

the van into an irrigation ditch,

spun the five-year-old me awake

to immigration officers,

their batons already out,

already looking for the soft spots on the body,

to my mother being handcuffed

and dragged to a van, to my father

trying to show them our green cards.

They let us go. But Alvaro

was going back.

So was his brother Fernando.

So was their sister Sonia. Their mother

did not escape,

and so was going back. Their father

was somewhere in the field,

and was free. There were no great truths

revealed to me then. No wisdom

given to me by anyone. I was a child

who had seen what a piece of polished wood

could do to a face, who had seen his father

about to lose the one he loved, who had lost

some friends who would never return,

who, later that morning, bent

to the earth and went to work.

"Bent to the Earth" by Blas Manuel De Luna. From *Bent to the Earth*, © 2006 by Blas Manuel De Luna, published by Carnegie Mellon University Press. Source: *Bent to the Earth* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2006)

**B18. Bereavement** By [William Lisle Bowles](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-lisle-bowles)

Whose was that gentle voice, that, whispering sweet,

      Promised methought long days of bliss sincere!

      Soothing it stole on my deluded ear,

Most like soft music, that might sometimes cheat

Thoughts dark and drooping! ’Twas the voice of Hope.

      Of love and social scenes, it seemed to speak,

      Of truth, of friendship, of affection meek;

That, oh! poor friend, might to life’s downward slope

Lead us in peace, and bless our latest hours.

      Ah me! the prospect saddened as she sung;

      Loud on my startled ear the death-bell rung;

Chill darkness wrapt the pleasurable bowers,

Whilst Horror, pointing to yon breathless clay,

“No peace be thine,” exclaimed, “away, away!”

**B19. Big City Speech** By [W. S. Di Piero](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-di-piero)

Use me

Abuse me

          Turn wheels of ﬁre

          on manhole hotheads

Sing me

Sour me

          Secrete dark matter’s sheen

          on our smarting skin

Rise and shine

In puddle shallows

          under every Meryl Cheryl Caleb Syd

          somnambulists and sleepyheads

Wake us

Speak to us

          Bless what you’ve nurtured in your pits

          the rats voles roaches and all outlivers

          of your obscene ethic and politics

Crawl on us

Fall on us

          you elevations that break and vein

          down to sulfuric ﬁber-optic wrecks

            through drill-bit dirt to bedrock

Beat our brows

Flee our sorrows

          Sleep tight with your ultraviolets

          righteous mica and drainage seeps

                               your gorgeous color-chart container ships

                               and cab-top numbers squinting in the mist

**B20. The Birth of John Henry** By [Melvin B. Tolson](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/melvin-b-tolson)

The night John Henry is born an ax

            of lightning splits the sky,

and a hammer of thunder pounds the earth,

      and the eagles and panthers cry!

      John Henry—he says to his Ma and Pa:

            “Get a gallon of barleycorn.

      I want to start right, like a he-man child,

            the night that I am born!”

Says:   “I want some ham hocks, ribs, and jowls,

            a pot of cabbage and greens;

      some hoecackes, jam, and buttermilk,

            a platter of pork and beans!”

      John Henry’s Ma—she wrings her hands,

            and his Pa—he scratches his head.

      John Henry—he curses in giraffe-tall words,

            flops over, and kicks down the bed.

      He’s burning mad, like a bear on fire—

            so he tears to the riverside.

As he stoops to drink, Old Man River gets scared

            and runs upstream to hide!

    Some say he was born in Georgia—O Lord!

            Some say in Alabam.

But it’s writ on the rock at the Big Bend Tunnel:

            “Lousyana was my home.   So scram!”

Melvin B. Tolson, “The Birth of John Henry” (1965). Reprinted with the permission of Melvin B. Tolson, Jr. Source: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1997)

**B21. A Birthday** By [Christina Rossetti](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christina-rossetti)

My heart is like a singing bird

                  Whose nest is in a water'd shoot;

My heart is like an apple-tree

                  Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;

My heart is like a rainbow shell

                  That paddles in a halcyon sea;

My heart is gladder than all these

                  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;

                  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;

Carve it in doves and pomegranates,

                  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;

Work it in gold and silver grapes,

                  In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;

Because the birthday of my life

                  Is come, my love is come to me.

**B22. Birthday Poem** By [Al Young](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/al-young)

First light of day in Mississippi

son of laborer & of house wife

it says so on the official photostat

not son of fisherman & child fugitive

from cottonfields & potato patches

from sugarcane chickens & well-water

from kerosene lamps & watermelons

mules named jack or jenny & wagonwheels,

years of meaningless farm work

work Work WORK WORK WORK—

“Papa pull you outta school bout March

to stay on the place & work the crop”

—her own earliest knowledge

of human hopelessness & waste

She carried me around nine months

inside her fifteen year old self

before here I sit numbering it all

How I got from then to now

is the mystery that could fill a whole library

much less an arbitrary stanza

But of course you already know about that

from your own random suffering

& sudden inexplicable bliss

Al Young, “Birthday Poem” from *The Blues Don’t Change*. Copyright © 1982 by Al Young. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.﻿ Source: *The Blues Don’t Change﻿* (Louisiana State University Press, 1982)

**B23. Black Boys Play the Classics** By [Toi Derricotte](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/toi-derricotte)

The most popular “act” in

Penn Station

is the three black kids in ratty

sneakers & T-shirts playing

two violins and a cello—Brahms.

White men in business suits

have already dug into their pockets

as they pass and they toss in

a dollar or two without stopping.

Brown men in work-soiled khakis

stand with their mouths open,

arms crossed on their bellies

as if they themselves have always

wanted to attempt those bars.

One white boy, three, sits

cross-legged in front of his

idols—in ecstasy—

their slick, dark faces,

their thin, wiry arms,

who must begin to look

like angels!

Why does this trembling

pull us?

A: *Beneath the surface we are one.*

B: *Amazing! I did not think that they could speak this tongue.*

Toi Derricotte, “Black Boys Play the Classics” from *Tender*. Copyright ©1997 by Toi Derricotte. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, www.upress.pitt.edu. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press. Source: *Tender* (1997)

**B24. A Black Man Talks of Reaping** By [Arna Bontemps](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arna-bontemps)

I have sown beside all waters in my day.

I planted deep, within my heart the fear

that wind or fowl would take the grain away.

I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

I scattered seed enough to plant the land

in rows from Canada to Mexico

but for my reaping only what the hand

can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields

my brother's sons are gathering stalk and root;

small wonder then my children glean in fields

they have not sown, and feed on bitter fruit.

Arna Bontemps, “A Black Man Talks of Reaping” (1926). Copyright 1926 by Arna Bontemps. Reprinted with the permission of Harold Ober Associates, Incorporated. Source: *American Poetry: The Twentieth Century Volume 2* (2000)

**B25. Blackberry-Picking** By [Seamus Heaney](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/seamus-heaney)

for Philip Hobsbaum

Late August, given heavy rain and sun

For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.

At first, just one, a glossy purple clot

Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.

You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet

Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it

Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for

Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger

Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots

Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.

Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills

We trekked and picked until the cans were full,

Until the tinkling bottom had been covered

With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned

Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered

With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.

But when the bath was filled we found a fur,

A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.

The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush

The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.

I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair

That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.

Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Source: *Death of a Naturalist* (1966)

**B26. Blackberrying** By [Sylvia Plath](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sylvia-plath)

Nobody in the lane, and nothing, nothing but blackberries,

Blackberries on either side, though on the right mainly,

A blackberry alley, going down in hooks, and a sea

Somewhere at the end of it, heaving. Blackberries

Big as the ball of my thumb, and dumb as eyes

Ebon in the hedges, fat

With blue-red juices. These they squander on my fingers.

I had not asked for such a blood sisterhood; they must love me.

They accommodate themselves to my milkbottle, flattening their sides.

Overhead go the choughs in black, cacophonous flocks—

Bits of burnt paper wheeling in a blown sky.

Theirs is the only voice, protesting, protesting.

I do not think the sea will appear at all.

The high, green meadows are glowing, as if lit from within.

I come to one bush of berries so ripe it is a bush of flies,

Hanging their bluegreen bellies and their wing panes in a Chinese screen.

The honey-feast of the berries has stunned them; they believe in heaven.

One more hook, and the berries and bushes end.

The only thing to come now is the sea.

From between two hills a sudden wind funnels at me,

Slapping its phantom laundry in my face.

These hills are too green and sweet to have tasted salt.

I follow the sheep path between them. A last hook brings me

To the hills’ northern face, and the face is orange rock

That looks out on nothing, nothing but a great space

Of white and pewter lights, and a din like silversmiths

Beating and beating at an intractable metal.

NOTES:  NOTE: The third line of the third stanza has been corrected to read "Slapping its phantom laundry in my face" instead of "Gapping its phantom laundry in my face." [2/23/11] Sylvia Plath, “Blackberrying” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1960, 1965, 1971, 1981 by the Estate of Sylvia Plath. Editorial matter copyright © 1981 by Ted Hughes. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers. Source: *Collected Poems* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1992)

**B27. The Blackstone Rangers** By [Gwendolyn Brooks](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

**I**

AS SEEN BY DISCIPLINES

There they are.

Thirty at the corner.

Black, raw, ready.

Sores in the city

that do not want to heal.

**II**

THE LEADERS

Jeff. Gene. Geronimo. And Bop.

They cancel, cure and curry.

Hardly the dupes of the downtown thing

the cold bonbon,

the rhinestone thing. And hardly

in a hurry.

Hardly Belafonte, King,

Black Jesus, Stokely, Malcolm X or Rap.

Bungled trophies.

Their country is a Nation on no map.

Jeff, Gene, Geronimo and Bop

in the passionate noon,

in bewitching night

are the detailed men, the copious men.

They curry, cure,

they cancel, cancelled images whose Concerts

are not divine, vivacious; the different tins

are intense last entries; pagan argument;

translations of the night.

The Blackstone bitter bureaus

(bureaucracy is footloose) edit, fuse

unfashionable damnations and descent;

and exulting, monstrous hand on monstrous hand,

construct, strangely, a monstrous pearl or grace.

**III**

GANG GIRLS

*A Rangerette*

Gang Girls are sweet exotics.

Mary Ann

uses the nutrients of her orient,

but sometimes sighs for Cities of blue and jewel

beyond her Ranger rim of Cottage Grove.

(Bowery Boys, Disciples, Whip-Birds will

dissolve no margins, stop no savory sanctities.)

Mary is

a rose in a whiskey glass.

Mary’s

Februaries shudder and are gone. Aprils

fret frankly, lilac hurries on.

Summer is a hard irregular ridge.

October looks away.

And that’s the Year!

                     Save for her bugle-love.

Save for the bleat of not-obese devotion.

Save for Somebody Terribly Dying, under

the philanthropy of robins. Save for her Ranger

bringing

an amount of rainbow in a string-drawn bag.

“Where did you get the diamond?” Do not ask:

but swallow, straight, the spirals of his flask

and assist him at your zipper; pet his lips

and help him clutch you.

Love’s another departure.

Will there be any arrivals, confirmations?

Will there be gleaning?

Mary, the Shakedancer’s child

from the rooming-flat, pants carefully, peers at

her laboring lover ....

                     Mary! Mary Ann!

Settle for sandwiches! settle for stocking caps!

for sudden blood, aborted carnival,

the props and niceties of non-loneliness—

the rhymes of Leaning.

Gwendolyn Brooks, “The Blackstone Rangers,” from *Blacks* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987). Reprinted by consent of Brooks Permissions. Source: *Blacks* (Third World Press, 1987)

**B28. A Blessing** By [James Wright](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-wright)

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,

Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.

And the eyes of those two Indian ponies

Darken with kindness.

They have come gladly out of the willows

To welcome my friend and me.

We step over the barbed wire into the pasture

Where they have been grazing all day, alone.

They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness

That we have come.

They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other.

There is no loneliness like theirs.

At home once more,

They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.

I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,

For she has walked over to me

And nuzzled my left hand.

She is black and white,

Her mane falls wild on her forehead,

And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear

That is delicate as the skin over a girl’s wrist.

Suddenly I realize

That if I stepped out of my body I would break

Into blossom.

James Wright, “A Blessing” from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose.* Copyright � 1990 by James Wright. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. Source: *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose* (1990)

**B29. Blind Curse** By [Simon J. Ortiz](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/simon-j-ortiz)

You could drive blind

for those two seconds

and they would be forever.

I think that as a diesel truck

passes us eight miles east of Mission.

Churning through the storm, heedless

of the hill sliding away.

There isn’t much use to curse but I do.

Words fly away, tumbling invisibly

toward the unseen point where

the prairie and sky meet.

The road is like that in those seconds,

nothing but the blind white side

of creation.

                   You’re there somewhere,

a tiny struggling cell.

You just might be significant

but you might not be anything.

Forever is a space of split time

from which to recover after the mass passes.

My curse flies out there somewhere,

and then I send my prayer into the wake

of the diesel truck headed for Sioux Falls

one hundred and eighty miles through the storm.

Simon Ortiz, “Blind Curse” from *After and Before the Lightning* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1994). Copyright © 1994 by Simon Ortiz. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *After and Before the Lightning* (University of Arizona Press, 1994)

**B30. A Blind Fisherman** By [Stanley Moss](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stanley-moss)

I teach my friend, a fisherman gone blind, to cast

true left, right or center and how far

between lily pads and the fallen cedar.

Darkness is precious, how long will darkness last?

Our bait, worms, have no professors, they live

in darkness, can be taught fear of light.

Cut into threes even sixes they live

separate lives, recoil from light.

He tells me, “I am seldom blind

when I dream, morning is anthracite,

I play blind man’s bluff,

I cannot find myself,

my shoe, the sink,

tell time, but that’s spilled milk and ink,

the lost and found  I cannot find.

I can tell the difference between a mollusk and a whelk,

a grieving liar and a lemon rind.”

Laughing, he says, “I still hope the worm will turn,

*pink, lank, and warm*, dined

out on apples of good fortune.

Books have a faintly legible smell.

Divorced from the sun, I am a kind

of bachelor henpecked by the night.

Sometimes I use my darkness well—

in the overcast and sunlight of my mind.

I can still wink, sing, my eyes are songs.”

Darkness is precious, how long will darkness last?

He could not fish, he could not walk, he fell

in his own feces. He wept. He died where he fell.

*The power of beauty to right all wrongs*

is hard for me to sell.

NOTES: Poetry Out Loud Participants: We have fixed a typo in line 18: "worn" should be "worm".  Also in January 2014, a typo was corrected in line 19: “land” was corrected to “lank.” Readers should not be penalized for reciting “land.” Stanley Moss, “A Blind Fisherman” from *God Breaketh Not All Men’s Hearts Alike*. Copyright © 2011 by Stanley Moss. Reprinted by permission of Seven Stories Press. Source: *God Breaketh Not All Men’s Hearts Alike* (Seven Stories Press, 2011)

**B31. The Bloody Sire** By [Robinson Jeffers](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robinson-jeffers)

It is not bad.  Let them play.

Let the guns bark and the bombing-plane

Speak his prodigious blasphemies.

It is not bad, it is high time,

Stark violence is still the sire of all the world’s values.

What but the wolf’s tooth whittled so fine

The fleet limbs of the antelope?

What but fear winged the birds, and hunger

Jewelled with such eyes the great goshawk’s head?

Violence has been the sire of all the world’s values.

Who would remember Helen’s face

Lacking the terrible halo of spears?

Who formed Christ but Herod and Caesar,

The cruel and bloody victories of Caesar?

Violence, the bloody sire of all the world’s values.

Never weep, let them play,

Old violence is not too old to beget new values.

Robinson Jeffers, “The Bloody Sire” from *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers.* Copyright by the Jeffers Literary Properties. All rights reserved. Used with the permission of Stanford University Press, [www.sup.org](http://www.sup.org/). Source: *Poetry* (December 1940).

**B32. Song: “**Blow, blow, thou winter wind**”** By [William Shakespeare](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,

   Thou art not so unkind

      As man’s ingratitude;

   Thy tooth is not so keen,

Because thou art not seen,

      Although thy breath be rude.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:*

*Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:*

*Then, heigh-ho, the holly!*

*This life is most jolly.*

   Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,

   That dost not bite so nigh

      As benefits forgot:

   Though thou the waters warp,

      Thy sting is not so sharp

      As friend remembered not.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly...*

**B33. The Blues Don’﻿t Change** By [Al Young](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/al-young)

*“Now I’﻿﻿ll tell you about the  
Blues. All Negroes like Blues.*  *Why? Because they was born with  
the Blues. And now everybody  
have the Blues. Sometimes they*  *don’﻿t know what it is.”*           
        —Leadbelly

And I was born with you, wasn’t I, Blues?

Wombed with you, wounded, reared and forwarded

from address to address, stamped, stomped

and returned to sender by nobody else but you,

Blue Rider, writing me off every chance you

got, you mean old grudgeful-hearted, table-

turning demon, you, you sexy soul-sucking gem.

Blue diamond in the rough, you *are* forever.

You can’t be outfoxed don’t care how they cut

and smuggle and shine you on,  you’re like a

shadow, too dumb and stubborn and necessary

to let them turn you into what you ain’t

with color or theory or powder or paint.

That’s how you can stay in style without sticking

and not getting stuck. You know how to sting

where I can’t scratch, and you move from frying

pan to skillet the same way you move people

to go to wiggling their bodies, juggling their

limbs, loosening that goose, upping their voices,

opening their pores, rolling their hips and lips.

They can shake their boodies but they can’t shake *you*.

Al Young, “The Blues Don’t Change” from *The Blues Don’t Change*. Copyright © 1982 by Al Young. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.﻿ Source: *The Blues Don’t Change﻿* (Louisiana State University Press, 1982)

**B34. A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky** By [Lewis Carroll](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lewis-carroll)

A BOAT beneath a sunny sky,

Lingering onward dreamily

In an evening of July —

Children three that nestle near,

Eager eye and willing ear,

Pleased a simple tale to hear —

Long has paled that sunny sky:

Echoes fade and memories die:

Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,

Alice moving under skies

Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,

Eager eye and willing ear,

Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,

Dreaming as the days go by,

Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream —

Lingering in the golden gleam —

Life, what is it but a dream?

**B35. The Bones of My Father** By [Etheridge Knight](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/etheridge-knight)

1

There are no dry bones

here in this valley. The skull

of my father grins

at the Mississippi moon

from the bottom

of the Tallahatchie,

the bones of my father

are buried in the mud

of these creeks and brooks that twist

and flow their secrets to the sea.

but the wind sings to me

here the sun speaks to me

of the dry bones of my father.

      2

There are no dry bones

in the northern valleys, in the Harlem alleys

young / black / men with knees bent

nod on the stoops of the tenements

and dream

of the dry bones of my father.

And young white longhairs who flee

their homes, and bend their minds

and sing their songs of brotherhood

and no more wars are searching for

my father’s bones.

      3

There are no dry bones here.

We hide from the sun.

No more do we take the long straight strides.

Our steps have been shaped by the cages

that kept us. We glide sideways

like crabs across the sand.

We perch on green lilies, we search

beneath white rocks...

THERE ARE NO DRY BONES HERE

The skull of my father

grins at the Mississippi moon

from the bottom

of the Tallahatchie.

FOOTNOTES: Connecticut  February 21. 1971 "The Bones of My Father" from *The Essential Etheridge Knight*, by Etheridge Knight, copyright 1986. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press. Source: *The Essential Etheridge Knight* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986)

**B36. Boy and Egg** By [Naomi Shihab Nye](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/naomi-shihab-nye)

Every few minutes, he wants

to march the trail of flattened rye grass

back to the house of muttering

hens. He too could make

a bed in hay. Yesterday the egg so fresh

it felt hot in his hand and he pressed it

to his ear while the other children

laughed and ran with a ball, leaving him,

so little yet, too forgetful in games,

ready to cry if the ball brushed him,

riveted to the secret of birds

caught up inside his fist,

not ready to give it over

to the refrigerator

or the rest of the day.

Reprinted from *Fuel,* published by BOA Editions by permission of the author. Copyright © 1998 by Naomi Shihab Nye, whose most recent book is *A Maze Me,* Harper Collins/Greenwillow, 2004. Source: *Fuel* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1998)

**B37. Break, Break, Break** By [Alfred, Lord Tennyson](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alfred-tennyson)

Break, break, break,

         On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter

         The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,

         That he shouts with his sister at play!

O, well for the sailor lad,

         That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on

         To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,

         And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break

         At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!

But the tender grace of a day that is dead

         Will never come back to me.

**B38. Break of Day** By [John Donne](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

‘Tis true, ‘tis day, what though it be?

O wilt thou therefore rise from me?

Why should we rise because ‘tis light?

Did we lie down because ‘twas night?

Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,

Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;

If it could speak as well as spy,

This were the worst that it could say,

That being well I fain would stay,

And that I loved my heart and honour so,

That I would not from him, that had them, go.

Must business thee from hence remove?

Oh, that’s the worst disease of love,

The poor, the foul, the false, love can

Admit, but not the busied man.

He which hath business, and makes love, doth do

Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

Source: *Selected Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

**B39. Break of Day in the Trenches** By [Isaac Rosenberg](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/isaac-rosenberg)

The darkness crumbles away. It is the same old druid

Time as ever, Only a live thing leaps my hand,

A queer sardonic rat, As I pull the parapet’s poppy

To stick behind my ear. Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew

Your cosmopolitan sympathies. Now you have touched this

English hand You will do the same to a German

Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure

To cross the sleeping green between. It seems you inwardly grin as you pass

Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes, Less chanced than you for life, Bonds to the whims of murder, Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,

The torn fields of France. What do you see in our eyes

At the shrieking iron and flame Hurled through still heavens?

What quaver—what heart aghast? Poppies whose roots are in man’s veins Drop, and are ever dropping; But mine in my ear is safe—

Just a little white with the dust. Source: *Poetry* (December 1916).

**B40. Bright Copper Kettles** By [Vijay Seshadri](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/vijay-seshadri)

Dead friends coming back to life, dead family,

speaking languages living and dead, their minds retentive,

their five senses intact, their footprints like a butterfly’s,

mercy shining from their comprehensive faces—

this is one of my favorite things.

I like it so much I sleep all the time.

Moon by day and sun by night find me dispersed

deep in the dreams where they appear.

In fields of goldenrod, in the city of five pyramids,

before the empress with the melting face, under

the towering plane tree, they just show up.

“It’s all right,” they seem to say. “It always was.”

They are diffident and polite.

(Who knew the dead were so polite?)

They don’t want to scare me; their heads don’t spin like weather vanes.

They don’t want to steal my body

and possess the earth and wreak vengeance.

They’re dead, you understand, they don’t exist. And, besides,

why would they care? They’re subatomic, horizontal. Think about it.

One of them shyly offers me a pencil.

The eyes under the eyelids dart faster and faster.

Through the intercom of the house where for so long there was no music,

the right Reverend Al Green is singing,

“I could never see tomorrow.

I was never told about the sorrow.”

**B41. Bright Star** By [John Keats](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-keats)

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—

         Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night

And watching, with eternal lids apart,

         Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,

The moving waters at their priestlike task

         Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

         Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—

No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,

         Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

         Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,

And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

**B42. Broken Promises** By [David Kirby](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-kirby)

I have met them in dark alleys, limping and one-armed;

I have seen them playing cards under a single light-bulb

and tried to join in, but they refused me rudely,

knowing I would only let them win.

I have seen them in the foyers of theaters,

coming back late from the interval

long after the others have taken their seats,

and in deserted shopping malls late at night,

peering at things they can never buy,

and I have found them wandering

in a wood where I too have wandered.

This morning I caught one;

small and stupid, too slow to get away,

it was only a promise I had made to myself once

and then forgot, but it screamed and kicked at me

and ran to join the others, who looked at me with reproach

in their long, sad faces.

When I drew near them, they scurried away,

even though they will sleep in my yard tonight.

I hate them for their ingratitude,

I who have kept countless promises,

as dead now as Shakespeare’s children.

“You bastards,” I scream,

“you have to love me—I gave you life!”

David Kirby, “Broken Promises” from *Big-Leg Music* (Washington, DC: Orchises Press, 1995). Copyright © 1995 by David Kirby. Used by permission of the author. Source: *Big-Leg Music* (Orchises Press, 1995)

**B43. The Brook** By [Edward Thomas](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edward-thomas)

Seated once by a brook, watching a child

Chiefly that paddled, I was thus beguiled.

Mellow the blackbird sang and sharp the thrush

Not far off in the oak and hazel brush,

Unseen. There was a scent like honeycomb

From mugwort dull. And down upon the dome

Of the stone the cart-horse kicks against so oft

A butterfly alighted. From aloft

He took the heat of the sun, and from below.

On the hot stone he perched contented so,

As if never a cart would pass again

That way; as if I were the last of men

And he the first of insects to have earth

And sun together and to know their worth.

I was divided between him and the gleam,

The motion, and the voices, of the stream,

The waters running frizzled over gravel,

That never vanish and for ever travel.

A grey flycatcher silent on a fence

And I sat as if we had been there since

The horseman and the horse lying beneath

The fir-tree-covered barrow on the heath,

The horseman and the horse with silver shoes,

Galloped the downs last. All that I could lose

I lost. And then the child’s voice raised the dead.

“No one’s been here before” was what she said

And what I felt, yet never should have found

A word for, while I gathered sight and sound.

Source: *Last Poems* (1918)

**B44. Buckroe, After the Season, 1942** By [Virginia Hamilton Adair](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/virginia-hamilton-adair)

Past the fourth cloverleaf, by dwindling roads

At last we came into the unleashed wind;

The Chesapeake rose to meet us at a dead end

Beyond the carnival wheels and gingerbread.

Forsaken by summer, the wharf. The oil-green waves

Flung yellow foam and sucked at disheveled sand.

Small fish stank in the sun, and nervous droves

Of cloud hastened their shadows over bay and land.

Beyond the NO DUMPING sign in its surf of cans

And the rotting boat with nettles to the rails,

The horse dung garlanded with jeweling flies

And papers blown like a fleet of shipless sails,

We pushed into an overworld of wind and light

Where sky unfettered ran wild from earth to noon,

And the tethered heart broke loose and rose like a kite

From sands that borrowed diamonds from the sun.

We were empty and pure as shells that air-drenched hour,

Heedless as waves that swell at the shore and fall,

Pliant as sea-grass, the rapt inheritors

Of a land without memory, where tide erases all.

Virginia Hamilton Adair, “Buckroe, After the Season” from *Ants on the Melon.* Copyright © 1996 by Virginia Hamilton Adair. Used by permission of Random House, Inc. Source: *Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems* (Random House Inc., 1996)

**B45. Buick** By [Karl Shapiro](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/karl-shapiro)

As a sloop with a sweep of immaculate wing on her delicate spine

And a keel as steel as a root that holds in the sea as she leans,

Leaning and laughing, my warm-hearted beauty, you ride, you ride,

You tack on the curves with parabola speed and a kiss of goodbye,

Like a thoroughbred sloop, my new high-spirited spirit, my kiss.

As my foot suggests that you leap in the air with your hips of a girl,

My finger that praises your wheel and announces your voices of song,

Flouncing your skirts, you blueness of joy, you flirt of politeness,

You leap, you intelligence, essence of wheelness with silvery nose,

And your platinum clocks of excitement stir like the hairs of a fern.

But how alien you are from the booming belts of your birth and the smoke

Where you turned on the stinging lathes of Detroit and Lansing at night

And shrieked at the torch in your secret parts and the amorous tests,

But now with your eyes that enter the future of roads you forget;

You are all instinct with your phosphorous glow and your streaking hair.

And now when we stop it is not as the bird from the shell that I leave

Or the leathery pilot who steps from his bird with a sneer of delight,

And not as the ignorant beast do you squat and watch me depart,

But with exquisite breathing you smile, with satisfaction of love,

And I touch you again as you tick in the silence and settle in sleep.

Karl Shapiro, “Buick” from *Selected Poems* (New York: Library of America, 2003). Copyright © 2003 by Estate of Karl Shapiro. Reprinted with the permission of Wieser & Elwell, Inc.Source: *Selected Poems* (2003)

**B46. Buried at Springs** By [James Schuyler](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-schuyler)

There is a hornet in the room

and one of us will have to go

out the window into the late

August midafternoon sun. I

won. There is a certain challenge

in being humane to hornets

but not much. A launch draws

two lines of wake behind it

on the bay like a delta

with a melted base. Sandy

billows, or so they look,

of feathery ripe heads of grass,

an acid-yellow kind of

goldenrod glowing or glowering

in shade. Rocks with rags

of shadow, washed dust clouts

that will never bleach.

It is not like this at all.

The rapid running of the

lapping water a hollow knock

of someone shipping oars:

it’s eleven years since

Frank sat at this desk and

saw and heard it all

the incessant water the

immutable crickets only

not the same: new needles

on the spruce, new seaweed

on the low-tide rocks

other grass and other water

even the great gold lichen

on a granite boulder

even the boulder quite

literally is not the same

**II**

A day subtle and suppressed

in mounds of juniper enfolding

scratchy pockets of shadow

while bigness—rocks, trees, a stump—

stands shadowless in an overcast

of ripe grass. There is nothing

but shade, like the boggy depths

of a stand of spruce, its resonance

just the thin scream

of mosquitoes ascending.

Boats are light lumps on the bay

stretching past erased islands

to ocean and the terrible tumble

and London (“rain persisting”)

and Paris (“changing to rain”).

Delicate day, setting the bright

of a young spruce against the cold

of an old one hung with unripe cones

each exuding at its tip

gum, pungent, clear as a tear,

a day tarnished and fractured

as the quartz in the rocks

of a dulled and distant point,

a day like a gull passing

with a slow flapping of wings

in a kind of lope, without

breeze enough to shake loose

the last of the fireweed flowers,

a faintly clammy day, like wet silk

stained by one dead branch

the harsh russet of dried blood.

James Schuyler, “Buried at Springs” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1993 by James Schuyler. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com/). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.Source: *Collected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1993)

**B47. Burning the Old Year** By [Naomi Shihab Nye](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/naomi-shihab-nye)

Letters swallow themselves in seconds.

Notes friends tied to the doorknob,

transparent scarlet paper,

sizzle like moth wings,

marry the air.

So much of any year is flammable,

lists of vegetables, partial poems.

Orange swirling flame of days,

so little is a stone.

Where there was something and suddenly isn’t,

an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space.

I begin again with the smallest numbers.

Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves,

only the things I didn’t do

crackle after the blazing dies.

Naomi Shihab Nye, “Burning the Old Year” from *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems* (Portland, Oregon: Far Corner Books, 1995). Copyright © 1995 by Naomi Shihab Nye. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems* (Far Corner Books, 1995)

**POL C-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**C1**](#C1)[**C2**](#C2)[**C3**](#C3)[**C4**](#C4)[**C5**](#C5)[**C6**](#C6)[**C7**](#C7)[**C8**](#C8)[**C9**](#C9)[**C10**](#C10)[**C11**](#C11)[**C12**](#C12)[**C13**](#C13)

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[**C53**](#C53)[**C54**](#C54)[**C55**](#C55)[**C56**](#C56)[**C57**](#C57)[**C58**](#C58)[**C59**](#C59) **C60 C61 C62 C63 C64 C65**

**C66 C67 C68 C69 C70 C71 C72 C73 C74 C75 C76 C77 C78**

**C79 C80 C81 C82 C83 C84 C85 C86 C87 C88 C89 C90 C91**

**C92 C93 C94 C95 C96 C97 C98 C99 C100 C101 C102 C103 C104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

**Consider an ERA**

**Multiple Poets make up an age, often denoted by particular character traits. After reading through the poems of the following poets, describe the character traits of the age in the last column.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **William Blake** | **Samuel Coleridge** | **John Keats** | **Defining a Poetic Age** |
|  |  |  | **1.** |
| **P. B. Shelley** | **Lord Byron** | **William Wordsworth** | **2.** |
|  |  |  | **3.** |

**C1. Cabezón By** [**Amy Beeder**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-beeder)

I see you shuffle up Washington Street

whenever I am driving much too fast:

you, chub & bug-eyed, jaw like a loaf

hands in your pockets, a smoke dangling slack

from the slit of your pumpkin mouth,

humped over like the eel-man or geek,

the dummy paid to sweep out gutters,

drown the cats. Where are you going now?

Though someday you'll turn your gaze

upon my shadow in this tinted glass

I know for now you only look ahead

at sidewalks cracked & paved with trash

but what are you slouching toward—knee-locked,

hippity, a hitch in your zombie walk, Bighead?

Source: *Poetry* (February 2004).

**C2. Cadillac Moon By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

Crashing

again—Basquiat

sends fenders

& letters headlong

into each other

the future. Fusion.

AAAAAAAAAAA.

Big Bang. The Big

Apple, Atom's

behind him—

no sirens

in sight. His career

of careening

since—at six—

playing stickball

a car stole

his spleen. Blind

sided. Move

along folks—nothing

to see here. Driven,

does two Caddys

colliding, biting

the dust he's begun

to snort. Hit

& run. Red

Cross—the pill-pale

ambulance, inside

out, he hitched

to the hospital.

Joy ride. Hot

wired. O the rush

before the wreck—

each Cadillac,

a Titanic,

an iceberg that's met

its match—cabin

flooded

like an engine,

drawing even

dark Shine

from below deck.

FLATS FIX. Chop

shop. Body work

while-u-wait. *In situ*

*the spleen*

*or lien, anterior view—*

removed. Given

Gray's Anatomy

by his mother for recovery—

*151. Reflexion of spleen*

*turned forwards*

*& to the right, like*

*pages of a book*

—

Basquiat pulled

into orbit

with tide, the moon

gold as a tooth,

a hubcap gleaming,

gleaned—Shine

swimming for land,

somewhere solid

to spin his own obit.

Kevin Young, "Cadillac Moon" from *To Repel Ghosts*. Copyright © 2001 by Kevin Young. Reprinted with the permission of Zoland Books/Steerforth Press. Source: *To Repel Ghosts* (Zoland Books, 2001)

**C3. Caged Bird By** [**Maya Angelou**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/maya-angelou)

A free bird leaps

on the back of the wind

and floats downstream

till the current ends

and dips his wing

in the orange sun rays

and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks

down his narrow cage

can seldom see through

his bars of rage

his wings are clipped and

his feet are tied

so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings

with a fearful trill

of things unknown

but longed for still

and his tune is heard

on the distant hill

for the caged bird

sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze

and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees

and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn

and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams

his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream

his wings are clipped and his feet are tied

so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings

with a fearful trill

of things unknown

but longed for still

and his tune is heard

on the distant hill

for the caged bird

sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou, “Caged Bird” from *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* Copyright © 1983 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, Inc. Source: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (Random House Inc., 1994)

**C4. Calmly We Walk through This April’s Day By** [**Delmore Schwartz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/delmore-schwartz)

Calmly we walk through this April’s day,

Metropolitan poetry here and there,

In the park sit pauper and *rentier*,

The screaming children, the motor-car

Fugitive about us, running away,

Between the worker and the millionaire

Number provides all distances,

It is Nineteen Thirty-Seven now,

Many great dears are taken away,

What will become of you and me

(This is the school in which we learn ...)

Besides the photo and the memory?

(... that time is the fire in which we burn.)

(This is the school in which we learn ...)

What is the self amid this blaze?

What am I now that I was then

Which I shall suffer and act again,

The theodicy I wrote in my high school days

Restored all life from infancy,

The children shouting are bright as they run

(This is the school in which they learn ...)

Ravished entirely in their passing play!

(... that time is the fire in which they burn.)

Avid its rush, that reeling blaze!

Where is my father and Eleanor?

Not where are they now, dead seven years,

But what they were then?

No more? No more?

From Nineteen-Fourteen to the present day,

Bert Spira and Rhoda consume, consume

Not where they are now (where are they now?)

But what they were then, both beautiful;

Each minute bursts in the burning room,

The great globe reels in the solar fire,

Spinning the trivial and unique away.

(How all things flash! How all things flare!)

What am I now that I was then?

May memory restore again and again

The smallest color of the smallest day:

Time is the school in which we learn,

Time is the fire in which we burn.

Delmore Schwartz, “Calmly We Walk Through This April’s Day” from *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge.* Copyright © 1967 by Delmore Schwartz. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm) Source: *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1967)

**C5. Camouflaging the Chimera By** [**Yusef Komunyakaa**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/yusef-komunyakaa)

We tied branches to our helmets.

We painted our faces & rifles

with mud from a riverbank,

blades of grass hung from the pockets

of our tiger suits. We wove

ourselves into the terrain,

content to be a hummingbird’s target.

We hugged bamboo & leaned

against a breeze off the river,

slow-dragging with ghosts

from Saigon to Bangkok,

with women left in doorways

reaching in from America.

We aimed at dark-hearted songbirds.

In our way station of shadows

rock apes tried to blow our cover,

throwing stones at the sunset. Chameleons

crawled our spines, changing from day

to night: green to gold,

gold to black. But we waited

till the moon touched metal,

till something almost broke

inside us. VC struggled

with the hillside, like black silk

wrestling iron through grass.

We weren’t there. The river ran

through our bones. Small animals took refuge

against our bodies; we held our breath,

ready to spring the L-shaped

ambush, as a world revolved

under each man’s eyelid.

Yusef Komunyakaa, “Camouflaging the Chimera” from *Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems.* Copyright © 2001 by Yusef Komunyakaa. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 2001)

**C6. The Campus on the Hill By** [**W. D. Snodgrass**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-d-snodgrass)

Up the reputable walks of old established trees

They stalk, children of the *nouveaux riches;* chimes

Of the tall Clock Tower drench their heads in blessing:

“I don't wanna play at your house;

I don't like you any more.”

My house stands opposite, on the other hill,

Among meadows, with the orchard fences down and falling;

Deer come almost to the door.

You cannot see it, even in this clearest morning.

White birds hang in the air between

Over the garbage landfill and those homes thereto adjacent,

Hovering slowly, turning, settling down

Like the flakes sifting imperceptibly onto the little town

In a waterball of glass.

And yet, this morning, beyond this quiet scene,

The floating birds, the backyards of the poor,

Beyond the shopping plaza, the dead canal, the hillside lying tilted in the air,

Tomorrow has broken out today:

Riot in Algeria, in Cyprus, in Alabama;

Aged in wrong, the empires are declining,

And China gathers, soundlessly, like evidence.

What shall I say to the young on such a morning?—

Mind is the one salvation?—also grammar?—

No; my little ones lean not toward revolt. They

Are the Whites, the vaguely furiously driven, who resist

Their souls with such passivity

As would make Quakers swear. All day, dear Lord, all day

They wear their godhead lightly.

They look out from their hill and say,

To themselves, “We have nowhere to go but down;

The great destination is to stay.”

Surely the nations will be reasonable;

They look at the world—don't they?—the world's way?

The clock just now has nothing more to say.

W.D. Snodgrass, “The Campus on the Hill” from *Selected Poems, 1957-1987* (New York: Soho Press, 1987). Copyright © 1987 by W.D. Snodgrass. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Selected Poems 1957-1987* (1987)

**C7. Candles By** [**Carl Dennis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-dennis)

If on your grandmother's birthday you burn a candle

To honor her memory, you might think of burning an extra

To honor the memory of someone who never met her,

A man who may have come to the town she lived in

Looking for work and never found it.

Picture him taking a stroll one morning,

After a month of grief with the want ads,

To refresh himself in the park before moving on.

Suppose he notices on the gravel path the shards

Of a green glass bottle that your grandmother,

Then still a girl, will be destined to step on

When she wanders barefoot away from her school picnic

If he doesn't stoop down and scoop the mess up

With the want-ad section and carry it to a trash can.

For you to burn a candle for him

You needn't suppose the cut would be a deep one,

Just deep enough to keep her at home

The night of the hay ride when she meets Helen,

Who is soon to become her dearest friend,

Whose brother George, thirty years later,

Helps your grandfather with a loan so his shoe store

Doesn't go under in the Great Depression

And his son, your father, is able to stay in school

Where his love of learning is fanned into flames,

A love he labors, later, to kindle in you.

How grateful you are for your father's efforts

Is shown by the candles you've burned for him.

But today, for a change, why not a candle

For the man whose name is unknown to you?

Take a moment to wonder whether he died at home

With friends and family or alone on the road,

On the look-out for no one to sit at his bedside

And hold his hand, the very hand

It's time for you to imagine holding.

Source: *Poetry* (April 2002).

**C8. The Canonization By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,

My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,

With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,

Take you a course, get you a place,

Observe his honor, or his grace,

Or the king's real, or his stampèd face

Contemplate; what you will, approve,

So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?

Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

When did the heats which my veins fill

Add one more to the plaguy bill?

Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still

Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the eagle and the dove.

The phœnix riddle hath more wit

By us; we two being one, are it.

So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tombs and hearse

Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;

And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;

As well a well-wrought urn becomes

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for Love.

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love

Made one another's hermitage;

You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;

Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove

Into the glasses of your eyes

(So made such mirrors, and such spies,

That they did all to you epitomize)

Countries, towns, courts: beg from above

A pattern of your love!"

**C9. Carmel Highlands By** [**Janet Loxley Lewis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/janet-loxley-lewis)

Below the gardens and the darkening pines

The living water sinks among the stones,

Sinking yet foaming till the snowy tones

Merge with the fog drawn landward in dim lines.

The cloud dissolves among the flowering vines,

And now the definite mountain-side disowns

The fluid world, the immeasurable zones.

Then white oblivion swallows all designs.

But still the rich confusion of the sea,

Unceasing voice, sombre and solacing,

Rises through veils of silence past the trees;

In restless repetition bound, yet free,

Wave after wave in deluge fresh releasing

An ancient speech, hushed in tremendous ease.

"Carmel Highlands" from *The Selected Poems of Janet Lewis* edited by R.L. Barth. Published in 2000 by Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio ([www.ohioswallow.com](http://www.ohioswallow.com)).   
Source: *Poetry* (January 1938).

**C10. Carnival By** [**Rebecca Lindenberg**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rebecca-lindenberg)

The mask that burns like a violin, the mask

that sings only dead languages, that loves

the destruction of being put on. The mask

that sighs like a woman even though

a woman wears it. The mask beaded with

freshwater pearls, with seeds. The plumed mask,

the mask with a sutured mouth, a moonface,

with a healed gash that means *harvest*. A glower

that hides *wanting*. A grotesque pucker. Here’s

a beaked mask, a braided mask, here’s a mask

without eyes, a mask that looks like a mask

but isn’t—please don’t try to unribbon it.

The mask that snows coins, the mask full of wasps.

Lace mask to net escaping thoughts. Pass me

the rouged mask, the one made of sheet music.

Or the jackal mask, the hide-bound mask

that renders lovers identical with night.

Rebecca Lindenberg, “Carnival” from *Love, an Index*. Copyright © 2012 by Rebecca Lindenberg. Reprinted by permission of McSweeney’s Publishing. Source: *Love, an Index* (McSweeney's Publishing, 2012)

**C11. Cartoon Physics, part 1 By** [**Nick Flynn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/nick-flynn)

Children under, say, *ten*, shouldn't know

that the universe is ever-expanding,

inexorably pushing into the vacuum, galaxies

swallowed by galaxies, whole

solar systems collapsing, all of it

acted out in silence. At ten we are still learning

the rules of cartoon animation,

that if a man draws a door on a rock

only he can pass through it.

Anyone else who tries

will crash into the rock. Ten-year-olds

should stick with burning houses, car wrecks,

ships going down—earthbound, tangible

disasters, arenas

where they can be heroes. You can run

back into a burning house, sinking ships

have lifeboats, the trucks will come

with their ladders, if you jump

you will be saved. A child

places her hand on the roof of a schoolbus,

& drives across a city of sand. She knows

the exact spot it will skid, at which point

the bridge will give, who will swim to safety

& who will be pulled under by sharks. She will learn

that if a man runs off the edge of a cliff

he will not fall

until he notices his mistake.

"Cartoon Physics, part 1" by Nick Flynn from *Some Ether*. Copyright 2000 by Nick Flynn. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press. Source: *Some Ether* (Graywol

**C12. Catch a Little Rhyme By** [**Eve Merriam**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eve-merriam)

Once upon a time

I caught a little rhyme

Eve Merriam, “Catch a Little Rhyme” from *Catch a Little Rhyme* (New York: Atheneum, 1966). Copyright © 1966, 1994 by Eve Merriam. Reprinted with the permission of Marian Reiner. Source: *The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children’s Poems* (1999)

I set it on the floor

but it ran right out the door

I chased it on my bicycle

but it melted to an icicle

I scooped it up in my hat

but it turned into a at

I caught it by the tail

but it stretched into a whale

I followed it in a boat

but it changed into a goat

When I fed it tin and paper

it became a tall skyscraper

Then it grew into a kite

and flew far out of sight ...

**C13. Cathedral of Salt By** [**Nick Flynn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/nick-flynn)

Beneath all this I’m carving a cathedral

of salt. I keep

the entrance hidden, no one seems to notice

the hours I’m missing  ...    I’ll

bring you one night, it’s where

I go when I

hang up the phone  ...

Neither you

nor your soul is waiting for me at

the end of this, I know that, the salt

nearly clear after I

chisel out the pews, the see-through

altar, the opaque

panes of glass that depict the stations of

our cross — *Here is the day*

*we met, here is the day we remember we*

*met*

*...*    The air down here

will kill us, some say, some wear paper

masks, some still imagine the air above the green

trees, thick with bees

building solitary nests out of petals. What’s

the name for this? *Ineffable?* The endless

white will blind you, some say,

but what is there to see we haven’t already

seen? Some say it’s

like poking a stick into a river — you might as well

simply write about the stick.

Or the river.

**C14. Celebration for June 24 By** [**Thomas McGrath**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-mcgrath)

For Marian

Before you, I was living on an island

And all around the seas of that lonely coast

Cast up their imitation jewels, cast

Their fables and enigmas, questioning, sly.

I never solved them, or ever even heard,

Being perfect in innocence: unconscious of self;

Such ignorance of history was all my wealth—

A geographer sleeping in the shadow of virgins.

But though my maps were made of private countries

I was a foreigner in all of them after you had come,

For when you spoke, it was with a human tongue

And never understood by my land-locked gentry.

Then did the sun shake down a million bells

And birds bloom on bough in wildest song!

Phlegmatic hills went shivering with flame;

The chestnut trees were manic at their deepest boles!

It is little strange that nature was riven in her frame

At this second creation, known to every lover—

How we are shaped and shape ourselves in the desires of the other

Within the tolerance of human change.

Out of the spring’s innocence this revolution,

Created on a kiss, announced the second season,

The summer of private history, of growth, through whose sweet sessions

The trees lift toward the sun, each leaf a revelation.

Our bodies, coupled in the moonlight’s album,

Proclaimed our love against the outlaw times

Whose signature was written in the burning towns.

Your face against the night was my medallion.

Your coming forth aroused unlikely trumpets

In the once-tame heart. They heralded your worth

Who are my lodestar, my bright and ultimate North,

Marrying all points of my personal compass.

This is the love that now invents my fear

Which nuzzles me like a puppy each violent day.

It is poor comfort that the mind comes, saying:

What is one slim girl to the peoples’ wars?

Still, my dice are loaded: having had such luck,

Having your love, my life would still be whole

Though I should die tomorrow. I have lived it all.

—And love is never love, that cannot give love up.

Thomas McGrath, “Celebration for June 24” from *Movie At The End of the World.* Copyright © 1972 by Thomas McGrath. Used by permission of Swallow Press/Ohio University Press. Source: *Poetry* (June 1944).

**C15. A Celebration of Charis: I. His Excuse for Loving By** [**Ben Jonson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ben-jonson)

Let it not your wonder move,

Less your laughter, that I love.

Though I now write fifty years,

I have had, and have, my peers;

Poets, though divine, are men,

Some have lov'd as old again.

And it is not always face,

Clothes, or fortune, gives the grace;

Or the feature, or the youth.

But the language and the truth,

With the ardour and the passion,

Gives the lover weight and fashion.

If you then will read the story,

First prepare you to be sorry

That you never knew till now

Either whom to love or how;

But be glad, as soon with me,

When you know that this is she

Of whose beauty it was sung;

She shall make the old man young,

Keep the middle age at stay,

And let nothing high decay,

Till she be the reason why

All the world for love may die.

**C16. A Certain Kind of Eden By** [**Kay Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kay-ryan)

It seems like you could, but

you can’t go back and pull

the roots and runners and replant.

It’s all too deep for that.

Kay Ryan, "A Certain Kind of Eden" from *Flamingo Watching*. Copyright © 1994 by Kay Ryan. Reprinted by permission of Copper Beech Press. Source: *Flamingo Watching* (Copper Beech Press, 1994)

You’ve overprized intention,

have mistaken any bent you’re given

for control. You thought you chose

the bean and chose the soil.

You even thought you abandoned

one or two gardens. But those things

keep growing where we put them—

if we put them at all.

A certain kind of Eden holds us thrall.

Even the one vine that tendrils out alone

in time turns on its own impulse,

twisting back down its upward course

a strong and then a stronger rope,

the greenest saddest strongest

kind of hope.

**C17. Channel Firing By** [**Thomas Hardy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hardy)

That night your great guns, unawares,

Shook all our coffins as we lay,

And broke the chancel window-squares,

We thought it was the Judgment-day

Source: *The Complete Poems* (2001)

And sat upright. While drearisome

Arose the howl of wakened hounds:

The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,

The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, “No;

It’s gunnery practice out at sea

Just as before you went below;

The world is as it used to be:

“All nations striving strong to make

Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters

They do no more for Christés sake

Than you who are helpless in such matters.

“That this is not the judgment-hour

For some of them’s a blessed thing,

For if it were they’d have to scour

Hell’s floor for so much threatening....

“Ha, ha. It will be warmer when

I blow the trumpet (if indeed

I ever do; for you are men,

And rest eternal sorely need).”

So down we lay again. “I wonder,

Will the world ever saner be,”

Said one, “than when He sent us under

In our indifferent century!”

And many a skeleton shook his head.

“Instead of preaching forty year,”

My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,

“I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.”

Again the guns disturbed the hour,

Roaring their readiness to avenge,

As far inland as Stourton Tower,

And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

**C18. The Charge of the Light Brigade By** [**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alfred-tennyson)

**I**

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!” he said.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

**II**

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew

Someone had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

**III**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,

Into the mouth of hell

Rode the six hundred.

**IV**

Flashed all their sabres bare,

Flashed as they turned in air

Sabring the gunners there,

Charging an army, while

All the world wondered.

Plunged in the battery-smoke

Right through the line they broke;

Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the sabre stroke

Shattered and sundered.

Then they rode back, but not

Not the six hundred.

**V**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

While horse and hero fell.

They that had fought so well

Came through the jaws of Death,

Back from the mouth of hell,

All that was left of them,

Left of six hundred.

**VI**

When can their glory fade?

O the wild charge they made!

All the world wondered.

Honour the charge they made!

Honour the Light Brigade,

Noble six hundred!

**C19. Chez Jane By** [**Frank O'Hara**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frank-ohara)

The white chocolate jar full of petals

swills odds and ends around in a dizzying eye

of four o’clocks now and to come. The tiger,

marvellously striped and irritable, leaps

Frank O’Hara, “Chez Jane” from *Meditations in an Emergency*. Copyright © 1957 by Frank O’Hara. Reprinted with the permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc., [www.groveatlantic.com](http://www.groveatlantic.com). Source: *Poetry* (November 1954).

on the table and without disturbing a hair

of the flowers’ breathless attention, pisses

into the pot, right down its delicate spout.

A whisper of steam goes up from that porcelain

urethra. “Saint-Saëns!” it seems to be whispering,

curling unerringly around the furry nuts

of the terrible puss, who is mentally flexing.

Ah be with me always, spirit of noisy

contemplation in the studio, the Garden

of Zoos, the eternally fixed afternoons!

There, while music scratches its scrofulous

stomach, the brute beast emerges and stands,

clear and careful, knowing always the exact peril

at this moment caressing his fangs with

a tongue given wholly to luxurious usages;

which only a moment before dropped aspirin

in this sunset of roses, and now throws a chair

in the air to aggravate the truly menacing.

**C20. Chicago and December By** [**W. S. Di Piero**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-di-piero)

Trying to find my roost

one lidded, late afternoon,

the consolation of color

worked up like neediness,

like craving chocolate,

I’m at Art Institute favorites:

Velasquez’s “Servant,”

her bashful attention fixed

to place things just right,

Beckmann’s “Self-Portrait,”

whose fishy fingers seem

never to do a day’s work,

the great stone lions outside

monumentally pissed

by jumbo wreaths and ribbons

municipal good cheer

yoked around their heads.

Mealy mist. Furred air.

I walk north across

the river, Christmas lights

crushed on skyscraper glass,

bling stringing Michigan Ave.,

sunlight’s last-gasp sighing

through the artless fog.

Vague fatigued promise hangs

in the low darkened sky

when bunched scrawny starlings

rattle up from trees,

switchback and snag

like tossed rags dressing

the bare wintering branches,

black-on-black shining,

and I’m in a moment

more like a fore-moment:

from the sidewalk, watching them

poised without purpose,

I feel lifted inside the common

hazards and orders of things

when from their stillness,

the formal, aimless, not-waiting birds

erupt again, clap, elated weather-

making wing-clouds changing,

smithereened back and forth,

now already gone to follow

the river’s running course.

**C21. Childhood By** [**Margaret Walker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-walker)

When I was a child I knew red miners

dressed raggedly and wearing carbide lamps.

I saw them come down red hills to their camps

dyed with red dust from old Ishkooda mines.

Night after night I met them on the roads,

or on the streets in town I caught their glance;

the swing of dinner buckets in their hands,

and grumbling undermining all their words.

I also lived in low cotton country

where moonlight hovered over ripe haystacks,

or stumps of trees, and croppers’ rotting shacks

with famine, terror, flood, and plague near by;

where sentiment and hatred still held sway

and only bitter land was washed away.

Margaret Walker, “Childhood” from *This is My Century: New and Collected Poems*. Copyright © 1989 by Margaret Walker. Reprinted by permission of University of Georgia Press. Source: *This is My Century: New and Collected Poems* (University of Georgia Press, 1989)

**C22. Childhood’s Retreat By** [**Robert Duncan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-duncan)

It’s in the perilous boughs of the tree

out of blue sky the wind

sings loudest surrounding me.

And solitude, a wild solitude

’s reveald, fearfully, high I’d climb

into the shaking uncertainties,

part out of longing, part daring my self,

part to see that

widening of the world, part

to find my own, my secret

hiding sense and place, where from afar

all voices and scenes come back

—the barking of a dog, autumnal burnings,

far calls, close calls— the boy I was

calls out to me

here the man where I am “Look!

I’ve been where you

most fear to be.”

Robert Duncan, “Childhood’s Retreat” from *Ground Work: Before the War.* Copyright © 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1982, 1984 by Robert Duncan. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Ground Work: Before the War* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1984)

**C23. The Children of the Poor By** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

1

People who have no children can be hard:

Attain a mail of ice and insolence:

Need not pause in the fire, and in no sense

Hesitate in the hurricane to guard.

And when wide world is bitten and bewarred

They perish purely, waving their spirits hence

Without a trace of grace or of offense

To laugh or fail, diffident, wonder-starred.

While through a throttling dark we others hear

The little lifting helplessness, the queer

Whimper-whine; whose unridiculous

Lost softness softly makes a trap for us.

And makes a curse. And makes a sugar of

The malocclusions, the inconditions of love.

2

What shall I give my children? who are poor,

Who are adjudged the leastwise of the land,

Who are my sweetest lepers, who demand

No velvet and no velvety velour;

But who have begged me for a brisk contour,

Crying that they are quasi, contraband

Because unfinished, graven by a hand

Less than angelic, admirable or sure.

My hand is stuffed with mode, design, device.

But I lack access to my proper stone.

And plenitude of plan shall not suffice

Nor grief nor love shall be enough alone

To ratify my little halves who bear

Across an autumn freezing everywhere.

3

And shall I prime my children, pray, to pray?

Mites, come invade most frugal vestibules

Spectered with crusts of penitents’ renewals

And all hysterics arrogant for a day.

Instruct yourselves here is no devil to pay.

Children, confine your lights in jellied rules;

Resemble graves; be metaphysical mules.

Learn Lord will not distort nor leave the fray.

Behind the scurryings of your neat motif

I shall wait, if you wish: revise the psalm

If that should frighten you: sew up belief

If that should tear: turn, singularly calm

At forehead and at fingers rather wise,

Holding the bandage ready for your eyes.

Gwendolyn Brooks, “The Children of the Poor” from *Annie Allen* (New York: Harper & Row, 1949). Collected in *Blacks* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991). Source: *Poetry* (March 1949).

**C24. The Children's Hour By** [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

Between the dark and the daylight,

When the night is beginning to lower,

Comes a pause in the day's occupations,

That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me

The patter of little feet,

The sound of a door that is opened,

And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,

Descending the broad hall stair,

Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,

And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:

Yet I know by their merry eyes

They are plotting and planning together

To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,

A sudden raid from the hall!

By three doors left unguarded

They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret

O'er the arms and back of my chair;

If I try to escape, they surround me;

They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,

Their arms about me entwine,

Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen

In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,

Because you have scaled the wall,

Such an old mustache as I am

Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,

And will not let you depart,

But put you down into the dungeon

In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,

Yes, forever and a day,

Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,

And moulder in dust away!

**C25. The Chimney Sweeper: A little black thing among the snow By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

A little black thing among the snow,

Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!

"Where are thy father and mother? say?"

"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,

And smil'd among the winter's snow,

They clothed me in the clothes of death,

And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy and dance and sing,

They think they have done me no injury,

And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King,

Who make up a heaven of our misery."

**C26. The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very young By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

When my mother died I was very young,

And my father sold me while yet my tongue

Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"

So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head

That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said,

"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,

You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night,

As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!

That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,

Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,

And he opened the coffins & set them all free;

Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,

And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,

They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.

And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,

He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark

And got with our bags & our brushes to work.

Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;

So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

**C27. Choices By** [**Tess Gallagher**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tess-gallagher)

I go to the mountain side

*for Drago Štambuk*

Tess Gallagher, "Choices" from *Midnight Lantern: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2011 by Tess Gallagher. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press.

of the house to cut saplings,

and clear a view to snow

on the mountain. But when I look up,

saw in hand, I see a nest clutched in

the uppermost branches.

I don’t cut that one.

I don’t cut the others either.

Suddenly, in every tree,

an unseen nest

where a mountain

would be.

**C28. Chord By** [**Stuart Dybek**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stuart-dybek)

A man steps out of sunlight,

sunlight that streams like grace,

still gaping at blue sky

staked across the emptiness of space,

into a history where shadows

assume a human face.

A man slips into silence

that began as a cry,

still trailing music

although reduced to the sigh

of an accordion

as it folds into its case.

"Chord" from *Streets in Their Own Ink*. Copyright © 2004 byStuart Dybek. Used with the permission of Farrar Straus & Giroux, LLC. Source: *Poetry* (March 2001).

**C29. Chorus Sacerdotum By** [**Fulke Greville**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/fulke-greville)

from Mustapha

O wearisome condition of humanity!

Born under one law, to another bound;

Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity;

Created sick, commanded to be sound.

What meaneth nature by these diverse laws?

Passion and reason, self-division cause.

Is it the mark or majesty of power

To make offenses that it may forgive?

Nature herself doth her own self deflower

To hate those errors she herself doth give.

For how should man think that he may not do,

If nature did not fail and punish, too?

Tyrant to others, to herself unjust,

Only commands things difficult and hard,

Forbids us all things which it knows is lust,

Makes easy pains, unpossible reward.

If nature did not take delight in blood,

She would have made more easy ways to good.

We that are bound by vows and by promotion,

With pomp of holy sacrifice and rites,

To teach belief in good and still devotion,

To preach of heaven’s wonders and delights;

Yet when each of us in his own heart looks

He finds the God there, far unlike his books.

**C30. The Cities Inside Us By** [**Alberto Ríos**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alberto-rios)

We live in secret cities

And we travel unmapped roads.

We speak words between us that we recognize

But which cannot be looked up.

They are our words.

They come from very far inside our mouths.

You and I, we are the secret citizens of the city

Inside us, and inside us

There go all the cars we have driven

And seen, there are all the people

We know and have known, there

Are all the places that are

But which used to be as well. This is where

They went. They did not disappear.

We each take a piece

Through the eye and through the ear.

It’s loud inside us, in here, and when we speak

In the outside world

We have to hope that some of that sound

Does not come out, that an arm

Does not reach out

In place of the tongue.

Alberto Ríos, “The Cities Inside Us” from *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body.* Copyright © 2002 by Alberto Ríos. Used with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).  
Source: *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body* (Copper Canyon Press, 2002)

**C31. The City of Sleep By** [**Rudyard Kipling**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rudyard-kipling)

Over the edge of the purple down,

Where the single lamplight gleams,

Know ye the road to the Merciful Town

That is hard by the Sea of Dreams –

Where the poor may lay their wrongs away,

And the sick may forget to weep?

But we – pity us! Oh, pity us!

We wakeful; ah, pity us! –

We must go back with Policeman Day –

Back from the City of Sleep!

Weary they turn from the scroll and crown,

Fetter and prayer and plough –

They that go up to the Merciful Town,

For her gates are closing now.

It is their right in the Baths of Night

Body and soul to steep,

But we – pity us! ah, pity us!

We wakeful; oh, pity us! –

We must go back with Policeman Day –

Back from the City of Sleep!

Over the edge of the purple down,

Ere the tender dreams begin,

Look – we may look – at the Merciful Town,

But we may not enter in!

Outcasts all, from her guarded wall

Back to our watch we creep:

We – pity us! ah, pity us!

We wakeful; ah, pity us! –

We that go back with Policeman Day –

Back from the City of Sleep!

**C32. Clear Night By** [**Charles Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-wright)

Clear night, thumb-top of a moon, a back-lit sky.

Moon-fingers lay down their same routine

On the side deck and the threshold, the white keys and the black keys.

Bird hush and bird song. A cassia flower falls.

I want to be bruised by God.

I want to be strung up in a strong light and singled out.

I want to be stretched, like music wrung from a dropped seed.

I want to be entered and picked clean.

And the wind says “What?” to me.

And the castor beans, with their little earrings of death, say “What?” to me.

And the stars start out on their cold slide through the dark.

And the gears notch and the engines wheel.

Charles Wright, “Clear Night” from *Country Music: Selected Early Poems*. Copyright © 1982 by Charles Wright. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *Country Music: Selected Early Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 1982)

**C33. Clothespins By** [**Stuart Dybek**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stuart-dybek)

I once hit clothespins

for the Chicago Cubs.

I'd go out after supper

when the wash was in

and collect clothespins

from under four stories

of clothesline.

A swing-and-a-miss

was a strike-out;

the garage roof, Willie Mays,

pounding his mitt

under a pop fly.

Bushes, a double,

off the fence, triple,

and over, home run.

The bleachers roared.

I was all they ever needed for the flag.

New records every game—

once, 10 homers in a row!

But sometimes I'd tag them

so hard they'd explode,

legs flying apart in midair,

pieces spinning crazily

in all directions.

Foul Ball! What else

could I call it?

The bat was real.

“Clothespins” from BRASS KNUCKLES. Copyright (c) 2004 by Stuart Dybek. Used by permission of the author and Carnegie Mellon Press.

Source: *Brass Knuckles* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1979)

**C34. The Clouded Morning By** [**Jones Very**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jones-very)

The morning comes, and thickening clouds prevail,

Hanging like curtains all the horizon round,

Or overhead in heavy stillness sail;

So still is day, it seems like night profound;

Scarce by the city’s din the air is stirred,

And dull and deadened comes its every sound;

The cock’s shrill, piercing voice subdued is heard,

By the thick folds of muffling vapors drowned.

Dissolved in mists the hills and trees appear,

Their outlines lost and blended with the sky;

And well-known objects, that to all are near,

No longer seem familiar to the eye,

But with fantastic forms they mock the sight,

As when we grope amid the gloom of night.

**C35. Coda By** [**Basil Bunting**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/basil-bunting)

A strong song tows

us, long earsick.

Blind, we follow

rain slant, spray flick

to fields we do not know.

Night, float us.

Offshore wind, shout,

ask the sea

what’s lost, what’s left,

what horn sunk,

what crown adrift.

Where we are who knows

of kings who sup

while day fails? Who,

swinging his axe

to fell kings, guesses

where we go?

Basil Bunting, “Coda” from *Complete Poems,* edited by Richard Caddel. Reprinted with the permission of Bloodaxe Books Ltd., [www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com).

**C36. Cold Blooded Creatures By** [**Elinor Wylie**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elinor-wylie)

Man, the egregious egoist,

(In mystery the twig is bent,)

Imagines, by some mental twist,

That he alone is sentient

Of the intolerable load

Which on all living creatures lies,

Nor stoops to pity in the toad

The speechless sorrow of its eyes.

He asks no questions of the snake,

Nor plumbs the phosphorescent gloom

Where lidless fishes, broad awake,

Swim staring at a night-mare doom.

Elinor Wylie, “Cold Blooded Creatures” from *Selected Works of Elinor Wylie*, edited by Evelyn Helmick Hively (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2005). Reprinted with the permission of The Kent State University Press. Source: *Selected Works of Elinor Wylie* (Kent State University Press, 2005)

**C37. The Collar By** [**George Herbert**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-herbert)

I struck the board, and cried, "No more;

I will abroad!

What? shall I ever sigh and pine?

My lines and life are free, free as the road,

Loose as the wind, as large as store.

Shall I be still in suit?

Have I no harvest but a thorn

To let me blood, and not restore

What I have lost with cordial fruit?

Sure there was wine

Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn

Before my tears did drown it.

Is the year only lost to me?

Have I no bays to crown it,

No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?

All wasted?

Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,

And thou hast hands.

Recover all thy sigh-blown age

On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute

Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,

Thy rope of sands,

Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee

Good cable, to enforce and draw,

And be thy law,

While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.

Away! take heed;

I will abroad.

Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears;

He that forbears

To suit and serve his need

Deserves his load."

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild

At every word,

Methought I heard one calling, *Child!*

And I replied *My Lord.*

**C38. Come into Animal Presence By** [**Denise Levertov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/denise-levertov)

Come into animal presence.

No man is so guileless as

the serpent. The lonely white

rabbit on the roof is a star

twitching its ears at the rain.

The llama intricately

folding its hind legs to be seated

not disdains but mildly

Denise Levertov, “Come into Animal Presence” from *Poems 1960-1967*. Copyright © 1961 by Denise Levertov. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Poetry* (April 1960).

disregards human approval.

What joy when the insouciant

armadillo glances at us and doesn't

quicken his trotting

across the track into the palm brush.

What is this joy? That no animal

falters, but knows what it must do?

That the snake has no blemish,

that the rabbit inspects his strange surroundings

in white star-silence? The llama

rests in dignity, the armadillo

has some intention to pursue in the palm-forest.

Those who were sacred have remained so,

holiness does not dissolve, it is a presence

of bronze, only the sight that saw it

faltered and turned from it.

An old joy returns in holy presence.

**C39. The Coming of the Plague By** [**Weldon Kees**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/weldon-kees)

September was when it began.

Locusts dying in the fields; our dogs

Silent, moving like shadows on a wall;

And strange worms crawling; flies of a kind

We had never seen before; huge vineyard moths;

Badgers and snakes, abandoning

Their holes in the field; the fruit gone rotten;

Queer fungi sprouting; the fields and woods

Covered with spiderwebs; black vapors

Rising from the earth - all these,

And more began that fall. Ravens flew round

The hospital in pairs. Where there was water,

We could hear the sound of beating clothes

All through the night. We could not count

All the miscarriages, the quarrels, the jealousies.

And one day in a field I saw

A swarm of frogs, swollen and hideous,

Hundreds upon hundreds, sitting on each other,

Huddled together, silent, ominous,

And heard the sound of rushing wind.

Weldon Kees, "The Coming of the Plague" from *The Collected Poems of Weldon Kees* edited by Donald Justice by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1962, 1975, by the University of Nebraska Press. © renewed 2003 by the University of Nebraska Press. Source: *Poetry* (October 1950).

**C40. Concord Hymn By** [**Ralph Waldo Emerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ralph-waldo-emerson)

Sung at the Completion of the Battle Monument, July 4, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,

Their flag to April’s breeze unfurled,

Here once the embattled farmers stood

And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;

Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;

And Time the ruined bridge has swept

Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,

We set today a votive stone;

That memory may their deed redeem,

When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare

To die, and leave their children free,

Bid Time and Nature gently spare

The shaft we raise to them and thee.

**C41. Confessions By** [**Robert Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-browning)

What is he buzzing in my ears?

"Now that I come to die,

Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"

Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again

Where the physic bottles stand

On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,

With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,

From a house you could descry

O'er the garden-wall; is the curtain blue

Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather

Blue above lane and wall;

And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"

Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,

There watched for me, one June,

A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,

My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way... you crept

Close by the side, to dodge

Eyes in the house, two eyes except:

They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?

But, by creeping very close,

With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain

And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,

As she left the attic, there,

By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"

And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,

We loved, sir—used to meet:

How sad and bad and mad it was—

But then, how it was sweet!

**C42. The Conqueror Worm By** [**Edgar Allan Poe**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-allan-poe)

Lo! ’t is a gala night

Within the lonesome latter years!

An angel throng, bewinged, bedight

In veils, and drowned in tears,

Sit in a theatre, to see

A play of hopes and fears,

While the orchestra breathes fitfully

The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,

Mutter and mumble low,

And hither and thither fly—

Mere puppets they, who come and go

At bidding of vast formless things

That shift the scenery to and fro,

Flapping from out their Condor wings

Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure

It shall not be forgot!

With its Phantom chased for evermore

By a crowd that seize it not,

Through a circle that ever returneth in

To the self-same spot,

And much of Madness, and more of Sin,

And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout,

A crawling shape intrude!

A blood-red thing that writhes from out

The scenic solitude!

It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs

The mimes become its food,

And seraphs sob at vermin fangs

In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!

And, over each quivering form,

The curtain, a funeral pall,

Comes down with the rush of a storm,

While the angels, all pallid and wan,

Uprising, unveiling, affirm

That the play is the tragedy, “Man,”

And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

Source: *The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe* (1946)

**C43. The Consent By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

Late in November, on a single night

Not even near to freezing, the ginkgo trees

That stand along the walk drop all their leaves

In one consent, and neither to rain nor to wind

But as though to time alone: the golden and green

Leaves litter the lawn today, that yesterday

Had spread aloft their fluttering fans of light.

What signal from the stars? What senses took it in?

What in those wooden motives so decided

To strike their leaves, to down their leaves,

Rebellion or surrender? and if this

Can happen thus, what race shall be exempt?

What use to learn the lessons taught by time.

If a star at any time may tell us: *Now*.

Howard Nemerov, “The Consent” from *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov*. Copyright © 1977 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted by permission of Margaret Nemerov. Source: *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov* (1977)

**C44. Constancy to an Ideal Object By** [**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/samuel-taylor-coleridge)

Since all that beat about in Nature's range,

Or veer or vanish; why should'st thou remain

The only constant in a world of change,

O yearning Thought! that liv'st but in the brain?

Call to the Hours, that in the distance play,

The faery people of the future day—

Fond Thought! not one of all that shining swarm

Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,

Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,

Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!

Yet still thou haunt'st me; and though well I see,

She is not thou, and only thou are she,

Still, still as though some dear embodied Good,

Some living Love before my eyes there stood

With answering look a ready ear to lend,

I mourn to thee and say—'Ah! loveliest friend!

That this the meed of all my toils might be,

To have a home, an English home, and thee!'

Vain repetition! Home and Thou are one.

The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon,

Lulled by the thrush and wakened by the lark,

Without thee were but a becalm{'e}d bark,

Whose Helmsman on an ocean waste and wide

Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.

And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when

The woodman winding westward up the glen

At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze

The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,

Sees full before him, gliding without tread,

An image with a glory round its head;

The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,

Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!

**C45. Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15) By** [**Lawrence Ferlinghetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lawrence-ferlinghetti)

Constantly risking absurdity

and death

whenever he performs

above the heads

of his audience

the poet like an acrobat

climbs on rime

to a high wire of his own making

and balancing on eyebeams

above a sea of faces

paces his way

to the other side of day

performing entrechats

and sleight-of-foot tricks

and other high theatrics

and all without mistaking

any thing

for what it may not be

For he's the super realist

who must perforce perceive

taut truth

before the taking of each stance or step

in his supposed advance

toward that still higher perch

where Beauty stands and waits

with gravity

to start her death-defying leap

And he

a little charleychaplin man

who may or may not catch

her fair eternal form

spreadeagled in the empty air

of existence

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)" from *A Coney Island of the Mind: Poems*. Copyright 1958 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *A Coney Island of the Mind: Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1958)

**C46. Contraction By** [**Ravi Shankar**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ravi-shankar)

Ravi Shankar, "Contraction" from *Instrumentality*. Copyright © 2005 by Ravi Shankar. Reprinted by permission of Cherry Grove Collections.

Source: *Instrumentality* (Cherry Grove Collections, 2005)

Honest self-scrutiny too easily mutinies,

mutates into false memories

Which find language a receptive host,

Boosted by boastful embellishments.

Self-esteem is raised on wobbly beams,

seeming seen as stuff enough

To fund the hedge of personality,

Though personally, I cannot forget

Whom I have met and somehow wronged,

wrung for a jot of fugitive juice,

Trading some ruse for a blot or two,

Labored to braid from transparent diction

Fiction, quick fix, quixotic fixation.

As the pulse of impulses

Drained through my veins, I tried to live

Twenty lives at once. Now one is plenty.

**C47. The Convergence of the Twain By** [**Thomas Hardy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hardy)

(Lines on the loss of the "Titanic")

I

In a solitude of the sea

Deep from human vanity,

And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres

Of her salamandrine fires,

Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant

To glass the opulent

The sea-worm crawls — grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed

To ravish the sensuous mind

Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near

Gaze at the gilded gear

And query: "What does this vaingloriousness down here?" ...

VI

Well: while was fashioning

This creature of cleaving wing,

The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate

For her — so gaily great —

A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew

In stature, grace, and hue,

In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be;

No mortal eye could see

The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent

By paths coincident

On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years

Said "Now!" And each one hears,

And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

**C48. Conversation By** [**Ai**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ai)

for Robert Lowell

We smile at each other

and I lean back against the wicker couch.

How does it feel to be dead? I say.

You touch my knees with your blue fingers.

And when you open your mouth,

a ball of yellow light falls to the floor

and burns a hole through it.

Don’t tell me, I say. I don't want to hear.

Did you ever, you start,

wear a certain kind of silk dress

and just by accident,

so inconsequential you barely notice it,

your fingers graze that dress

and you hear the sound of a knife cutting paper,

you see it too

and you realize how that image

is simply the extension of another image,

that your own life

is a chain of words

that one day will snap.

Words, you say, young girls in a circle, holding hands,

and beginning to rise heavenward

in their confirmation dresses,

like white helium balloons,

the wreaths of flowers on their heads spinning,

and above all that,

that’s where I’m floating,

and that’s what it’s like

only ten times clearer,

ten times more horrible.

Could anyone alive survive it?

Ai, “Conversation” from *Vice: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1999 by Ai. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., [www.nortonpoets.com](http://www.nortonpoets.com).

Source: *Vice: New and Selected Poems* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1999)

**C49. Cool Tombs By** [**Carl Sandburg**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-sandburg)

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin ... in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes ... in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas’ body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? ... in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns ... tell me if the lovers are losers ... tell me if any get more than the lovers ... in the dust ... in the cool tombs.

Source: *Cornhuskers* (1918)

**C50. Corn Maze By** [**David Barber**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-barber)

Here is where

You can get nowhere

Faster than ever

As you go under

Deeper and deeper

In the fertile smother

Of another acre

Like any other

You can’t peer over

And then another

And everywhere

You veer or hare

There you are

Farther and farther

Afield than before

But on you blunder

In the verdant meander

As if   the answer

To looking for cover

Were to bewilder

Your inner minotaur

And near and far were

Neither here nor there

And where you are

Is where you were

**C51. A Country Boy in Winter By** [**Sarah Orne Jewett**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sarah-orne-jewett)

The wind may blow the snow about,

For all I care, says Jack,

And I don’t mind how cold it grows,

For then the ice won’t crack.

Old folks may shiver all day long,

But I shall never freeze;

What cares a jolly boy like me

For winter days like these?

Far down the long snow-covered hills

It is such fun to coast,

So clear the road! the fastest sled

There is in school I boast.

The paint is pretty well worn off,

But then I take the lead;

A dandy sled’s a loiterer,

And I go in for speed.

When I go home at supper-time,

Ki! but my cheeks are red!

They burn and sting like anything;

I’m cross until I’m fed.

You ought to see the biscuit go,

I am so hungry then;

And old Aunt Polly says that boys

Eat twice as much as men.

There’s always something I can do

To pass the time away;

The dark comes quick in winter-time—

A short and stormy day

And when I give my mind to it,

It’s just as father says,

I almost do a man’s work now,

And help him many ways.

I shall be glad when I grow up

And get all through with school,

I’ll show them by-and-by that I

Was not meant for a fool.

I’ll take the crops off this old farm,

I’ll do the best I can.

A jolly boy like me won’t be

A dolt when he’s a man.

I like to hear the old horse neigh

Just as I come in sight,

The oxen poke me with their horns

To get their hay at night.

Somehow the creatures seem like friends,

And like to see me come.

Some fellows talk about New York,

But I shall stay at home.

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (1993)

**C52. A Country Incident By** [**May Sarton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/may-sarton)

Absorbed in planting bulbs, that work of hope,

I was startled by a loud human voice,

“Do go on working while I talk. Don’t stop!”

And I was caught upon the difficult choice—

To yield the last half hour of precious light,

Or to stay on my knees, absurd and rude;

I willed her to be gone with all my might,

This kindly neighbor who destroyed a mood;

I could not think of next spring any more,

I had to re-assess the way I live.

Long after I went in and closed the door,

I pondered on the crude imperative.

What it is to be caught up in each day

Like a child fighting imaginary wars,

Converting work into this passionate play,

A rounded whole made up of different chores

Which one might name haphazard meditation.

And yet an unexpected call destroys

Or puts to rout my primitive elation:

Why be so serious about mere joys?

Is this where some outmoded madness lies,

Poet as recluse? No, what comes to me

Is how my father looked out of his eyes,

And how he fought for his own passionate play.

He could tear up unread and throw away

Communications from officialdom,

And, courteous in every other way,

Would not brook anything that kept him from

Those lively dialogues with man’s whole past

That were his intimate and fruitful pleasure.

Impetuous, impatient to the last,

“Be adamant, keep clear, strike for your treasure!”

I hear the youthful ardor in his voice

(And so I must forgive a self in labor).

I feel his unrepentant smiling choice,

(And so I ask forgiveness of my neighbor).

. May Sarton, “A Country Incident” from *Collected Poems (1930-1993).* Copyright © 1993, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1974 by May Sarton. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Poetry* (November 1961).

**C53. Courtesy By** [**David Ferry**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-ferry)

It is an afternoon toward the end of August:

Autumnal weather, cool following on,

And riding in, after the heat of summer,

Into the empty afternoon shade and light,

The shade full of light without any thickness at all;

You can see right through and right down into the depth

Of the light and shade of the afternoon; there isn’t

Any weight of the summer pressing down.

In the backyard of the house next door there’s a kid,

Maybe eleven or twelve, and a young man,

Visitors at the house whom I don’t know,

The house in which the sound of some kind of party,

Perhaps even a wedding, is going on.

Somehow you can tell from the tone of their voices

That they don’t know each other very well—

Two guests at the party, one of them, maybe,

A friend of the bride or groom, the other the son

Or the younger brother, maybe, of somebody there.

A couple of blocks away the wash of traffic

Dimly sounds, as if we were near the ocean.

They’re shooting baskets, amiably and mildly.

The noise of the basketball, though startlingly louder

Than the voices of the two of them as they play,

Is peaceable as can be, something like meter.

The earnest voice of the kid, girlish and manly,

And the voice of the young man, carefully playing the game

Of having a grown-up conversation with him:

I can tell the young man is teaching the boy by example,

The easy way he dribbles the ball and passes it

Back with a single gesture of wrist to make it

Easy for the kid to be in synch;

Giving and taking, perfectly understood.

David Ferry, “Courtesy” from *Of No Country I Know: New and Selected Poems and Translations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999). Copyright © 1999 by David Ferry. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Of No Country I Know: New and Selected Poems and Translations* (The University of Chicago Press, 1999)

**C54. Coy Mistress By** [**Annie Finch**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/annie-finch)

Sir, I am not a bird of prey:

a Lady does not seize the day.

I trust that brief Time will unfold

our youth, before he makes us old.

How could we two write lines of rhyme

were we not fond of numbered Time

and grateful to the vast and sweet

trials his days will make us meet:

The Grave's not just the body's curse;

no skeleton can pen a verse!

So while this numbered World we see,

let's sweeten Time with poetry,

and Time, in turn, may sweeten Love

and give us time our love to prove.

You've praised my eyes, forehead, breast:

you've all our lives to praise the rest.

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**C55. The Craftsman By** [**Marcus B. Christian**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marcus-b-christian)

I ply with all the cunning of my art

This little thing, and with consummate care

I fashion it—so that when I depart,

Those who come after me shall find it fair

And beautiful. It must be free of flaws—

Pointing no laborings of weary hands;

And there must be no flouting of the laws

Of beauty—as the artist understands.

Through passion, yearnings infinite—yet dumb—

I lift you from the depths of my own mind

And gild you with my soul’s white heat to plumb

The souls of future men. I leave behind

This thing that in return this solace gives:

“He who creates true beauty ever lives.”

﻿

Marcus B. Christian, "The Craftsman" from *The Poetry of the Negro 1746-1970*. Copyright © 1970 by Marcus B. Christian. Reprinted by permission of University of New Orleans, Marcus B. Christian Papers, Earl K. Long Library.﻿ Source: *The Poetry of the Negro 1746-1970﻿* (Doubleday, 1970)

**C56. Crepuscule with Muriel By** [**Marilyn Hacker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marilyn-hacker)

Instead of a cup of tea, instead of a milk-

silk whelk of a cup, of a cup of nearly six

o'clock teatime, cup of a stumbling block,

cup of an afternoon unredeemed by talk,

cup of a cut brown loaf, of a slice, a lack

of butter, blueberry jam that's almost black,

instead of tannin seeping into the cracks

of a pot, the void of an hour seeps out, infects

the slit of a cut I haven't the wit to fix

with a surgeon's needle threaded with fine-gauge silk

as a key would thread the cylinder of a lock.

But no key threads the cylinder of a lock.

Late afternoon light, transitory, licks

the place of the absent cup with its rough tongue, flicks

itself out beneath the wheel's revolving spoke.

Taut thought's gone, with a blink of attention, slack,

a vision of "death and distance in the mix"

(she lost her words and how did she get them back

when the corridor of a day was a lurching deck?

The dream-life logic encodes in nervous tics

she translated to a syntax which connects

intense and unfashionable politics

with morning coffee, Hudson sunsets, sex;

then the short-circuit of the final stroke,

the end toward which all lines looped out, then broke).

What a gaze out the window interjects:

on the southeast corner, a black Lab balks,

tugged as the light clicks green toward a late-day walk

by a plump brown girl in a purple anorak.

The Bronx-bound local comes rumbling up the tracks

out of the tunnel, over west Harlem blocks

whose windows gleam on the animal warmth of bricks

rouged by the fluvial light of six o'clock.

“Crepuscule with Muriel”, from *Desesperanto: Poems 1999-2002* by Marilyn Hacker. Copyright © 2003 by Marilyn Hacker. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc Source: *Desperanto: Poems 1999-2002* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2003)

**C57. The Cricket and the Grasshopper By** [**Dan Beachy-Quick**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dan-beachy-quick)

The senseless leaf   in the fevered hand

Grows hot, near blood-heat, but never grows

Green. Weeks ago the dove’s last cooing strain

Settled silent in the nest to brood slow

Absence from song. The dropped leaf cools

On the uncut grass, supple still, still green,

Twining still these fingers as they listless pull

The tangle straight until the tangle tightens

And the hand is caught, another fallen leaf.

The poetry of the earth never ceases

Ceasing — one blade of grass denies belief

Until its mere thread bears the grasshopper’s

Whole weight, and the black cricket sings unseen,

Desire living in a hole beneath the tangle’s green.

**C58. The Cross of Snow By** [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,

A gentle face — the face of one long dead —

Looks at me from the wall, where round its head

The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.

Here in this room she died; and soul more white

Never through martyrdom of fire was led

To its repose; nor can in books be read

The legend of a life more benedight.

There is a mountain in the distant West

That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines

Displays a cross of snow upon its side.

Such is the cross I wear upon my breast

These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes

And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

**C59. Crossing the Bar By** [**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alfred-tennyson)

Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crost the bar.

**POL D-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

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**D92 D93 D94 D95 D96 D97 D98 D99 D100 D101 D102 D103 D104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

**Genre Transformation is the idea that a message can be that same, even though the genre might differ.**

**Consider Robert Frost’s poem The Road Not Taken, and his letter to his publisher regarding meeting a stranger in the woods. How are those writings (different in form) actually similar in meaning?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Genre Transformation** | **Similarities** | **Differences** | **Overall Effect** |
| **Requirements of the Letter Form** |  |  |  |
| **Requirements of the Poetic Form** |  |  |  |
| **Message of Both Pieces** |  |  |  |

**D1 Dancers Exercising By** [**Amy Clampitt**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-clampitt)

Frame within frame, the evolving conversation

is dancelike, as though two could play

at improvising snowflakes’

six-feather-vaned evanescence,

no two ever alike. All process

and no arrival: the happier we are,

the less there is for memory to take hold of,

or—memory being so largely a predilection

for the exceptional—come to a halt

in front of. But finding, one evening

on a street not quite familiar,

inside a gated

November-sodden garden, a building

of uncertain provenance,

peering into whose vestibule we were

arrested—a frame within a frame,

a lozenge of impeccable clarity—

by the reflection, no, not

of our two selves, but of

dancers exercising in a mirror,

at the center

of that clarity, what we saw

was not stillness

but movement: the perfection

of memory consisting, it would seem,

in the never-to-be-completed.

We saw them mirroring themselves,

never guessing the vestibule

that defined them, frame within frame,

contained two other mirrors.

Amy Clampitt, “Dancers Exercising” from *The Collected Poems of Amy Clampitt.* Copyright © 1997 by the Estate of Amy Clampitt. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. Source: *The Collected Poems of Amy Clampitt* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)

**D2 Danse Russe By** [**William Carlos Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-carlos-williams)

If I when my wife is sleeping

and the baby and Kathleen

are sleeping

and the sun is a flame-white disc

in silken mists

above shining trees,—

if I in my north room

dance naked, grotesquely

before my mirror

waving my shirt round my head

and singing softly to myself:

“I am lonely, lonely.

I was born to be lonely,

I am best so!”

If I admire my arms, my face,

my shoulders, flanks, buttocks

against the yellow drawn shades,—

Who shall say I am not

the happy genius of my household?

William Carlos Williams, “Danse Russe” from *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume I*, 1909-1939, edited by Christopher MacGowan. Copyright 1938, 1944, 1945 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

**D3 The Daring One By** [**Edwin Markham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edwin-markham)

I would my soul were like the bird

That dares the vastness undeterred.

Look, where the bluebird on the bough

Breaks into rapture even now!

He sings, tip-top, the tossing elm

As tho he would a world o’erwhelm.

Indifferent to the void he rides

Upon the wind’s eternal tides.

He tosses gladly on the gale,

For well he knows he can not fail—

Knows if the bough breaks, still his wings

Will bear him upward while he sings!

Source: *The Gates of Paradise and Other Poems* (1928)

**D4 The Darker Sooner By** [**Catherine Wing**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/catherine-wing)

Then came the darker sooner,

came the later lower.

We were no longer a sweeter-here

happily-ever-after. We were after ever.

We were farther and further.

More was the word we used for harder.

Lost was our standard-bearer.

Our gods were fallen faster,

and fallen larger.

The day was duller, duller

was disaster. Our charge was error.

Instead of leader we had louder,

instead of lover, never. And over this river

broke the winter’s black weather.

Catherine Wing, "The Darker Sooner" from *The Best American Poetry* 2010. Copyright © 2010 by Catherine Wing. Reprinted by permission of Catherine Wing. Source: The Best American Poetry (Scribner, 2010)

**D5 The Darkling Thrush By** [**Thomas Hardy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hardy)

I leant upon a coppice gate

When Frost was spectre-grey,

And Winter's dregs made desolate

The weakening eye of day.

The tangled bine-stems scored the sky

Like strings of broken lyres,

And all mankind that haunted nigh

Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be

The Century's corpse outleant,

His crypt the cloudy canopy,

The wind his death-lament.

The ancient pulse of germ and birth

Was shrunken hard and dry,

And every spirit upon earth

Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among

The bleak twigs overhead

In a full-hearted evensong

Of joy illimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,

In blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul

Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings

Of such ecstatic sound

Was written on terrestrial things

Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through

His happy good-night air

Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew

And I was unaware.

**D6 Dawn Chorus By** [**Sasha Dugdale**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sasha-dugdale)

March 29, 2010

Every morning since the time changed

I have woken to the dawn chorus

And even before it sounded, I dreamed of it

Loud, unbelievably loud, shameless, raucous

And once I rose and twitched the curtains apart

Expecting the birds to be pressing in fright

Against the pane like passengers

But the garden was empty and it was night

Not a slither of light at the horizon

Still the birds were bawling through the mists

Terrible, invisible

A million small evangelists

How they sing: as if each had pecked up a smoldering coal

Their throats singed and swollen with song

In dissonance as befits the dark world

Where only travelers and the sleepless belong

**D7 The Day By** [**Geoffrey Brock**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/geoffrey-brock)

It hangs on its

stem like a plum

at the edge of a

darkening thicket.

It’s swelling and

blushing and ripe

and I reach out a

hand to pick it

but flesh moves

slow through time

and evening

comes on fast

and just when I

think my fingers

might seize that

sweetness at last

the gentlest of

breezes rises

and the plum lets

go of   the stem.

And now it’s my

fingers ripening

and evening that’s

reaching for them.

**D8 The Day Lady Died By** [**Frank O'Hara**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frank-ohara)

It is 12:20 in New York a Friday

three days after Bastille day, yes

it is 1959 and I go get a shoeshine

because I will get off the 4:19 in Easthampton

at 7:15 and then go straight to dinner

and I don’t know the people who will feed me

I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun

and have a hamburger and a malted and buy

an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets

in Ghana are doing these days

I go on to the bank

and Miss Stillwagon (first name Linda I once heard)

doesn’t even look up my balance for once in her life

and in the GOLDEN GRIFFIN I get a little Verlaine

for Patsy with drawings by Bonnard although I do

think of Hesiod, trans. Richmond Lattimore or

Brendan Behan’s new play or *Le Balcon* or *Les Nègres*

of Genet, but I don’t, I stick with Verlaine

after practically going to sleep with quandariness

and for Mike I just stroll into the PARK LANE

Liquor Store and ask for a bottle of Strega and

then I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue

and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theatre and

casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton

of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it

and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of

leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT

while she whispered a song along the keyboard

to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing

Frank O’Hara, “The Day Lady Died” from *Lunch Poems.* Copyright © 1964 by Frank O’Hara. Reprinted with the permission of City Lights Books.  
  
Source: *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara* (1995)

**D9 The Days Gone By By** [**James Whitcomb Riley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-whitcomb-riley)

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!

The apples in the orchard, and the pathway through the rye;

The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the quail

As he piped across the meadows sweet as any nightingale;

When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was in the sky,

And my happy heart brimmed over in the days gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were tripped

By the honey-suckle’s tangles where the water-lilies dipped,

And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along the brink

Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to drink,

And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant’s wayward cry

And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!

The music of the laughing lip, the luster of the eye;

The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin’s magic ring—

The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in everything,—

When life was like a story, holding neither sob nor sigh,

In the golden olden glory of the days gone by.

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (The Library of America, 1993)

**D10 Deaf-Mute in the Pear Tree By** [**P. K. Page**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/p-k-page)

His clumsy body is a golden fruit

pendulous in the pear tree

Blunt fingers among the multitudinous buds

Adriatic blue the sky above and through

the forking twigs

Sun ruddying tree’s trunk, his trunk

his massive head thick-nobbed with burnished curls

tight-clenched in bud

(Painting by Generalíc. Primitive.)

I watch him prune with silent secateurs

Boots in the crotch of branches shift their weight

heavily as oxen in a stall

Hear small inarticulate mews from his locked mouth

a kitten in a box

Pear clippings fall

soundlessly on the ground

Spring finches sing

soundlessly in the leaves

A stone. A stone in ears and on his tongue

Through palm and fingertip he knows the tree’s

quick springtime pulse

Smells in its sap the sweet incipient pears

Pale sunlight’s choppy water glistens on

his mutely snipping blades

and flags and scraps of blue

above him make regatta of the day

But when he sees his wife’s foreshortened shape

sudden and silent in the grass below

uptilt its face to him

then air is kisses, kisses

stone dissolves

his locked throat finds a little door

and through it feathered joy

flies screaming like a jay

P. K. Page, “Deaf-Mute in the Pear Tree” from *The Glass Air: Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1985 by P. K. Page. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *The Glass Air: Selected Poems* (Oxford University Press, 1985)

**D11 Death of a Naturalist By** [**Seamus Heaney**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/seamus-heaney)

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart

Of the townland; green and heavy headed

Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.

Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.

Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles

Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.

There were dragonflies, spotted butterflies,

But best of all was the warm thick slobber

Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water

In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring

I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied

Specks to range on window sills at home,

On shelves at school, and wait and watch until

The fattening dots burst, into nimble

Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how

The daddy frog was called a bullfrog

And how he croaked and how the mammy frog

Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was

Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too

For they were yellow in the sun and brown

In rain.

Then one hot day when fields were rank

With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs

Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges

To a coarse croaking that I had not heard

Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.

Right down the dam gross bellied frogs were cocked

On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:

The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat

Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.

I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings

Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew

That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

Seamus Heaney, "Death of a Naturalist" from *Opened Ground: Selected poems 1966-1996*. Copyright © 1999 by Seamus Heaney Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, www.fsgbooks.com. All rights reserved.   
  
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Source: *Opened Ground: Selected poems 1966-1996* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999)

**D12 The Death of Allegory By** [**Billy Collins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/billy-collins)

I am wondering what became of all those tall abstractions

that used to pose, robed and statuesque, in paintings

and parade about on the pages of the Renaissance

displaying their capital letters like license plates.

Truth cantering on a powerful horse,

Chastity, eyes downcast, fluttering with veils.

Each one was marble come to life, a thought in a coat,

Courtesy bowing with one hand always extended,

Villainy sharpening an instrument behind a wall,

Reason with her crown and Constancy alert behind a helm.

They are all retired now, consigned to a Florida for tropes.

Justice is there standing by an open refrigerator.

Valor lies in bed listening to the rain.

Even Death has nothing to do but mend his cloak and hood,

and all their props are locked away in a warehouse,

hourglasses, globes, blindfolds and shackles.

Even if you called them back, there are no places left

for them to go, no Garden of Mirth or Bower of Bliss.

The Valley of Forgiveness is lined with condominiums

and chain saws are howling in the Forest of Despair.

Here on the table near the window is a vase of peonies

and next to it black binoculars and a money clip,

exactly the kind of thing we now prefer,

objects that sit quietly on a line in lower case,

themselves and nothing more, a wheelbarrow,

an empty mailbox, a razor blade resting in a glass ashtray.

As for the others, the great ideas on horseback

and the long-haired virtues in embroidered gowns,

it looks as though they have traveled down

that road you see on the final page of storybooks,

the one that winds up a green hillside and disappears

into an unseen valley where everyone must be fast asleep.

Billy Collins, “The Death of Allegory” from *Questions about Angels.* Copyright © 1991 by Billy Collins. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, [www.pitt.edu/~press/](http://www.pitt.edu/~press/).  
  
Source: *Poetry* (January 1990).

**D13 The Definition of Love By** [**Andrew Marvell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/andrew-marvell)

My love is of a birth as rare

As ’tis for object strange and high;

It was begotten by Despair

Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone

Could show me so divine a thing

Where feeble Hope could ne’er have flown,

But vainly flapp’d its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive

Where my extended soul is fixt,

But Fate does iron wedges drive,

And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see

Two perfect loves, nor lets them close;

Their union would her ruin be,

And her tyrannic pow’r depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel

Us as the distant poles have plac’d,

(Though love’s whole world on us doth wheel)

Not by themselves to be embrac’d;

Unless the giddy heaven fall,

And earth some new convulsion tear;

And, us to join, the world should all

Be cramp’d into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well

Themselves in every angle greet;

But ours so truly parallel,

Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,

But Fate so enviously debars,

Is the conjunction of the mind,

And opposition of the stars.

**D14 Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg By** [**Richard Hugo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-hugo)

You might come here Sunday on a whim.

Say your life broke down. The last good kiss

you had was years ago. You walk these streets

laid out by the insane, past hotels

that didn’t last, bars that did, the tortured try

of local drivers to accelerate their lives.

Only churches are kept up. The jail

turned 70 this year. The only prisoner

is always in, not knowing what he’s done.

The principal supporting business now

is rage. Hatred of the various grays

the mountain sends, hatred of the mill,

The Silver Bill repeal, the best liked girls

who leave each year for Butte. One good

restaurant and bars can’t wipe the boredom out.

The 1907 boom, eight going silver mines,

a dance floor built on springs—

all memory resolves itself in gaze,

in panoramic green you know the cattle eat

or two stacks high above the town,

two dead kilns, the huge mill in collapse

for fifty years that won’t fall finally down.

Isn’t this your life? That ancient kiss

still burning out your eyes? Isn’t this defeat

so accurate, the church bell simply seems

a pure announcement: ring and no one comes?

Don’t empty houses ring? Are magnesium

and scorn sufficient to support a town,

not just Philipsburg, but towns

of towering blondes, good jazz and booze

the world will never let you have

until the town you came from dies inside?

Say no to yourself. The old man, twenty

when the jail was built, still laughs

although his lips collapse. Someday soon,

he says, I’ll go to sleep and not wake up.

You tell him no. You’re talking to yourself.

The car that brought you here still runs.

The money you buy lunch with,

no matter where it’s mined, is silver

and the girl who serves your food

is slender and her red hair lights the wall.

Richard Hugo, “Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg” from *Making Certain It Goes On: The Collected Poems of Richard Hugo.* Copyright © 1984 by Richard Hugo. Reprinted with the permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Making Certain It Goes On: The Collected Poems of Richard Hugo* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1984)

**D15 Deliberate By** [**Amy Uyematsu**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-uyematsu)

So by sixteen we move in packs

learn to strut and slide

in deliberate lowdown rhythm

talk in a syn/co/pa/ted beat

because we want so bad

to be cool, never to be mistaken

for white, even when we leave

these rowdier L.A. streets—

remember how we paint our eyes

like gangsters

flash our legs in nylons

sassy black high heels

or two inch zippered boots

stack them by the door at night

next to Daddy’s muddy gardening shoes.

Amy Uyematsu, "Deliberate" from *Nights of Fire, Nights of Rain*, published by Story Line Press. Copyright © 1997 by Amy Uyematsu. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Nights of Fire Nights of Rain* (Story Line Press, 1997)

**D16 The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee By** [**N. Scott Momaday**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/n-scott-momaday)

I am a feather on the bright sky

I am the blue horse that runs in the plain

I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water

I am the shadow that follows a child

I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows

I am an eagle playing with the wind

I am a cluster of bright beads

I am the farthest star

I am the cold of dawn

I am the roaring of the rain

I am the glitter on the crust of the snow

I am the long track of the moon in a lake

I am a flame of four colors

I am a deer standing away in the dusk

I am a field of sumac and the pomme blanche

I am an angle of geese in the winter sky

I am the hunger of a young wolf

I am the whole dream of these things

You see, I am alive, I am alive

I stand in good relation to the earth

I stand in good relation to the gods

I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful

I stand in good relation to the daughter of Tsen-tainte

You see, I am alive, I am alive

N. Scott Momaday, “The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee” from *In the Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems,* 1961-1991. Copyright ©1991 by N. Scott Momaday. Reprinted with the permission of the author and St. Martin’s Press, LLC.  
  
Source: *In the Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems 1961-1991* (St. Martin's Press LLC, 1992)

**D17 The Delta By** [**Bruce Bond**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/bruce-bond)

If you are going there by foot, prepare

to get wet. You are not you anymore.

You are a girl standing in a pool

of clouds as they catch fire in the distance.

There are laws of   heaven and those of   place

and those who see the sky in the water,

angels in ashes that are the delta’s now.

They say if you sweep the trash from your house

after dark, you sweep away your luck.

If you are going by foot, bring a stick,

a third leg, and honor the great disorder,

the great broom of waterfowl and songbirds.

Prepare to voodoo your way, best you can,

knowing there is a little water in things

you take for granted, a little charity

and squalor for the smallest forms of life.

Voodoo was always mostly charity.

People forget. If you shake a tablecloth

outside at night, someone in your family

dies. There are laws we make thinking

it was us who made them. We are not us.

We are a floodplain by the Mississippi

that once poured slaves upriver to the fields.

We are a hurricane in the making.

We could use a magus who knows something

about suffering, who knows a delta’s needs.

We understand if   you want a widow

to stay single, cut up her husband’s shoes.

He is not himself anyway and walks

barefoot across a landscape that has no north.

Only a ghost tree here and there, a frog,

a cricket, a bird. And if the fates are kind,

a girl with a stick, who is more at home,

being homeless, than you will ever be.

**D18 Desert By** [**Josephine Miles**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/josephine-miles)

When with the skin you do acknowledge drought,

The dry in the voice, the lightness of feet, the fine

Flake of the heat at every level line;

When with the hand you learn to touch without

Surprise the spine for the leaf, the prickled petal,

The stone scorched in the shine, and the wood brittle;

Then where the pipe drips and the fronds sprout

And the foot-square forest of clover blooms in sand,

You will lean and watch, but never touch with your hand.

*September 1934*

**D19 The Destruction of Sennacherib By** [**Lord Byron (George Gordon)**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lord-byron)

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,

And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;

And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,

When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,

That host with their banners at sunset were seen:

Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,

That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,

And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;

And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,

And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,

But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;

And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,

And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,

With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:

And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,

The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,

And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;

And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,

Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

**D20 Difference By** [**Stephen Vincent Benét**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-vincent-benaet)

My mind’s a map. A mad sea-captain drew it

Under a flowing moon until he knew it;

Winds with brass trumpets, puffy-cheeked as jugs,

And states bright-patterned like Arabian rugs.

“Here there be tygers.” “Here we buried Jim.”

Here is the strait where eyeless fishes swim

About their buried idol, drowned so cold

He weeps away his eyes in salt and gold.

A country like the dark side of the moon,

A cider-apple country, harsh and boon,

A country savage as a chestnut-rind,

A land of hungry sorcerers.

Your mind?

—Your mind is water through an April night,

A cherry-branch, plume-feathery with its white,

A lavender as fragrant as your words,

A room where Peace and Honor talk like birds,

Sewing bright coins upon the tragic cloth

Of heavy Fate, and Mockery, like a moth,

Flutters and beats about those lovely things.

You are the soul, enchanted with its wings,

The single voice that raises up the dead

To shake the pride of angels.

I have said.

Source: *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét* (Henry Holt & Co., 1942)

**D21 Digging By** [**Seamus Heaney**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/seamus-heaney)

Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound

When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:

My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds

Bends low, comes up twenty years away

Stooping in rhythm through potato drills

Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft

Against the inside knee was levered firmly.

He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep

To scatter new potatoes that we picked,

Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.

Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day

Than any other man on Toner’s bog.

Once I carried him milk in a bottle

Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up

To drink it, then fell to right away

Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods

Over his shoulder, going down and down

For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap

Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge

Through living roots awaken in my head.

But I’ve no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests.

I’ll dig with it.

Seamus Heaney, "Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist*. Copyright 1966 by Seamus Heaney. Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC.

Source: *Death of a Naturalist* (1966)

**D22 Dirge in Woods By** [**George Meredith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-meredith)

A wind sways the pines,

And below

Not a breath of wild air;

Still as the mosses that glow

On the flooring and over the lines

Of the roots here and there.

The pine-tree drops its dead;

They are quiet, as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead

Rushes life in a race,

As the clouds the clouds chase;

And we go,

And we drop like the fruits of the tree,

Even we,

Even so.

**D23 Dirge Without Music By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.

So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind:

Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned

With lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you.

Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust.

A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew,

A formula, a phrase remains,—but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love,—

They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and curled

Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve.

More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses in the world.

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave

Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;

Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.

I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, “Dirge Without Music” from *Collected Poems* © 1928, 1955 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis. Reprinted with permission of Elizabeth Barnett and Holly Peppe, Literary Executors, The Millay Society.  
  
Source: *Collected Poems* (HarperCollins, 1958)

**D24 Discrimination By** [**Kenneth Rexroth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-rexroth)

I don’t mind the human race.

I’ve got pretty used to them

In these past twenty-five years.

I don’t mind if they sit next

To me on streetcars, or eat

In the same restaurants, if

It’s not at the same table.

However, I don’t approve

Of a woman I respect

Dancing with one of them. I’ve

Tried asking them to my home

Without success. I shouldn’t

Care to see my own sister

Marry one. Even if she

Loved him, think of the children.

Their art is interesting,

But certainly barbarous.

I’m sure, if given a chance,

They’d kill us all in our beds.

And you must admit, they smell.

Kenneth Rexroth, “Discrimination” from *The Collected Shorter Poems*. Copyright © 1966 by Kenneth Rexroth. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).  
Source: *The Collected Shorter Poems* (1966)

**D25 Disenchantment Bay By** [**Timothy Murphy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/timothy-murphy)

Touch and go. Our Cessna bumped the sand,

thumped its tundra tires,

lifted as if on wires,

banked over ice and rocked its wings to land.

We pitched our camp hard by the Hubbard’s face,

some sixty fathoms tall,

a seven-mile-long wall

seven leagues from Yakutat, our base.

*Crack!* A blue serac tottered and gave.

Stunned at the water’s edge,

we ﬂed our vantage ledge

like oyster catchers skittering from a wave.

Separation has become my fear.

What was does not console,

what is, is past control—

the disembodiment that looms so near.

Detachment? So an ice cliff by the sea

calves with a seismic crash

of bergy bits and brash,

choking a waterway with its debris.

We clear the neap tide beach of glacial wrack,

pace and mark the ground,

then wave the Cessna round.

Pilot, we bank on you to bear us back.

**D26 A Display of Mackerel By** [**Mark Doty**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-doty)

They lie in parallel rows,

on ice, head to tail,

each a foot of luminosity

barred with black bands,

which divide the scales’

radiant sections

like seams of lead

in a Tiffany window.

Iridescent, watery

prismatics: think abalone,

the wildly rainbowed

mirror of a soapbubble sphere,

think sun on gasoline.

Splendor, and splendor,

and not a one in any way

distinguished from the other

—nothing about them

of individuality. Instead

they’re *all* exact expressions

of the one soul,

each a perfect fulfilment

of heaven’s template,

mackerel essence. As if,

after a lifetime arriving

at this enameling, the jeweler’s

made uncountable examples,

each as intricate

in its oily fabulation

as the one before

Suppose we could iridesce,

like these, and lose ourselves

entirely in the universe

of shimmer—would you want

to be yourself only,

unduplicatable, doomed

to be lost? They’d prefer,

plainly, to be flashing participants,

multitudinous. Even now

they seem to be bolting

forward, heedless of stasis.

They don’t care they’re dead

Mark Doty, "A Display of Mackerel" from *Atlantis*, published by HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. Copyright © 1995 by Mark Doty. Reprinted by permission of Mark Doty. Source: *Atlantis: Poems* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1995)

and nearly frozen,

just as, presumably,

they didn’t care that they were living:

all, all for all,

the rainbowed school

and its acres of brilliant classrooms,

in which no verb is singular,

or every one is. How happy they seem,

even on ice, to be together, selfless,

which is the price of gleaming.

**D27 Do Not! By** [**Stevie Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stevie-smith)

Do not despair of man, and do not scold him,

Who are you that you should so lightly hold him?

Are you not also a man, and in your heart

Are there not warlike thoughts and fear and smart?

Are you not also afraid and in fear cruel,

Do you not think of yourself as usual,

Faint for ambition, desire to be loved,

Prick at a virtuous thought by beauty moved?

You love your wife, you hold your children dear,

Then say not that Man is vile, but say they are.

But they are not. So is your judgement shown

Presumptuous, false, quite vain, merely your own

Sadness for failed ambition set outside,

Made a philosophy of, prinked, beautified

In noble dress and into the world sent out

To run with the ill it most pretends to rout.

Oh know your own heart, that heart's not wholly evil,

And from the particular judge the general,

If judge you must, but with compassion see life,

Or else, of yourself despairing, flee strife.

Stevie Smith, “Do Not!” from *New Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1972 by Stevie Smith. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *The New Selected Poems of Stevie Smith* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1988)

**D28 Domestic Situation By** [**Ernest Hilbert**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ernest-hilbert)

Maybe you’ve heard about this. Maybe not.

A man came home and chucked his girlfriend’s cat

In the wood chipper. This really happened.

Dinner wasn’t ready on time. A lot

Of other little things went wrong. He spat

On her father, who came out when he learned

About it. He also broke her pinky,

Stole her checks, and got her sister pregnant.

But she stood by him, stood strong, through it all,

Because she loved him. She loved him, you see.

She actually said that, and then she went

And married him. She felt some unique call.

Don’t try to understand what another

Person means by love. Don’t even bother.

Ernest Hilbert, “Domestic Situation” from *Sixty Sonnets*. Copyright © 2009 by Ernest Hilbert. Reprinted by permission of Red Hen Press.

Source: *Sixty Sonnets* (Red Hen Press, 2009)

**D29 The Donkey By** [**G. K. Chesterton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/g-k-chesterton)

When fishes flew and forests walked

And figs grew upon thorn,

Some moment when the moon was blood

Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry

And ears like errant wings,

The devil’s walking parody

On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,

Of ancient crooked will;

Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,

I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;

One far fierce hour and sweet:

There was a shout about my ears,

And palms before my feet.

Source: *The Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton* (Dodd Mead & Company, 1927)

**D30 Double Dutch By** [**Gregory Pardlo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gregory-pardlo)

The girls turning double-dutch

bob & weave like boxers pulling

punches, shadowing each other,

sparring across the slack cord

casting parabolas in the air. They

whip quick as an infant’s pulse

and the jumper, before she

enters the winking, nods in time

as if she has a notion to share,

waiting her chance to speak. But she’s

anticipating the upbeat

like a bandleader counting off

the tune they are about to swing into.

The jumper stair-steps into mid-air

as if she’s jumping rope in low-gravity,

training for a lunar mission. Airborne a moment

long enough to fit a second thought in,

she looks caught in the mouth bones of a fish

as she flutter-floats into motion

like a figure in a stack of time-lapse photos

thumbed alive. Once inside,

the bells tied to her shoestrings rouse the gods

who’ve lain in the dust since the Dutch

acquired Manhattan. How she dances

patterns like a dust-heavy bee retracing

its travels in scale before the hive. How

the whole stunning contraption of girl and rope

slaps and scoops like a paddle boat.

Her misted skin arranges the light

with each adjustment and flex. Now heather-

hued, now sheen, light listing on the fulcrum

of a wrist and the bare jutted joints of elbow

and knee, and the faceted surfaces of muscle,

surfaces fracturing and reforming

like a sun-tickled sleeve of running water.

She makes jewelry of herself and garlands

the ground with shadows.

﻿

Gregory Pardlo, "Double Dutch" from *Totem*, published by The American Poetry Review. Copyright © 2007 by Gregory Pardlo. Reprinted by permission of the author.﻿ Source: *Totem* (The American Poetry Review, 2007)

**D31 The Doubt of Future Foes By** [**Queen Elizabeth I**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/queen-elizabeth-i)

The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,

And wit me warns to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy;

For falsehood now doth flow, and subjects’ faith doth ebb,

Which should not be if reason ruled or wisdom weaved the web.

But clouds of joys untried do cloak aspiring minds,

Which turn to rain of late repent by changed course of winds.

The top of hope supposed the root upreared shall be,

And fruitless all their grafted guile, as shortly ye shall see.

The dazzled eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,

Shall be unsealed by worthy wights whose foresight falsehood finds.

The daughter of debate that discord aye doth sow

Shall reap no gain where former rule still peace hath taught to know.

No foreign banished wight shall anchor in this port;

Our realm brooks not seditious sects, let them elsewhere resort.

My rusty sword through rest shall first his edge employ

To poll their tops that seek such change or gape for future joy.

**D32. Dover Beach By** [**Matthew Arnold**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/matthew-arnold)

The sea is calm tonight.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; on the French coast the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,

Listen! you hear the grating roar

Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

At their return, up the high strand,

Begin, and cease, and then again begin,

With tremulous cadence slow, and bring

The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago

Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow

Of human misery; we

Find also in the sound a thought,

Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

**D33. Dream Song 14 By** [**John Berryman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-berryman)

Life, friends, is boring. We must not say so.

After all, the sky flashes, the great sea yearns,

we ourselves flash and yearn,

and moreover my mother told me as a boy

(repeatingly) ‘Ever to confess you’re bored

means you have no

Inner Resources.’ I conclude now I have no

inner resources, because I am heavy bored.

Peoples bore me,

literature bores me, especially great literature,

Henry bores me, with his plights & gripes

as bad as achilles,

who loves people and valiant art, which bores me.

And the tranquil hills, & gin, look like a drag

and somehow a dog

has taken itself & its tail considerably away

into mountains or sea or sky, leaving

behind: me, wag.

John Berryman, Dream Song 14 from *The Dream Songs.* Copyright © 1969 by John Berryman, renewed 1997 by Kate Donahue Berryman. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. Source: *The Dream Songs* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1991)

**D34. Dreamers By** [**Siegfried Sassoon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/siegfried-sassoon)

Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,

Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.

In the great hour of destiny they stand,

Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.

Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win

Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.

Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin

They think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,

And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,

Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,

And mocked by hopeless longing to regain

Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,

And going to the office in the train.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1968)

**D35 Dressing My Daughters By** [**Mark Jarman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-jarman)

One girl a full head taller

Than the other—into their Sunday dresses.

First, the slip, hardly a piece of fabric,

Softly stitched and printed with a bud.

I’m not their mother, and tangle, then untangle

The whole cloth—on backwards, have to grab it

Round their necks. But they know how to pull

Arms in, a reflex of being dressed,

And also, a child’s faith. The mass of stuff

That makes the Sunday frocks collapses

In my hands and finds its shape, only because

They understand the drape of it—

These skinny keys to intricate locks.

The buttons are a problem

For a surgeon. How would she connect

These bony valves and stubborn eyelets?

The filmy dress revolves in my blind fingers.

The slots work one by one.

And when they’re put together,

Not like puppets or those doll-saints

That bring tears to true believers,

But living children, somebody’s real daughters,

They do become more real.

They say, “Stop it!” and “Give it back!”

And “I don’t want to!” They’ll kiss

A doll’s hard features, whispering,

“I’m sorry.” I know just why my mother

Used to worry. Your clothes don’t keep

You close—it’s nakedness.

Clad in my boots and holster,

I would roam with my six-gun buddies.

We dealt fake death to one another,

Fell and rolled in filth and rose,

Grimy with wounds, then headed home.

But Sunday ... what was that tired explanation

Given for wearing clothes that

Scratched and shone and weighed like a slow hour?

That we should shine—in gratitude.

So, I give that explanation, undressing them,

And wait for the result.

After a day like Sunday, such a long one,

When they lie down, half-dead,

To be undone, they won’t help me.

They cry, “It’s not my fault.”

Mark Jarman, “Dressing My Daughters” from *Questions for Ecclesiastes*. Copyright © 1997 by Mark Jarman. Reprinted with the permission of the author and Story Line Press, [www.storylinepress.com](http://www.storylinepress.com).

Source: *Questions for Ecclesiastes* (Story Line Press, 1997)

**D36. Driving in Oklahoma By** [**Carter Revard**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carter-revard)

On humming rubber along this white concrete,

lighthearted between the gravities

of source and destination like a man

halfway to the moon

in this bubble of tuneless whistling

at seventy miles an hour from the windvents,

over prairie swells rising

and falling, over the quick offramp

that drops to its underpass and the truck

thundering beneath as I cross

with the country music twanging out my windows,

I'm grooving down this highway feeling

technology is freedom's other name when

—a meadowlark

comes sailing across my windshield

with breast shining yellow

and five notes pierce

the windroar like a flash

of nectar on mind,

gone as the country music swells up and drops

me wheeling down

my notch of cement-bottomed sky

between home and away

and wanting

to move again through country that a bird

has defined wholly with song,

and maybe next time see how

he flies so easy, when he sings.

Carter Revard, "Driving in Oklahoma" from *How the Songs Come Down*. Copyright © 2005 by Carter Revard. Reprinted by permission of Salt Publishing.  
  
Source: *How the Songs Come Down* (Salt Publishing, 2005)

**D37. Driving toward the Lac Qui Parle River By** [**Robert Bly**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-bly)

*I*

I am driving; it is dusk; Minnesota.

The stubble field catches the last growth of sun.

The soybeans are breathing on all sides.

Old men are sitting before their houses on car seats

In the small towns. I am happy,

The moon rising above the turkey sheds.

*II*

The small world of the car

Plunges through the deep fields of the night,

On the road from Willmar to Milan.

This solitude covered with iron

Moves through the fields of night

Penetrated by the noise of crickets.

*III*

Nearly to Milan, suddenly a small bridge,

And water kneeling in the moonlight.

In small towns the houses are built right on the ground;

The lamplight falls on all fours on the grass.

When I reach the river, the full moon covers it.

A few people are talking, low, in a boat.

Robert Bly, “Driving toward the Lac Qui Parle River” from *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1962). Copyright © 1962 by Robert Bly. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1986)

**D38 Drowning in Wheat By** [**John Kinsella**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-kinsella)

They’d been warned

on every farm

that playing

in the silos

would lead to death.

You sink in wheat.

Slowly. And the more

you struggle the worse it gets.

‘You’ll see a rat sail past

your face, nimble on its turf,

and then you’ll disappear.’

In there, hard work

has no reward.

So it became a kind of test

to see how far they could sink

without needing a rope

to help them out.

But in the midst of play

rituals miss a beat—like both

leaping in to resolve

an argument

as to who’d go first

and forgetting

to attach the rope.

Up to the waist

and afraid to move.

That even a call for help

would see the wheat

trickle down.

The painful consolidation

of time. The grains

in the hourglass

grotesquely swollen.

And that acrid

chemical smell

of treated wheat

coaxing them into

a near-dead sleep.

"Drowning in Wheat" from Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems by John Kinsella. Copyright 2004 by John Kinsella. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *Peripheral Light: New and Selected Poems* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2004)

**D39. Duende By** [**Tracy K. Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tracy-k-smith)

1.

The earth is dry and they live wanting.

Each with a small reservoir

Of furious music heavy in the throat.

They drag it out and with nails in their feet

Coax the night into being. Brief believing.

A skirt shimmering with sequins and lies.

And in this night that is not night,

Each word is a wish, each phrase

A shape their bodies ache to fill—

*I’m going to braid my hair*

*Braid many colors into my hair*

*I’ll put a long braid in my hair*

*And write your name there*

They defy gravity to feel tugged back.

The clatter, the mad slap of landing.

2.

And not just them. Not just

The ramshackle family, the *tíos,*

*Primitos,* not just the *bailaor*

Whose heels have notched

And hammered time

So the hours flow in place

Like a tin river, marking

Only what once was.

Not just the voices of scraping

Against the river, nor the hands

Nudging them farther, fingers

Like blind birds, palms empty,

Echoing. Not just the women

With sober faces and flowers

In their hair, the ones who dance

As though they’re burying

Memory—one last time—

Beneath them.

And I hate to do it here.

To set myself heavily beside them.

Not now that they’ve proven

The body a myth, a parable

For what not even language

Moves quickly enough to name.

If I call it pain, and try to touch it

With my hands, my own life,

It lies still and the music thins,

A pulse felt for through garments.

If I lean into the desire it starts from—

If I lean unbuttoned into the blow

Of loss after loss, love tossed

Into the ecstatic void—

It carries me with it farther,

To chords that stretch and bend

Like light through colored glass.

But it races on, toward shadows

Where the world I know

And the world I fear

Threaten to meet.

3.

There is always a road,

The sea, dark hair, *dolor.*

Always a question

Bigger than itself—

*They say you’re leaving Monday*

*Why can’t you leave on Tuesday?*

Tracy K. Smith, "Duende" from *Duende*. Copyright © 2007 by Tracy K. Smith. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press. [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org) Source: *Duende* (Graywolf Press, 2007)

**POL E-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**E1**](#E1)[**E2**](#E2)[**E3**](#E3)[**E4**](#E4)[**E5**](#E5)[**E6**](#E6)[**E7**](#E7)[**E8**](#E8)[**E9**](#E9)[**E10**](#E10)[**E11**](#E11)[**E12**](#E12)[**E13**](#E13)

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**E79 E80 E81 E82 E83 E84 E85 E86 E87 E88 E89 E90 E91**

**E92 E93 E94 E95 E96 E97 E98 E99 E100 E101 E102 E103 E104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**E1. Eagle Plain By** [**Robert Francis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-francis)

The American eagle is not aware he is

the American eagle. He is never tempted

to look modest.

When orators advertise the American eagle’s

virtues, the American eagle is not listening.

This is his virtue.

He is somewhere else, he is mountains away

but even if he were near he would never

make an audience.

The American eagle never says he will serve

if drafted, will dutifully serve etc. He is

not at our service.

If we have honored him we have honored one

who unequivocally honors himself by

overlooking us.

He does not know the meaning of magnificent.

Perhaps we do not altogether either

who cannot touch him.

Robert Francis, “Eagle Plain” from *Collected Poems, 1936-1976*. Copyright © 1993 by Robert Francis. Reprinted by permission of University of Massachusetts Press. Source: *Collected Poems 1936-1976* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1993)

**E2. Eagle Poem By** [**Joy Harjo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joy-harjo)

To pray you open your whole self

To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon

To one whole voice that is you.

And know there is more

That you can’t see, can’t hear;

Can’t know except in moments

Steadily growing, and in languages

That aren’t always sound but other

Circles of motion.

Like eagle that Sunday morning

Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky

In wind, swept our hearts clean

With sacred wings.

We see you, see ourselves and know

That we must take the utmost care

And kindness in all things.

Breathe in, knowing we are made of

All this, and breathe, knowing

We are truly blessed because we

Were born, and die soon within a

True circle of motion,

Like eagle rounding out the morning

Inside us.

We pray that it will be done

In beauty.

In beauty.

Joy Harjo, “Eagle Poem” from *In Mad Love and War.* Copyright © 1990 by Joy Harjo. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *In Mad Love and War* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990)

**E3. Early Affection By** [**George Moses Horton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-moses-horton)

I lov’d thee from the earliest dawn,

When first I saw thy beauty’s ray,

And will, until life’s eve comes on,

And beauty’s blossom fades away;

And when all things go well with thee,

With smiles and tears remember me.

I’ll love thee when thy morn is past,

And wheedling gallantry is o’er,

When youth is lost in age’s blast,

And beauty can ascend no more,

And when life’s journey ends with thee,

O, then look back and think of me.

I’ll love thee with a smile or frown,

’Mid sorrow’s gloom or pleasure’s light,

And when the chain of life runs down,

Pursue thy last eternal flight,

When thou hast spread thy wing to flee,

Still, still, a moment wait for me.

I’ll love thee for those sparkling eyes,

To which my fondness was betray’d,

Bearing the tincture of the skies,

To glow when other beauties fade,

And when they sink too low to see,

Reflect an azure beam on me.

**E4. Early Elegy: Headmistress By** [**Claudia Emerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/claudia-emerson)

The word itself: prim, retired, its artifact

her portrait above the fireplace, on her face

the boredom she abhorred, then perfected,

her hands held upward—their emptiness

a revision, cigarette and brandy snifter

painted, intolerably, out, to leave her this

lesser gesture: *What next?* or shrugged *Whatever*.

From the waist down she was never there.

**E5. Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest By** [**B. H. Fairchild**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/b-h-fairchild)

In his fifth year the son, deep in the backseat

of his father’s Ford and the *mysterium*

of time, holds time in memory with words,

*night, this night*, on the way to a stalled rig south

of Kiowa Creek where the plains wind stacks

the skeletons of weeds on barbed-wire fences

and rattles the battered DeKalb sign to make

the child think of time in its passing, of death.

Cattle stare at flat-bed haulers gunning clumps

of black smoke and lugging damaged drill pipe

up the gullied, mud-hollowed road. *Road, this*

*road*

. Roustabouts shouting from the crow’s nest

float like Ascension angels on a ring of lights.

Chokecherries gouge the purpled sky, cloud-

swags running the moon under, and starlight

rains across the Ford’s blue hood. *Blue, this blue.*

Later, where black flies haunt the mud tank,

the boy walks along the pipe rack dragging

a stick across the hollow ends to make a kind

of music, and the creek throbs with frog songs,

locusts, the rasp of tree limbs blown and scattered.

The great horse people, his father, these sounds,

these shapes saved from time’s dark creek as the car

moves across the moving earth: *world, this world*.

B. H. Fairchild, “Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest” from *Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest.* Copyright © 2003 by B. H. Fairchild. Reprinted with the permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2003)

**E6. Eating Poetry By** [**Mark Strand**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-strand)

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.

There is no happiness like mine.

I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.

Her eyes are sad

and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.

The light is dim.

The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,

their blond legs burn like brush.

The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.

When I get on my knees and lick her hand,

she screams.

I am a new man.

I snarl at her and bark.

I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

Mark Strand, “Eating Poetry” from *Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1979, 1980 by Mark Strand. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *Selected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

**E7. Eating Together By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

In the steamer is the trout

seasoned with slivers of ginger,

two sprigs of green onion, and sesame oil.

We shall eat it with rice for lunch,

brothers, sister, my mother who will

taste the sweetest meat of the head,

holding it between her fingers

deftly, the way my father did

weeks ago. Then he lay down

to sleep like a snow-covered road

winding through pines older than him,

without any travelers, and lonely for no one.

Li-Young Lee, “Eating Together” from *Rose*. Copyright © 1986 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Rose* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1986)

**E8. Ebb By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

I know what my heart is like

Since your love died:

It is like a hollow ledge

Holding a little pool

Left there by the tide,

A little tepid pool,

Drying inward from the edge.

**E9. Echo By** [**Daryl Hine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/daryl-hine)

Echo that loved hid within a wood

Would to herself rehearse her weary woe:

O, she cried, and all the rest unsaid

Identical came back in sorry echo.

Echo for the fix that she was in

Invisible, distraught by mocking passion,

Passionate, ignored, as good as dumb,

Employed that O unchanged in repetition.

Shun love if you suspect that he shuns you,

Use with him no reproaches whatsoever.

Ever you knew, supposing him to know

No melody from which you might recover-

Cover your ears, dear Echo, do not hear.

Here is no supplication but your own,

Only your sighs return upon the air

Ere their music from the mouth be gone.

Daryl Hine, “Echo” from *Wooden Horses* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1965). Copyright © 1965 by Daryl Hine. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *The Wooden Horse: Poems* (1965)

**E10. Echo By** [**Christina Rossetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christina-rossetti)

Come to me in the silence of the night;

Come in the speaking silence of a dream;

Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright

As sunlight on a stream;

Come back in tears,

O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,

Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,

Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;

Where thirsting longing eyes

Watch the slow door

That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live

My very life again tho’ cold in death:

Come back to me in dreams, that I may give

Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:

Speak low, lean low,

As long ago, my love, how long ago.

**E11. Ecology By** [**Jack Collom**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jack-collom)

Surrounded by bone, surrounded by cells,

by rings, by rings of hell, by hair, surrounded by

air-is-a-thing, surrounded by silhouette, by honey-wet bees, yet

by skeletons of trees, surrounded by actual, yes, for practical

purposes, people, surrounded by surreal

popcorn, surrounded by the reborn: Surrender in the center

to surroundings. O surrender forever, never

end her, let her blend around, surrender to the surroundings that

surround the tender endo-surrender, that

tumble through the tumbling to that blue that

curls around the crumbling, to that, the blue that

rumbles under the sun bounding the pearl that

we walk on, talk on; we can chalk that

up to experience, sensing the brown here that’s

blue now, a drop of water surrounding a cow that’s

black & white, the warbling Blackburnian twitter that’s

machining midnight orange in the light that’s

glittering in the light green visible wind. That’s

the ticket to the tunnel through the thicket that’s

a cricket’s funnel of music to correct & pick it out

from under the wing that whirls up over & out.

Jack Collom, “Ecology” from *Red Car Goes By: Selected Poems 1955-2000*, published by Tuumba Press. Copyright © 2001 by Jack Collom. Reprinted by permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Red Car Goes By: Selected Poems 1955-2000* (Tuumba Press, 2001)

**E12. Eddie Priest’s Barbershop & Notary By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

*Closed Mondays*

is music is men

off early from work is waiting

for the chance at the chair

while the eagle claws holes

in your pockets keeping

time by the turning

of rusty fans steel flowers with

cold breezes is having nothing

better to do than guess at the years

of hair matted beneath the soiled caps

of drunks the pain of running

a fisted comb through stubborn

knots is the dark dirty low

down blues the tender heads

of sons fresh from cornrows all

wonder at losing half their height

is a mother gathering hair for good

luck for a soft wig is the round

difficulty of ears the peach

faced boys asking Eddie

to cut in parts and arrows

wanting to have their names read

for just a few days and among thin

jazz is the quick brush of a done

head the black flood around

your feet grandfathers

stopping their games of ivory

dominoes just before they reach the bone

yard is winking widowers announcing

*cut it clean off I’m through courting*

*and hair only gets in the way*

is the final

spin of the chair a reflection of

a reflection that sting of wintergreen

tonic on the neck of a sleeping snow

haired man when you realize it is

your turn you are next

Young, Kevin. “Eddie Priest’s Barbershop & Notary.” *Most Way Home.* Published by Zoland Books, an imprint of Steerforth Press of Hanover, New Hampshire. Copyright © 1995 by Kevin Young. 96-97.

Source: *Most Way Home* (Zoland Books, 1995)

**E13. El Olvido By** [**Judith Ortiz Cofer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/judith-ortiz-cofer)

It is a dangerous thing

to forget the climate of your birthplace,

to choke out the voices of dead relatives

when in dreams they call you

by your secret name.

It is dangerous

to spurn the clothes you were born to wear

for the sake of fashion; dangerous

to use weapons and sharp instruments

you are not familiar with; dangerous

to disdain the plaster saints

before which your mother kneels

praying with embarrassing fervor

that you survive in the place you have chosen to live:

a bare, cold room with no pictures on the walls,

a forgetting place where she fears you will die

of loneliness and exposure.

*Jesús, María, y José*, she says,

*el olvido is a dangerous thing.*

Judith Ortiz Cofer, “El Olvido” from *Terms of Survival.* Copyright © 1987 by Judith Ortiz Cofer. Reprinted by permission of Arte Público Press.  
  
Source: *Terms of Survival* (Arte Público Press, 1987)

**E14. Elegy on Toy Piano By** [**Dean Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dean-young)

For Kenneth Koch

You don't need a pony

to connect you to the unseeable

or an airplane to connect you to the sky.

Necessary it is to love to live

and there are many manuals

but in all important ways

one is on one's own.

You need not cut off your hand.

No need to eat a bouquet.

Your head becomes a peach pit.

Your tongue a honeycomb.

Necessary it is to live to love,

to charge into the burning tower

then charge back out

and necessary it is to die.

Even for the trees, even for the pony

connecting you to what can't be grasped.

The injured gazelle falls behind the

herd. One last wild enjambment.

Because of the sores in his mouth,

the great poet struggles with a dumpling.

His work has enlarged the world

but the world is about to stop including him.

He is the tower the world runs out of.

When something becomes ash,

there's nothing you can do to turn it back.

About this, even diamonds do not lie.

Source: *Poetry* (October 2003).

**E15. The Emperor of Ice-Cream By** [**Wallace Stevens**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wallace-stevens)

Call the roller of big cigars,

The muscular one, and bid him whip

In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.

Let the wenches dawdle in such dress

As they are used to wear, and let the boys

Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.

Let be be finale of seem.

The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,

Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet

On which she embroidered fantails once

And spread it so as to cover her face.

If her horny feet protrude, they come

To show how cold she is, and dumb.

Let the lamp affix its beam.

The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (1982)

**E16. Emplumada By** [**Lorna Dee Cervantes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorna-dee-cervantes)

When summer ended

the leaves of snapdragons withered

taking their shrill-colored mouths with them.

They were still, so quiet. They were

violet where umber now is. She hated

and she hated to see

them go. Flowers

born when the weather was good - this

she thinks of, watching the branch of peaches

daring their ways above the fence, and further,

two hummingbirds, hovering, stuck to each other,

arcing their bodies in grim determination

to find what is good, what is

given them to find. These are warriors

distancing themselves from history.

They find peace

in the way they contain the wind

and are gone.

"Emplumada" from *Emplumada*, by Lorna Dee Cervantes, © 1982. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Emplumada* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982)

**E17. The Empty Dance Shoes By** [**Cornelius Eady**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/cornelius-eady)

My friends,

As it has been proven in the laboratory,

An empty pair of dance shoes

Will sit on the floor like a wart

Until it is given a reason to move.

Those of us who study inertia

(Those of us covered with wild hair and sleep)

Can state this without fear:

The energy in a pair of shoes at rest

Is about the same as that of a clown

Knocked flat by a sandbag.

This you can tell your friends with certainty:

A clown, flat on his back,

Is a lot like an empty pair of

dancing shoes.

An empty pair of dancing shoes

Is also a lot like a leaf

Pressed in a book.

And now you know a simple truth:

A leaf pressed in, say, *The Colossus*

by Sylvia Plath,

Is no different from an empty pair of dance shoes

Even if those shoes are in the middle of the Stardust Ballroom

With all the lights on, and hot music shakes the windows

up and down the block.

This is the secret of inertia:

The shoes run on their own sense of the world.

They are in sympathy with the rock the kid skips

over the lake

After it settles to the mud.

Not with the ripples,

But with the rock.

A practical and personal application of inertia

Can be found in the question:

Whose Turn Is It

To Take Out The Garbage?

An empty pair of dance shoes

Is a lot like the answer to this question,

As well as book-length poems

Set in the Midwest.

To sum up:

An empty pair of dance shoes

Is a lot like the sand the 98-pound weakling

brushes from his cheeks

As the bully tows away his girlfriend.

Later,

When he spies the coupon at the back of the comic book,

He is about to act upon a different set of scientific principles.

He is ready to dance.

Cornelius Eady, “The Empty Dance Shoes” from *Victims of the Latest Dance Craze* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1997). Copyright © 1985 by Cornelius Eady. Used with the permission of the author.

Source: *Victims of the Latest Dance Craze* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1997)

**E18. The End of Science Fiction By** [**Lisel Mueller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lisel-mueller)

This is not fantasy, this is our life.

We are the characters

who have invaded the moon,

who cannot stop their computers.

We are the gods who can unmake

the world in seven days.

Both hands are stopped at noon.

We are beginning to live forever,

in lightweight, aluminum bodies

with numbers stamped on our backs.

We dial our words like Muzak.

We hear each other through water.

The genre is dead. Invent something new.

Invent a man and a woman

naked in a garden,

invent a child that will save the world,

a man who carries his father

out of a burning city.

Invent a spool of thread

that leads a hero to safety,

invent an island on which he abandons

the woman who saved his life

with no loss of sleep over his betrayal.

Invent us as we were

before our bodies glittered

and we stopped bleeding:

invent a shepherd who kills a giant,

a girl who grows into a tree,

a woman who refuses to turn

her back on the past and is changed to salt,

a boy who steals his brother’s birthright

and becomes the head of a nation.

Invent real tears, hard love,

slow-spoken, ancient words,

difficult as a child’s

first steps across a room.

﻿

Lisel Mueller, “The End of Science Fiction” from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1996 by Lisel Mueller. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.﻿

Source: *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* (Louisiana State University Press, 1996)

**E19. End of Summer By** [**Stanley Kunitz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stanley-kunitz)

An agitation of the air,

A perturbation of the light

Admonished me the unloved year

Would turn on its hinge that night.

I stood in the disenchanted field

Amid the stubble and the stones,

Amazed, while a small worm lisped to me

The song of my marrow-bones.

Blue poured into summer blue,

A hawk broke from his cloudless tower,

The roof of the silo blazed, and I knew

That part of my life was over.

Already the iron door of the north

Clangs open: birds, leaves, snows

Order their populations forth,

And a cruel wind blows.

Stanley Kunitz, "End of Summer" from *The Collected Poems of Stanley Kunitz*. Copyright © 1953 by Stanley Kunitz. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Stanley Kunitz* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2002)

**E20. The End of the World By** [**Dana Gioia**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dana-gioia)

“We're going,” they said, “to the end of the world.”

So they stopped the car where the river curled,

And we scrambled down beneath the bridge

On the gravel track of a narrow ridge.

We tramped for miles on a wooded walk

Where dog-hobble grew on its twisted stalk.

Then we stopped to rest on the pine-needle floor

While two ospreys watched from an oak by the shore.

We came to a bend, where the river grew wide

And green mountains rose on the opposite side.

My guides moved back. I stood alone,

As the current streaked over smooth flat stone.

Shelf by stone shelf the river fell.

The white water goosetailed with eddying swell.

Faster and louder the current dropped

Till it reached a cliff, and the trail stopped.

I stood at the edge where the mist ascended,

My journey done where the world ended.

I looked downstream. There was nothing but sky,

The sound of the water, and the water’s reply.

Dana Gioia, “The End of the World” from *Interrogations at Noon.* Copyright © 2001 by Dana Gioia. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *Interrogations at Noon* (Graywolf Press, 2001)

**E21. England in 1819 By** [**Percy Bysshe Shelley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/percy-bysshe-shelley)

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;

Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow

Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring;

Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,

But leechlike to their fainting country cling

Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.

A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field;

An army, whom liberticide and prey

Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield;

Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;

Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;

A senate, Time’s worst statute, unrepealed—

Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may

Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Volume Two Seventh Edition* (2000)

**E22. The Enigma By** [**Anne Stevenson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-stevenson)

Falling to sleep last night in a deep crevasse

between one rough dream and another, I seemed,

still awake, to be stranded on a stony path,

and there the familiar enigma presented itself

in the shape of a little trembling lamb.

It was lying like a pearl in the trough between

one Welsh slab and another, and it was crying.

I looked around, as anyone would, for its mother.

Nothing was there. What did I know about lambs?

Should I pick it up? Carry it . . . where?

What would I do if it were dying? The hand

of my conscience fought with the claw of my fear.

It wasn't so easy to imitate the Good Shepherd

in that faded, framed Sunday School picture

filtering now through the dream's daguerreotype.

With the wind fallen and the moon swollen to the full,

small, white doubles of the creature at my feet

flared like candles in the creases of the night

until it looked to be alive with newborn lambs.

Where could they all have come from?

A second look, and the bleating lambs were birds—

kittiwakes nesting, clustered on a cliff face,

fixing on me their dark accusing eyes.

There was a kind of imperative not to touch them,

yet to be *of* them, whatever they were—

now lambs, now birds, now floating points of light—

fireflies signaling how many lost New England summers?

One form, now another; one configuration, now another.

Like fossils locked deep in the folds of my brain,

outliving a time by telling its story. Like stars.

**E23. Enough By** [**Suzanne Buffam**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/suzanne-buffam)

I am wearing dark glasses inside the house

To match my dark mood.

I have left all the sugar out of the pie.

My rage is a kind of domestic rage.

I learned it from my mother

Who learned it from her mother before her

And so on.

Surely the Greeks had a word for this.

Now surely the Germans do.

The more words a person knows

To describe her private sufferings

The more distantly she can perceive them.

I repeat the names of all the cities I’ve known

And watch an ant drag its crooked shadow home.

What does it mean to love the life we’ve been given?

To act well the part that’s been cast for us?

*Wind. Light. Fire. Time.*

A train whistles through the far hills.

One day I plan to be riding it.

Suzanne Buffam, "Enough" from *The Irrationalist*. Copyright © 2010 by Suzanne Buffam. Reprinted by permission of Canarium Books. Source: *The Irrationalist* (Canarium Books, 2010)

**E24. Entirely By** [**Louis MacNeice**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louis-macneice)

If we could get the hang of it entirely

It would take too long;

All we know is the splash of words in passing

And falling twigs of song,

And when we try to eavesdrop on the great

Presences it is rarely

That by a stroke of luck we can appropriate

Even a phrase entirely.

If we could find our happiness entirely

In somebody else’s arms

We should not fear the spears of the spring nor the city’s

Yammering fire alarms

But, as it is, the spears each year go through

Our flesh and almost hourly

Bell or siren banishes the blue

Eyes of Love entirely.

And if the world were black or white entirely

And all the charts were plain

Instead of a mad weir of tigerish waters,

A prism of delight and pain,

We might be surer where we wished to go

Or again we might be merely

Bored but in brute reality there is no

Road that is right entirely.

Louis MacNeice, "Entirely" from *The Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice*, edited by E. R. Dodds. Used by permission of David Higham Associates, Ltd. Source: *Poetry* (May 1940).

**E25. Envoi By** [**Ezra Pound**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ezra-pound)

Go, dumb-born book,

Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:

Hadst thou but song

As thou hast subjects known,

Then were there cause in thee that should condone

Even my faults that heavy upon me lie

And build her glories their longevity.

Tell her that sheds

Such treasure in the air,

Recking naught else but that her graces give

Life to the moment,

I would bid them live

As roses might, in magic amber laid,

Red overwrought with orange and all made

One substance and one colour

Braving time.

Tell her that goes

With song upon her lips

But sings not out the song, nor knows

The maker of it, some other mouth,

May be as fair as hers,

Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,

When our two dusts with Waller’s shall be laid,

Siftings on siftings in oblivion,

Till change hath broken down

All things save Beauty alone.

**E26. Envy By** [**Mary Lamb**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-lamb)

This rose-tree is not made to bear

The violet blue, nor lily fair,

Nor the sweet mignionet:

And if this tree were discontent,

Or wished to change its natural bent,

It all in vain would fret.

And should it fret, you would suppose

It ne’er had seen its own red rose,

Nor after gentle shower

Had ever smelled its rose’s scent,

Or it could ne’er be discontent

With its own pretty flower.

Like such a blind and senseless tree

As I’ve imagined this to be,

All envious persons are:

With care and culture all may find

Some pretty flower in their own mind,

Some talent that is rare.

**E27. Epilogue By** [**Robert Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-browning)

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,

When you set your fancies free,

Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—

Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,

—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!

What had I on earth to do

With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?

Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel

—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,

Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!

Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,

"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever

There as here!"

**E28. Epistle to Mrs. Tyler By** [**Christopher Smart**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christopher-smart)

It ever was allow’d, dear Madam,

Ev’n from the days of father Adam,

Of all perfection flesh is heir to,

Fair patience is the gentlest virtue;

This is a truth our grandames teach,

Our poets sing, and parsons preach;

Yet after all, dear Moll, the fact is

We seldom put it into practice;

I’ll warrant (if one knew the truth)

You’ve call’d me many an idle youth,

And styled me rude ungrateful bear,

Enough to make a parson swear.

I shall not make a long oration

In order for my vindication,

For what the plague can I say more

Than lazy dogs have done before;

Such stuff is nought but mere tautology,

And so take that for my apology.

First then for custards, my dear Mary,

The produce of your dainty dairy,

For stew’d, for bak’d, for boil’d, for roast,

And all the teas and all the toast;

With thankful tongue and bowing attitude,

I here present you with my gratitude:

Next for you apples, pears and plums

Acknowledgment in order comes;

For wine, for ale, for fowl, for fish—for

Ev’n all one’s appetite can wish for:

But O ye pens, and O ye pencils,

And all ye scribbling utensils,

Say in what words and in what metre,

Shall unfeign’d admiration greet her,

For that rich banquet so refin’d

Her conversation gave the mind;

The solid meal of sense and worth,

Set off by the desert of mirth;

Wit’s fruit and pleasure’s genial bowl,

And all the joyous flow of soul;

For these, and every kind ingredient

That form’d your love—your most obedient.

**E29. Epitaph By** [**Katherine Philips**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/katherine-philips)

On her Son H.P. at St. Syth’s Church where her body also lies interred

What on Earth deserves our trust?

Youth and Beauty both are dust.

Long we gathering are with pain,

What one moment calls again.

Seven years childless marriage past,

A Son, a son is born at last:

So exactly lim’d and fair,

Full of good Spirits, Meen, and Air,

As a long life promised,

Yet, in less than six weeks dead.

Too promising, too great a mind

In so small room to be confined:

Therefore, as fit in Heaven to dwell,

He quickly broke the Prison shell.

So the subtle Alchemist,

Can’t with *Hermes* Seal resist

The powerful spirit’s subtler flight,

But t’will bid him long good night.

And so the Sun if it arise

Half so glorious as his Eyes,

Like this Infant, takes a shrowd,

Buried in a morning Cloud.

**E30. Epitaph on the Lady Mary Villiers By** [**Thomas Carew**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-carew)

This little vault, this narrow room,

Of Love, and Beauty, is the tomb;

The dawning beam that gan to clear

Our clouded sky, lies darken'd here,

Forever set to us, by death

Sent to inflame the world beneath.

'Twas but a bud, yet did contain

More sweetness than shall spring again;

A budding star that might have grown

Into a sun, when it had blown.

This hopeful beauty did create

New life in Love's declining state;

But now his empire ends, and we

From fire and wounding darts are free;

His brand, his bow, let no man fear,

The flames, the arrows, all lie here.

**E31. Epitaph on the Tombstone of a Child, the Last of Seven that Died Before By** [**Aphra Behn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/aphra-behn)

This Little, Silent, Gloomy Monument,

Contains all that was sweet and innocent ;

The softest pratler that e'er found a Tongue,

His Voice was Musick and his Words a Song ;

Which now each List'ning Angel smiling hears,

Such pretty Harmonies compose the Spheres;

Wanton as unfledg'd Cupids, ere their Charms

Has learn'd the little arts of doing harms ;

Fair as young Cherubins, as soft and kind,

And tho translated could not be refin'd ;

The Seventh dear pledge the Nuptial Joys had given,

Toil'd here on Earth, retir'd to rest in Heaven ;

Where they the shining Host of Angels fill,

Spread their gay wings before the Throne, and smile.

**E32. Equus Caballus By** [**Joel Nelson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joel-nelson)

Written in the Autumn of the Year of the Horse 2002

I have run on middle fingernail through Eolithic morning,

I have thundered down the coach road with the Revolution’s warning.

I have carried countless errant knights who never found the grail.

I have strained before the caissons I have moved the nation’s mail.

I’ve made knights of lowly tribesmen and kings from ranks of peons

I have given pride and arrogance to riding men for eons.

I have grazed among the lodges and the tepees and the yurts.

I have felt the sting of driving whips, lashes, spurs and quirts.

I am roguish – I am flighty – I am inbred – I am lowly.

I’m a nightmare – I am wild – I am the horse.

I am gallant and exalted – I am stately – I am noble.

I’m impressive – I am grand – I am the horse.

I have suffered gross indignities from users and from winners,

I have felt the hand of kindness from the losers and the sinners.

I have given for the cruel hand and given for the kind.

Heaved a sigh at Appomattox when surrender had been signed.

I can be as tough as hardened steel – as fragile as a flower.

I know not my endurance and I know not my own power.

I have died with heart exploded ’neath the cheering in the stands -

Calmly stood beneath the hanging noose of vigilante bands.

I have traveled under conqueror and underneath the beaten.

I have never chosen sides – I am the horse.

The world is but a player’s stage – my roles have numbered many.

Under blue or under gray – I am the horse.

So I’ll run on middle fingernail until the curtain closes,

And I will win your triple crowns and I will wear your roses.

Toward you who took my freedom I’ve no malice or remorse.

I’ll endure – This Is My Year – I am the Horse!

Joel Nelson, “Equus Caballus” from *Cowboy Poetry: The Reunion*. Copyright © 2004 by Joel Nelson. Reprinted by permission of Gibbs Smith Publisher. Source: *Cowboy Poetry: The Reunion* (Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2004)

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Joel Nelson, “Equus Caballus” from *Cowboy Poetry: The Reunion*. Copyright © 2004 by Joel Nelson. Reprinted by permission of Gibbs Smith Publisher.  
  
Source: *Cowboy Poetry: The Reunion* (Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2004)

**E34. every single day By** [**John Straley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-straley)

*(After Raymond Carver’s* Hummingbird*)*

Suppose I said the word “springtime”

and I wrote the words “king salmon”

on a piece of paper

and mailed it to you.

When you opened it

would you remember that afternoon we spent

together in the yellow boat

when the early whales were feeding

and we caught our first fish of the year?

Or would you remember that time off Cape Flattery

when you were a little girl:

your father smoking, telling stories as he ran the boat,

then the tug and zing of that very first fish

spooling off into the gray-green world;

you laughing and brushing back your hair

before setting the hook?

I know I am hard to understand sometimes

particularly when you are standing

at the post office with only a piece of paper

saying “king salmon” on it

but just think of it as a promissary note

and that electric tug, that thrill

pulling your mind into deep water

is how I feel about you every,

single day.

John Straley, “every single day” from *The Rising and the Rain*. Copyright © 2008 by John Straley. Reprinted by permission of University of Alaska Press.  
  
Source: *The Rising and the Rain* (University of Alaska Press, 2008)

**E35. Evolution of My Block By** [**Jacob Saenz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jacob-saenz)

As a boy I bicycled the block

w/a brown mop top falling

into a tail bleached blond,

gold-like under golden light,

like colors of Noble Knights

’banging on corners, unconcerned

w/the colors I bore—a shorty

too small to war with, too brown

to be down for the block.

White Knights became brown

Kings still showing black *&* gold

on corners now crowned,

the block a branch branded

w/la corona graffitied on

garage doors by the pawns.

As a teen, I could’ve beamed

the crown, walked in w/out

the beat down custom,

warred w/my cousin

who claimed Two-Six,

the set on the next block

decked in black *&* beige.

But I preferred games to gangs,

books to crooks wearing hats

crooked to the left or right

fighting for a plot, a block

to spot *&* mark w/blood

of boys who knew no better

way to grow up than throw up

the crown *&* be down for whatever.

**E36. Ex Libris By** [**Eleanor Wilner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eleanor-wilner)

By the stream, where the ground is soft

and gives, under the slightest pressure—even

the fly would leave its footprint here

and the paw of the shrew the crescent

of its claws like the strokes of a chisel

in clay; where the lightest chill, lighter

than the least rumor of winter, sets the reeds

to a kind of speaking, and a single drop of rain

leaves a crater to catch the first silver

glint of sun when the clouds slide away

from each other like two tired lovers,

and the light returns, pale, though brightened

by the last chapter of late autumn:

copper, rusted oak, gold aspen, and the red

pages of maple, the wind leafing through to the end

the annals of beech, the slim volumes

of birch, the elegant script of the ferns ...

for the birds, it is all

notations for a coda, for the otter

an invitation to the river,

and for the deer—a dream

in which to disappear, light-footed

on the still open book of earth,

adding the marks of their passage,

adding it all in, waiting only

for the first thick flurry of snowflakes

for cover, soft cover that carries

no title, no name.

Eleanor Wilner, “Ex Libris” from *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1997 by Eleanor Wilner. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Source: *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1998)

**E37. Ex Machina By** [**Linda Gregerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-gregerson)

When love was a question, the message arrived

in the beak of a wire and plaster bird. The coloratura

was hardly to be believed. For flight,

it took three stagehands: two

on the pulleys and one on the flute. And you

thought fancy rained like grace.

Our fog machine lost in the Parcel Post, we improvised

with smoke. The heroine dies of tuberculosis after all.

Remorse and the raw night air: any plausible tenor

might cough. The passions, I take my clues

from an obvious source, may be less like climatic events

than we conventionalize, though I’ve heard

of tornadoes that break the second-best glassware

and leave everything else untouched.

There’s a finer conviction than seamlessness

elicits: the Greeks knew a god

by the clanking behind his descent.

The heart, poor pump, protests till you’d think

it’s rusted past redemption, but

there’s tuning in these counterweights,

celebration’s assembled voice.

Linda Gregerson, “*Ex Machina*” from *Fire in the Conservatory* (Port Townsend, Washington: Dragon Gate, 1982). Copyright © 1982 by Linda Gregerson. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Fire in the Conservatory* (Dragon Gate, 1982)

**E38. Experience By** [**Ralph Waldo Emerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ralph-waldo-emerson)

The lords of life, the lords of life,—

I saw them pass,

In their own guise,

Like and unlike,

Portly and grim,—

Use and Surprise,

Surface and Dream,

Succession swift and spectral Wrong,

Temperament without a tongue,

And the inventor of the game

Omnipresent without name;—

Some to see, some to be guessed,

They marched from east to west:

Little man, least of all,

Among the legs of his guardians tall,

Walked about with puzzled look.

Him by the hand dear Nature took,

Dearest Nature, strong and kind,

Whispered, ‘Darling, never mind!

To-morrow they will wear another face,

The founder thou; these are thy race!’

**E39. Experience By** [**Edith Wharton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edith-wharton)

I

Like Crusoe with the bootless gold we stand

Upon the desert verge of death, and say:

“What shall avail the woes of yesterday

To buy to-morrow’s wisdom, in the land

Whose currency is strange unto our hand?

In life’s small market they had served to pay

Some late-found rapture, could we but delay

Till Time hath matched our means to our demand.”

But otherwise Fate wills it, for, behold,

Our gathered strength of individual pain,

When Time’s long alchemy hath made it gold,

Dies with us—hoarded all these years in vain,

Since those that might be heir to it the mould

Renew, and coin themselves new griefs again.

II

O Death, we come full-handed to thy gate,

Rich with strange burden of the mingled years,

Gains and renunciations, mirth and tears,

And love’s oblivion, and remembering hate,

Nor know we what compulsion laid such freight

Upon our souls—and shall our hopes and fears

Buy nothing of thee, Death? Behold our wares,

And sell us the one joy for which we wait.

Had we lived longer, like had such for sale,

With the last coin of sorrow purchased cheap,

But now we stand before thy shadowy pale,

And all our longings lie within thy keep—

Death, can it be the years shall naught avail?

“Not so,” Death answered, “they shall purchase sleep.”

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (The Library of America, 1993)

**POL F-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**F1**](#F1)[**F2**](#F2)[**F3**](#F3)[**F4**](#F4)[**F5**](#F5)[**F6**](#F6)[**F7**](#F7)[**F8**](#F8)[**F9**](#F9)[**F10**](#F10)[**F11**](#F11)[**F12**](#F12)[**F13**](#F13)

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[**F40**](#F40)[**F41**](#F41)[**F42**](#F42)[**F43**](#F43)[**F44**](#F44)[**F45**](#F45)[**F46**](#F46)[**F47**](#F47)[**F48**](#F48) **F49 F50 F51 F52**

**F53 F54 F55 F56 F57 F58 F59 F60 F61 F62 F63 F64 F65**

**F66 F67 F68 F69 F70 F71 F72 F73 F74 F75 F76 F77 F78**

**F79 F80 F81 F82 F83 F84 F85 F86 F87 F88 F89 F90 F91**

**F92 F93 F94 F95 F96 F97 F98 F99 F100 F101 F102 F103 F104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**F1. Fable for Blackboard By** [**George Starbuck**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-starbuck)

Here is the grackle, people.

Here is the fox, folks.

The grackle sits in the bracken. The fox

hopes.

Here are the fronds, friends,

that cover the fox.

The fronds get in a frenzy. The grackle

looks.

Here are the ticks, tykes,

that live in the leaves, loves.

The fox is confounded,

and God is above.

George Starbuck, “Fable for Blackboard” from *Bone Thoughts.* Copyright © 1960 by George Starbuck. Reprinted with the permission of Yale University Press. Source: *The Works: Poems Selected from Five Decades* (The University of Alabama Press, 2003)

**F2. The Fair Singer By** [**Andrew Marvell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/andrew-marvell)

To make a final conquest of all me,

Love did compose so sweet an enemy,

In whom both beauties to my death agree,

Joining themselves in fatal harmony;

That while she with her eyes my heart does bind,

She with her voice might captivate my mind.

I could have fled from one but singly fair,

My disentangled soul itself might save,

Breaking the curled trammels of her hair.

But how should I avoid to be her slave,

Whose subtle art invisibly can wreath

My fetters of the very air I breathe?

It had been easy fighting in some plain,

Where victory might hang in equal choice,

But all resistance against her is vain,

Who has th’advantage both of eyes and voice,

And all my forces needs must be undone,

She having gained both the wind and sun.

**F3. Fairy-tale Logic By** [**A. E. Stallings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ae-stallings)

Fairy tales are full of impossible tasks:

Gather the chin hairs of a man-eating goat,

Or cross a sulphuric lake in a leaky boat,

Select the prince from a row of identical masks,

Tiptoe up to a dragon where it basks

And snatch its bone; count dust specks, mote by mote,

Or learn the phone directory by rote.

Always it’s impossible what someone asks—

You have to fight magic with magic. You have to believe

That you have something impossible up your sleeve,

The language of snakes, perhaps, an invisible cloak,

An army of ants at your beck, or a lethal joke,

The will to do whatever must be done:

Marry a monster. Hand over your firstborn son.

**F4. Faith By** [**David Baker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-baker)

It was midday before we noticed it was morning.

The boy cousins brought us a tray—soup and cheese,

warm soda, and a soft cloth and candy for her fever.

They wouldn’t come in, the tray weighing between them.

They stood like woodwork inside the door frame.

By afternoon the old procession—silence at the lip

of a dozen night travelers tired and grieving, one

by one, or pairs floating to the bed and back

with a touching of hands like humming,

and the one we gathered for slipping farther

for all the good we could do. She lay in her shadow.

She looked to no one. Her daylilies bobbed wide

open out in the wild, blue sun and the same bee

kept nosing her window to reach them.

Dusk: even the boys were back watching it try.

David Baker, “Faith” from *After the Reunion.* Copyright © 1994 by David Baker. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Arkansas Press, [www.uapress.com](http://www.uapress.com).  
  
Source: *After the Reunion* (University of Arkansas Press, 1994)

**F5. The Faithful By** [**Jane Cooper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-cooper)

Once you said joking slyly, *If I’m killed*

*I’ll come to haunt your solemn bed,*

*I’ll stand and glower at the head*

*And see if my place is empty still, or filled.*

What was it woke me in the early darkness

Before the first bird’s twittering?

—A shape dissolving and flittering

Unsteady as a flame in a drafty house.

It seemed a concentration of the dark burning

By the bedpost at my right hand

While to my left that no man’s land

Of sheet stretched palely as a false morning....

All day I have been sick and restless. This evening

Curtained, with all the lights on,

I start up—only to sit down.

Why should I grieve after ten years of grieving?

What if last night I was the one who lay dead

While the dead burned beside me

Trembling with passionate pity

At my blameless life and shaking its flamelike head?

"The Faithful" from The Flashboat: Poems Collected and Reclaimed by Jane Cooper. Copyright © 2000 by Jane Cooper. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *The Flashboat: Poems Collected and Reclaimed* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2000)

**F6. Falling: The Code By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

1.

Through the night

the apples

outside my window

one by one let go

their branches and

drop to the lawn.

I can’t see, but hear

the stem-snap, the plummet

through leaves, then

the final thump against the ground.

Sometimes two

at once, or one

right after another.

During long moments of silence

I wait

and wonder about the bruised bodies,

the terror of diving through air, and

think I’ll go tomorrow

to find the newly fallen, but they

all look alike lying there

dewsoaked, disappearing before me.

2.

I lie beneath my window listening

to the sound of apples dropping in

the yard, a syncopated code I long to know,

which continues even as I sleep, and dream I know

the meaning of what I hear, each dull

thud of unseen apple-

body, the earth

falling to earth

once and forever, over

and over.

Li-Young Lee, “Falling: The Code” from *Rose*. Copyright © 1986 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Rose* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1986)

**F7. Famous By** [**Naomi Shihab Nye**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/naomi-shihab-nye)

The river is famous to the fish.

The loud voice is famous to silence,

which knew it would inherit the earth

before anybody said so.

The cat sleeping on the fence is famous to the birds

watching him from the birdhouse.

The tear is famous, briefly, to the cheek.

The idea you carry close to your bosom

is famous to your bosom.

The boot is famous to the earth,

more famous than the dress shoe,

which is famous only to floors.

The bent photograph is famous to the one who carries it

and not at all famous to the one who is pictured.

I want to be famous to shuffling men

who smile while crossing streets,

sticky children in grocery lines,

famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,

or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,

but because it never forgot what it could do.

“Famous” from *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems* (Portland, Oregon: Far Corner Books, 1995). Copyright © 1995 by Naomi Shihab Nye. Used by permission of the author.

Source: *Words under the Words: Selected Poems* (Far Corner Books, 1995)

**F8. The Farmer By** [**W.D. Ehrhart**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wd-ehrhart)

Each day I go into the fields

to see what is growing

and what remains to be done.

It is always the same thing: nothing

is growing, everything needs to be done.

Plow, harrow, disc, water, pray

till my bones ache and hands rub

blood-raw with honest labor—

all that grows is the slow

intransigent intensity of need.

I have sown my seed on soil

guaranteed by poverty to fail.

But I don’t complain—except

to passersby who ask me why

I work such barren earth.

They would not understand me

if I stooped to lift a rock

and hold it like a child, or laughed,

or told them it is their poverty

I labor to relieve. For them,

I complain. A farmer of dreams

knows how to pretend. A farmer of dreams

knows what it means to be patient.

Each day I go into the fields.

﻿

W. D. Ehrhart, "The Farmer" from *Beautiful Wreckage*. Copyright © 1999 by W. D. Ehrhart. Reprinted by permission of Adastra Press.﻿

Source: *Beautiful Wreckage﻿* (Adastra Press, 1999)

**F9. A Farmer Remembers Lincoln By** [**Witter Bynner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/witter-bynner)

“Lincoln?—

Well, I was in the old Second Maine,

The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.

Of course I didn’t get the butt of the clip;

We was there for guardin’ Washington—

We was all green.

“I ain’t never ben to the theayter in my life—

I didn’t know how to behave.

I ain’t never ben since.

I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in

When he was shot.

I can tell you, sir, there was a panic

When we found our President was in the shape he was in!

Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

“Yes, sir. His looks was kind o’ hard to forget.

He was a spare man,

An old farmer.

Everything was all right, you know,

But he wasn’t a smooth-appearin’ man at all—

Not in no ways;

Thin-faced, long-necked,

And a swellin’ kind of a thick lip like.

“And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;

He wasn’t so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.

While I was servin’ at the Hospital

He’d come in and say, ‘You look nice in here,’

Praise us up, you know.

And he’d bend over and talk to the boys—

And he’d talk so good to ’em—so close—

That’s why I call him a farmer.

I don’t mean that everything about him wasn’t all right, you understand,

It’s just—well, I was a farmer—

And he was my neighbor, anybody’s neighbor.

I guess even you young folks would ‘a’ liked him.”

Source: *Modern American Poetry* (1919)

**F10. Father By** [**Edgar Albert Guest**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-albert-guest)

My father knows the proper way

The nation should be run;

He tells us children every day

Just what should now be done.

He knows the way to fix the trusts,

He has a simple plan;

But if the furnace needs repairs,

We have to hire a man.

My father, in a day or two

Could land big thieves in jail;

There’s nothing that he cannot do,

He knows no word like “fail.”

“Our confidence” he would restore,

Of that there is no doubt;

But if there is a chair to mend,

We have to send it out.

All public questions that arise,

He settles on the spot;

He waits not till the tumult dies,

But grabs it while it’s hot.

In matters of finance he can

Tell Congress what to do;

But, O, he finds it hard to meet

His bills as they fall due.

It almost makes him sick to read

The things law-makers say;

Why, father’s just the man they need,

He never goes astray.

All wars he’d very quickly end,

As fast as I can write it;

But when a neighbor starts a fuss,

’Tis mother has to fight it.

In conversation father can

Do many wondrous things;

He’s built upon a wiser plan

Than presidents or kings.

He knows the ins and outs of each

And every deep transaction;

We look to him for theories,

But look to ma for action.

**F11. Father Son and Holy Ghost By** [**Audre Lorde**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/audre-lorde)

I have not ever seen my father’s grave.

Not that his judgment eyes

have been forgotten

nor his great hands’ print

on our evening doorknobs

one half turn each night

and he would come

drabbled with the world’s business

massive and silent

as the whole day’s wish

ready to redefine

each of our shapes

but now the evening doorknobs

wait and do not recognize us

as we pass.

Each week a different woman

regular as his one quick glass

each evening

pulls up the grass his stillness grows

calling it weed.

Each week a different woman

has my mother’s face

and he

who time has changeless

must be amazed

who knew and loved

but one.

My father died in silence

loving creation

and well-defined response

he lived still judgments

on familiar things

and died knowing

a January 15th that year me.

Lest I go into dust

I have not ever seen my father’s grave.

Audre Lorde, “Father Son and Holy Ghost” from *Collected Poems of Audre Lorde.* Copyright © 1997 by The Audre Lorde Estate. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Collected Poems of Audre Lorde* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1997)

**F12. Fermanagh Cave By** [**Sherod Santos**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sherod-santos)

An emerald dungeon’s blacklight glow

glimmered in the deeper reaches

where my son and I could hear the slub

of water riddling through the muck.

We’d stumbled on it following a stream,

his first cave made stranger still

by a chill that closes on the goblined heart

of a boy inflamed by stories where

gnome-clans hoarded underground

bone-shard, mandrake, monkey gland,

and eel. And so, grave Hansel

paying out his last scraps of bread,

he inched inward looking back

and gathering himself as he devolved

step by step along the wet-ribbed walls,

the omphalos seepage of a subterranea

that dreamed us into its kingdom come,

where like some secret dreams

make known the burnt-punk smell

of marijuana cluttered up the air,

and just beyond, just close enough to see,

a spur of light that like a dwindling

eyemote disappeared. Then the sound

a human soul makes as it slips out

from the throat. Composed in darkness,

my son’s hand closed on mine. I bent

to whisper we could turn back now,

but his voice was there before me saying,

“Something’s here.” And something was,

something that in that instant rose,

and moved off from us, or drew up close.

In either case, my son came to me

almost weightlessly at first, then hungry

for what was filling up my arms,

the startled, upriding bodyweight

of a boy I’d never before felt rock

so solidly into the place I was,

blind and hunkered in the earthen air.

I held him only a moment there.

We didn’t speak. And though the wheeze

of his breathing must’ve stopped my ears,

for weeks to come, settling him back

to sleep at night, or waking him

from some troubling dream, I’d hear

the soft concussion of an outsized heart-

beat I could not decide was mine,

or his, or the stranger’s I had brought us to.

Or if what happened would happen again,

years from now, when he is grown,

and I have grown newly strange to him.

Sherod Santos, “Fermanagh Cave” from *The Pilot Star Elegies.* Copyright © 1999 by Sherod Santos. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *The Pilot Star Elegies* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1999)

**F13. Fever By** [**Hailey Leithauser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hailey-leithauser)

The heat so peaked tonight

the moon can’t cool

a scum-mucked swimming

pool, or breeze

emerge to lift the frowsy

ruff of owls too hot

to hoot, (the mouse and brown

barn rat astute

enough to know to drop

and dash) while

on the bunched up,

corkscrewed sheets of cots

and slumped brass beds,

the fitful twist

and kink and plead to dream

a dream of air

as bitter cruel as winter

gale that scrapes and blows

and gusts the grate

to luff

the whitened ashes from the coal.

**F14. Fierce Girl Playing Hopscotch By** [**Alice Fulton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alice-fulton)

You sway like a crane to the tunes of tossed stones.

I am what you made to live in

from what you had: hair matted as kelp, bad schools.

Oh, you will never know me. I wave and you go

on playing in the clouds

boys clap from erasers. I am the pebble

you tossed on the chalked space and war-

danced toward, one-leg two-leg, arms treading air.

In this, your future, waves rechristen the sea

after its tiny jeweled lives

that hiss “Us Us” to the shore all day.

Where’s the kid called Kateydid? the moonfaced

Kewpiedoll? The excitable pouting

Zookie? The somber O-Be-Joyful?

Lost girl, playing hopscotch, I will do what you could.

Name of father, son, ghost. Cross my heart and hope.

While the sea’s jewels build shells and shells

change to chalk and chalk to loam and gold

wheat grows where oceans teetered.

Used by permission of the author. Source: *Poetry* (March 1985).

**F15. Filling Station By** [**Elizabeth Bishop**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-bishop)

Oh, but it is dirty!

—this little filling station,

oil-soaked, oil-permeated

to a disturbing, over-all

black translucency.

Be careful with that match!

Father wears a dirty,

oil-soaked monkey suit

that cuts him under the arms,

and several quick and saucy

and greasy sons assist him

(it’s a family filling station),

all quite thoroughly dirty.

Do they live in the station?

It has a cement porch

behind the pumps, and on it

a set of crushed and grease-

impregnated wickerwork;

on the wicker sofa

a dirty dog, quite comfy.

Some comic books provide

the only note of color—

of certain color. They lie

upon a big dim doily

draping a taboret

(part of the set), beside

a big hirsute begonia.

Why the extraneous plant?

Why the taboret?

Why, oh why, the doily?

(Embroidered in daisy stitch

with marguerites, I think,

and heavy with gray crochet.)

Somebody embroidered the doily.

Somebody waters the plant,

or oils it, maybe. Somebody

arranges the rows of cans

so that they softly say:

esso—so—so—so

to high-strung automobiles.

Somebody loves us all.

“Filling Station” from *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979* by Elizabeth Bishop. © 1979, 1983 by Alice Helen Methfessel. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. All rights reserved. www.fsgbooks.com

Source: *The Complete Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1983)

**F16. The Film By** [**Kate Northrop**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kate-northrop)

Come, let’s go in.

The ticket-taker

has shyly grinned

and it’s almost time,

Lovely One.

Let’s go in.

The wind tonight’s too wild.

The sky too deep,

too thin. Already it’s time.

The lights have dimmed.

Come, Loveliest.

Let’s go in

and know these bodies

we do not have to own, passing

quietly as dreams, as snow.

Already leaves are falling

and music begins.

Lovely One,

it’s time.

Let’s go in.

Kate Northrop, "The Film" from *Things Are Disappearing Here*. Copyright © 2007 by Kate Northrop. Reprinted by permission of Persea Books. Source: *Things Are Disappearing Here* (Persea Books, 2007)

**F17. Finale By** [**Pablo Neruda**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/pablo-neruda)

Matilde, years or days

sleeping, feverish,

here or there,

gazing off,

twisting my spine,

bleeding true blood,

perhaps I awaken

or am lost, sleeping:

hospital beds, foreign windows,

white uniforms of the silent walkers,

the clumsiness of feet.

And then, these journeys

and my sea of renewal:

your head on the pillow,

your hands floating

in the light, in my light,

over my earth.

It was beautiful to live

when you lived!

The world is bluer and of the earth

at night, when I sleep

enormous, within your small hands.

Reprinted from *The Sea and the Bells* (2002) by Pablo Neruda, translated by William O’Daly. Used by permission of Copper Canyon Press, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org). Source: *The Sea and the Bells* (City Lights Books, 2002)

**F18. Find Work” By** [**Rhina P. Espaillat**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rhina-p-espaillat)

I tie my Hat—I crease my Shawl—  
Life's little duties do—precisely  
As the very least  
Were infinite—to me—  
—Emily Dickinson, #443

My mother’s mother, widowed very young

of her first love, and of that love’s first fruit,

moved through her father’s farm, her country tongue

and country heart anaesthetized and mute

with labor. So her kind was taught to do—

“Find work,” she would reply to every grief—

and her one dictum, whether false or true,

tolled heavy with her passionate belief.

Widowed again, with children, in her prime,

she spoke so little it was hard to bear

so much composure, such a truce with time

spent in the lifelong practice of despair.

But I recall her floors, scrubbed white as bone,

her dishes, and how painfully they shone.

Source: *Poetry* (February 1999).

**F19. Fire and Ice By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

Some say the world will end in fire,

Some say in ice.

From what I’ve tasted of desire

I hold with those who favor fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction ice

Is also great

And would suffice.

**F20. First Job By** [**Joseph Campana**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joseph-campana)

All evening I hunted

the bird that wanted

a cage of glass,

here where cemetery

slides into creek, fronting

what was once the largest

indoor leather mill in the world.

There the skins gathered

for cleansing, coloring,

scraping, shipping off.

It closed three years after

a lone sparrow set up camp

behind the only desk

in the only full-serve

service station left in town

where, from four to seven

nightly one summer,

I blackened the pages

of books with my thumbs.

Whatever it sought there—

thumping its frightened body

against glass, into cabinets

or out to the bays

scrubbed raw with gasoline

where the broken waited

to be raised up, hosed off,

fastened together in hope

of coughing to life again—

whatever it sought was not a dollar

slipped through a window cracked

because patronage was right

for the aging ladies of August to provide

from Chryslers cool in the sun.

There was nothing to be found

in books or boxes of parts.

And the tools hanging from pegs

were as useless as my hands,

which could not patch together

those straggling conveyances

any more than I could

with a tattered broom

batter the bird to freedom

as I swung at fluttering terror

as I sought with useless devices

some fortune reposed

in corners of grease and dust.

Source: *Poetry* (July 2002).

**F21. First Night By** [**D. Nurkse**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/d-nurkse)

We brought that newborn home from Maimonides

and showed her nine blue glittering streets.

Would she like the semis with hoods of snow?

The precinct? Bohack’s? A lit diner?

Her eyes were huge and her gaze tilted

like milk in a pan, toward shadow.

Would she like the tenement, three dim flights,

her crib that smelled of Lemon Pledge?

We slept beside her in our long coats,

rigid with fatigue in the unmade bed.

Her breath woke us with its slight catch.

Would she approve of gray winter dawn?

We showed her daylight in our cupped hands.

Then the high clocks began booming

in this city and the next, we counted for her,

but just the strokes, not the laggards

or the tinny echoes, and we taught her

how to wait, how to watch, how to be held,

in that icy room, until our own alarm chimed.

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**F22. First Poem for You By** [**Kim Addonizio**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kim-addonizio)

I like to touch your tattoos in complete

darkness, when I can’t see them. I’m sure of

where they are, know by heart the neat

lines of lightning pulsing just above

your nipple, can find, as if by instinct, the blue

swirls of water on your shoulder where a serpent

twists, facing a dragon. When I pull you

to me, taking you until we’re spent

and quiet on the sheets, I love to kiss

the pictures in your skin. They’ll last until

you’re seared to ashes; whatever persists

or turns to pain between us, they will still

be there. Such permanence is terrifying.

So I touch them in the dark; but touch them, trying.

Kim Addonizio, “First Poem For You” from *The Philosopher’s Club*. Copyright © 1994 by Kim Addonizio. Used by permission of BOA Editions, Ltd, [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *The Philosopher’s Club* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1994)

**F23. First Storm and Thereafter By** [**Scott Cairns**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/scott-cairns)

What I notice first within

this rough scene fixed

in memory is the rare

quality of its lightning, as if

those bolts were clipped

from a comic book, pasted

on low cloud, or fashioned

with cardboard, daubed

with gilt then hung overhead

on wire and fine hooks.

What I hear most clearly

within that thunder now

is its grief—a moan, a long

lament echoing, an ache.

And the rain? Raucous enough,

pounding, but oddly

musical, and, well,

eager to entertain, solicitous.

No storm since has been framed

with such matter-of-fact

artifice, nor to such comic

effect. No, the thousand-plus

storms since then have turned

increasingly artless,

arbitrary, bearing—every

one of them—a numbing burst.

And today, from the west a gust

and a filling pressure

pulsing in the throat—offering

little or nothing to make light of.

**F24. Fishing By** [**A. E. Stallings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ae-stallings)

The two of them stood in the middle water,

The current slipping away, quick and cold,

The sun slow at his zenith, sweating gold,

Once, in some sullen summer of father and daughter.

Maybe he regretted he had brought her—

She'd rather have been elsewhere, her look told—

Perhaps a year ago, but now too old.

Still, she remembered lessons he had taught her:

To cast towards shadows, where the sunlight fails

And fishes shelter in the undergrowth.

And when the unseen strikes, how all else pales

Beside the bright-dark struggle, the rainbow wroth,

Life and death weighed in the shining scales,

The invisible line pulled taut that links them both.

Source: *Poetry* (July 1998).

**F25. Fishing on the Susquehanna in July By** [**Billy Collins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/billy-collins)

I have never been fishing on the Susquehanna

or on any river for that matter

to be perfectly honest.

Not in July or any month

have I had the pleasure—if it is a pleasure—

of fishing on the Susquehanna.

I am more likely to be found

in a quiet room like this one—

a painting of a woman on the wall,

a bowl of tangerines on the table—

trying to manufacture the sensation

of fishing on the Susquehanna.

There is little doubt

that others have been fishing

on the Susquehanna,

rowing upstream in a wooden boat,

sliding the oars under the water

then raising them to drip in the light.

But the nearest I have ever come to

fishing on the Susquehanna

was one afternoon in a museum in Philadelphia

when I balanced a little egg of time

in front of a painting

in which that river curled around a bend

under a blue cloud-ruffled sky,

dense trees along the banks,

and a fellow with a red bandanna

sitting in a small, green

flat-bottom boat

holding the thin whip of a pole.

That is something I am unlikely

ever to do, I remember

saying to myself and the person next to me.

Then I blinked and moved on

to other American scenes

of haystacks, water whitening over rocks,

even one of a brown hare

who seemed so wired with alertness

I imagined him springing right out of the frame.

Billy Collins, “Fishing on the Susquehanna in July” from *Picnic, Lightning*. Copyright © 1998 by Billy Collins. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15206. Source: *Picnic Lightning* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998)

**F26. A Fit of Rhyme against Rhyme By** [**Ben Jonson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ben-jonson)

Rhyme, the rack of finest wits,

That expresseth but by fits

True conceit,

Spoiling senses of their treasure,

Cozening judgment with a measure,

But false weight;

Wresting words from their true calling,

Propping verse for fear of falling

To the ground;

Jointing syllabes, drowning letters,

Fast'ning vowels as with fetters

They were bound!

Soon as lazy thou wert known,

All good poetry hence was flown,

And art banish'd.

For a thousand years together

All Parnassus' green did wither,

And wit vanish'd.

Pegasus did fly away,

At the wells no Muse did stay,

But bewail'd

So to see the fountain dry,

And Apollo's music die,

All light failed!

Starveling rhymes did fill the stage;

Not a poet in an age

Worth crowning;

Not a work deserving bays,

Not a line deserving praise,

Pallas frowning;

Greek was free from rhyme's infection,

Happy Greek by this protection

Was not spoiled.

Whilst the Latin, queen of tongues,

Is not yet free from rhyme's wrongs,

But rests foiled.

Scarce the hill again doth flourish,

Scarce the world a wit doth nourish

To restore

Phoebus to his crown again,

And the Muses to their brain,

As before.

Vulgar languages that want

Words and sweetness, and be scant

Of true measure,

Tyrant rhyme hath so abused,

That they long since have refused

Other cæsure.

He that first invented thee,

May his joints tormented be,

Cramp'd forever.

Still may syllabes jar with time,

Still may reason war with rhyme,

Resting never.

May his sense when it would meet

The cold tumor in his feet,

Grow unsounder;

And his title be long fool,

That in rearing such a school

Was the founder.

**F27. A Fixed Idea By** [**Amy Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-lowell)

What torture lurks within a single thought

When grown too constant; and however kind,

However welcome still, the weary mind

Aches with its presence. Dull remembrance taught

Remembers on unceasingly; unsought

The old delight is with us but to find

That all recurring joy is pain refined,

Become a habit, and we struggle, caught.

You lie upon my heart as on a nest,

Folded in peace, for you can never know

How crushed I am with having you at rest

Heavy upon my life. I love you so

You bind my freedom from its rightful quest.

In mercy lift your drooping wings and go.

Amy Lowell, “A Fixed Idea” from *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell.* Copyright © 1955 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © renewed 1983 by Houghton Mifflin Company, Brinton P. Roberts, and G. D'Andelot, Esquire. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Selected Poems of Amy Lowell* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002)

**F28. Flaxman By** [**Margaret Fuller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-fuller)

We deemed the secret lost, the spirit gone,

Which spake in Greek simplicity of thought,

And in the forms of gods and heroes wrought

Eternal beauty from the sculptured stone,—

A higher charm than modern culture won

With all the wealth of metaphysic lore,

Gifted to analyze, dissect, explore.

A many-colored light flows from one sun;

Art, ’neath its beams, a motley thread has spun;

The prism modifies the perfect day;

But thou hast known such mediums to shun,

And cast once more on life a pure, white ray.

Absorbed in the creations of thy mind,

Forgetting daily self, my truest self I find.

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (1993)

**F29. Flies Buzzing By** [**Mark Turcotte**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-turcotte)

*somewhere in america, in a certain state of grace . . .*   
Patti Smith

As a child I danced

to the heartful, savage

rhythm

of the Native, the

American Indian,

in the Turtle Mountains,

in the Round Hall,

in the greasy light of

kerosene lamps.

As a child I danced

among the long, jangle legs of

the men, down

beside the whispering moccasin women,

in close circles

around the Old Ones,

who sat at the drum,

their heads tossed, backs arched

in ancient prayer.

As a child I danced away from the fist,

I danced toward the rhythms of life,

I danced into dreams, into

the sound of flies buzzing.

A deer advancing but clinging to the forest wall,

the old red woman rocking in her tattered shawl,

the young women bent, breasts

drooping to the mouths of their young, the heat

hanging heavy on the tips of our tongues,

until the Sun

burned the sky black, the moon

made us silvery blue and

all of the night sounds, all of the night sounds

folded together with the buzzing

still in our heads,

becoming a chant of ghosts,

of *Crazy Horse* and *Wovoka*

and all the Endless Others,

snaking through the weaving through the trees

like beams of ribbons of light,

singing, *we shall live again we shall live*,

until the Sun and the Sun and the Sun and I

awaken,

still a child, still dancing

toward the rhythm of life.

Mark Turcotte, “Flies Buzzing” from *The Feathered Heart*, published by Michigan State University Press. Copyright © 1998 by Mark Turcotte. Reprinted by permission of Mark Turcotte. Source: *The Feathered Heart* (Michigan State University Press, 1998)

**F30. Flirtation By** [**Rita Dove**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

After all, there’s no need

to say anything

at first. An orange, peeled

and quartered, flares

like a tulip on a wedgewood plate

Anything can happen.

Outside the sun

has rolled up her rugs

and night strewn salt

across the sky. My heart

is humming a tune

I haven’t heard in years!

Quiet’s cool flesh—

let’s sniff and eat it.

There are ways

to make of the moment

a topiary

so the pleasure’s in

walking through.

Rita Dove, “Flirtation” from *Museum* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1983). Copyright © 1983 by Rita Dove. Reprinted with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October 1982).

**F31. Floating Island By** [**Dorothy Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dorothy-wordsworth)

Harmonious Powers with Nature work

On sky, earth, river, lake, and sea:

Sunshine and storm, whirlwind and breeze

All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth,

By throbbing waves long undermined,

Loosed from its hold; — *how* no one knew

But all might see it float, obedient to the wind.

Might see it, from the mossy shore

Dissevered float upon the Lake,

Float, with its crest of trees adorned

On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety there they find

There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;

There insects live their lives — and die:

A peopled *world* it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons’ space

This little Island may survive

But Nature, though we mark her not,

Will take away — may cease to give.

Perchance when you are wandering forth

Upon some vacant sunny day

Without an object, hope, or fear,

Thither your eyes may turn — the Isle is passed away.

Buried beneath the glittering Lake!

Its place no longer to be found,

Yet the lost fragments shall remain,

To fertilize some other ground.

**F32. Flood: Years of Solitude By** [**Dionisio D. Martínez**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dionisio-d-martinez)

To the one who sets a second place at the table anyway.   
  
To the one at the back of the empty bus.   
  
To the ones who name each piece of stained glass projected on a white wall.   
  
To anyone convinced that a monologue is a conversation with the past.   
  
To the one who loses with the deck he marked.   
  
To those who are destined to inherit the meek.   
  
To us.

“Flood: Years of Solitude” from *Bad Alchemy.* Copyright © 1995 by Dionisio D. Martínez. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Source: *Bad Alchemy* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1995)

**F33. Flounder By** [**Natasha Trethewey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/natasha-trethewey)

*Here*, she said, *put this on your head.*

She handed me a hat.

*You ’bout as white as your dad,*

*and you gone stay like that.*

Aunt Sugar rolled her nylons down

around each bony ankle,

and I rolled down my white knee socks

letting my thin legs dangle,

circling them just above water

and silver backs of minnows

flitting here then there between

the sun spots and the shadows.

*This is how you hold the pole*

*to cast the line out straight.*

*Now put that worm on your hook,*

*throw it out and wait.*

She sat spitting tobacco juice

into a coffee cup.

Hunkered down when she felt the bite,

jerked the pole straight up

reeling and tugging hard at the fish

that wriggled and tried to fight back.

*A flounder,* she said, and *you can tell*

*’cause*

*one of its sides is black.*

*The other side is white*

, she said.

It landed with a thump.

I stood there watching that fish flip-flop,

switch sides with every jump.

Natasha Trethewey, “Flounder” from *Domestic Work*. Copyright © 2000 by Natasha Trethewey. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press.

Source: *Domestic Work* (Graywolf Press, 2000)

**F34. Flying Lesson By** [**Dolores Hayden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dolores-hayden)

Focus on the shapes. *Cirrus*, a curl,

*stratus*, a layer, *cumulus*, a heap.

*Humilis*, a small cloud,

*cumulus humilis*, a fine day to fly.

*Incus*, the anvil, stay grounded.

*Nimbus*, rain, be careful,

don’t take off near *nimbostratus*,

a shapeless layer

of  rain, hail, ice, or snow.

Ice weighs on the blades of  your propeller,

weighs on the entering edge of your wings.

Read a cloud,

decode it,

a dense, chilly mass

can shift, flood with light.

Watch for clouds closing under you,

the sky opens in a breath,

shuts in a heartbeat.

**F35. Follow Thy Fair Sun By** [**Thomas Campion**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-campion)

Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow,

Though thou be black as night

And she made all of light,

Yet follow thy fair sun unhappy shadow.

Follow her whose light thy light depriveth,

Though here thou liv’st disgraced,

And she in heaven is placed,

Yet follow her whose light the world reviveth.

Follow those pure beams whose beauty burneth,

That so have scorched thee,

As thou still black must be,

Till Her kind beams thy black to brightness turneth.

Follow her while yet her glory shineth,

There comes a luckless night,

That will dim all her light,

And this the black unhappy shade divineth.

Follow still since so thy fates ordained,

The Sun must have his shade,

Till both at once do fade,

The Sun still proved, the shadow still disdained.

**Poetry Out Loud Note**: In the print anthology, this poem is titled "Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow." The student may give either title during the recitation.

**F36. Football By** [**Louis Jenkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louis-jenkins)

I take the snap from the center, fake to the right, fade back...

I've got protection. I've got a receiver open downfield...

What the hell is this? This isn't a football, it's a shoe, a man's

brown leather oxford. A cousin to a football maybe, the same

skin, but not the same, a thing made for the earth, not the air.

I realize that this is a world where anything is possible and I

understand, also, that one often has to make do with what one

has. I have eaten pancakes, for instance, with that clear corn

syrup on them because there was no maple syrup and they

weren't very good. Well, anyway, this is different. (My man

downfield is waving his arms.) One has certain responsibilities,

one has to make choices. This isn't right and I'm not going

to throw it.

Louis Jenkins, "Football" from *Nice Fish:New and Selected Prose Poems*. Copyright © 1995 by Louis Jenkins. Reprinted by permission of Holy Cow! Press.

Source: *Nice Fish:New and Selected Prose Poems* (Holy Cow! Press, 1995)

**F37. For a Traveler By** [**Jessica Greenbaum**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jessica-greenbaum)

I only have a moment so let me tell you the shortest story,

about arriving at a long loved place, the house of friends in Maine,

their lawn of wildflowers, their grandfather clock and candid

portraits, their gabled attic rooms, and woodstove in the kitchen,

all accessories of the genuine summer years before, when I was

their son’s girlfriend and tied an apron behind my neck, beneath

my braids, and took from their garden the harvest for a dinner

I would make alone and serve at their big table with the gladness

of the found, and loved. The eggplant shone like polished wood,

the tomatoes smelled like their furred collars, the dozen zucchini

lined up on the counter like placid troops with the onions, their

minions, and I even remember the garlic, each clove from its airmail

envelope brought to the cutting board, ready for my instruction.

And in this very slight story, a decade later, I came by myself,

having been dropped by the airport cab, and waited for the family

to arrive home from work. I walked into the lawn, waist-high

in the swaying, purple lupines, the subject of   June’s afternoon light

as I had never been addressed — a displaced young woman with

cropped hair, no place to which I wished to return, and no one

to gather me in his arms. That day the lupines received me,

and I was in love with them, because they were all I had left,

and in that same manner I have loved much of the world since then,

and who is to say there is more of a reason, or more to love?

**F38. For Allen Ginsberg By** [**X J Kennedy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/x-j-kennedy)

Ginsberg, Ginsberg, burning bright,

Taunter of the ultra right,

What blink of the Buddha’s eye

Chose the day for you to die?

Queer pied piper, howling wild,

Mantra-minded flower child,

Queen of Maytime, misrule’s lord

Bawling, *Drop out! All aboard!*

Finger-cymbaled, chanting *Om*,

Foe of fascist, bane of bomb,

Proper poets’ thorn-in-side,

Turner of a whole time’s tide,

Who can fill your sloppy shoes?

What a catch for Death. We lose

Glee and sweetness, freaky light,

Ginsberg, Ginsberg, burning bright.

Kennedy, X.J. “For Allen Ginsberg” from *The Lords of Misrule: Poems 1922-2001.* © 2002 X.J. Kennedy. Reproduced with permission of The John Hopkins University Press.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 1998).

**F39. For Love By** [**Robert Creeley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-creeley)

for Bobbie

Yesterday I wanted to

speak of it, that sense above

the others to me

important because all

that I know derives

from what it teaches me.

Today, what is it that

is finally so helpless,

different, despairs of its own

statement, wants to

turn away, endlessly

to turn away.

If the moon did not ...

no, if you did not

I wouldn’t either, but

what would I not

do, what prevention, what

thing so quickly stopped.

That is love yesterday

or tomorrow, not

now. Can I eat

what you give me. I

have not earned it. Must

I think of everything

as earned. Now love also

becomes a reward so

remote from me I have

only made it with my mind.

Here is tedium,

despair, a painful

sense of isolation and

whimsical if pompous

self-regard. But that image

is only of the mind’s

vague structure, vague to me

because it is my own.

Love, what do I think

to say. I cannot say it.

What have you become to ask,

what have I made you into,

companion, good company,

crossed legs with skirt, or

soft body under

the bones of the bed.

Nothing says anything

but that which it wishes

would come true, fears

what else might happen in

some other place, some

other time not this one.

A voice in my place, an

echo of that only in yours.

Let me stumble into

not the confession but

the obsession I begin with

now. For you

also (also)

some time beyond place, or

place beyond time, no

mind left to

say anything at all,

that face gone, now.

Into the company of love

it all returns.

Robert Creeley, “For Love” from *Selected Poems of Robert Creeley*. Copyright © 1991 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press, [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).  
  
Source: *Poetry* (May 1961).

**F40. For My Contemporaries By** [**J. V. Cunningham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/j-v-cunningham)

How time reverses

The proud in heart!

I now make verses

Who aimed at art.

But I sleep well.

Ambitious boys

Whose big lines swell

With spiritual noise,

Despise me not!

And be not queasy

To praise somewhat:

Verse is not easy.

But rage who will.

Time that procured me

Good sense and skill

Of madness cured me.

J. V. Cunningham, “For My Contemporaries” from *The Exclusions of a Rhyme: Poems and Epigrams.* Copyright © 1960 by J. V. Cunningham. Reprinted with the permission of Ohio University Press/Swallow Press, Athens, Ohio.  
  
Source: *The Exclusions of a Rhyme: Poems and Epigrams* (Alan Swallow Press, 1960)

**F41. For My Daughter By** [**Weldon Kees**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/weldon-kees)

Looking into my daughter’s eyes I read

Beneath the innocence of morning flesh

Concealed, hintings of death she does not heed.

Coldest of winds have blown this hair, and mesh

Of seaweed snarled these miniatures of hands;

The night’s slow poison, tolerant and bland,

Has moved her blood. Parched years that I have seen

That may be hers appear: foul, lingering

Death in certain war, the slim legs green.

Or, fed on hate, she relishes the sting

Of others’ agony; perhaps the cruel

Bride of a syphilitic or a fool.

These speculations sour in the sun.

I have no daughter. I desire none.

Weldon Kees, "For My Daughter” from *The Collected Poems of Weldon Kees* edited by Donald Justice by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1962, 1975, by the University of Nebraska Press. © renewed 2003 by the University of Nebraska Press.

Source: The Collected Poems of Weldon Kees (2003)

**F42. For the young who want to By** [**Marge Piercy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marge-piercy)

Talent is what they say

you have after the novel

is published and favorably

reviewed. Beforehand what

you have is a tedious

delusion, a hobby like knitting.

Work is what you have done

after the play is produced

and the audience claps.

Before that friends keep asking

when you are planning to go

out and get a job.

Genius is what they know you

had after the third volume

of remarkable poems. Earlier

they accuse you of withdrawing,

ask why you don’t have a baby,

call you a bum.

The reason people want M.F.A.’s,

take workshops with fancy names

when all you can really

learn is a few techniques,

typing instructions and some-

body else’s mannerisms

is that every artist lacks

a license to hang on the wall

like your optician, your vet

proving you may be a clumsy sadist

whose fillings fall into the stew

but you’re certified a dentist.

The real writer is one

who really writes. Talent

is an invention like phlogiston

after the fact of fire.

Work is its own cure. You have to

like it better than being loved.

Marge Piercy, “For the young who want to” from *Circles on the Water: Selected Poems of Marge Piercy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). First appeared in *Mother Jones* V, no. 4 (May 1980). Copyright © 1980, 1982 by Marge Piercy and Middlemarsh, Inc. Used by permission of the Wallace Literary Agency, Inc.

Source: *Circles on the Water* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1982)

**F43. Fortuna By** [**Thomas Carlyle**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-carlyle)

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,

And the frost falls and the rain:

A weary heart went thankful to rest,

And must rise to toil again, ’gain,

And must rise to toil again.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,

And there comes good luck and bad;

The thriftiest man is the cheerfulest;

’Tis a thriftless thing to be sad, sad,

’Tis a thriftless thing to be sad.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;

Ye shall know a tree by its fruit:

This world, they say, is worst to the best;—

But a dastard has evil to boot, boot,

But a dastard has evil to boot.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;

What skills it to mourn or to talk?

A journey I have, and far ere I rest;

I must bundle my wallets and walk, walk,

I must bundle my wallets and walk.

The wind does blow as it lists alway;

Canst thou change this world to thy mind?

The world will wander its own wise way;

I also will wander mine, mine,

I also will wander mine.

**F44. Four Glimpses of Night By** [**Frank Marshall Davis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frank-marshall-davis)

I

Eagerly

Like a woman hurrying to her lover

Night comes to the room of the world

And lies, yielding and content

Against the cool round face

Of the moon.

II

Night is a curious child, wandering

Between earth and sky, creeping

In windows and doors, daubing

The entire neighborhood

With purple paint.

Day

Is an apologetic mother

Cloth in hand

Following after.

III

Peddling

From door to door

Night sells

Black bags of peppermint stars

Heaping cones of vanilla moon

Until

His wares are gone

Then shuffles homeward

Jingling the gray coins

Of daybreak.

IV

Night’s brittle song, sliver-thin

Shatters into a billion fragments

Of quiet shadows

At the blaring jazz

Of a morning sun.

﻿

Frank Marshall Davis, "Four Glimpses of Night" from *Black Moods: Collected Poems*, edited by John Edgar Tidwell. Copyright © 2002 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Reprinted by permission of University of Illinois Press.﻿

Source: *Black Moods: Collected Poems﻿* (University of Illinois Press, 2007)

**F45. Four Portraits of Fire By** [**Lorna Dee Cervantes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorna-dee-cervantes)

1

I find a strange knowledge of wind,

an open door in the mountain

pass where everything intersects.

Believe me. This will not pass.

This is a world where flags

contain themselves, and are still,

marked by their unfurled edges.

Lean stuff sways on the boughs

of pitch pine: silver, almost tinsel,

all light gone blue and sprouting

orange oils in a last bouquet.

2

These were the nest builders;

I caught one last morning, I sang

so it fell down, stupid,

from the trees. They’re so incorrect

in their dead skin. Witness their twig

feet, the mistake of their hands.

They will follow you. They yearn

pebbles for their gullets to grind

their own seed. They swallow

so selflessly and die

like patriots.

3

Last Christmas, a family of five

woke from their dreaming and

dreamed themselves over: the baby

in its pink pajamas, the boy

in the red flannel bathrobe

he grabbed from the door,

a mother, a father, and a sister

in curlers; all died.

A wood frame house,

a cannister of oil,

a match—watch

as it unsettles.

They were so cold;

umber.

4

I am away from the knowledge

of animal mystics,

brujas and sorcerers

or the nudging chants

of a Tlingit Kachina.

I am frightened by regions

with wills of their own,

but when my people

die in the snow

I wonder

did the depths billow up

to reach them?

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**F46. Friendship After Love By** [**Ella Wheeler Wilcox**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ella-wheeler-wilcox)

After the fierce midsummer all ablaze

Has burned itself to ashes, and expires

In the intensity of its own fires,

There come the mellow, mild, St. Martin days

Crowned with the calm of peace, but sad with haze.

So after Love has led us, till he tires

Of his own throes, and torments, and desires,

Comes large-eyed friendship: with a restful gaze,

He beckons us to follow, and across

Cool verdant vales we wander free from care.

Is it a touch of frost lies in the air?

Why are we haunted with a sense of loss?

We do not wish the pain back, or the heat;

And yet, and yet, these days are incomplete.

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century Volume Two* (The Library of America, 1993)

**F47. From Blossoms By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

From blossoms comes

this brown paper bag of peaches

we bought from the boy

at the bend in the road where we turned toward

signs painted *Peaches*.

From laden boughs, from hands,

from sweet fellowship in the bins,

comes nectar at the roadside, succulent

peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,

comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.

O, to take what we love inside,

to carry within us an orchard, to eat

not only the skin, but the shade,

not only the sugar, but the days, to hold

the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into

the round jubilance of peach.

There are days we live

as if death were nowhere

in the background; from joy

to joy to joy, from wing to wing,

from blossom to blossom to

impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.

Li-Young Lee, “From Blossoms” from *Rose*. Copyright © 1986 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org). Source: *Rose* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1986)

**F48. Full Moon By** [**Elinor Wylie**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elinor-wylie)

My bands of silk and miniver

Momently grew heavier;

The black gauze was beggarly thin;

The ermine muffled mouth and chin;

I could not suck the moonlight in.

Harlequin in lozenges

Of love and hate, I walked in these

Striped and ragged rigmaroles;

Along the pavement my footsoles

Trod warily on living coals.

Shouldering the thoughts I loathed,

In their corrupt disguises clothed,

Morality I could not tear

From my ribs, to leave them bare

Ivory in silver air.

There I walked, and there I raged;

The spiritual savage caged

Within my skeleton, raged afresh

To feel, behind a carnal mesh,

The clean bones crying in the flesh.

**POL G-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**G1**](#G1)[**G2**](#G2)[**G3**](#G3)[**G4**](#G4)[**G5**](#G5)[**G6**](#G6)[**G7**](#G7)[**G8**](#G8)[**G9**](#G9)[**G10**](#G10)[**G11**](#G11)[**G12**](#G12)[**G13**](#G13)

[**G14**](#G14)[**G15**](#G15)[**G16**](#G16)[**G17**](#G17)[**G18**](#G18)[**G19**](#G19)[**G20**](#G20)[**G21**](#G21)[**G22**](#G22)[**G23**](#G23)[**G24**](#G24)[**G25**](#G25) **G26**

**G27 G28 G29 G30 G31 G32 G33 G34 G35 G36 G37 G38 G39**

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**G79 G80 G81 G82 G83 G84 G85 G86 G87 G88 G89 G90 G91**

**G92 G93 G94 G95 G96 G97 G98 G99 G100 G101 G102 G103 G104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

G1. **The Gaffe By** [**C. K. Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/c-k-williams)

1.

If that someone who’s me yet not me yet who judges me is always with me,

as he is, shouldn’t he have been there when I said so long ago that thing I said?

If he who rakes me with such not trivial shame for minor sins now were there then,

shouldn’t he have warned me he’d even now devastate me for my unpardonable affront?

I’m a child then, yet already I’ve composed this conscience-beast, who harries me:

is there anything else I can say with certainty about who I was, except that I, that he,

could already draw from infinitesimal transgressions complex chords of remorse,

and orchestrate ever undiminishing retribution from the hapless rest of myself?

2

The son of some friends of my parents has died, and my parents, paying their call,

take me along, and I’m sent out with the dead boy’s brother and some others to play.

We’re joking around, and some words come to my mind, which to my amazement are said.

*How do you know when you can laugh when somebody dies, your brother dies*?

is what’s said, and the others go quiet, the backyard goes quiet, everyone stares,

and I want to know now why that someone in me who’s me yet not me let me say it.

Shouldn’t he have told me the contrition cycle would from then be ever upon me,

it didn’t matter that I’d really only wanted to know how grief ends, and when?

3

I could hear the boy’s mother sobbing inside, then stopping, sobbing then stopping.

Was the end of her grief already there? Had her someone in her told her it would end?

Was her someone in her kinder to her, not tearing at her, as mine did, still does, me,

for guessing grief someday ends? Is that why her sobbing stopped sometimes?

She didn’t laugh, though, or I never heard her. *How do you know when you can laugh*?

Why couldn’t someone have been there in me not just to accuse me, but to explain?

The kids were playing again, I was playing, I didn’t hear anything more from inside.

The way now sometimes what’s in me is silent, too, and sometimes, though never really, forgets.

“The Gaffe” from *The Singing* by C.K. Willams. © 2003 by C.K. Williams. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com) Source: *Poetry* (September 2005).

**G2. Garden By** [**H. D.**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/h-d)

**I**

You are clear

O rose, cut in rock,

hard as the descent of hail.

I could scrape the colour

from the petals

like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you

I could break a tree.

If I could stir

I could break a tree—

I could break you.

**II**

O wind, rend open the heat,

cut apart the heat,

rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop

through this thick air—

fruit cannot fall into heat

that presses up and blunts

the points of pears

and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat—

plough through it,

turning it on either side

of your path.

Source: *Poetry* (March 1915).

**G3. Ghazal By** [**Agha Shahid Ali**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/agha-shahid-ali)

Feel the patient’s heart   
Pounding—oh please, this once—   
—JAMES MERRILL

I’ll do what I must if I’m bold in real time.

A refugee, I’ll be paroled in real time.

Cool evidence clawed off like shirts of hell-fire?

A former existence untold in real time ...

The one you would choose: Were you led then by him?

What longing, O *Yaar*, is controlled in real time?

Each syllable sucked under waves of our earth—

The funeral love comes to hold in real time!

They left him alive so that he could be lonely—

The god of small things is not consoled in real time.

Please afterwards empty my pockets of keys—

It’s hell in the city of gold in real time.

God’s angels again are—for Satan!—forlorn.

Salvation was bought but sin sold in real time.

And who is the terrorist, who the victim?

We’ll know if the country is polled in real time.

“Behind a door marked DANGER” are being unwound

the prayers my friend had enscrolled in real time.

The throat of the rearview and sliding down it

the Street of Farewell’s now unrolled in real time.

I heard the incessant dissolving of silk—

I felt my heart growing so old in real time.

Her heart must be ash where her body lies burned.

What hope lets your hands rake the cold in real time?

Now Friend, the Belovèd has stolen your words—

Read slowly: The plot will unfold in real time.

(*for Daniel Hall*)

NOTES: *Yaar:* Hindi word for friend.

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Source: *Rooms Are Never Finished* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002)

**G4. The Gift By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

To pull the metal splinter from my palm

my father recited a story in a low voice.

I watched his lovely face and not the blade.

Before the story ended, he’d removed

the iron sliver I thought I’d die from.

I can’t remember the tale,

but hear his voice still, a well

of dark water, a prayer.

And I recall his hands,

two measures of tenderness

he laid against my face,

the flames of discipline

he raised above my head.

Had you entered that afternoon

you would have thought you saw a man

planting something in a boy’s palm,

a silver tear, a tiny flame.

Had you followed that boy

you would have arrived here,

where I bend over my wife’s right hand.

Look how I shave her thumbnail down

so carefully she feels no pain.

Watch as I lift the splinter out.

I was seven when my father

took my hand like this,

and I did not hold that shard

between my fingers and think,

*Metal that will bury me,*

christen it Little Assassin,

Ore Going Deep for My Heart.

And I did not lift up my wound and cry,

*Death visited here!*

I did what a child does

when he’s given something to keep.

I kissed my father.

Li-Young Lee, “The Gift” from *Rose*. Copyright ©1986 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Rose* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1986)

**G5. Girl Sleuth By** [**Brenda Hillman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/brenda-hillman)

A brenda is missing—where is she?

Summon the seeds & weeds, the desert whooshes. Phone the finch

with the crowded beak; a little pretenda

is learning to read

in the afternoon near the cactus caves. Near oleander & pulpy

caves with the click-click of the wren & the *shkrrrr* of the thrasher,

a skinny pretenda is learning

to read till the missing brenda

is found. Drip of syllables like olives near the saguaro.

Nancy Drew will find the secret in raincoats & wednesdays

& sticks. Nancy whose spine is yellow

or blue will find the brenda in 1962,

 Nancy who has no mother,

who takes suggestions from her father & ignores them.

Gleam goes the wren ignoring the thorn. They cannot tell the difference.

Click of the smart dog’s nails on linoleum.

Nancy bends over the clues,

of brenda’s locket & dress. Word by word

between syllables a clue. Where has the summer gone, the autumn—

are they missing too? Maybe Nancy

will parse the secret & read the book report on Nancy Drew:

“neat pretty sly cute.” Syllable by syllable

& still no brenda! Nancy

puts her hand to her forehead; is the missing

girl in the iron bird? is the clue to the girl in the locket?

Brenda Hillman, “Girl Sleuth” from *Practical Waters.* Copyright © 2009 by Brenda Hillman. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Practical Waters* (Wesleyan University Press, 2009)

**G6. Gitanjali 35 By** [**Rabindranath Tagore**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rabindranath-tagore)

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

**G7. Give All to Love By** [**Ralph Waldo Emerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ralph-waldo-emerson)

Give all to love;

Obey thy heart;

Friends, kindred, days,

Estate, good-frame,

Plans, credit and the Muse,—

Nothing refuse.

’T is a brave master;

Let it have scope:

Follow it utterly,

Hope beyond hope:

High and more high

It dives into noon,

With wing unspent,

Untold intent:

But it is a god,

Knows its own path

And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;

It requireth courage stout.

Souls above doubt,

Valor unbending,

It will reward,—

They shall return

More than they were,

And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;

Yet, hear me, yet,

One word more thy heart behoved,

One pulse more of firm endeavor,—

Keep thee to-day,

To-morrow, forever,

Free as an Arab

Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;

But when the surprise,

First vague shadow of surmise

Flits across her bosom young,

Of a joy apart from thee,

Free be she, fancy-free;

Nor thou detain her vesture’s hem,

Nor the palest rose she flung

From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,

As a self of purer clay,

Though her parting dims the day,

Stealing grace from all alive;

Heartily know,

When half-gods go,

The gods arrive.

**G8. Glass By** [**A. R. Ammons**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-r-ammons)

The song

sparrow puts all his

saying

into one

repeated song:

what

variations, subtleties

he manages,

to encompass denser

meanings, I’m

too coarse

to catch: it’s

one song, an over-reach

from which

all possibilities,

like filaments,

depend:

killing,

nesting, dying,

sun or cloud,

figure up

and become

song—simple, hard:

removed.

A. R. Ammons, “Glass” from *Collected Poems: 1951-1971*. Copyright © 1965 by A. R. Ammons. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.﻿ Source: *Collected Poems: 1951-1971﻿* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1972)

**G9. The Glories of Our Blood and State By** [**James Shirley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-shirley)

The glories of our blood and state

Are shadows, not substantial things;

There is no armour against Fate;

Death lays his icy hand on kings:

Sceptre and Crown

Must tumble down,

And in the dust be equal made

With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,

And plant fresh laurels where they kill:

But their strong nerves at last must yield;

They tame but one another still:

Early or late

They stoop to fate,

And must give up their murmuring breath

When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;

Then boast no more your mighty deeds!

Upon Death's purple altar now

See where the victor-victim bleeds.

Your heads must come

To the cold tomb:

Only the actions of the just

Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

**G10. God’s Secretary By** [**R. S. Gwynn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/r-s-gwynn)

Her e-mail inbox always overflows.

Her outbox doesn’t get much use at all.

She puts on hold the umpteen-billionth call

As music oozes forth to placate those

Who wait, then disconnect. Outside, wind blows,

Scything pale leaves. She sees a sparrow fall

Fluttering to a claw-catch on a wall.

Will He be in today? God only knows.

She hasn’t seen His face—He’s so aloof.

She’s long resigned He’ll never know or love her

But still can wish there were some call, some proof

That He requires a greater service of her.

Fingers of rain now drum upon the roof,

Coming from somewhere, somewhere far above her.

**G11. God's Grandeur By** [**Gerard Manley Hopkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerard-manley-hopkins)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Source: *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985)

**G12. The Goddess Who Created This Passing World By** [**Alice Notley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alice-notley)

The Goddess who created this passing world

Said Let there be lightbulbs & liquefaction

Life spilled out onto the street, colors whirled

Cars & the variously shod feet were born

And the past & future & I born too

Light as airmail paper away she flew

To Annapurna or Mt. McKinley

Or both but instantly

Clarified, composed, forever was I

Meant by her to recognize a painting

As beautiful or a movie stunning

And to adore the finitude of words

And understand as surfaces my dreams

Know the eye the organ of affection

And depths to be inflections

Of her voice & wrist & smile

Alice Notley, “The Goddess Who Created This Passing World” from *Selected Poems* (Talisman House, 1993). Copyright © 1993 by Alice Notley. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Selected Poems* (1993)

**G13. Golden Retrievals By** [**Mark Doty**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-doty)

Fetch? Balls and sticks capture my attention

seconds at a time. Catch? I don’t think so.

Bunny, tumbling leaf, a squirrel who’s—oh

joy—actually scared. Sniff the wind, then

I’m off again: muck, pond, ditch, residue

of any thrillingly dead thing. And you?

Either you’re sunk in the past, half our walk,

thinking of what you never can bring back,

or else you’re off in some fog concerning

—tomorrow, is that what you call it? My work:

to unsnare time’s warp (and woof!), retrieving,

my haze-headed friend, you. This shining bark,

a Zen master’s bronzy gong, calls you here,

entirely, now: bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow.

Mark Doty, “Golden Retrievals” from *Sweet Machine: Poems.* Copyright © 1998 by Mark Doty. Reprinted with the permission of HarperCollins Publishers. Source: *Sweet Machine: Poems* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1998)

**G14. The Golden Shovel By** [**Terrance Hayes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/terrance-hayes)

*after Gwendolyn Brooks*

I. 1981

When I am so small Da’s sock covers my arm, we

cruise at twilight until we find the place the real

men lean, bloodshot and translucent with cool.

His smile is a gold-plated incantation as we

drift by women on bar stools, with nothing left

in them but approachlessness. This is a school

I do not know yet. But the cue sticks mean we

are rubbed by light, smooth as wood, the lurk

of smoke thinned to song. We won’t be out late.

Standing in the middle of the street last night we

watched the moonlit lawns and a neighbor strike

his son in the face. A shadow knocked straight

Da promised to leave me everything: the shovel we

used to bury the dog, the words he loved to sing

his rusted pistol, his squeaky Bible, his sin.

The boy’s sneakers were light on the road. We

watched him run to us looking wounded and thin.

He’d been caught lying or drinking his father’s gin.

He’d been defending his ma, trying to be a man. We

stood in the road, and my father talked about jazz,

how sometimes a tune is born of outrage. By June

the boy would be locked upstate. That night we

got down on our knees in my room. *If I should die*

*before I wake*. Da said to me, *it will be too soon*.

II. 1991

Into the tented city we go, we-

akened by the fire’s ethereal

afterglow. Born lost and cool-

er than heartache. What we

know is what we know. The left

hand severed and school-

ed by cleverness. A plate of we-

ekdays cooking. The hour lurk-

ing in the afterglow. A late-

night chant. Into the city we

go. Close your eyes and strike

a blow. Light can be straight-

ened by its shadow. What we

break is what we hold. A sing-

ular blue note. An outcry sin-

ged exiting the throat. We

push until we thin, thin-

king we won’t creep back again.

While God licks his kin, we

sing until our blood is jazz,

we swing from June to June.

We sweat to keep from we-

eping. Groomed on a die-

t of hunger, we end too soon.

Terrance Hayes, “The Golden Shovel” from *Lighthead*. Copyright © 2010 by Terrance Hayes. Used by permission of Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA), Inc. Source: *Lighthead* (Penguin Books, 2010)

**G15. The Good-Morrow By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I

Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?

But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?

Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers’ den?

’Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.

If ever any beauty I did see,

Which I desired, and got, ’twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,

Which watch not one another out of fear;

For love, all love of other sights controls,

And makes one little room an everywhere.

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,

Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,

Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,

And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;

Where can we find two better hemispheres,

Without sharp north, without declining west?

Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;

If our two loves be one, or, thou and I

Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (1983)

**G16. Good People By** [**W. S. Merwin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-merwin)

From the kindness of my parents

I suppose it was that I held

that belief about suffering

imagining that if only

it could come to the attention

of any person with normal

feelings certainly anyone

literate who might have gone

to college they would comprehend

pain when it went on before them

and would do something about it

whenever they saw it happen

in the time of pain the present

they would try to stop the bleeding

for example with their own hands

but it escapes their attention

or there may be reasons for it

the victims under the blankets

the meat counters the maimed children

the animals the animals

staring from the end of the world

Source: *Poetry* (December 1999).

**G17. Grandfather By** [**Michael S. Harper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-s-harper)

In 1915 my grandfather’s

neighbors surrounded his house

near the dayline he ran

on the Hudson

in Catskill, NY

and thought they’d burn

his family out

in a movie they’d just seen

and be rid of his kind:

the death of a lone black

family is *the Birth*

*of a Nation*,

or so they thought.

His 5’4” waiter gait

quenched the white jacket smile

he’d brought back from watered

polish of my father

on the turning seats,

and he asked his neighbors

up on his thatched porch

for the first blossom of fire

that would bring him down.

They went away, his nation,

spittooning their torched necks

in the shadows of the riverboat

they’d seen, posse decomposing;

and I see him on Sutter

with white bag from your

restaurant, challenged by his first

grandson to a foot-race

he will win in white clothes.

I see him as he buys galoshes

for his railed yard near Mineo’s

metal shop, where roses jump

as the el circles his house

toward Brooklyn, where his rain fell;

and I see cigar smoke in his eyes,

chocolate Madison Square Garden chews

he breaks on his set teeth,

stitched up after cancer,

the great white nation immovable

as his weight wilts

and he is on a porch

that won’t hold my arms,

or the legs of the race run

forwards, or the film

played backwards on his grandson’s eyes.

Michael S. Harper, “Grandfather” from *Songlines in Michaeltree: New and Collected Poems*. Copyright ©2000 by Michael S. Harper. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the University of Illinois Press.

Source: *Songlines in Michaeltree: New and Collected Poems* (University of Illinois Press, 2000)

**G18. The Grauballe Man By** [**Seamus Heaney**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/seamus-heaney)

As if he had been poured

in tar, he lies

on a pillow of turf

and seems to weep

the black river of himself.

The grain of his wrists

is like bog oak,

the ball of his heel

like a basalt egg.

His instep has shrunk

cold as a swan's foot

or a wet swamp root.

His hips are the ridge

and purse of a mussel,

his spine an eel arrested

under a glisten of mud.

The head lifts,

the chin is a visor

raised above the vent

of his slashed throat

that has tanned and toughened.

The cured wound

opens inwards to a dark

elderberry place.

Who will say 'corpse'

to his vivid cast?

Who will say 'body'

to his opaque repose?

And his rusted hair,

a mat unlikely

as a foetus's.

I first saw his twisted face

Seamus Heaney, "The Grauballe Man" from *Opened Ground: Selected Poems 1966-1996*. Copyright © 1999 by Seamus Heaney. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, www.fsgbooks.com. All rights reserved.   
Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.Source: *Opened Ground: Selected Poems 1966-1996* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999)

in a photograph,

a head and shoulder

out of the peat,

bruised like a forceps baby,

but now he lies

perfected in my memory,

down to the red horn

of his nails,

hung in the scales

with beauty and atrocity:

with the Dying Gaul

too strictly compassed

on his shield,

with the actual weight

of each hooded victim,

slashed and dumped.

**G19. Gravelly Run By** [**A. R. Ammons**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-r-ammons)

I don’t know somehow it seems sufficient

to see and hear whatever coming and going is,

losing the self to the victory

of stones and trees,

of bending sandpit lakes, crescent

round groves of dwarf pine:

for it is not so much to know the self

as to know it as it is known

by galaxy and cedar cone,

as if birth had never found it

and death could never end it:

the swamp’s slow water comes

down Gravelly Run fanning the long

stone-held algal

hair and narrowing roils between

the shoulders of the highway bridge:

holly grows on the banks in the woods there,

and the cedars’ gothic-clustered

spires could make

green religion in winter bones:

so I look and reflect, but the air’s glass

jail seals each thing in its entity:

no use to make any philosophies here:

I see no

god in the holly, hear no song from

the snowbroken weeds: Hegel is not the winter

yellow in the pines: the sunlight has never

heard of trees: surrendered self among

unwelcoming forms: stranger,

hoist your burdens, get on down the road.

A.R. Ammons, “Gravelly Run” from *The Selected Poems, Expanded Edition.* Copyright © 1988 by A. R. Ammons. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (November 1960).

**G20. A Graveyard By** [**Marianne Moore**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marianne-moore)

Man, looking into the sea—

taking the view from those who have as much right to it as you have it to yourself—

it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing

but you cannot stand in the middle of this:

the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.

The firs stand in a procession—each with an emerald turkey-foot at the top—

reserved as their contours, saying nothing;

repression, however, is not the most obvious characteristic of the sea;

the sea is a collector, quick to return a rapacious look.

There are others besides you who have worn that look—

whose expression is no longer a protest; the fish no longer investigate them

for their bones have not lasted;

men lower nets, unconscious of the fact that they are desecrating a grave,

and row quickly away—the blades of the oars

moving together like the feet of water-spiders as if there were no such thing as death.

The wrinkles progress upon themselves in a phalanx—beautiful under networks of foam,

and fade breathlessly while the sea rustles in and out of the seaweed;

the birds swim through the air at top speed, emitting cat-calls as heretofore—

the tortoise-shell scourges about the feet of the cliffs, in motion beneath them

and the ocean, under the pulsation of light-houses and noise of bell-buoys,

advances as usual, looking as if it were not that ocean in which dropped things are bound to sink—

in which if they turn and twist, it is neither with volition nor consciousness.

Source: *Becoming Marianne Moore: The Early Poems 1907-1924* (University of California Press, 2002)

**G21. The Great Blue Heron By** [**Carolyn Kizer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carolyn-kizer)

M.A.K. September, 1880-September, 1955

As I wandered on the beach

I saw the heron standing

Sunk in the tattered wings

He wore as a hunchback’s coat.

Shadow without a shadow,

Hung on invisible wires

From the top of a canvas day,

What scissors cut him out?

Superimposed on a poster

Of summer by the strand

Of a long-decayed resort,

Poised in the dusty light

Some fifteen summers ago;

I wondered, an empty child,

“Heron, whose ghost are you?”

I stood on the beach alone,

In the sudden chill of the burned.

My thought raced up the path.

Pursuing it, I ran

To my mother in the house

And led her to the scene.

The spectral bird was gone.

But her quick eye saw him drifting

Over the highest pines

On vast, unmoving wings.

Could they be those ashen things,

So grounded, unwieldy, ragged,

A pair of broken arms

That were not made for flight?

In the middle of my loss

I realized she knew:

My mother knew what he was.

O great blue heron, now

That the summer house has burned

So many rockets ago,

So many smokes and fires

And beach-lights and water-glow

Reflecting pinwheel and flare:

The old logs hauled away,

The pines and driftwood cleared

From that bare strip of shore

Where dozens of children play;

Now there is only you

Heavy upon my eye.

Carolyn Kizer, “The Great Blue Heron” from *Cool, Calm, and Collected: Poems 1960-2000*. Copyright © 2001 by Carolyn Kizer. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org). Source: *Poetry* (April 1958).

Why have you followed me here,

Heavy and far away?

You have stood there patiently

For fifteen summers and snows,

Denser than my repose,

Bleaker than any dream,

Waiting upon the day

When, like grey smoke, a vapor

Floating into the sky,

A handful of paper ashes,

My mother would drift away.

**G22. The Greatest Grandeur By** [**Pattiann Rogers**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/pattiann-rogers)

Some say it’s in the reptilian dance

of the purple-tongued sand goanna,

for there the magnificent translation

of tenacity into bone and grace occurs.

And some declare it to be an expansive

desert—solid rust-orange rock

like dusk captured on earth in stone—

simply for the perfect contrast it provides

to the blue-grey ridge of rain

in the distant hills.

Some claim the harmonics of shifting

electron rings to be most rare and some

the complex motion of seven sandpipers

bisecting the arcs and pitches

of come and retreat over the mounting

hayfield.

Others, for grandeur, choose the terror

of lightning peals on prairies or the tall

collapsing cathedrals of stormy seas,

because there they feel dwarfed

and appropriately helpless; others select

the serenity of that ceiling/cellar

of stars they see at night on placid lakes,

because there they feel assured

and universally magnanimous.

But it is the dark emptiness contained

in every next moment that seems to me

the most singularly glorious gift,

that void which one is free to fill

with processions of men bearing burning

cedar knots or with parades of blue horses,

belled and ribboned and stepping sideways,

with tumbling white-faced mimes or companies

of black-robed choristers; to fill simply

with hammered silver teapots or kiln-dried

crockery, tangerine and almond custards,

polonaises, polkas, whittling sticks, wailing

walls; that space large enough to hold all

invented blasphemies and pieties, 10,000

definitions of god and more, never fully

filled, never.

Pattiann Rogers, “The Greatest Grandeur” from *Firekeeper: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by Pattiann Rogers. Reprinted with the permission of Milkweed Editions.

Source: *Firekeeper: New and Selected Poems* (Milkweed Editions, 1994)

**G23. Greed By** [**Philip Schultz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-schultz)

My ocean town struggles

to pick up leaves,

offer summer school,

and keep our library open.

Every day now

more men stand

at the railroad station,

waiting to be chosen for work.

Because it’s thought

the Hispanics will work for less

they get picked first,

while the whites and blacks

avoid the terror

in one another’s eyes.

Our handyman, Santos,

who expects only

what his hands earn,

is proud of   his half acre in Guatemala,

where he plans to retire.

His desire to proceed with dignity

is admirable, but he knows

that now no one retires,

everyone works harder.

My father imagined a life

more satisfying than the one

he managed to lead.

He didn’t see himself as uneducated,

thwarted, or bitter,

but soon-to-be rich.

Being rich was his right, he believed.

Happiness, I used to think,

was a necessary illusion.

Now I think it’s just

precious moments of relief,

like dreams of Guatemala.

Sometimes, at night,

in winter, surrounded by

the significant silence

of empty mansions,

which once were cottages,

where people lived their lives,

and now are owned by banks

and the absent rich,

I like to stand at my window,

looking for a tv’s futile flickering,

always surprised to see

instead

the quaint, porous face

of my reflection,

immersed

in its one abundance.

**G24. Grief By** [**Elizabeth Barrett Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-barrett-browning)

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless;

That only men incredulous of despair,

Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air

Beat upward to God’s throne in loud access

Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,

In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare

Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare

Of the absolute heavens. Deep-hearted man, express

Grief for thy dead in silence like to death—

Most like a monumental statue set

In everlasting watch and moveless woe

Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.

Touch it; the marble eyelids are not wet:

If it could weep, it could arise and go.

**G25. Gulf Memo By** [**Stephen Sandy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-sandy)

Tell me the way to the wedding

Tell me the way to the war,

Tell me the needle you’re threading

I won’t raise my voice anymore.

And tell me what axe you are grinding

Where the boy on the bivouac believes,

What reel you are unwinding

For the girl in her bed who grieves.

While behind a derrick’s girder

He watches the sinking sun,

He asks what he’ll do for murder

And what he will do for fun.

Will you read him the ways of war

His Miranda rights in sin,

Will you tell him what to ignore

When he studies your discipline?

He dozes off—but he shakes

In a dream that he is the one

Death finds abed and wakes

Just as the night is done.

Tell me what boats go ashore

Riding the oil-dimmed tide,

Red streamers and black in store

For the boy with a pain in his side.

And tell me where they are heading

Tonight; now tell me the score.

Tell me the way to their wedding

I won’t raise my own voice anymore.

Stephen Sandy, “Gulf Memo” from *The Thread*. Copyright © 1998 by Stephen Sandy. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.﻿

Source: *The Thread﻿* (Louisiana State University Press, 1998)

**POL H-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**H1**](#H1)[**H2**](#H2)[**H3**](#H3)[**H4**](#H4)[**H5**](#H5)[**H6**](#H6)[**H7**](#H7)[**H8**](#H8)[**H9**](#H9)[**H10**](#H10)[**H11**](#H11)[**H12**](#H12)[**H13**](#H13)

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**H40 H41 H42 H43 H44 H45 H46 H47 H48 H49 H50 H51 H52**

**H53 H54 H55 H56 H57 H58 H59 H60 H61 H62 H63 H64 H65**

**H66 H67 H68 H69 H70 H71 H72 H73 H74 H75 H76 H77 H78**

**H79 H80 H81 H82 H83 H84 H85 H86 H87 H88 H89 H90 H91**

**H92 H93 H94 H95 H96 H97 H98 H99 H100 H101 H102 H103 H104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**H1. Hap By** [**Thomas Hardy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hardy)

If but some vengeful god would call to me

From up the sky, and laugh: “Thou suffering thing,

Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,

That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!”

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,

Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;

Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I

Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,

And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?

—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,

And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .

These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown

Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

**H2. Happiness By** [**Jane Kenyon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-kenyon)

There’s just no accounting for happiness,

or the way it turns up like a prodigal

who comes back to the dust at your feet

having squandered a fortune far away.

And how can you not forgive?

You make a feast in honor of what

was lost, and take from its place the finest

garment, which you saved for an occasion

you could not imagine, and you weep night and day

to know that you were not abandoned,

that happiness saved its most extreme form

for you alone.

No, happiness is the uncle you never

knew about, who flies a single-engine plane

onto the grassy landing strip, hitchhikes

into town, and inquires at every door

until he finds you asleep midafternoon

as you so often are during the unmerciful

hours of your despair.

It comes to the monk in his cell.

It comes to the woman sweeping the street

with a birch broom, to the child

whose mother has passed out from drink.

Jane Kenyon, “Happiness” from *Otherwise: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 2005 by the Estate of Jane Kenyon. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org). Source: *Poetry* (February 1995).

It comes to the lover, to the dog chewing

a sock, to the pusher, to the basketmaker,

and to the clerk stacking cans of carrots

in the night.

It even comes to the boulder

in the perpetual shade of pine barrens,

to rain falling on the open sea,

to the wineglass, weary of holding wine.

**H3. Happiness By** [**Paisley Rekdal**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paisley-rekdal)

I have been taught never to brag but now

I cannot help it: I keep

a beautiful garden, all abundance,

indiscriminate, pulling itself

from the stubborn earth: does it offend you

to watch me working in it,

touching my hands to the greening tips or

tearing the yellow stalks back, so wild

the living and the dead both

snap off in my hands?

The neighbor with his stuttering

fingers, the neighbor with his broken

love: each comes up my drive

to receive his pitying,

accustomed consolations, watches me

work in silence awhile, rises in anger,

walks back. Does it offend them to watch me

not mourning with them but working

fitfully, fruitlessly, working

the way the bees work, which is to say

by instinct alone, which looks like pleasure?

I can stand for hours among the sweet

narcissus, silent as a point of bone.

I can wait longer than sadness. I can wait longer

than your grief. It is such a small thing

to be proud of, a garden. Today

there were scrub jays, quail,

a woodpecker knocking at the white-

and-black shapes of trees, and someone’s lost rabbit

scratching under the barberry: is it

indiscriminate? Should it shrink back, wither,

and expurgate? Should I, too, not be loved?

It is only a little time, a little space.

Why not watch the grasses take up their colors in a rush

like a stream of kerosene being lit?

If I could not have made this garden beautiful

I wouldn’t understand your suffering,

nor care for each the same, inflamed way.

I would have to stay only like the bees,

beyond consciousness, beyond

self-reproach, fingers dug down hard

into stone, and growing nothing.

There is no end to ego,

with its museum of disappointments.

I want to take my neighbors into the garden

and show them: Here is consolation.

Here is your pity. Look how much seed it drops

around the sparrows as they fight.

It lives alongside their misery.

It glows each evening with a violent light.

Paisley Rekdal, “Happiness” from *Animal Eye*. Copyright © 2012 by Paisley Rekdal. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, [www.pitt.edu/~press](http://www.pitt.edu/~press). Source: *Animal Eye* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012)

**H4. Harp Song of the Dane Women By** [**Rudyard Kipling**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rudyard-kipling)

“The Knights of the Joyous Venture”—Puck of Pook’s Hill

What is a woman that you forsake her,

And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,

To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

She has no house to lay a guest in—

But one chill bed for all to rest in,

That the pale suns and the stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,

But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you—

Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yet, when the signs of summer thicken,

And the ice breaks, and the birch-buds quicken,

Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken—

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.

You steal away to the lapping waters,

And look at your ship in her winter-quarters.

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,

The kine in the shed and the horse in the stables—

To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds swallow,

And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow,

Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,

And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,

To go with the old grey Widow-maker ?

**H5. Hartley Field By** [**Connie Wanek**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/connie-wanek)

And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place . . .  
T. S. Eliot

The wind cooled as it crossed the open pond

and drove little waves toward us,

brisk, purposeful waves

that vanished at our feet, such energy

thwarted by so little elevation.

The wind was endless, seamless,

old as the earth.

Insects came

to regard us with favor. I felt them alight,

felt their minute footfalls.

I was a challenge, an Everest . . .

And you, whom I have heard breathe all night,

sigh through the water of sleep

with vestigial gills . . .

A pair of dragonflies drifted past us, silent,

while higher up two bullet-shaped jets

dragged their roars behind them

on unbreakable chains. It seemed a pity

we’d given up the sky to them, but I understand so little.

Perhaps it was necessary.

All our years together—

and not just together. Surely by now

we have the same blood type, the same myopia.

Sometimes I think we’re the same sex,

the one in the middle of man and woman,

born of both as every child is.

The waves came to us, one each heartbeat,

and lay themselves at our feet.

The swelling goes down.

The fever cools.

There, where the Hartleys grew lettuce eighty years ago

bear and beaver, fox and partridge

den and nest and hunt

and are hunted. I wish I had the means

to give all the north back to itself, to let the pines

rise in the hayfield and the lilacs go wild.

But then where would we live?

I wanted that hour with you all winter—

I thought of it while I worked,

before I slept and when I woke,

a time when the tangled would straighten,

when contrition would become benediction:

the positive hour, shining like mica.

At last the wind brought it to us across the pond,

then took it up again, every last minute.

“Hartley Field” from *Hartley Field*. Copyright (c) 2002 by Connie Wanek. Used by permission of Holy Cow! Press   
Source: *Poetry* (August 2001).

**H6. [He Lived—Childhood Summers] By** [**Lorine Niedecker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorine-niedecker)

He lived—childhood summers

thru bare feet

then years of money’s lack

and heat

beside the river—out of flood

came his wood, dog,

woman, lost her, daughter—

prologue

to planting trees. He buried carp

beneath the rose

where grass-still

the marsh rail goes.

To bankers on high land

he opened his wine tank.

He wished his only daughter

to work in the bank

but he’d given her a source

to sustain her—

a weedy speech,

a marshy retainer.

Lorine Niedecker, "He Lived Childhood Summers" from *Collected Works*, edited by Jenny Penberthy. Copyright © 2002 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press.

Source: *Collected Works* (The University of California Press, 2002)

**H7. The Healing Improvisation of Hair By** [**Jay Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jay-wright)

If you undo your do you would

be strange. Hair has been on my mind.

I used to lean in the doorway

and watch my stony woman wind

the copper through the black, and play

with my understanding, show me she cóuld

take a cup of river water,

and watch it shimmy, watch it change,

turn around and become ash bone.

Wind in the cottonwoods wakes me

to a day so thin its breastbone

shows, so paid out it shakes me free

of its blue dust. I will arrange

that river water, bottom juice.

I conjure my head in the stream

and ride with the silk feel of it

as my woman bathes me, and shaves

away the scorn, sponges the grit

of solitude from my skin, laves

the salt water of self-esteem

over my feathering body.

How like joy to come upon me

in remembering a head of hair

and the way water would caress

it, and stress beauty in the flair

and cut of the only witness

to my dance under sorrow's tree.

This swift darkness is spring's first hour.

I carried my life, like a stone,

in a ragged pocket, but I

had a true weaving song, a sly

way with rhythm, a healing tone.

Jay Wright, “The Healing Improvisation of Hair” from *Transfigurations: Collected Poems* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000). Copyright © 2000 by Jay Wright. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Transfigurations: Collected Poems* (Louisiana State University Press, 2000)

**H8. The Heaven of Animals By** [**James L. Dickey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-l-dickey)

Here they are. The soft eyes open.

If they have lived in a wood

It is a wood.

If they have lived on plains

It is grass rolling

Under their feet forever.

Having no souls, they have come,

Anyway, beyond their knowing.

Their instincts wholly bloom

And they rise.

The soft eyes open.

To match them, the landscape flowers,

Outdoing, desperately

Outdoing what is required:

The richest wood,

The deepest field.

For some of these,

It could not be the place

It is, without blood.

These hunt, as they have done,

But with claws and teeth grown perfect,

More deadly than they can believe.

They stalk more silently,

And crouch on the limbs of trees,

And their descent

Upon the bright backs of their prey

May take years

In a sovereign floating of joy.

And those that are hunted

Know this as their life,

Their reward: to walk

Under such trees in full knowledge

Of what is in glory above them,

And to feel no fear,

But acceptance, compliance.

Fulfilling themselves without pain

At the cycle’s center,

They tremble, they walk

Under the tree,

They fall, they are torn,

They rise, they walk again.

James Dickey, “The Heaven of Animals” from *The Whole Motion: Collected Poems 1945-1992*. Copyright © 1992 by James Dickey. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress).

Source: *James Dickey: The Selected Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 1998)

**H9. The Heavenly City By** [**Stevie Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stevie-smith)

I sigh for the heavenly country,

Where the heavenly people pass,

And the sea is as quiet as a mirror

Of beautiful beautiful glass.

I walk in the heavenly field,

With lilies and poppies bright,

I am dressed in a heavenly coat

Of polished white.

When I walk in the heavenly parkland

My feet on the pasture are bare,

Tall waves the grass, but no harmful

Creature is there.

At night I fly over the housetops,

And stand on the bright moony beams;

Gold are all heaven’s rivers,

And silver her streams.

Stevie Smith, “The Heavenly City” from *Stevie Smith Collected Poems*. Copyright © 1983 by Stevie Smith. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Stevie Smith Collected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1983)

**H10. Hedgehog By** [**Paul Muldoon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-muldoon)

The snail moves like a

Hovercraft, held up by a

Rubber cushion of itself,

Sharing its secret

With the hedgehog. The hedgehog

Shares its secret with no one.

We say, Hedgehog, come out

Of yourself and we will love you.

We mean no harm. We want

Only to listen to what

You have to say. We want

Your answers to our questions.

The hedgehog gives nothing

Away, keeping itself to itself.

We wonder what a hedgehog

Has to hide, why it so distrusts.

We forget the god

under this crown of thorns.

We forget that never again

will a god trust in the world.

"Hedgehog" from *Poems 1968-1998* by Paul Muldoon. Copyright © 2001 by Paul Muldoon. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. www.fsgbooks.com

Source: *Poems 1968-1998* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2001)

**H11. Helen By** [**H. D.**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/h-d)

All Greece hates

the still eyes in the white face,

the lustre as of olives

where she stands,

and the white hands.

All Greece reviles

the wan face when she smiles,

hating it deeper still

when it grows wan and white,

remembering past enchantments

and past ills.

Greece sees unmoved,

God’s daughter, born of love,

the beauty of cool feet

and slenderest knees,

could love indeed the maid,

only if she were laid,

white ash amid funereal cypresses.

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), “Helen” from *Collected Poems 1912-1944.* Copyright © 1982 by The Estate of Hilda Doolittle. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Collected Poems 1912-1944* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1982)

**H12. Her Head By** [**Joan Murray**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joan-murray)

Near Ekuvukeni,

in Natal, South Africa,

a woman carries water on her head.

After a year of drought,

when one child in three is at risk of death,

she returns from a distant well,

carrying water on her head.

The pumpkins are gone,

the tomatoes withered,

yet the woman carries water on her head.

The cattle kraals are empty,

the goats gaunt—

no milk now for children,

but she is carrying water on her head.

The engineers have reversed the river:

those with power can keep their power,

but *one* woman is carrying water on her head.

In the homelands, where the dusty crowds

watch the empty roads for water trucks,

one woman trusts herself with treasure,

and carries water on her head.

The sun does not dissuade her,

not the dried earth that blows against her,

as she carries the water on her head.

In a huge and dirty pail,

with an idle handle,

resting on a narrow can,

this *woman* is carrying water on her head.

This woman, who girds her neck

with safety pins, this one

who carries water on her head,

trusts her *own* head to bring to her people

what they need now

between life and death:

She is carrying them water on her head.

Joan Murray, "Her Head" from *Looking for the Parade*. Copyright © 1999 by Joan Murray. Used by permission of the author and W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Looking for the Parade* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1999)

**H13. Her Kind By** [**Anne Sexton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-sexton)

I have gone out, a possessed witch,

haunting the black air, braver at night;

dreaming evil, I have done my hitch

over the plain houses, light by light:

lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind.

A woman like that is not a woman, quite.

I have been her kind.

I have found the warm caves in the woods,

filled them with skillets, carvings, shelves,

closets, silks, innumerable goods;

fixed the suppers for the worms and the elves:

whining, rearranging the disaligned.

A woman like that is misunderstood.

I have been her kind.

I have ridden in your cart, driver,

waved my nude arms at villages going by,

learning the last bright routes, survivor

where your flames still bite my thigh

and my ribs crack where your wheels wind.

A woman like that is not ashamed to die.

I have been her kind.

Anne Sexton, “Her Kind” from *The Complete Poems of Anne Sexton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981). Copyright © 1981 by Linda Gray Sexton and Loring Conant, Jr. Reprinted with the permission of Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.

Source: *The Complete Poems of Anne Sexton* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1981)

**H14. Here By** [**Joshua Mehigan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joshua-mehigan)

Nothing has changed. They have a welcome sign,

a hill with cows and a white house on top,

a mall and grocery store where people shop,

a diner where some people go to dine.

It is the same no matter where you go,

and downtown you will find no big surprises.

Each fall the dew point falls until it rises.

White snow, green buds, green lawn, red leaves, white snow.

This is all right. This is their hope. And yet,

though what you see is never what you get,

it does feel somehow changed from what it was.

Is it the people? Houses? Fields? The weather?

Is it the streets? Is it these things together?

Nothing here ever changes, till it does.

**H15. Here Is an Ear Hear By** [**Victor Hernández Cruz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/victor-hernandez-cruz)

*Is the ocean really inside seashells*

*or is it all in your mind?*

—PICHON DE LA ONCE

Behold and soak like a sponge.

I have discovered that the island of Puerto Rico

is the ears of Saru-Saru, a poet reputed to have lived

in Atlantis. On the day that the water kissed and

embraced and filled all the holes of that giant

missing link, this bard’s curiosity was the greatest

for he kept swimming and listening for causes.

He picked up rocks before they sank and blew

wind viciously into them. Finally he blew so hard

into a rock that he busted his ear drums; angry,

he recited poems as he tried turning into a bird

to fly to green Brazil. His left ear opened up

like a canal and a rock lodged in it. Rock attracts

rock and many rocks attached to this rock. It got

like a rocket. His ear stayed with it in a horizontal

position. Finally after so many generations he got

to hear what he most wanted: the sounds made by flowers

as they stretched into the light. Behold, I have

discovered that the island of Puerto Rico is the

ears of Saru-Saru.

Victor Hernández Cruz, "Here Is an Ear Hear" from *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965-2000*. Copyright © 2001 by Victor Hernandez Cruz. Reprinted with the permission of Coffee House Press. www.coffeehousepress.org.  
  
Source: *Maraca: New and Selected Poems 1965-2000* (Coffee House Press, 2001)

**H16. Here Where Coltrane Is By** [**Michael S. Harper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-s-harper)

Soul and race

are private dominions,

memories and modal

songs, a tenor blossoming,

which would paint suffering

a clear color but is not in

this Victorian house

without oil in zero degree

weather and a forty-mile-an-hour wind;

it is all a well-knit family:

*a love supreme.*

Oak leaves pile up on walkway

and steps, catholic as apples

in a special mist of clear white

children who love my children.

I play “Alabama”

on a warped record player

skipping the scratches

on your faces over the fibrous

conical hairs of plastic

under the wooden floors.

Dreaming on a train from New York

to Philly, you hand out six

notes which become an anthem

to our memories of you:

oak, birch, maple,

apple, cocoa, rubber.

For this reason Martin is dead;

for this reason Malcolm is dead;

for this reason Coltrane is dead;

in the eyes of my first son are the browns

of these men and their music.

Michael S. Harper, “Here Where Coltrane Is” from *Songlines in Michaeltree: New and Collected Poems.* Copyright © 2000 by Michael S. Harper. Used with the permission of the University of Illinois Press.  
  
Source: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (University of Illinois Press, 1997)

**H17. Hero By** [**Paul Engle**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-engle)

I

I have heard the horn of Roland goldly screaming

In the petty Pyrenees of the inner ear

And seen the frightful Saracens of fear

Pour from the passes, fought them, brave in dreaming.

But waked, and heard my own voice tinly screaming

In the whorled and whirling valleys of the ear,

And beat the savage bed back in my fear,

And crawled, unheroed, down those cliffs of dreaming.

II

I have ridden with Hannibal in the mountain dusk,

Watching the drivers yell the doomed and gray

Elephants over the trumpeting Alps, gone gay

With snow vivid on peaks, on the ivory tusk.

But waked, and found myself in the vivid dusk

Plunging the deep and icy floor, gone gray

With bellowing shapes of morning, and the gay

Sunshaft through me like an ivory tusk.

III

I have smiled on the platform, hearing without shame

The crowd scream out my praise, I, the new star,

Handsome, disparaging my bloody scar,

Yet turning its curve to the light when they called my name.

But waked, and the empty window sneered my name,

The sky bled, drop by golden drop, each star

The curved moon glittered like a sickle's scar,

The night wind called with its gentle voices: *Shame!*

IV

I have climbed the secret balcony, on the floor

Lain with the lady, drunk the passionate wine,

Found, beneath the green, lewd-smelling vine,

Love open to me like a waiting door.

But waked to delirious shadows on the door,

Found, while my stomach staggered with sour wine,

Green drunkenness creep on me like a vine,

And puked my passion on the bathroom floor.

V

I have run with Boone and watched the Indian pillage

The log house, fought, arrow in leg, and hobbled

Over the painful ground while the warrior gobbled

Wild-turkey cry, but escaped to save the village.

But waked, and walked the city, vicious village,

Fought through the traffic where the wild horn gobbled,

Bruised on the bumper, turned toward home, hobbled

Back, myself the house my neighbors pillage.

VI

I have lain in bed and felt my body taken

Like water utterly possessing sand,

Surrounding, seething, soothing, as a hand

Comforts and clasps the hand that it has shaken.

But waked, and found that I was wholly shaken

By you, as the wave surrounds and seethes the sand,

That your whole body was a reaching hand

And my whole body the hand that yours had taken.

"Hero" from *Embrace*, by Paul Engle, copyright © 1969, and reprinted by permission of the Estate of Paul Engle.   
Source: *Embrace* (Random House Inc., 1969)

**H18. High Noon at Los Alamos By** [**Eleanor Wilner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eleanor-wilner)

To turn a stone

with its white squirming

underneath, to pry the disc

from the sun’s eclipse—white heat

coiling in the blinded eye: to these malign

necessities we come

from the dim time of dinosaurs

who crawled like breathing lava

from the earth’s cracked crust, and swung

their tiny heads above the lumbering tons

of flesh, brains no bigger than a fist

clenched to resist the white flash

in the sky the day the sun-flares

pared them down to relics for museums,

turned glaciers back, seared Sinai’s

meadows black—the ferns withered, the swamps

were melted down to molten mud, the cells

uncoupled, recombined, and madly

multiplied, huge trees toppled to the ground,

the slow life there abandoned hope,

a caterpillar stiffened in the grass.

Two apes, caught in the act of coupling,

made a mutant child

who woke to sunlight wondering, his mother

torn by the huge new head

that forced the narrow birth canal.

As if compelled to repetition

and to unearth again

white fire at the heart of matter—fire

we sought and fire we spoke,

our thoughts, however elegant, were fire

from first to last—like sentries set to watch

at Argos for the signal fire

passed peak to peak from Troy

to Nagasaki, triumphant echo of the burning

city walls and prologue to the murders

yet to come—we scan the sky

for that bright flash,

our eyes stared white from watching

for the signal fire that ends

the epic—a cursed line

with its caesura, a pause

to signal peace, or a rehearsal

for the silence.

Eleanor Wilner, “High Noon at Los Alamos” from *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1997 by Eleanor Wilner. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Source: *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1998)

**H19. The Hill By** [**Joshua Mehigan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joshua-mehigan)

On the crowded hill bordering the mill,

across the shallow stream, nearer than they seem,

they wait and will be waiting.

Rain. The small smilax is the same to the fly

as the big bush of lilacs exploding nearby.

The rain may be abating.

On the quiet hill beside the droning mill,

across the dirty stream, nearer than they seem,

they wait and will be waiting.

The glass-eyed cicada drones in the linden draped like a tent

above three polished stones. Aphids swarm at the scent

of the yellow petals.

A bird comes to prod a clump of wet fur.

The ferns idiotically nod when she takes it away with her.

Something somewhere settles.

On the crowded hill bordering the mill

is our best cemetery, pretty, but not very.

All are welcome here.

Sun finds a bare teak box on the tidy green plot.

It finds lichen-crusted blocks fringed with forget-me-not.

Angels preen everywhere.

On the crowded hill bordering the mill

is our best cemetery, pretty, but not very.

All are welcome here.

**H20. Himself By** [**Thomas P. Lynch**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-p-lynch)

He’ll have been the last of his kind here then.

The flagstones, dry-stone walls, the slumping thatch,

out-offices and cow cabins, the patch

of haggard he sowed spuds and onions in—

all of it a century out of fashion—

all giving way to the quiet rising damp

of hush and vacancy once he is gone.

Those long contemplations at the fire, cats

curling at the door, the dog’s lame waltzing,

the kettle, the candle and the lamp—

all still, all quenched, all darkened—

the votives and rosaries and novenas,

the pope and Kennedy and Sacred Heart,

the bucket, the basket, the latch and lock,

the tractor that took him into town and back

for the pension cheque and messages and pub,

the chair, the bedstead and the chamber pot,

everything will amount to nothing much.

Everything will slowly disappear.

And some grandniece, a sister’s daughter’s daughter,

one blue August in ten or fifteen years

will marry well and will inherit it:

the cottage ruins, the brown abandoned land.

They’ll come to see it in a hired car.

The kindly Liverpudlian she’s wed,

in concert with a local auctioneer,

will post a sign to offer *Site for Sale*.

The acres that he labored in will merge

with a neighbor’s growing pasturage

and all the decades of him will begin to blur,

easing, as the far fields of his holding did,

up the hill, over the cliff, into the sea.

NOTES: Poetry Out Loud participants: a typo has been corrected in the third-to-last line: “being to blur” should read “begin to blur”. This typo was corrected on February 1, 2013.

Thomas Lynch, “Himself” from *Walking Papers: 1999-2009*. Copyright © 2010 by Thomas Lynch. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *Walking Papers: 1999-2009* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2010)

**H21. History Lesson By** [**Natasha Trethewey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/natasha-trethewey)

I am four in this photograph, standing

on a wide strip of Mississippi beach,

my hands on the flowered hips

of a bright bikini. My toes dig in,

curl around wet sand. The sun cuts

the rippling Gulf in flashes with each

tidal rush. Minnows dart at my feet

glinting like switchblades. I am alone

except for my grandmother, other side

of the camera, telling me how to pose.

It is 1970, two years after they opened

the rest of this beach to us,

forty years since the photograph

where she stood on a narrow plot

of sand marked *colored*, smiling,

her hands on the flowered hips

of a cotton meal-sack dress.

Natasha Trethewey, “History Lesson” from *Domestic Work.* Copyright © 2000 by Natasha Tretheway. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).  
  
Source: *Domestic Work* (Graywolf Press, 2000)

**H22. History Without Suffering ﻿ By** [**E. A. Markham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/e-a-markham)

In this poem there is no suffering.

It spans hundreds of years and records

no deaths, connecting when it can,

those moments where people are healthy

and happy, content to be alive. A Chapter,

maybe a Volume, shorn of violence

consists of an adult reading aimlessly.

This line is the length of a full life

smuggled in while no one was plotting

against a neighbour, except in jest.

Then, after a gap, comes Nellie. She

is in a drought-fisted field

with a hoe. This is her twelfth year

on the land, and today her back

doesn’t hurt. Catechisms of self-pity

and of murder have declared a day’s truce

in the Civil War within her. So today,

we can bring Nellie, content with herself,

with the world, into our History.

For a day. In the next generation

we find a suitable subject camping

near the border of a divided country:

for a while no one knows how near. For these

few lines she is ours. But how about

the lovers? you ask, the freshly-washed

body close to yours; sounds, smells, tastes;

anticipation of the young, the edited memory

of the rest of us? How about thoughts

higher than their thinkers?...Yes, yes.

Give them half a line and a mass of footnotes:

they have their own privileged history,

like inherited income beside our husbandry.

We bring our History up to date

in a city like London: someone’s just paid

the mortgage, is free of guilt

and not dying of cancer; and going

past the news-stand, doesn’t see a headline

advertising torture. This is all

recommended reading, but in small doses.

It shows you can avoid suffering, if you try. ﻿

E. A. Markham, "A History Without Suffering" from *Human Rites: Selected Poems 1970-1982*. Copyright © 1984 by E. A. Markham. Reprinted by permission of Anvil Press Poetry, Ltd..﻿

Source: *Human Rites: Selected Poems 1970-1982﻿* (Anvil Press Poetry Ltd., 1984)

**H23. Holding Court By** [**Jacob Saenz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jacob-saenz)

Today I became King

of the Court w/out a diamond-

encrusted crown thrust upon

my sweaty head. Instead

my markings of royalty

were the t-shirt draping

my body like a robe soaked

in champagne *&* the pain

in my right knee — a sign

of a battle endured, my will

tested *&* bested by none

as the ball flew off my hands

as swift as an arrow toward

the heart of a target — my fingers

ringless yet feeling like gold.

**H24. Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three-person'd God By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you

As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;

That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend

Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

I, like an usurp'd town to another due,

Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;

Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,

But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,

But am betroth'd unto your enemy;

Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,

Take me to you, imprison me, for I,

Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,

Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

**H25. Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

**H26. The Hospital Window By** [**James L. Dickey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-l-dickey)

I have just come down from my father.

Higher and higher he lies

Above me in a blue light

Shed by a tinted window.

I drop through six white floors

And then step out onto pavement.

Still feeling my father ascend,

I start to cross the firm street,

My shoulder blades shining with all

The glass the huge building can raise.

Now I must turn round and face it,

And know his one pane from the others.

Each window possesses the sun

As though it burned there on a wick.

I wave, like a man catching fire.

All the deep-dyed windowpanes flash,

And, behind them, all the white rooms

They turn to the color of Heaven.

Ceremoniously, gravely, and weakly,

Dozens of pale hands are waving

Back, from inside their flames.

Yet one pure pane among these

Is the bright, erased blankness of nothing.

I know that my father is there,

In the shape of his death still living.

The traffic increases around me

Like a madness called down on my head.

The horns blast at me like shotguns,

And drivers lean out, driven crazy—

But now my propped-up father

Lifts his arm out of stillness at last.

The light from the window strikes me

And I turn as blue as a soul,

As the moment when I was born.

I am not afraid for my father—

Look! He is grinning; he is not

Afraid for my life, either,

As the wild engines stand at my knees

Shredding their gears and roaring,

And I hold each car in its place

For miles, inciting its horn

To blow down the walls of the world

That the dying may float without fear

James Dickey, “The Hospital Window” from *The Whole Motion: Collected Poems 1945-1992*. Copyright 1992 by James Dickey. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *Helmets* (Wesleyan University Press, 1964)

In the bold blue gaze of my father.

Slowly I move to the sidewalk

With my pin-tingling hand half dead

At the end of my bloodless arm.

I carry it off in amazement,

High, still higher, still waving,

My recognized face fully mortal,

Yet not; not at all, in the pale,

Drained, otherworldly, stricken,

Created hue of stained glass.

I have just come down from my father.

**H27. How I Discovered Poetry By** [**Marilyn Nelson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marilyn-nelson)

It was like soul-kissing, the way the words

filled my mouth as Mrs. Purdy read from her desk.

All the other kids zoned an hour ahead to 3:15,

but Mrs. Purdy and I wandered lonely as clouds borne

by a breeze off Mount Parnassus. She must have seen

the darkest eyes in the room brim: The next day

she gave me a poem she’d chosen especially for me

to read to the all except for me white class.

She smiled when she told me to read it, smiled harder,

said oh yes I could. She smiled harder and harder

until I stood and opened my mouth to banjo playing

darkies, pickaninnies, disses and dats. When I finished

my classmates stared at the floor. We walked silent

to the buses, awed by the power of words.

Marilyn Nelson, “How I Discovered Poetry” from *The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 by Marilyn Nelson. Reprinted with the permission of Louisiana State University Press.  
  
Source: *The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems* (1997)

**H28. How many times these low feet staggered (238) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

How many times these low feet staggered -

Only the soldered mouth can tell -

Try - can you stir the awful rivet -

Try - can you lift the hasps of steel!

Stroke the cool forehead - hot so often -

Lift - if you care - the listless hair -

Handle the adamantine fingers

Never a thimble - more - shall wear -

Buzz the dull flies - on the chamber window -

Brave - shines the sun through the freckled pane -

Fearless - the cobweb swings from the ceiling -

Indolent Housewife - in Daisies - lain!

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Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

**H29. How We Made a New Art on Old Ground By** [**Eavan Boland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eavan-boland)

A famous battle happened in this valley.

You never understood the nature poem.

Till now. Till this moment—if these statements

seem separate, unrelated, follow this

silence to its edge and you will hear

the history of air: the crispness of a fern

or the upward cut and turn around of

a fieldfare or thrush written on it.

The other history is silent: The estuary

is over there. The issue was decided here:

Two kings prepared to give no quarter.

Then one king and one dead tradition.

Now the humid dusk, the old wounds

wait for language, for a different truth:

When you see the silk of the willow

and the wider edge of the river turn

and grow dark and then darker, then

you will know that the nature poem

is not the action nor its end: it is

this rust on the gate beside the trees, on

the cattle grid underneath our feet,

on the steering wheel shaft: it is

an aftermath, an overlay and even in

its own modest way, an art of peace:

I try the word *distance* and it fills with

sycamores, a summer's worth of pollen

And as I write *valley* straw, metal

blood, oaths, armour are unwritten.

Silence spreads slowly from these words

to those ilex trees half in, half out

of shadows falling on the shallow ford

of the south bank beside Yellow Island

as twilight shows how this sweet corrosion

begins to be complete: what we see

is what the poem says:

evening coming—cattle, cattle-shadows—

and whin bushes and a change of weather

about to change them all: what we see is how

the place and the torment of the place are

for this moment free of one another.

Eavan Boland, “How We Made a New Art on Old Ground” from *Against Love Poetry: Poems.* Copyright © 2001 by Eavan Boland. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Poetry* (November 2001).

**H30. Hunger for Something By** [**Chase Twichell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/chase-twichell)

Sometimes I long to be in the woodpile,

cut-apart trees soon to be smoke,

or even the smoke itself,

sinewy ghost of ash and air, going

wherever I want to, at least for a while.

Neither inside nor out,

neither lost nor home, no longer

a shape or a name, I’d pass through

all the broken windows of the world.

It’s not a wish for consciousness to end.

It’s not the appetite an army has

for its own emptying heart,

but a hunger to stand now and then

alone on the death-grounds,

where the dogs of the self are feeding.

“Hunger for Something” by Chase Twichell from The Snow Watcher published by Ontario Review Press. © 1998 by Chase Twichell. Used by permission of Chase Twichell.

Source: *The Snow Watcher* (Ontario Review Press, 1998)

**H31. Hunger Moon By** [**Jane Cooper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-cooper)

The last full moon of February

stalks the fields; barbed wire casts a shadow.

Rising slowly, a beam moved toward the west

stealthily changing position

until now, in the small hours, across the snow

it advances on my pillow

to wake me, not rudely like the sun

but with the cocked gun of silence.

I am alone in a vast room

where a vain woman once slept.

The moon, in pale buckskins, crouches

on guard beside her bed.

Slowly the light wanes, the snow will melt

and all the fences thrum in the spring breeze

but not until that sleeper, trapped

in my body, turns and turns.

Jane Cooper, "Hunger Moon" from *The Flashboat: Poems Collected and Reclaimed*. Copyright © 2000 by Jane Cooper. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *The Flashboat: Poems Collected and Reclaimed* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2000)

**H32. Hush By** [**David St. John**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-st-john)

for my son

The way a tired Chippewa woman

Who’s lost a child gathers up black feathers,

Black quills & leaves

That she wraps & swaddles in a little bale, a shag

Cocoon she carries with her & speaks to always

As if it were the child,

Until she knows the soul has grown fat & clever,

That the child can find its own way at last;

Well, I go everywhere

Picking the dust out of the dust, scraping the breezes

Up off the floor, & gather them into a doll

Of you, to touch at the nape of the neck, to slip

Under my shirt like a rag—the way

Another man’s wallet rides above his heart. As you

Cry out, as if calling to a father you conjure

In the paling light, the voice rises, instead, in me.

Nothing stops it, the crying. Not the clove of moon,

Not the woman raking my back with her words. Our letters

Close. Sometimes, you ask

About the world; sometimes, I answer back. Nights

Return you to me for a while, as sleep returns sleep

To a landscape ravaged

& familiar. The dark watermark of your absence, a hush.

David St. John, “Hush” from *Study for the World’s Body: Selected Poems* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994). Copyright © 1994, 2005 by David St. John. Reprinted by permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Study for the World's Body: New and Selected Poems* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1994)

**H33. A Hymn to God the Father By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,

Which was my sin, though it were done before?

Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,

And do run still, though still I do deplore?

When thou hast done, thou hast not done,

For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won

Others to sin, and made my sin their door?

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun

A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?

When thou hast done, thou hast not done,

For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun

My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;

But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son

Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;

And, having done that, thou hast done;

I fear no more.

**H34. Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Since I am coming to that holy room,

Where, with thy choir of saints for evermore,

I shall be made thy music; as I come

I tune the instrument here at the door,

And what I must do then, think here before.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown

Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie

Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown

That this is my south-west discovery,

*Per fretum febris*, by these straits to die,

I joy, that in these straits I see my west;

For, though their currents yield return to none,

What shall my west hurt me? As west and east

In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,

So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are

The eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?

Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltar,

All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them,

Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem.

We think that Paradise and Calvary,

Christ's cross, and Adam's tree, stood in one place;

Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;

As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,

May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

So, in his purple wrapp'd, receive me, Lord;

By these his thorns, give me his other crown;

And as to others' souls I preach'd thy word,

Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:

"Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down."

**H35. Hysteria By** [**Dionisio D. Martínez**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dionisio-d-martinez)

For Ana Menendez

It only takes one night with the wind on its knees

to imagine Carl Sandburg unfolding

a map of Chicago, puzzled, then walking the wrong way.

The lines on his face are hard to read. I alternate

between the tv, where a plastic surgeon is claiming

that every facial expression causes wrinkles, and

the newspaper. I picture the surgeon reading the lines

on Sandburg’s face, lines that would’ve made more sense

if the poet had been, say, a tree growing

in a wind orchard. Maybe he simply smiled too much.

I’m reading about the All-Star game, thinking

that maybe Sandburg saw the White Sox of 1919.

**. . .**

I love American newspapers, the way each section

is folded independently and believes it owns

the world. There’s this brief item in the inter-

national pages: the Chinese government has posted

signs in Tiananmen Square, forbidding laughter.

I’m sure the plastic surgeon would approve, he’d say

the Chinese will look young much longer, their faces

unnaturally smooth, but what *I* see (although

no photograph accompanies the story) is laughter

bursting inside them. I go back to the sports section

and a closeup of a rookie in mid-swing, his face

keeping all the wrong emotions in check.

**. . .**

When I read I bite my lower lip, a habit

the plastic surgeon would probably call

cosmetic heresy because it accelerates the aging

process. I think of Carl Sandburg and the White Sox;

I think of wind in Tiananmen Square, how a country

deprived of laughter ages invisibly; I think

of the Great Walls of North America, each of them

a grip on some outfield like a rookie’s hands

around a bat when the wind is against him; I bite

my lower lip again; I want to learn

to think in American, to believe that a headline

is a fact and all stories are suspect.

Dionisio D. Martínez, “Hysteria” from *Bad Alchemy.* Copyright © 1995 by Dionisio D. Martinez. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Bad Alchemy* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1995)

**POL I-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**I1**](#I1)[**I2**](#I2)[**I3**](#I3)[**I4**](#I4)[**I5**](#I5)[**I6**](#I6)[**I7**](#I7)[**I8**](#I8)[**I9**](#I9)[**I10**](#I10)[**I11**](#I11)[**I12**](#I12)[**I13**](#I13)

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[**I40**](#I40)[**I41**](#I41)[**I42**](#I42)[**I43**](#I43)[**I44**](#I44)[**I45**](#I45)[**I46**](#I46)[**I47**](#I47)[**I48**](#I48)[**I49**](#I49)[**I50**](#I50)[**I51**](#I51)[**I52**](#I52)

[**I53**](#I53)[**I54**](#I54)[**I55**](#I55)[**I56**](#I56)[**I57**](#I57)[**I58**](#I58)[**I59**](#I59)[**I60**](#I60)[**I61**](#I61)[**I62**](#I62)[**I63**](#I63)[**I64**](#I64)[**I65**](#I65)

[**I66**](#I66)[**I67**](#I67) **I68 I69 I70 I71 I72 I73 I74 I75 I76 I77 I78**

**I79 I80 I81 I82 I83 I84 I85 I86 I87 I88 I89 I90 I91**

**I92 I93 I94 I95 I96 I97 I98 I99 I100 I101 I102 I103 I104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**I1. I Am Learning To Abandon the World By** [**Linda Pastan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-pastan)

I am learning to abandon the world

before it can abandon me.

Already I have given up the moon

and snow, closing my shades

against the claims of white.

And the world has taken

my father, my friends.

I have given up melodic lines of hills,

moving to a flat, tuneless landscape.

And every night I give my body up

limb by limb, working upwards

across bone, towards the heart.

But morning comes with small

reprieves of coffee and birdsong.

A tree outside the window

which was simply shadow moments ago

takes back its branches twig

by leafy twig.

And as I take my body back

the sun lays its warm muzzle on my lap

as if to make amends.

Linda Pastan, “I Am Learning to Abandon the World” from *PM/AM: New and Selected Poems* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982). Copyright © 1982 by Linda Pastan. Reprinted with the permission of the Jean V. Naggar Agency, Inc. on behalf of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (September 1981).

**I2. I Am Offering this Poem By** [**Jimmy Santiago Baca**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jimmy-santiago-baca)

I am offering this poem to you,

since I have nothing else to give.

Keep it like a warm coat

when winter comes to cover you,

or like a pair of thick socks

the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,

so it is a pot full of yellow corn

to warm your belly in winter,

it is a scarf for your head, to wear

over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would

if you were lost, needing direction,

in the wilderness life becomes when mature;

and in the corner of your drawer,

tucked away like a cabin or hogan

in dense trees, come knocking,

and I will answer, give you directions,

and let you warm yourself by this fire,

rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It’s all I have to give,

and all anyone needs to live,

and to go on living inside,

when the world outside

no longer cares if you live or die;

remember,

I love you.

Jimmy Santiago Baca, “I Am Offering this Poem” from *Immigrants in Our Own Land and Selected Early Poems*. Copyright © 1990 by Jimmy Santiago Baca. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Immigrants in Our Own Land and Selected Early Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1990)

**I3. I am Trying to Break Your Heart By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

I am hoping

to hang your head

on my wall

in shame—

the slightest taxidermy

thrills me. Fish

forever leaping

on the living-room wall—

paperweights made

from skulls

of small animals.

I want to wear

your smile on my sleeve

& break

your heart like a horse

or its leg. Weeks of being

bucked off, then

all at once, you're mine—

Put me down.

I want to call you *thine*

to tattoo *mercy*

along my knuckles. *I assassin*

*down the avenue*

I hope

to have you forgotten

by noon. To know you

by your knees

palsied by prayer.

Loneliness is a science—

consider the taxidermist's

tender hands

trying to keep from losing

skin, the bobcat grin

of the living.

Kevin Young, "I am Trying to Break Your Heart" from *Dear Darkness*. Copyright © 2008 by Kevin Young. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. All Rights Reserved. Source: Dear Darkness (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008)

**I4. [i carry your heart with me(i carry it in] By** [**E. E. Cummings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/e-e-cummings)

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in

my heart)i am never without it(anywhere

i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done

by only me is your doing,my darling)

i fear

no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want

no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)

and it’s you are whatever a moon has always meant

and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows

(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud

and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows

higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)

and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

“[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in]” Copyright 1952, © 1980, 1991 by the Trustees for the E. E. Cummings Trust, from *Complete Poems: 1904-1962* by E. E. Cummings, edited by George J. Firmage. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 1952).

**I5. I Close My Eyes By** [**David Ignatow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-ignatow)

I close my eyes like a good little boy at night in bed,

as I was told to do by my mother when she lived,

and before bed I brush my teeth and slip on my pajamas,

as I was told, and look forward to tomorrow.

I do all things required of me to make me a citizen of sterling worth.

I keep a job and come home each evening for dinner. I arrive at the

same time on the same train to give my family a sense of order.

I obey traffic signals. I am cordial to strangers, I answer my

mail promptly. I keep a balanced checking account. Why can’t I

live forever?

David Ignatow, “I Close My Eyes” from *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994.* Copyright © 1993 by David Ignatow. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.  
  
Source: *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994* (Wesleyan University Press, 1993)

**I6. I Dreamed That I Was Old By** [**Stanley Kunitz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stanley-kunitz)

I dreamed that I was old: in stale declension

Fallen from my prime, when company

Was mine, cat-nimbleness, and green invention,

Before time took my leafy hours away.

My wisdom, ripe with body’s ruin, found

Itself tart recompense for what was lost

In false exchange: since wisdom in the ground

Has no apocalypse or pentecost.

I wept for my youth, sweet passionate young thought,

And cozy women dead that by my side

Once lay: I wept with bitter longing, not

Remembering how in my youth I cried.

Stanley Kunitz, “I Dreamed That I Was Old” from *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz, 1928-1978.* Copyright © 1930, 1944, 1958, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1976, 1978, 1979 by Stanley Kunitz. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Selected Poems 1928-1958* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1958)

**I7. I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,

And Mourners to and fro

Kept treading - treading - till it seemed

That Sense was breaking through -

And when they all were seated,

A Service, like a Drum -

Kept beating - beating - till I thought

My mind was going numb -

And then I heard them lift a Box

And creak across my Soul

With those same Boots of Lead, again,

Then Space - began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,

And Being, but an Ear,

And I, and Silence, some strange Race,

Wrecked, solitary, here -

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,

And I dropped down, and down -

And hit a World, at every plunge,

And Finished knowing - then -

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**I8. I Find no Peace By** [**Thomas Wyatt**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-wyatt)

I find no peace, and all my war is done.

I fear and hope. I burn and freeze like ice.

I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise;

And nought I have, and all the world I season.

That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison

And holdeth me not—yet can I scape no wise—

Nor letteth me live nor die at my device,

And yet of death it giveth me occasion.

Without eyen I see, and without tongue I plain.

I desire to perish, and yet I ask health.

I love another, and thus I hate myself.

I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain;

Likewise displeaseth me both life and death,

And my delight is causer of this strife.

**I9. I Genitori Perduti By** [**Lawrence Ferlinghetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lawrence-ferlinghetti)

The dove-white gulls

on the wet lawn in Washington Square

in the early morning fog

each a little ghost in the gloaming

Souls transmigrated maybe

from Hudson’s shrouded shores

across all the silent years—

Which one’s my maybe mafioso father

in his so white suit and black shoes

in his real estate office Forty-second Street

or at the front table wherever he went—

Which my dear lost mother with faded smile

locked away from me in time—

Which my big brother Charley

selling switching-signals all his life

on the New York Central—

And which good guy brother Clem

sweating in Sing Sing’s darkest offices

deputy-warden thirty years

watching executions in the wooden armchair

(with leather straps and black hood)

He too gone mad with it in the end—

And which my nearest brother Harry

still kindest and dearest in a far suburb—

I see them now all turn to me at last

gull-eyed in the white dawn

about to call to me

across the silent grass

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "I Genitori Perduti" from *These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1993 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).

Source: *These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993)

**I10. I Hear America Singing By** [**Walt Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walt-whitman)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1991)

**I11. I heard a Fly buzz - when I died - (591) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -

The Stillness in the Room

Was like the Stillness in the Air -

Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -

And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset - when the King

Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away

What portion of me be

Assignable - and then it was

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -

Between the light - and me -

And then the Windows failed - and then

I could not see to see -

Emily Dickinson, “I Heard a Fly buzz—when I died” from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Copyright 1945, 1951, ©1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted with the permission of The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson Edited by R. W. Franklin* (Harvard University Press, 1999)

**I12. I Knew a Woman By** [**Theodore Roethke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/theodore-roethke)

I knew a woman, lovely in her bones,

When small birds sighed, she would sigh back at them;

Ah, when she moved, she moved more ways than one:

The shapes a bright container can contain!

Of her choice virtues only gods should speak,

Or English poets who grew up on Greek

(I’d have them sing in chorus, cheek to cheek).

How well her wishes went! She stroked my chin,

She taught me Turn, and Counter-turn, and Stand;

She taught me Touch, that undulant white skin;

I nibbled meekly from her proffered hand;

She was the sickle; I, poor I, the rake,

Coming behind her for her pretty sake

(But what prodigious mowing we did make).

Love likes a gander, and adores a goose:

Her full lips pursed, the errant note to seize;

She played it quick, she played it light and loose;

My eyes, they dazzled at her flowing knees;

Her several parts could keep a pure repose,

Or one hip quiver with a mobile nose

(She moved in circles, and those circles moved).

Let seed be grass, and grass turn into hay:

I’m martyr to a motion not my own;

What’s freedom for? To know eternity.

I swear she cast a shadow white as stone.

But who would count eternity in days?

These old bones live to learn her wanton ways:

(I measure time by how a body sways).

Theodore Roethke, “I Knew a Woman” from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke.* Copyright 1954 by Theodore Roethke. Reprinted with the permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (Random House Inc., 1961)

**I13. I Know, I Remember, But How Can I Help You By** [**Hayden Carruth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hayden-carruth)

The northern lights. I wouldn’t have noticed them

if the deer hadn’t told me

a doe her coat of pearls her glowing hoofs

proud and inquisitive

eager for my appraisal

and I went out into the night with electrical steps

but with my head held also proud

to share the animal’s fear

and see what I had seen before

a sky flaring and spectral

greenish waves and ribbons

and the snow under strange light tossing in the pasture

like a storming ocean caught

by a flaring beacon.

The deer stands away from me not far

there among bare black apple trees

a presence I no longer see.

We are proud to be afraid

proud to share

the silent magnetic storm that destroys the stars

and flickers around our heads

like the saints’ cold spiritual agonies

of old.

I remember but without the sense other light-storms

cold memories discursive and philosophical

in my mind’s burden

and the deer remembers nothing.

We move our feet crunching bitter snow while the storm

crashes like god-wars down the east

we shake the sparks from our eyes

we quiver inside our shocked fur

we search for each other

in the apple thicket—

a glimpse, an acknowledgment

it is enough and never enough—

we toss our heads and say good night

moving away on bitter bitter snow.

Hayden Carruth, “I Know, I Remember, But How Can I Help You” from *Collected Shorter Poems, 1946-1991*. Copyright © 1992 by Hayden Carruth. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Source: *Collected Shorter Poems 1946-1991* (Copper Canyon Press, 1992)

**I14. I'm a Fool to Love You By** [**Cornelius Eady**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/cornelius-eady)

Some folks will tell you the blues is a woman,

Some type of supernatural creature.

My mother would tell you, if she could,

About her life with my father,

A strange and sometimes cruel gentleman.

She would tell you about the choices

A young black woman faces.

Is falling in love with some man

A deal with the devil

In blue terms, the tongue we use

When we don't want nuance

To get in the way,

When we need to talk straight.

My mother chooses my father

After choosing a man

Who was, as we sing it,

Of no account.

This man made my father look good,

That's how bad it was.

He made my father seem like an island

In the middle of a stormy sea,

He made my father look like a rock.

And is the blues the moment you realize

You exist in a stacked deck,

You look in a mirror at your young face,

The face my sister carries,

And you know it's the only leverage

You've got.

Does this create a hurt that whispers

*How you going to do?*

Is the blues the moment

You shrug your shoulders

And agree, a girl without money

Is nothing, dust

To be pushed around by any old breeze.

Compared to this,

My father seems, briefly,

To be a fire escape.

This is the way the blues works

Its sorry wonders,

Makes trouble look like

A feather bed,

Makes the wrong man's kisses

A healing.

Cornelius Eady, "I’m a Fool To Love You" from *Autobiography of a Jukebox*. Copyright © 1997 by Cornelius Eady. Reprinted by permission of Carnegie Mellon University Press.  
  
Source: *Autobiography of a Jukebox* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1997)

**I15. [I married] By** [**Lorine Niedecker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorine-niedecker)

I married

in the world’s black night

for warmth

if not repose.

At the close—

someone.

I hid with him

from the long range guns.

We lay leg

in the cupboard, head

in closet.

A slit of light

at no bird dawn—

Untaught

I thought

he drank

too much.

I say

I married

and lived unburied.

I thought—

Lorine Niedecker, “[I married]” from *Collected Works*, edited by Jenny Penberthy, Copyright © 2002 Regents of the University of California. Published by University of California Press.

Source: *Collected Works* (University of California Press, 2004)

**I16. I Remember, I Remember By** [**Thomas Hood**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hood)

I remember, I remember,

The house where I was born,

The little window where the sun

Came peeping in at morn;

He never came a wink too soon,

Nor brought too long a day,

But now, I often wish the night

Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,

The roses, red and white,

The vi'lets, and the lily-cups,

Those flowers made of light!

The lilacs where the robin built,

And where my brother set

The laburnum on his birthday,—

The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,

Where I was used to swing,

And thought the air must rush as fresh

To swallows on the wing;

My spirit flew in feathers then,

That is so heavy now,

And summer pools could hardly cool

The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,

The fir trees dark and high;

I used to think their slender tops

Were close against the sky:

It was a childish ignorance,

But now 'tis little joy

To know I'm farther off from heav'n

Than when I was a boy.

Source: *Poets of the English Language* (Viking Press, 1950)

**I17. “I think I should have loved you presently” By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

I think I should have loved you presently,

And given in earnest words I flung in jest;

And lifted honest eyes for you to see,

And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;

And all my pretty follies flung aside

That won you to me, and beneath your gaze,

Naked of reticence and shorn of pride,

Spread like a chart my little wicked ways.

I, that had been to you, had you remained,

But one more waking from a recurrent dream,

Cherish no less the certain stakes I gained,

And walk your memory’s halls, austere, supreme,

A ghost in marble of a girl you knew

Who would have loved you in a day or two.

**I18. I, Too By** [**Langston Hughes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/langston-hughes)

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I’ll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody’ll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They’ll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes, “I, Too” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by The Estate of Langston Hughes. Reprinted with the permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated. Source: *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (Vintage Books, 2004)

**I19. I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud By** [**William Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-wordsworth)

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay,

In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils.

**I20. Ice By** [**Gail Mazur**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gail-mazur)

In the warming house, children lace their skates,

bending, choked, over their thick jackets.

A Franklin stove keeps the place so cozy

it’s hard to imagine why anyone would leave,

clumping across the frozen beach to the river.

December’s always the same at Ware’s Cove,

the first sheer ice, black, then white

and deep until the city sends trucks of men

with wooden barriers to put up the boys’

hockey rink. An hour of skating after school,

of trying wobbly figure-8’s, an hour

of distances moved backwards without falling,

then—twilight, the warming house steamy

with girls pulling on boots, their chafed legs

aching. Outside, the hockey players keep

playing, slamming the round black puck

until it’s dark, until supper. At night,

a shy girl comes to the cove with her father.

Although there isn’t music, they glide

arm in arm onto the blurred surface together,

braced like dancers. She thinks she’ll never

be so happy, for who else will find her graceful,

find her perfect, skate with her

in circles outside the emptied rink forever?

“Ice” from *Zeppo’s First Wife: New and Selected Poems* by Gail Mazur. Copyright © 2005 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Source: *Poetry* (December 1987).

**I21. Ice Bound By** [**Walter Bargen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walter-bargen)

Sky’s gray sheet spreads icy rain.

Through the night we heard the branches cracking.

Now they bend with the bowed ache of apostrophes.

Backs to the window, sitting on the couch, we listen

as the radio announces the list of schools closed.

An hour earlier I inched my way along

the road, tires spinning toward the ditch.

Now I read aloud to a teenage daughter,

who tolerates my foolishness, my claim

that Lao Tzu traversed a more slippery world.

With two books open on my lap, one in my hand,

two on the floor, I’m surrounded by imperfect

translations: a gathering chaos; something

mysteriously formed; without beginning,

without end; formless and perfect.

She responds, Sure,

I knew that, so what? I persist:

that existed before the heavens and the earth;

before the universe was born. She’s ready to go

upstairs and listen to the radio. I ask,

What was her face before her parents were born?

she answers, Nothing. I ask again.

She says it again. Where are the angels,

nights on humble knees, the psalms of faith,

the saints of daylight? She walks out of the room.

I’m surrounded by thin books.

How pointless to go anywhere on this day,

or maybe any other, but then

the time comes when there is

no other way but to stand firm on ice.

Walter L Bargen, “Ice Bound” from *West of West*. Copyright © 2007 by Walter L Bargen. Reprinted by permission of Timberline Press.  
  
Source: *West of West* (Bkmk Press, 2007)

**I22. Ice Child By** [**John Haines**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-haines)

Cold for so long, unable to speak,

yet your mouth seems framed

on a cry, or a stifled question.

Who placed you here, and left you

to this lonely eternity of ash and ice,

and himself returned to the dust

fields, the church and the temple?

Was it God—the sun-god of the Incas,

the imperial god of the Spaniards?

Or only the priests of that god,

self-elected—voice of the volcano

that speaks once in a hundred years.

And I wonder, with your image before me,

what life might you have lived,

had you lived at all—whose companion,

whose love? To be perhaps no more

than a slave of that earthly master:

a jug of water on your shoulder,

year after stunted year, a bundle

of reeds and corn, kindling

for a fire on whose buried hearth?

There were furies to be fed, then

as now: blood to fatten the sun,

a heart for the lightning to strike.

And now the furies walk the streets,

a swarm in the milling crowd.

They stand to the podium, speak

of their coming ascension ...

Through all this drift and clamor

you have survived—in this cramped

and haunted effigy, another entry

on the historian’s dated page.

Under the weight of this mountain—

once a god, now only restless stone,

we find your interrupted life,

placed here among the trilobites

and shells, so late unearthed.

John Haines, “The Ice Child” from *For the Century’s End: Poems 1990-1999*. Used with the permission of the University of Washington Press.  
  
Source: *For the Century's End: Poems 1990-1999* (University of Washington Press, 1999)

**I23. Idea 20: An evil spirit, your beauty, haunts me still By** [**Michael Drayton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-drayton)

An evil spirit, your beauty, haunts me still,

Wherewith, alas, I have been long possess'd,

Which ceaseth not to tempt me to each ill,

Nor gives me once but one poor minute's rest.

In me it speaks, whether I sleep or wake;

And when by means to drive it out I try,

With greater torments then it me doth take,

And tortures me in most extremity.

Before my face it lays down my despairs,

And hastes me on unto a sudden death;

Now tempting me to drown myself in tears,

And then in sighing to give up my breath.

Thus am I still provok'd to every evil

By this good-wicked spirit, sweet angel-devil.

**I24. Idea 43: Why should your fair eyes with such sovereign grace By** [**Michael Drayton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-drayton)

Why should your fair eyes with such sovereign grace

Disperse their rays on every vulgar spirit,

Whilst I in darkness in the self-same place

Get not one glance to recompense my merit?

So doth the ploughman gaze the wandering star,

And only rest contented with the light,

That never learned what constellations are,

Beyond the bent of his unknowing sight,

O! why should beauty, custom to obey,

To their gross sense apply herself so ill?

Would God I were as ignorant as they,

When I am made unhappy by my skill;

Only compelled on this poor good to boast,

Heavens are not kind to them that know them most.

**I25. Idea 61: Since there’s no help, come let us kiss and part By** [**Michael Drayton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-drayton)

Since there’s no help, come let us kiss and part.

Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;

And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,

That thus so cleanly I myself can free.

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,

And when we meet at any time again,

Be it not seen in either of our brows

That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of Love’s latest breath,

When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies;

When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,

And Innocence is closing up his eyes—

Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,

From death to life thou might’st him yet recover!

**I26. The Idler By** [**Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alice-moore-dunbar-nelson)

An idle lingerer on the wayside's road,

He gathers up his work and yawns away;

A little longer, ere the tiresome load

Shall be reduced to ashes or to clay.

No matter if the world has marched along,

And scorned his slowness as it quickly passed;

No matter, if amid the busy throng,

He greets some face, infantile at the last.

His mission? Well, there is but one,

And if it is a mission he knows it, nay,

To be a happy idler, to lounge and sun,

And dreaming, pass his long-drawn days away.

So dreams he on, his happy life to pass

Content, without ambitions painful sighs,

Until the sands run down into the glass;

He smiles—content—unmoved and dies.

And yet, with all the pity that you feel

For this poor mothling of that flame, the world;

Are you the better for your desperate deal,

When you, like him, into infinitude are hurled?

Source: *Violets and Other Tales* (1895)

**I27. [if mama / could see] By** [**Lucille Clifton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lucille-clifton)

if mama

could see

she would see

lucy sprawling

limbs of lucy

decorating the

backs of chairs

lucy hair

holding the mirrors up

that reflect odd

aspects of lucy.

if mama

could hear

she would hear

lucysong rolled in the

corners like lint

exotic webs of lucysighs

long lucy spiders explaining

to obscure gods.

if mama

could talk

she would talk

good girl

good girl

good girl

clean up your room.

Lucille Clifton, “[if mama/could see]” from *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir,* 1969-1980. Copyright ©1987 by Lucille Clifton. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org). Source: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (1997)

**I28. Ikebana By** [**Cathy Song**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/cathy-song)

To prepare the body,

aim for the translucent perfection

you find in the sliced shavings

of a pickled turnip.

In order for this to happen,

you must avoid the sun,

protect the face

under a paper parasol

until it is bruised white

like the skin of lilies.

Use white soap

from a blue porcelain

dish for this.

Restrict yourself.

Eat the whites of things:

tender bamboo shoots,

the veins of the young iris,

the clouded eye of a fish.

Then wrap the body,

as if it were a perfumed gift,

in pieces of silk

held together with invisible threads

like a kite, weighing no more

than a handful of crushed chrysanthemums.

Light enough to float in the wind.

You want the effect

of koi moving through water.

When the light leaves

the room, twist lilacs

into the lacquered hair

piled high like a complicated shrine.

There should be tiny bells

inserted somewhere

in the web of hair

to imitate crickets

singing in a hidden grove.

Reveal the nape of the neck,

your beauty spot.

Hold the arrangement.

If your spine slacks

and you feel faint,

remember the hand-picked flower

set in the front alcove,

which, just this morning,

you so skillfully wired into place.

How poised it is!

Petal and leaf

curving like a fan,

the stem snipped and wedged

into the metal base—

to appear like a spontaneous accident.

Cathy Song, “Ikebana” from *Picture Bride.* Copyright © 1983 by Cathy Song. Reprinted with the permission of Yale University Press. Source: *Picture Bride* (Yale University Press, 1983)

**I29. Ill-Advised Love Poem By** [**John Yau**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-yau)

Come live with me

And we will sit

Upon the rocks

By shallow rivers

Come live with me

And we will plant acorns

In each other's mouth

It would be our way

Of greeting the earth

Before it shoves us

Back into the snow

Our interior cavities

Brimming with

Disagreeable substances

Come live with me

Before winter stops

To use the only pillow

The sky ever sleeps on

Our interior cavities

Brimming with snow

Come live with me

Before spring

Swallows the air

And birds sing

John Yau, "Ill-Advised Love Poem" from *Further Adventures in Monochrome*. Copyright © 2012 by John Yau. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press.

Source: *Further Adventures in Monochrome* (Copper Canyon Press, 2012)

**I30. The Illiterate By** [**William Meredith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-meredith)

Touching your goodness, I am like a man

Who turns a letter over in his hand

And you might think this was because the hand

Was unfamiliar but, truth is, the man

Has never had a letter from anyone;

And now he is both afraid of what it means

And ashamed because he has no other means

To find out what it says than to ask someone.

His uncle could have left the farm to him,

Or his parents died before he sent them word,

Or the dark girl changed and want him for beloved.

Afraid and letter-proud, he keeps it with him.

What would you call his feeling for the words

That keep him rich and orphaned and beloved?

William Meredith, “The Illiterate” from *Effort at Speech: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1997 by William Meredith. Reprinted with the permission of the author and TriQuarterly Books/Northwestern University Press, <http://nupress.northwestern.edu>.

Source: *Effort at Speech: New and Selected Poems* (TriQuarterly Books, 1997)

**I31. Immigrant Picnic By** [**Gregory Djanikian**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gregory-djanikian)

It's the Fourth of July, the flags

are painting the town,

the plastic forks and knives

are laid out like a parade.

And I'm grilling, I've got my apron,

I've got potato salad, macaroni, relish,

I've got a hat shaped

like the state of Pennsylvania.

I ask my father what's his pleasure

and he says, "Hot dog, medium rare,"

and then, "Hamburger, sure,

what's the big difference,"

as if he's really asking.

I put on hamburgers and hot dogs,

slice up the sour pickles and Bermudas,

uncap the condiments. The paper napkins

are fluttering away like lost messages.

"You're running around," my mother says,

"like a chicken with its head loose."

"Ma," I say, "you mean cut off,

loose and cut off being as far apart

as, say, son and daughter."

She gives me a quizzical look as though

I've been caught in some impropriety.

"I love you and your sister just the same," she says,

"Sure," my grandmother pipes in,

"you're both our children, so why worry?"

That's not the point I begin telling them,

and I'm comparing words to fish now,

like the ones in the sea at Port Said,

or like birds among the date palms by the Nile,

unrepentantly elusive, wild.

"Sonia," my father says to my mother,

"what the hell is he talking about?"

"He's on a ball," my mother says.

"That's roll!" I say, throwing up my hands,

"as in hot dog, hamburger, dinner roll...."

"And what about roll out the barrels?" my mother asks,

and my father claps his hands, "Why sure," he says,

"let's have some fun," and launches

into a polka, twirling my mother

around and around like the happiest top,

and my uncle is shaking his head, saying

"You could grow nuts listening to us,"

and I'm thinking of pistachios in the Sinai

burgeoning without end,

pecans in the South, the jumbled

flavor of them suddenly in my mouth,

wordless, confusing,

crowding out everything else. Source: *Poetry* (July 1999).

**I32. Immortal Autumn By** [**Archibald MacLeish**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/archibald-macleish)

I speak this poem now with grave and level voice

In praise of autumn, of the far-horn-winding fall.

I praise the flower-barren fields, the clouds, the tall

Unanswering branches where the wind makes sullen noise.

I praise the fall: it is the human season.

Now

No more the foreign sun does meddle at our earth,

Enforce the green and bring the fallow land to birth,

Nor winter yet weigh all with silence the pine bough,

But now in autumn with the black and outcast crows

Share we the spacious world: the whispering year is gone:

There is more room to live now: the once secret dawn

Comes late by daylight and the dark unguarded goes.

Between the mutinous brave burning of the leaves

And winter’s covering of our hearts with his deep snow

We are alone: there are no evening birds: we know

The naked moon: the tame stars circle at our eaves.

It is the human season. On this sterile air

Do words outcarry breath: the sound goes on and on.

I hear a dead man’s cry from autumn long since gone.

I cry to you beyond upon this bitter air.

Archibald MacLeish, “Immortal Autumn” from *Collected Poems 1917-1982.* Copyright © 1985 by The Estate of Archibald MacLeish. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1952)

**I33. Immortal Sails By** [**Alfred Noyes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alfred-noyes)

Now, in a breath, we’ll burst those gates of gold,

And ransack heaven before our moment fails.

Now, in a breath, before we, too, grow old,

We’ll mount and sing and spread immortal sails.

It is not time that makes eternity.

Love and an hour may quite out-span the years,

And give us more to hear and more to see

Than life can wash away with all its tears.

Dear, when we part, at last, that sunset sky

Shall not be touched with deeper hues than this;

But we shall ride the lightning ere we die

And seize our brief infinitude of bliss,

With time to spare for all that heaven can tell,

While eyes meet eyes, and look their last farewell.

**I34. In By** [**Andrew Hudgins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/andrew-hudgins)

When we first heard from blocks away

the fog truck’s blustery roar,

we dropped our toys, leapt from our meals,

and scrambled out the door

into an evening briefly fuzzy.

We yearned to be transformed—

translated past confining flesh

to disembodied spirit. We swarmed

in thick smoke, taking human form

before we blurred again,

turned vague and then invisible,

in temporary heaven.

Freed of bodies by the fog,

we laughed, we sang, we shouted.

We were our voices, nothing else.

Voice was all we wanted.

The white clouds tumbled down our streets

pursued by spellbound children

who chased the most distorting clouds,

ecstatic in the poison.

Andrew Hudgins, "In" from *Ecstatic in the Poison*. Copyright © 2003 by Andrew Hudgins. Published in 2003 by The Overlook Press, Peter Mayer Publishers, Inc. New York, NY, www.overlookpress.com. All rights reserved.

Source: *Ecstatic in the Poison* (The Overlook Press, 2003)

**I35. In a Dark Time By** [**Theodore Roethke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/theodore-roethke)

In a dark time, the eye begins to see,

I meet my shadow in the deepening shade;

I hear my echo in the echoing wood—

A lord of nature weeping to a tree.

I live between the heron and the wren,

Beasts of the hill and serpents of the den.

What’s madness but nobility of soul

At odds with circumstance? The day’s on fire!

I know the purity of pure despair,

My shadow pinned against a sweating wall.

That place among the rocks—is it a cave,

Or winding path? The edge is what I have.

A steady storm of correspondences!

A night flowing with birds, a ragged moon,

And in broad day the midnight come again!

A man goes far to find out what he is—

Death of the self in a long, tearless night,

All natural shapes blazing unnatural light.

Dark, dark my light, and darker my desire.

My soul, like some heat-maddened summer fly,

Keeps buzzing at the sill. Which I is *I?*

A fallen man, I climb out of my fear.

The mind enters itself, and God the mind,

And one is One, free in the tearing wind.

Theodore Roethke, “In a Dark Time” from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke.* Copyright © 1963 by Beatrice Roethke, Administratrix of the Estate of Theodore Roethke. Reprinted with the permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc. Source: *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (Doubleday, 1961)

**I36. In a London Drawingroom By** [**George Eliot**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-eliot)

The sky is cloudy, yellowed by the smoke.

For view there are the houses opposite

Cutting the sky with one long line of wall

Like solid fog: far as the eye can stretch

Monotony of surface & of form

Without a break to hang a guess upon.

No bird can make a shadow as it flies,

For all is shadow, as in ways o'erhung

By thickest canvass, where the golden rays

Are clothed in hemp. No figure lingering

Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye

Or rest a little on the lap of life.

All hurry on & look upon the ground,

Or glance unmarking at the passers by

The wheels are hurrying too, cabs, carriages

All closed, in multiplied identity.

The world seems one huge prison-house & court

Where men are punished at the slightest cost,

With lowest rate of colour, warmth & joy.

**I37. In the Basement of the Goodwill Store By** [**Ted Kooser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ted-kooser)

In musty light, in the thin brown air

of damp carpet, doll heads and rust,

beneath long rows of sharp footfalls

like nails in a lid, an old man stands

trying on glasses, lifting each pair

from the box like a glittering fish

and holding it up to the light

of a dirty bulb. Near him, a heap

of enameled pans as white as skulls

looms in the catacomb shadows,

and old toilets with dry red throats

cough up bouquets of curtain rods.

You’ve seen him somewhere before.

He’s wearing the green leisure suit

you threw out with the garbage,

and the Christmas tie you hated,

and the ventilated wingtip shoes

you found in your father’s closet

and wore as a joke. And the glasses

which finally fit him, through which

he looks to see you looking back—

two mirrors which flash and glance—

are those through which one day

you too will look down over the years,

when you have grown old and thin

and no longer particular,

and the things you once thought

you were rid of forever

have taken you back in their arms.

Ted Kooser, “In the Basement of the Goodwill Store” from *One World at a Time*. Copyright © 1985 by Ted Kooser. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, www.upress.pitt.edu. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *One World At A Time* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985)

**I38. In California: Morning, Evening, Late January By** [**Denise Levertov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/denise-levertov)

Pale, then enkindled,

light

advancing,

emblazoning

summits of palm and pine,

the dew

lingering,

scripture of

scintillas.

Soon the roar

of mowers

cropping the already short

grass of lawns,

men with long-nozzled

cylinders of pesticide

poking at weeds,

at moss in cracks of cement,

and louder roar

of helicopters off to spray

vineyards where *braceros* try

to hold their breath,

and in the distance, bulldozers, excavators,

babel of destructive construction.

Banded by deep

oakshadow, airy

shadow of eucalyptus,

miner’s lettuce,

tender, untasted,

and other grass, unmown,

luxuriant,

no green more brilliant.

Fragile paradise.

. . . .

At day’s end the whole sky,

vast, unstinting, flooded with transparent

mauve,

tint of wisteria,

cloudless

over the malls, the industrial parks,

the homes with the lights going on,

the homeless arranging their bundles.

. . . .

Who can utter

the poignance of all that is constantly

threatened, invaded, expended

and constantly

nevertheless

persists in beauty,

tranquil as this young moon

just risen and slowly

drinking light

from the vanished sun.

Who can utter

the praise of such generosity

or the shame?

“In California” By Denise Levertov, from *A Door in the Hive*, copyright © 1989 by Denise Levertov. Used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.  
  
Source: *A Door in the Hive* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1989)

**I39. In the Desert By** [**Stephen Crane**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-crane)

In the desert

I saw a creature, naked, bestial,

Who, squatting upon the ground,

Held his heart in his hands,

And ate of it.

I said, “Is it good, friend?”

“It is bitter—bitter,” he answered;

“But I like it

“Because it is bitter,

“And because it is my heart.”

Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

**I40. In Flanders Fields By** [**John McCrae**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-mccrae)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie,

In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

**I41. [in Just-] By** [**E. E. Cummings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/e-e-cummings)

in Just-

spring when the world is mud-

luscious the little

lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come

running from marbles and

piracies and it's

spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer

old balloonman whistles

far and wee

and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's

spring

and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles

far

and

wee

**I42. In Love, His Grammar Grew By** [**Stephen Dunn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-dunn)

In love, his grammar grew

rich with intensifiers, and adverbs fell

madly from the sky like pheasants

for the peasantry, and he, as sated

as they were, lolled under shade trees

until roused by moonlight

and the beautiful fraternal twins

*and* and *but*. Oh that was when

he knew he couldn’t resist

a conjunction of any kind.

One said *accumulate*, the other

was a doubter who loved the wind

and the mind that cleans up after it.

For love

he wanted to break all the rules,

light a candle behind a sentence

named Sheila, always running on

and wishing to be stopped

by the hard button of a period.

Sometimes, in desperation, he’d look

toward a mannequin or a window dresser

with a penchant for parsing.

But mostly he wanted you, Sheila,

and the adjectives that could precede

and change you: *bluesy*, *fly-by-night*,

*queen of all that is and might be*.

**I43. In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr. By** [**June Jordan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/june-jordan)

***I***

honey people murder mercy U.S.A.

the milkland turn to monsters teach

to kill to violate pull down destroy

the weakly freedom growing fruit

from being born

America

tomorrow yesterday rip rape

exacerbate despoil disfigure

crazy running threat the

deadly thrall

appall belief dispel

the wildlife burn the breast

the onward tongue

the outward hand

deform the normal rainy

riot sunshine shelter wreck

of darkness derogate

delimit blank

explode deprive

assassinate and batten up

like bullets fatten up

the raving greed

reactivate a springtime

terrorizing

death by men by more

than you or I can

STOP

***II***

They sleep who know a regulated place

or pulse or tide or changing sky

according to some universal

stage direction obvious

like shorewashed shells

we share an afternoon of mourning

in between no next predictable

except for wild reversal hearse rehearsal

bleach the blacklong lunging

ritual of fright insanity and more

deplorable abortion

more and

more

June Jordan, “In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.” from *Directed By Desire: The Collected Poems of June Jordan* (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2005). Copyright © 2005 by The June M. Jordan Literary Trust. Reprinted with the permission of The June M. Jordan Literary Trust, [www.junejordan.com](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/). Source: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (1997)

**I44. In the Past By** [**Trumbull Stickney**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/trumbull-stickney)

There lies a somnolent lake

Under a noiseless sky,

Where never the mornings break

Nor the evenings die.

Mad flakes of colour

Whirl on its even face

Iridescent and streaked with pallour;

And, warding the silent place,

The rocks rise sheer and gray

From the sedgeless brink to the sky

Dull-lit with the light of pale half-day

Thro’ a void space and dry.

And the hours lag dead in the air

With a sense of coming eternity

To the heart of the lonely boatman there:

That boatman am I,

I, in my lonely boat,

A waif on the somnolent lake,

Watching the colours creep and float

With the sinuous track of a snake.

Now I lean o’er the side

And lazy shades in the water see,

Lapped in the sweep of a sluggish tide

Crawled in from the living sea;

And next I fix mine eyes,

So long that the heart declines,

On the changeless face of the open skies

Where no star shines;

And now to the rocks I turn,

To the rocks, around

That lie like walls of a circling sun

Wherein lie bound

The waters that feel my powerless strength

And meet my homeless oar

Labouring over their ashen length

Never to find a shore.

But the gleam still skims

At times on the somnolent lake,

And a light there is that swims

With the whirl of a snake;

And tho’ dead be the hours i’ the air,

And dayless the sky,

The heart is alive of the boatman there:

That boatman am I.

**I45. In Praise of My Bed By** [**Meredith Holmes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/meredith-holmes)

At last I can be with you!

The grinding hours

since I left your side!

The labor of being fully human,

working my opposable thumb,

talking, and walking upright.

Now I have unclasped

unzipped, stepped out of.

Husked, soft, a be-er only,

I do nothing, but point

my bare feet into your

clean smoothness

feel your quiet strength

the whole length of my body.

I close my eyes, hear myself

moan, so grateful to be held this way.

Meredith Holmes, "In Praise of My Bed" from *Shubad’s Crown*. Copyright © 2003 by Meredith Holmes. Reprinted by permission of Pond Road Press.  
  
Source: *Shubad’s Crown* (Pond Road Press, 2003)

**I46. In Praise of Pain By** [**Heather McHugh**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/heather-mchugh)

A brilliance takes up residence in flaws—

a brilliance all the unchipped faces of design

refuse. The wine collects its starlets

at a lip's fault, sunlight where the nicked

glass angles, and affection where the eye

is least correctable, where arrows of

unquivered light are lodged, where someone

else's eyes have come to be concerned.

For beauty's sake, assault and drive and burn

the devil from the simply perfect sun.

Demand a birthmark on the skin of love,

a tremble in the touch, in come a cry,

and let the silverware of nights be flecked,

the moon pocked to distribute more or less

indwelling alloys of its dim and shine

by nip and tuck, by chance's dance of laws.

The brightness drawn and quartered on a sheet,

the moment cracked upon a bed, will last

as if you soldered them with moon and flux.

And break the bottle of the eye to see

what lights are spun of accident and glass.

Heather McHugh, “In Praise of Pain” from *Hinge & Sign: Poems, 1968-1993.* Copyright © 1994 by Heather McHugh. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Hinge & Sign: Poems 1968-1993* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994)

**I47. In School-days By** [**John Greenleaf Whittier**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-greenleaf-whittier)

Still sits the school-house by the road,

A ragged beggar sleeping;

Around it still the sumachs grow,

And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master’s desk is seen,

Deep scarred by raps official;

The warping floor, the battered seats,

The jack-knife’s carved initial;

The charcoal frescos on its wall;

Its door’s worn sill, betraying

The feet that, creeping slow to school,

Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun

Shone over it at setting;

Lit up its western window-panes,

And low eaves’ icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,

And brown eyes full of grieving,

Of one who still her steps delayed

When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy

Her childish favor singled:

His cap pulled low upon a face

Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow

To right and left, he lingered;—

As restlessly her tiny hands

The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt

The soft hand’s light caressing,

And heard the tremble of her voice,

As if a fault confessing.

“I’m sorry that I spelt the word:

I hate to go above you,

Because,”—the brown eyes lower fell,—

“Because, you see, I love you!”

Still memory to a gray-haired man

That sweet child-face is showing.

Dear girl! the grasses on her grave

Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life’s hard school,

How few who pass above him

Lament their triumph and his loss,

Like her,—because they love him.

**I 48. Infelix By** [**Adah Isaacs Menken**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adah-isaacs-menken)

Where is the promise of my years;

Once written on my brow?

Ere errors, agonies and fears

Brought with them all that speaks in tears,

Ere I had sunk beneath my peers;

Where sleeps that promise now?

Naught lingers to redeem those hours,

Still, still to memory sweet!

The flowers that bloomed in sunny bowers

Are withered all; and Evil towers

Supreme above her sister powers

Of Sorrow and Deceit.

I look along the columned years,

And see Life’s riven fane,

Just where it fell, amid the jeers

Of scornful lips, whose mocking sneers,

For ever hiss within mine ears

To break the sleep of pain.

I can but own my life is vain

A desert void of peace;

I missed the goal I sought to gain,

I missed the measure of the strain

That lulls Fame’s fever in the brain,

And bids Earth’s tumult cease.

Myself! alas for theme so poor

A theme but rich in Fear;

I stand a wreck on Error’s shore,

A spectre not within the door,

A houseless shadow evermore,

An exile lingering here.

Source: *African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology* (University of Illinois Press, 1992)

**I 49. Insect By** [**Annie Finch**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/annie-finch)

That hour-glass-backed,

orchard-legged,

heavy-headed will,

paper-folded,

wedge-contorted,

savage—dense to kill—

pulls back on backward-moving,

arching

high legs still,

lowered through a deep, knees-reaching,

feathered down

green will,

antenna-honest,

thread-descending,

carpeted as if with skill,

a focus-changing,

sober-reaching,

tracing, killing will.

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**I50. Inside Out By** [**Diane Wakoski**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/diane-wakoski)

I walk the purple carpet into your eye

carrying the silver butter server

but a truck rumbles by,

leaving its black tire prints on my foot

and old images the sound of banging screen doors on hot

afternoons and a fly buzzing over the Kool-Aid spilled on

the sink

flicker, as reflections on the metal surface.

Come in, you said,

inside your paintings, inside the blood factory, inside the

old songs that line your hands, inside

eyes that change like a snowflake every second,

inside spinach leaves holding that one piece of gravel,

inside the whiskers of a cat,

inside your old hat, and most of all inside your mouth where you

grind the pigments with your teeth, painting

with a broken bottle on the floor, and painting

with an ostrich feather on the moon that rolls out of my mouth.

You cannot let me walk inside you too long inside

the veins where my small feet touch

bottom.

You must reach inside and pull me

like a silver bullet

from your arm.

Diane Wakoski, “Inside Out” from *Emerald Ice: Selected Poems 1962-1987.* Copyright © 1988 by Diane Wakoski. Reprinted with the permission of David R. Godine/Black Sparrow Press, [www.blacksparrowbooks.com/titles/wakoski.htm](http://www.blacksparrowbooks.com/titles/wakoski.htm). Source: *Emerald Ice: Selected Poems 1962-1987* (1988)

**I51. Insomnia By** [**Dante Gabriel Rossetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dante-gabriel-rossetti)

Thin are the night-skirts left behind

By daybreak hours that onward creep,

And thin, alas! the shred of sleep

That wavers with the spirit's wind:

But in half-dreams that shift and roll

And still remember and forget,

My soul this hour has drawn your soul

A little nearer yet.

Our lives, most dear, are never near,

Our thoughts are never far apart,

Though all that draws us heart to heart

Seems fainter now and now more clear.

To-night Love claims his full control,

And with desire and with regret

My soul this hour has drawn your soul

A little nearer yet.

Is there a home where heavy earth

Melts to bright air that breathes no pain,

Where water leaves no thirst again

And springing fire is Love's new birth?

If faith long bound to one true goal

May there at length its hope beget,

My soul that hour shall draw your soul

For ever nearer yet.

**I52. Insomnia By** [**Dana Gioia**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dana-gioia)

Now you hear what the house has to say.

Pipes clanking, water running in the dark,

the mortgaged walls shifting in discomfort,

and voices mounting in an endless drone

of small complaints like the sounds of a family

that year by year you’ve learned how to ignore.

But now you must listen to the things you own,

all that you’ve worked for these past years,

the murmur of property, of things in disrepair,

the moving parts about to come undone,

and twisting in the sheets remember all

the faces you could not bring yourself to love.

How many voices have escaped you until now,

the venting furnace, the floorboards underfoot,

the steady accusations of the clock

numbering the minutes no one will mark.

The terrible clarity this moment brings,

the useless insight, the unbroken dark.

Dana Gioia, “Insomnia” from *Daily Horoscope.* Copyright © 1986 by Dana Gioia. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org). Source: *Daily Horoscope: Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1986)

**I53. Insomnia and the Seven Steps to Grace By** [**Joy Harjo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joy-harjo)

At dawn the panther of the heavens peers over the edge of the world.

She hears the stars gossip with the sun, sees the moon washing her lean

darkness with water electrified by prayers. All over the world there are those

who can't sleep, those who never awaken.

My granddaughter sleeps on the breast of her mother with milk on

her mouth. A fly contemplates the sweetness of lactose.

Her father is wrapped in the blanket of nightmares. For safety he

approaches the red hills near Thoreau. They recognize him and sing for

him.

Her mother has business in the house of chaos. She is a prophet dis-

guised as a young mother who is looking for a job. She appears at the

door of my dreams and we put the house back together.

Panther watches as human and animal souls are lifted to the heavens by

rain clouds to partake of songs of beautiful thunder.

Others are led by deer and antelope in the wistful hours to the vil-

lages of their ancestors. There they eat cornmeal cooked with berries

that stain their lips with purple while the tree of life flickers in the sun.

It's October, though the season before dawn is always winter. On the

city streets of this desert town lit by chemical yellow travelers

search for home.

Some have been drinking and intimate with strangers. Others are

escapees from the night shift, sip lukewarm coffee, shift gears to the

other side of darkness.

One woman stops at a red light, turns over a worn tape to the last

chorus of a whispery blues. She has decided to live another day.

The stars take notice, as do the half-asleep flowers, prickly pear and

chinaberry tree who drink exhaust into their roots, into the earth.

She guns the light to home where her children are asleep and may

never know she ever left. That their fate took a turn in the land of

nightmares toward the sun may be untouchable knowledge.

It is a sweet sound.

The panther relative yawns and puts her head between her paws.

She dreams of the house of panthers and the seven steps to grace.

Joy Harjo, “Insomnia and the Seven Steps to Grace” from *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky: Poems.* Copyright © 1996 by Joy Harjo. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1996)

**I54. Interlude By** [**Amy Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-lowell)

When I have baked white cakes

And grated green almonds to spread upon them;

When I have picked the green crowns from the strawberries

And piled them, cone-pointed, in a blue and yellow platter;

When I have smoothed the seam of the linen I have been working;

What then?

To-morrow it will be the same:

Cakes and strawberries,

And needles in and out of cloth.

If the sun is beautiful on bricks and pewter,

How much more beautiful is the moon,

Slanting down the gauffered branches of a plum-tree;

The moon,

Wavering across a bed of tulips;

The moon,

Still,

Upon your face.

You shine, Beloved,

You and the moon.

But which is the reflection?

The clock is striking eleven.

I think, when we have shut and barred the door,

The night will be dark

Outside.

Source: *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919)

**I55. An Introduction to My Anthology By** [**Marvin Bell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marvin-bell)

Such a book must contain—

it always does!—a disclaimer.

I make no such. For here

I have collected all the best—

the lily from the field among them,

forget-me-nots and mint weed,

a rose for whoever expected it,

and a buttercup for the children

to make their noses yellow.

Here is clover for the lucky

to roll in, and milkweed to clatter,

a daisy for one judgment,

and a violet for when he loves you

or if he loves you not and why not.

Those who sniff and say no,

These are the wrong ones (and

there always are such people!)—

let them go elsewhere, and quickly!

Marvin Bell, “An Introduction to My Anthology” from *Nightworks: Poems 1962-2000.* Copyright © 2000 by Marvin Bell. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org) Source: *Nightworks: Poems 1962-2000* (Copper Canyon Press, 2000)

For you and I, who have made it this far,

are made happy by occasions

requiring orchids, or queenly arrangements

and even a bird-of-paradise,

but happier still by the flowers of

circumstance, cattails of our youth,

field grass and bulrush. I have included

the devil’s paintbrush

but only as a peacock among barn fowl.

**I56. Introduction to the Songs of Innocence By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

Piping down the valleys wild

Piping songs of pleasant glee

On a cloud I saw a child.

And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb;

So I piped with merry chear,

Piper pipe that song again—

So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe

Sing thy songs of happy chear,

So I sung the same again

While he wept with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write

In a book that all may read—

So he vanish'd from my sight.

And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,

And I stain'd the water clear,

And I wrote my happy songs

Every child may joy to hear

**I57. Inventing a Horse By** [**Meghan O'Rourke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/meghan-orourke)

Inventing a horse is not easy.

One must not only think of the horse.

One must dig fence posts around him.

One must include a place where horses like to live;

or do when they live with humans like you.

Slowly, you must walk him in the cold;

feed him bran mash, apples;

accustom him to the harness;

holding in mind even when you are tired

harnesses and tack cloths and saddle oil

to keep the saddle clean as a face in the sun;

one must imagine teaching him to run

among the knuckles of tree roots,

not to be skittish at first sight of timber wolves,

and not to grow thin in the city,

where at some point you will have to live;

and one must imagine the absence of money.

Most of all, though: the living weight,

the sound of his feet on the needles,

Meghan O’Rourke, "Inventing a Horse" from *Halflife*. Copyright © 2007 by Meghan O’Rourke. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Source: *Halflife* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2007)

and, since he is heavy, and real,

and sometimes tired after a run

down the river with a light whip at his side,

one must imagine love

in the mind that does not know love,

an animal mind, a love that does not depend

on your image of it,

your understanding of it;

indifferent to all that it lacks:

a muzzle and two black eyes

looking the day away, a field empty

of everything but witchgrass, fluent trees,

and some piles of hay.

**I58. Invictus By** [**William Ernest Henley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-ernest-henley)

Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the pit from pole to pole,

I thank whatever gods may be

For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance

I have not winced nor cried aloud.

Under the bludgeonings of chance

My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears

Looms but the Horror of the shade,

And yet the menace of the years

Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,

How charged with punishments the scroll,

I am the master of my fate,

I am the captain of my soul.

**I59. Invitation to Love By** [**Paul Laurence Dunbar**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-laurence-dunbar)

Come when the nights are bright with stars

Or come when the moon is mellow;

Come when the sun his golden bars

Drops on the hay-field yellow.

Come in the twilight soft and gray,

Come in the night or come in the day,

Come, O love, whene’er you may,

And you are welcome, welcome.

You are sweet, O Love, dear Love,

You are soft as the nesting dove.

Come to my heart and bring it to rest

As the bird flies home to its welcome nest.

Come when my heart is full of grief

Or when my heart is merry;

Come with the falling of the leaf

Or with the redd’ning cherry.

Come when the year’s first blossom blows,

Come when the summer gleams and glows,

Come with the winter’s drifting snows,

And you are welcome, welcome.

**I60. Is My Team Ploughing By** [**A. E. Housman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-e-housman)

“Is my team ploughing,

That I was used to drive

And hear the harness jingle

When I was man alive?”

Ay, the horses trample,

The harness jingles now;

No change though you lie under

The land you used to plough.

“Is football playing

Along the river shore,

With lads to chase the leather,

Now I stand up no more?”

Ay the ball is flying,

The lads play heart and soul;

The goal stands up, the keeper

Stands up to keep the goal.

“Is my girl happy,

That I thought hard to leave,

And has she tired of weeping

As she lies down at eve?”

Ay, she lies down lightly,

She lies not down to weep:

Your girl is well contented.

Be still, my lad, and sleep.

“Is my friend hearty,

Now I am thin and pine,

And has he found to sleep in

A better bed than mine?”

Yes, lad, I lie easy,

I lie as lads would choose;

I cheer a dead man’s sweetheart,

Never ask me whose.

**I61. Israfel By** [**Edgar Allan Poe**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-allan-poe)

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God’s creatures. —KORAN

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell

“Whose heart-strings are a lute”;

None sing so wildly well

As the angel Israfel,

And the giddy stars (so legends tell),

Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell

Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above

In her highest noon,

The enamoured moon

Blushes with love,

While, to listen, the red levin

(With the rapid Pleiads, even,

Which were seven,)

Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir

And the other listening things)

That Israfeli’s fire

Is owing to that lyre

By which he sits and sings—

The trembling living wire

Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,

Where deep thoughts are a duty,

Where Love’s a grown-up God,

Where the Houri glances are

Imbued with all the beauty

Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,

Israfeli, who despisest

An unimpassioned song;

To thee the laurels belong,

Best bard, because the wisest!

Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above

With thy burning measures suit—

Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,

With the fervour of thy lute—

Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this

Is a world of sweets and sours;

Our flowers are merely—flowers,

And the shadow of thy perfect bliss

Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell

Where Israfel

Hath dwelt, and he where I,

He might not sing so wildly well

A mortal melody,

While a bolder note than this might swell

From my lyre within the sky. Source: *The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe* (1946)

**I62. It Couldn’t Be Done By** [**Edgar Albert Guest**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-albert-guest)

Somebody said that it couldn’t be done

But he with a chuckle replied

That “maybe it couldn’t,” but he would be one

Who wouldn’t say so till he’d tried.

So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin

On his face. If he worried he hid it.

He started to sing as he tackled the thing

That couldn’t be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: “Oh, you’ll never do that;

At least no one ever has done it;”

But he took off his coat and he took off his hat

And the first thing we knew he’d begun it.

With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,

Without any doubting or quiddit,

He started to sing as he tackled the thing

That couldn’t be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,

There are thousands to prophesy failure,

There are thousands to point out to you one by one,

The dangers that wait to assail you.

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,

Just take off your coat and go to it;

Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing

That “cannot be done,” and you’ll do it.

**I63. It Isn’t Me By** [**James Lasdun**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-lasdun)

*It isn’t me*, he’d say,

stepping out of a landscape

that offered, he’d thought, the backdrop

to a plausible existence

until he entered it; *it’s just not me*,

he’d murmur, walking away.

*It’s not quite me*, he’d explain,

apologetic but firm,

leaving some job they’d found him.

They found him others: he’d go,

smiling his smile, putting

his best foot forward, till again

he’d find himself reluctantly concluding

that this, too, wasn’t him.

He wanted to get married, make a home,

unfold a life among his neighbors’ lives,

branching and blossoming like a tree,

but when it came to it, *it isn’t me*

was all he seemed to learn

from all his diligent forays outward.

And why it should be so hard

for someone not so different from themselves,

to find what they’d found, barely even seeking;

what gift he’d not been given, what forlorn

charm of his they’d had the luck to lack,

puzzled them—though not unduly:

they lived inside their lives so fully

they couldn’t, in the end, believe in him,

except as some half-legendary figure

destined, or doomed, to carry on his back

the weight of their own all-but-weightless, stray

doubts and discomforts. Only sometimes,

alone in offices or living rooms,

they’d hear that phrase again: *it isn’t me*,

and wonder, briefly, what they were, and where,

and feel the strangeness of being there.

**I64. It's the Little Towns I Like By** [**Thomas Lux**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-lux)

It’s the little towns I like

with their little mills making ratchets

and stanchions, elastic web,

spindles, you

name it. I like them in New England,

America, particularly-providing

bad jobs good enough to live on, to live in

families even: kindergarten,

church suppers, beach umbrellas ... The towns

are real, so fragile in their loneliness

a flood could come along

(and floods have) and cut them in two,

in half. There is no mayor,

the town council’s not prepared

for this, three of the four policemen

are stranded on their roofs ... and it doesn’t stop

raining. The mountain

is so thick with water parts of it just slide

down on the heifers—soggy, suicidal—

in the pastures below. It rains, it rains

in these towns and, because

there’s no other way, your father gets in a rowboat

so he can go to work.

Thomas Lux, “It’s the Little Towns I Like” from *New and Selected Poems: 1975-1995.* Copyright © 1997 by Thomas Lux. Used by the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Source: *Poetry* (December 1980).

**I65. It sifts from Leaden Sieves - (291) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

It sifts from Leaden Sieves -

It powders all the Wood.

It fills with Alabaster Wool

The Wrinkles of the Road -

It makes an even Face

Of Mountain, and of Plain -

Unbroken Forehead from the East

Unto the East again -

It reaches to the Fence -

It wraps it Rail by Rail

Till it is lost in Fleeces -

It deals Celestial Vail

Reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of Amherst College from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, Ralph W. Franklin, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

To Stump, and Stack - and Stem -

A Summer’s empty Room -

Acres of Joints, where Harvests were,

Recordless, but for them -

It Ruffles Wrists of Posts

As Ankles of a Queen -

Then stills it’s Artisans - like Ghosts -

Denying they have been -

**I66. It was not Death, for I stood up, (355) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

It was not Death, for I stood up,

And all the Dead, lie down -

It was not Night, for all the Bells

Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh

I felt Siroccos - crawl -

Nor Fire - for just my marble feet

Could keep a Chancel, cool -

And yet, it tasted, like them all,

The Figures I have seen

Set orderly, for Burial

Reminded me, of mine -

As if my life were shaven,

And fitted to a frame,

And could not breathe without a key,

And ’twas like Midnight, some -

When everything that ticked - has stopped -

And space stares - all around -

Or Grisly frosts - first Autumn morns,

Repeal the Beating Ground -

But most, like Chaos - Stopless - cool -

Without a Chance, or spar -

Or even a Report of Land -

To justify - Despair.

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Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

**I67. It would be neat if with the New Year By** [**Jimmy Santiago Baca**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jimmy-santiago-baca)

for Miguel

It would be neat if with the New Year

I could leave my loneliness behind with the old year.

My leathery loneliness an old pair of work boots

my dog vigorously head-shakes back and forth in its jaws,

chews on for hours every day in my front yard—

rain, sun, snow, or wind

in bare feet, pondering my poem,

I’d look out my window and see that dirty pair of boots in the yard.

But my happiness depends so much on wearing those boots.

At the end of my day

while I’m in a chair listening to a Mexican corrido

I stare at my boots appreciating:

all the wrong roads we’ve taken, all the drug and whiskey houses

we’ve visited, and as the Mexican singer wails his pain,

I smile at my boots, understanding every note in his voice,

and strangers, when they see my boots rocking back and forth on my

feet

keeping beat to the song, see how

my boots are scuffed, tooth-marked, worn-soled.

I keep wearing them because they fit so good

and I need them, especially when I love so hard,

where I go up those boulder strewn trails,

where flowers crack rocks in their defiant love for the light.

"It would be neat if with the New Year" by Jimmy Santiago Baca, from *Winter Poems Along the Río Grande*. Copyright © 2004 by Jimmy Santiago Baca. Used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp., <http://www.ndpublishing.com/>. Source: *Winter Poems Along the Rio Grande* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2004)

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**J1**](#J1)[**J2**](#J2)[**J3**](#J3)[**J4**](#J4) **J5 J6 J7 J8 J9 J10 J11 J12 J13**

**J14 J15 J16 J17 J18 J19 J20 J21 J22 J23 J24 J25 J26**

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**J53 J54 J55 J56 J57 J58 J59 J60 J61 J62 J63 J64 J65**

**J66 J67 J68 J69 J70 J71 J72 J73 J74 J75 J76 J77 J78**

**J79 J80 J81 J82 J83 J84 J85 J86 J87 J88 J89 J90 J91**

**J92 J93 J94 J95 J96 J97 J98 J99 J100 J101 J102 J103 J104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**J1. January, 1795 By** [**Mary Robinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-robinson)

Pavement slipp’ry, people sneezing,

Lords in ermine, beggars freezing;

Titled gluttons dainties carving,

Genius in a garret starving.

Lofty mansions, warm and spacious;

Courtiers cringing and voracious;

Misers scarce the wretched heeding;

Gallant soldiers fighting, bleeding.

Wives who laugh at passive spouses;

Theatres, and meeting-houses;

Balls, where simp’ring misses languish;

Hospitals, and groans of anguish.

Arts and sciences bewailing;

Commerce drooping, credit failing;

Placemen mocking subjects loyal;

Separations, weddings royal.

Authors who can’t earn a dinner;

Many a subtle rogue a winner;

Fugitives for shelter seeking;

Misers hoarding, tradesmen breaking.

Taste and talents quite deserted;

All the laws of truth perverted;

Arrogance o’er merit soaring;

Merit silently deploring.

Ladies gambling night and morning;

Fools the works of genius scorning;

Ancient dames for girls mistaken,

Youthful damsels quite forsaken.

Some in luxury delighting;

More in talking than in fighting;

Lovers old, and beaux decrepid;

Lordlings empty and insipid.

Poets, painters, and musicians;

Lawyers, doctors, politicians:

Pamphlets, newspapers, and odes,

Seeking fame by diff’rent roads.

Gallant souls with empty purses;

Gen’rals only fit for nurses;

School-boys, smit with martial spirit,

Taking place of vet’ran merit.

Honest men who can’t get places,

Knaves who shew unblushing faces;

Ruin hasten’d, peace retarded;

Candor spurn’d, and art rewarded.

**J2. John Lennon By** [**Mary Jo Salter**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-jo-salter)

The music was already turning sad,

those fresh-faced voices singing in a round

the lie that time could set its needle back

and play from the beginning. Had you lived

to eighty, as you’d wished, who knows?—you might

have broken from the circle of that past

more ours than yours. Never even sure

which was the truest color for your hair

(it changed with each photographer), we claimed

you for ourselves; called you John and named

the day you left us (spun out like a reel—

the last broadcast to prove you’d lived at all)

an end to hope itself. It isn’t true,

and worse, does you no justice if we call

your death the death of anything but you.

II

It put you in the headlines once again:

years after you’d left the band, you joined

another—of those whose lives, in breaking, link

all memory with their end. The studio

of history can tamper with you now,

as if there’d always been a single track

chance traveled on, and your discordant voice

had led us to the final violence.

Yet like the times when I, a star-crossed fan,

had catalogued your favorite foods, your views

on monarchy and war, and gaily clipped

your quips and daily antics from the news,

I keep a loving record of your death.

All the evidence is in—of what,

and to what end, it’s hard to figure out,

riddles you might have beat into a song.

A younger face of yours, a cover shot,

peered from all the newsstands as if proof

of some noteworthy thing you’d newly done.

Mary Jo Salter, “John Lennon” *from Henry Purcell in Japan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). Copyright © 1984 by Mary Jo Salter. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Henry Purcell in Japan* (1984)

**J3. ['Joy of my life, full oft for loving you'] By** [**Edmund Spenser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edmund-spenser)

Joy of my life, full oft for loving you

I bless my lot, that was so lucky placed:

But then the more your own mishap I rue,

That are so much by so mean love embased.

For had the equal heavens so much you graced

In this as in the rest, ye might invent

Some heavenly wit, whose verse could have enchased

Your glorious name in golden monument.

But since ye deign’d so goodly to relent

To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,

That little that I am shall all be spent

In setting your immortal praises forth;

Whose lofty argument uplifting me

Shall lift you up unto an high degree.

**J4. July in Washington By** [**Robert Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-lowell)

The stiff spokes of this wheel

touch the sore spots of the earth.

On the Potomac, swan-white

power launches keep breasting the sulphurous wave.

Otters slide and dive and slick back their hair,

raccoons clean their meat in the creek.

On the circles, green statues ride like South American

liberators above the breeding vegetation—

prongs and spearheads of some equatorial

backland that will inherit the globe.

The elect, the elected . . . they come here bright as dimes,

and die dishevelled and soft.

We cannot name their names, or number their dates—

circle on circle, like rings on a tree—

but we wish the river had another shore,

some further range of delectable mountains,

distant hills powdered blue as a girl’s eyelid.

It seems the least little shove would land us there,

that only the slightest repugnance of our bodies

we no longer control could drag us back.

Robert Lowell, “July in Washington” from *Collected Poems.* Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. Source: *Collected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2003)

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**K27 K28 K29 K30 K31 K32 K33 K34 K35 K36 K37 K38 K39**

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**K66 K67 K68 K69 K70 K71 K72 K73 K74 K75 K76 K77 K78**

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| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**K1. A Kind of Meadow By** [**Carl Phillips**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-phillips)

—shored

by trees at its far ending,

as is the way in moral tales:

whether trees as trees actually,

for their shadow and what

inside of it

hides, threatens, calls to;

or as ever-wavering conscience,

cloaked now, and called Chorus;

or, between these, whatever

falls upon the rippling and measurable,

but none to measure it, thin

fabric of *this stands for.*

A kind of meadow, and then

trees—many, assembled, a wood

therefore. Through the wood

the worn

path, emblematic of Much

Trespass: *Halt. Who goes there?*

A kind of meadow, where it ends

begin trees, from whose twinning

of late light and the already underway

darkness you were expecting perhaps

the stag to step forward, to make

of its twelve-pointed antlers

the branching foreground to a backdrop

a thing attainable, any real end

to wanting, and that it is close, and that

it is likely, how will you not

this time catch hold of it: flashing,

flesh at once

lit and lightless, a way

out, the one dappled way, back—

Carl Phillips, “A Kind of Meadow” from *Pastoral.* Copyright © 2000 by Carl Phillips. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org). Source: *Pastoral* (Graywolf Press, 2000)

all branches;

or you wanted the usual

bird to break cover at that angle

at which wings catch entirely

what light’s left,

so that for once the bird isn’t miracle

at all, but the simplicity of patience

and a good hand assembling: first

the thin bones, now in careful

rows the feathers, like fretwork,

now the brush, for the laying-on

of sheen.... *As is always the way,*

you tell yourself, *in*

*poems*—Yes, always,

until you have gone there,

and gone there, “into the

field,” vowing *Only until*

*there’s nothing more*

*I want—*thinking it, wrongly,

**K2. Kindness By** [**Yusef Komunyakaa**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/yusef-komunyakaa)

For Carol Rigolot

When deeds splay before us

NOTES: Poetry Out Loud Participants: There was an earlier version of this poem on our site that began with the line, "I acknowledge my status as a stranger:". Judges should not discount a recitation that includes this line. This line does not belong in this poem and it was removed on November 13, 2013. The online version of the poem now correctly begins with the line, "When deeds splay before us". Unfortunately, this error also appears in the print anthology.

Yusef Komunyakaa, “Kindness” from *Poetry* 181, No. 5 (March 2003). Copyright © 2003 by Yusef Komunyakaa. Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Poetry* (March 2003).

precious as gold & unused chances

stripped from the whine-bone,

we know the moment kindheartedness

walks in. Each praise be

echoes us back as the years uncount

themselves, eating salt. Though blood

first shaped us on the climbing wheel,

the human mind lit by the savanna’s

ice star & thistle rose,

your knowing gaze enters a room

& opens the day,

saying we were made for fun.

Even the bedazzled brute knows

when sunlight falls through leaves

across honed knives on the table.

If we can see it push shadows

aside, growing closer, are we less

broken? A barometer, temperature

gauge, a ruler in minus fractions

& pedigrees, a thingmajig,

a probe with an all-seeing eye,

what do we need to measure

kindness, every unheld breath,

every unkind leapyear?

Sometimes a sober voice is enough

to calm the waters & drive away

the false witnesses, saying, Look,

here are the broken treaties Beauty

brought to us earthbound sentinels.

**K3. The Kiss By** [**Robert Graves**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-graves)

Are you shaken, are you stirred

By a whisper of love,

Is that Love? no, but Death,

A passion, a shout,

The deep in-breath,

The breath roaring out,

And once that is flown,

You must lie alone,

Without hope, without life,

Poor flesh, sad bone.

Spellbound to a word

Does Time cease to move,

Till her calm grey eye

Expands to a sky

And the clouds of her hair

Like storms go by?

Then the lips that you have kissed

Turn to frost and fire,

And a white-steaming mist

Obscures desire:

So back to their birth

Fade water, air, earth,

And the First Power moves

Over void and dearth.

**K4. kitchenette building By** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,

Gwendolyn Brooks, "kitchenette building" from *Selected Poems*, published by Harper & Row. Copyright © 1963 by Gwendolyn Brooks. Reprinted by consent of Brooks Permissions. Source: *Selected Poems* (Harper & Row, 1963)

Grayed in, and gray. “Dream” makes a giddy sound, not strong

Like “rent,” “feeding a wife,” “satisfying a man.”

But could a dream send up through onion fumes

Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes

And yesterday’s garbage ripening in the hall,

Flutter, or sing an aria**aria** an elaborate song for one voice with orchestral accompaniment, appearing most often in opera (“aria” means “air” in Italian). down these rooms

Even if we were willing to let it in,

Had time to warm it, keep it very clean,

Anticipate a message, let it begin?

We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!

Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,

We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.

**K5. Knucks By** [**Carl Sandburg**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-sandburg)

In Abraham Lincoln’s city,

Where they remember his lawyer’s shingle,

The place where they brought him

Wrapped in battle flags,

Wrapped in the smoke of memories

From Tallahassee to the Yukon,

The place now where the shaft of his tomb

Points white against the blue prairie dome,

In Abraham Lincoln’s city ... I saw knucks

In the window of Mister Fischman’s second-hand store

On Second Street.

I went in and asked, “How much?”

“Thirty cents apiece,” answered Mister Fischman.

And taking a box of new ones off a shelf

He filled anew the box in the showcase

And said incidentally, most casually

And incidentally:

“I sell a carload a month of these.”

I slipped my fingers into a set of knucks,

Cast-iron knucks molded in a foundry pattern,

And there came to me a set of thoughts like these:

Mister Fischman is for Abe and the “malice to none” stuff,

And the street car strikers and the strike-breakers,

And the sluggers, gunmen, detectives, policemen,

Judges, utility heads, newspapers, priests, lawyers,

They are all for Abe and the “malice to none” stuff.

I started for the door.

“Maybe you want a lighter pair,”

Came Mister Fischman’s voice.

I opened the door ... and the voice again:

“You are a funny customer.”

Wrapped in battle flags,

Wrapped in the smoke of memories,

This is the place they brought him,

This is Abraham Lincoln's home town.

Source: *Cornhuskers* (1918)

**K6. Kubla Khan By** [**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/samuel-taylor-coleridge)

Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round;

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e’er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momently was forced:

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst

Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher’s flail:

And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever

It flung up momently the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion

Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,

Then reached the caverns measureless to man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;

And ’mid this tumult Kubla heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure

Floated midway on the waves;

Where was heard the mingled measure

From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer

In a vision once I saw:

It was an Abyssinian maid

And on her dulcimer she played,

Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me

Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight ’twould win me,

That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!

And all who heard should see them there,

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise.

**POL L-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**L1**](#L1)[**L2**](#L2)[**L3**](#L3)[**L4**](#L4)[**L5**](#L5)[**L6**](#L6)[**L7**](#L7)[**L8**](#L8)[**L9**](#L9)[**L10**](#L10)[**L11**](#L11)[**L12**](#L12)[**L13**](#L13)

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[**L27**](#L27)[**L28**](#L28)[**L29**](#L29)[**L30**](#L30)[**L31**](#L31)[**L32**](#L32)[**L33**](#L33)[**L34**](#L34)[**L35**](#L35)[**L36**](#L36)[**L37**](#L37)[**L38**](#L38)[**L39**](#L39)

[**L40**](#L40)[**L41**](#L41)[**L42**](#L42)[**L43**](#L43)[**L44**](#L44)[**L45**](#L45)[**L46**](#L46)[**L47**](#L47)[**L48**](#L48)[**L49**](#L49)[**L50**](#L50)[**L51**](#L51)[**L52**](#L52)

[**L53**](#L53)[**L54**](#L54)[**L55**](#L55)[**L56**](#L56)[**L57**](#I57)[**L58**](#L58)[**L59**](#L59)[**L60**](#L60) **L61 L62 L63 L64 L65**

**L66 L67 L68 L69 L70 L71 L72 L73 L74 L75 L76 L77 L78**

**L79 L80 L81 L82 L83 L84 L85 L86 L87 L88 L89 L90 L91**

**L92 L93 L94 L95 L96 L97 L98 L99 L100 L101 L102 L103 L104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**L1. La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad By** [**John Keats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-keats)

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge**sedge** Grasslike or rushlike plant that grows in wet areas. has withered from the lake,

And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

So haggard**haggard** Wild looking and so woe-begone**begone** To happen, occur, transpire ?

The squirrel’s granary is full,

And the harvest’s done.

I see a lily on thy brow,

With anguish moist and fever-dew,

And on thy cheeks a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads**meads** Meadow ,

Full beautiful—a faery’s child,

Her hair was long, her foot was light,

And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,

And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;

She looked at me as she did love,

And made sweet moan**made sweet moan** Compare "virgin-choir to make delicious moan" from *Ode to Psyche* (30), written between April 21 and 30, 1819. Noted by John Barnard in *John Keats: The Complete Poems* (Penguin, 2003).

I set her on my pacing steed,

And nothing else saw all day long,

For sidelong would she bend, and sing

A faery’s song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,

And honey wild, and manna-dew**honey wild, and manna-dew** Echoes manna in the Bible, first described in Exodus, 16:14-21, 31. The Israelites eat the manna, a food miraculously supplied in the wilderness after the dew has lifted, in the morning: “The house of Israel called it manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” (Exodus 16:31, NRSV).,

And sure in language strange she said—

‘I love thee true’.

She took me to her Elfin grot**Elfin grot** An elf’s grotto ,

And there she wept and sighed full sore,

And there I shut her wild wild eyes

With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,

And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—

The latest dream I ever dreamt

On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,

Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;

They cried—‘La Belle Dame sans Merci**La Belle Dame sans Merci** This phrase—and the poem’s title—is from Alain Chartier’s courtly French ballad, “La Belle Dame sans Merci” (1424). Keats wrote the poem in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, April 21, 1819.

Thee hath**Thee hath** The version of this poem has “Thee hath” (see *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. H. E. Rollins, 1958); though other versions of this poem reads “Hath thee” in thrall!’

I saw their starved lips in the gloam**gloam** Twilight; Keats coined the word from “gloaming”,

With horrid warning gapèd wide,

And I awoke and found me here,

On the cold hill’s side.

And this is why I sojourn**sojourn** To stay or visit temporarily here,

Alone and palely loitering,

Though the sedge is withered from the lake,

And no birds sing.

NOTES: *POL participants and judges*: in this poem's third-to-last stanza, recitations that include “Hath thee in thrall!” or “Thee hath in thrall!” are both acceptable. Source: *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics, 1988)

**L2. La Figlia che Piange By** [**T. S. Eliot**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/t-s-eliot)

*O quam te memorem virgo ...*

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—

Lean on a garden urn—

Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—

Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—

Fling them to the ground and turn

With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:

But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,

So I would have had her stand and grieve,

So he would have left

As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,

As the mind deserts the body it has used.

I should find

Some way incomparably light and deft,

Some way we both should understand,

Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather

Compelled my imagination many days,

Many days and many hours:

Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.

And I wonder how they should have been together!

I should have lost a gesture and a pose.

Sometimes these cogitations still amaze

The troubled midnight and the noon’s repose.

Source: *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917)

**L3. The Lake Isle of Innisfree By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,

And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;

There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,

And evening full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,

I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

**L4. The Lamb By** [**Linda Gregg**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-gregg)

It was a picture I had after the war.

A bombed English church. I was too young

to know the word *English* or *war*,

but I knew the picture.

The ruined city still seemed noble.

The cathedral with its roof blown off

was not less godly. The church was the same

plus rain and sky. Birds flew in and out

of the holes God’s fist made in the walls.

All our desire for love or children

is treated like rags by the enemy.

I knew so much and sang anyway.

Like a bird who will sing until

it is brought down. When they take

away the trees, the child picks up a stick

and says, this is a tree, this the house

and the family. As we might. Through a door

of what had been a house, into the field

of rubble, walks a single lamb, tilting

its head, curious, unafraid, hungry.

Linda Gregg, “The Lamb” from *Chosen By the Lion.* Copyright © 1994 by Linda Gregg. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org). Source: *Chosen by the Lion* (Graywolf Press, 1994)

**L5. Land By** [**Agha Shahid Ali**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/agha-shahid-ali)

For Christopher Merrill

Swear by the olive in the God-kissed land—

There is no sugar in the promised land.

Why must the bars turn neon now when, Love,

I’m already drunk in your capitalist land?

If home is found on both sides of the globe,

home is of course here—and always a missed land.

The hour’s come to redeem the pledge (not wholly?)

in Fate’s "Long years ago we made a tryst" land.

Clearly, these men were here only to destroy,

a mosque now the dust of a prejudiced land.

Will the Doomsayers die, bitten with envy,

when springtime returns to our dismissed land?

The prisons fill with the cries of children.

Then how do you subsist, how do you persist, Land?

“Is my love nothing for I’ve borne no children?”

I’m with you, Sappho, in that anarchist land.

A hurricane is born when the wings flutter ...

Where will the butterfly, on my wrist, land?

You made me wait for one who wasn’t even there

though summer had finished in that tourist land.

Do the blind hold temples close to their eyes

when we steal their gods for our atheist land?

Abandoned bride, Night throws down her jewels

so Rome—on our descent—is an amethyst land.

At the moment the heart turns terrorist,

are Shahid’s arms broken, O Promised Land?

Agha Shahid Ali, “Land” from *Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals.* Originally published in *Poetry* (July 2001). Copyright © 2001 by Agha Shahid Ali. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Poetry* (July 2001).

**L6. The Larger By** [**Joanie Mackowski**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joanie-mackowski)

I don't know how it happened, but I fell—

and I was immense, one dislocated arm

wedged between two buildings. I felt some ribs

had broken, perhaps a broken neck, too;

I couldn't speak. My dress caught bunched

about my thighs, and where my glasses shattered

there'd spread something like a seacoast, or maybe

it was a port. Where my hair tangled with power lines

I felt a hot puddle of blood.

I must have passed out,

but when I woke, a crew of about fifty

was building a winding stairway beside my breast

and buttressing a platform on my sternum.

I heard, as through cotton, the noise of hammers,

circular saws, laughter, and some radio

droning songs about love. Out the corner

of one eye (I could open one eye a bit) I saw

my pocketbook, its contents scattered, my lipstick's

toppled silo glinting out of reach.

And then, waving a tiny flashlight, a man

entered my ear. I felt his boots sloshing

the blood trickling there. He never came out.

So some went looking, with flares, dogs, dynamite

even: they burst my middle ear and found

my skull, its cavern crammed with dark matter

like a cross between a fungus and a cloud.

They never found his body, though. And they never

found or tried to find an explanation,

I think, for me; they didn't seem to need one.

Even now my legs subdue that dangerous

sea, the water bright enough to cut

the skin, where a lighthouse, perched on the tip

of my great toe, each eight seconds rolls

another flawless pearl across the waves.

It keeps most ships from wrecking against my feet.

On clear days, people stand beside the light;

they watch the waves' blue heads slip up and down

and scan for landmarks on the facing shore.

Source: *Poetry* (October 2003).

**L7. Larkinesque By** [**Michael Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-ryan)

Reading in the paper a summary

of a five-year psychological study

that shows those perceived as most beautiful

are treated differently,

I think *they could have just asked me,*

remembering a kind of pudgy kid

and late puberty, the bloody noses

and wisecracks because I wore glasses,

though we all know by now how awful it is

for the busty starlet no one takes seriously,

the loveliest women I’ve lunched with

lamenting the opacity of the body,

they can never trust a man’s interest

even when he seems not just out for sex

(eyes focus on me above rim of wineglass),

and who *would* want to live like this?

And what does beauty do to a man?—

Don Juan, Casanova, Lord Byron—

those fiery eyes and steel jawlines

can front a furnace of self-loathing,

all those breathless women rushing to him

while hubby’s at the office or ball game,

primed to be consumed by his beauty

while he stands next to it, watching.

So maybe the looks we’re dealt are best.

It’s only common sense that happiness

depends on some bearable deprivation

or defect, and who knows what conflicts

great beauty could have caused,

what cruelties one might have suffered

from those now friends, what unmanageable

possibilities smiling at every small turn?

So if I get up to draw a tumbler

of ordinary tap water and think *what if this were*

*nectar dripping from delicious burning fingers,*

will all I’ve missed knock me senseless?

No. Of course not. It won’t.

Michael Ryan, “Larkinesque” from *New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 2004 by Michael Ryan. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (February 1984).

**L8. The Last Laugh By** [**Wilfred Owen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wilfred-owen)

‘O Jesus Christ! I’m hit,’ he said; and died.

Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed,

The Bullets chirped—In vain, vain, vain!

Machine-guns chuckled—Tut-tut! Tut-tut!

And the Big Gun guffawed.

Another sighed,—‘O Mother,—mother,—Dad!’

Then smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.

And the lofty Shrapnel-cloud

Leisurely gestured,—Fool!

And the splinters spat, and tittered.

‘My Love!’ one moaned. Love-languid seemed his mood,

Till slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud.

And the Bayonets’ long teeth grinned;

Rabbles of Shells hooted and groaned;

And the Gas hissed.

NOTES: *POL Participants*: several changes to punctuation have been changed, and the line "And the falling splinters tittered" was changed to "And the splinters spat, and tittered", in June 2014.

Source: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen, edited by Jon Stallworthy* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)

**L9. Late Echo By** [**John Ashbery**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-ashbery)

Alone with our madness and favorite flower

We see that there really is nothing left to write about.

Or rather, it is necessary to write about the same old things

In the same way, repeating the same things over and over

For love to continue and be gradually different.

Beehives and ants have to be re-examined eternally

And the color of the day put in

Hundreds of times and varied from summer to winter

For it to get slowed down to the pace of an authentic

Saraband and huddle there, alive and resting.

Only then can the chronic inattention

Of our lives drape itself around us, conciliatory

And with one eye on those long tan plush shadows

That speak so deeply into our unprepared knowledge

Of ourselves, the talking engines of our day.

John Ashbery, "Late Echo" from *As We Know*. Copyright © 1979 by John Ashbery. Reprinted with the permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc. for the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (July 1979).

**L10. Late Summer By** [**Jennifer Grotz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jennifer-grotz)

Before the moths have even appeared

to orbit around them, the streetlamps come on,

a long row of them glowing uselessly

along the ring of garden that circles the city center,

where your steps count down the dulling of daylight.

At your feet, a bee crawls in small circles like a toy unwinding.

Summer specializes in time, slows it down almost to dream.

And the noisy day goes so quiet you can hear

the bedraggled man who visits each trash receptacle

mutter in disbelief: *Everything in the world is being thrown away!*

Summer lingers, but it’s about ending. It’s about how things

redden and ripen and burst and come down. It’s when

city workers cut down trees, demolishing

one limb at a time, spilling the crumbs

of twigs and leaves all over the tablecloth of street.

*Sunglasses!* the man softly exclaims

while beside him blooms a large gray rose of pigeons

huddled around a dropped piece of bread.

Jennifer Grotz, “Late Summer” from *The Needle*. Copyright © 2011 by Jennifer Grotz. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Source: *The Needle* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011)

**L11. Layabout By** [**John Brehm**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-brehm)

Do nothing and everything will be done,

that's what Mr. Lao Tzu said, who walked

around talking 2,500 years ago and

now his books practically grow on trees

they're so popular and if he were

alive today beautiful women would

rush up to him like waves lapping

at the shores of his wisdom.

That's the way it is, I guess: humbling.

But if I could just unclench my fists,

empty out my eyes, turn my mind into

a prayer flag for the wind to play with,

we could be brothers, him the older one

who's seen and not done it all and me

still unlearning, both of us slung low

in our hammocks, our hats tipped

forwards, hands folded neatly,

like bamboo huts, above our hearts.

Source: *Poetry* (June 2001).

**L12. The Layers By** [**Stanley Kunitz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stanley-kunitz)

I have walked through many lives,

some of them my own,

and I am not who I was,

though some principle of being

abides, from which I struggle

not to stray.

When I look behind,

as I am compelled to look

before I can gather strength

to proceed on my journey,

I see the milestones dwindling

toward the horizon

and the slow fires trailing

from the abandoned camp-sites,

over which scavenger angels

wheel on heavy wings.

Oh, I have made myself a tribe

out of my true affections,

and my tribe is scattered!

How shall the heart be reconciled

to its feast of losses?

In a rising wind

the manic dust of my friends,

those who fell along the way,

bitterly stings my face.

Yet I turn, I turn,

exulting somewhat,

with my will intact to go

wherever I need to go,

and every stone on the road

precious to me.

In my darkest night,

when the moon was covered

and I roamed through wreckage,

a nimbus-clouded voice

directed me:

“Live in the layers,

not on the litter.”

Though I lack the art

to decipher it,

no doubt the next chapter

in my book of transformations

is already written.

I am not done with my changes.

Stanley Kunitz, "The Layers" from *The Collected Poems of Stanley Kunitz*. Copyright © 1978 by Stanley Kunitz. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Stanley Kunitz* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2002)

**L13. Lazy By** [**David Yezzi**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-yezzi)

I don’t say things I don’t want to say

or chew the fat with fat cats just because.

With favor-givers who want favors back,

I tend to pass on going for the ask.

I send, instead, a series of regrets,

slip the winding snares that people lay.

The unruffledness I feel as a result,

the lank repose, the psychic field of rye

swayed in wavy air, is my respite

among the shivaree of clanging egos

on the packed commuter train again tonight.

Sapping and demeaning—it takes a lot

to get from bed to work and back to bed.

I barely go an hour before I’m caught

wincing at the way that woman laughs

or he keeps clucking at his magazine.

And my annoyance fills me with annoyance.

It’s laziness that lets them seem unreal

—a radio with in-and-out reception

blaring like hell when it finally hits a station.

The song that’s on is not the one I’d hoped for,

so I wait distractedly for what comes next.

**L14. “Hope” is the thing with feathers - (314) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -

And on the strangest Sea -

Yet - never - in Extremity,

It asked a crumb - of me.

Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson Edited by R. W. Franklin* (Harvard University Press, 1999)

**L15. “Oh could I raise the darken’d veil” By** [**Nathaniel Hawthorne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/nathaniel-hawthorne)

Oh could I raise the darken’d veil,

Which hides my future life from me,

Could unborn ages slowly sail,

Before my view—and could I see

My every action painted there,

To cast one look I would not dare.

There poverty and grief might stand,

And dark Despair’s corroding hand,

Would make me seek the lonely tomb

To slumber in its endless gloom.

Then let me never cast a look,

Within Fate’s fix’d mysterious book.

Source: *The Spectator* (1820)

**L16. Le Maudit By** [**Richard Aldington**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-aldington)

Women’s tears are but water;

The tears of men are blood.

He sits alone in the firelight

And on either side drifts by

Sleep, like a torrent whirling,

Profound, wrinkled and dumb.

Circuitously, stealthily,

Dawn occupies the city;

As if the seasons knew of his grief

Spring has suddenly changed into snow

Disaster and sorrow

Have made him their pet;

He cannot escape their accursed embraces.

For all his dodgings

Memory will lacerate him.

What good does it do to wander

Nights hours through city streets?

Only that in poor places

He can be with common men

And receive their unspoken

Instinctive sympathy.

What has life done for him?

He stands alone in the darkness

Like a sentry never relieved,

Looking over a barren space,

Awaiting the tardy finish.

from *Coterie*, 1920

**L17. Learning to Love America By** [**Shirley Geok-Lin Lim**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/shirley-geok-lin-lim)

because it has no pure products

because the Pacific Ocean sweeps along the coastline

because the water of the ocean is cold

and because land is better than ocean

because I say we rather than they

because I live in California

I have eaten fresh artichokes

and jacaranda bloom in April and May

because my senses have caught up with my body

my breath with the air it swallows

my hunger with my mouth

because I walk barefoot in my house

because I have nursed my son at my breast

because he is a strong American boy

because I have seen his eyes redden when he is asked who he is

because he answers I don’t know

because to have a son is to have a country

because my son will bury me here

because countries are in our blood and we bleed them

because it is late and too late to change my mind

because it is time.

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, “Learning to love America” from *What the Fortune Teller Didn’t Say.* Copyright © 1998 by Shirley Geok-lin Lim. Reprinted with the permission of West End Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Source: *What the Fortune Teller Didn’t Say* (West End Press, 1998)

**L18. Learning to swim By** [**Bob Hicok**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/bob-hicok)

At forty-eight, to be given water,

which is most of the world, given life

in water, which is most of me, given ease,

which is most of what I lack, here, where walls

don’t part to my hands, is to be born

as of three weeks ago. Taking nothing

from you, mother, or you, sky, or you,

mountain, that you wouldn’t take

if offered by the sea, any sea, or river,

any river, or the pool, beside which

a woman sits who would save me

if I needed saving, in a red suit, as if flame

is the color of emergency, as I do,

need saving, from solid things,

most of all, their dissolve.

**L19. Leda By** [**H. D.**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/h-d)

Where the slow river

meets the tide,

a red swan lifts red wings

and darker beak,

and underneath the purple down

of his soft breast

uncurls his coral feet.

Through the deep purple

of the dying heat

of sun and mist,

the level ray of sun-beam

has caressed

the lily with dark breast,

and flecked with richer gold

its golden crest.

Where the slow lifting

of the tide,

floats into the river

and slowly drifts

among the reeds,

and lifts the yellow flags,

he floats

where tide and river meet.

Ah kingly kiss—

no more regret

nor old deep memories

to mar the bliss;

where the low sedge is thick,

the gold day-lily

outspreads and rests

beneath soft fluttering

of red swan wings

and the warm quivering

of the red swan's breast.

**L20. Leda and the Swan By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still

Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed

By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,

He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push

The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?

And how can body, laid in that white rush,

But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there

The broken wall, the burning roof and tower

And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,

So mastered by the brute blood of the air,

Did she put on his knowledge with his power

Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

W. B. Yeats, “Leda and the Swan” from *The Poems of W. B. Yeats: A New Edition,* edited by Richard J. Finneran. Copyright 1933 by Macmillan Publishing Company, renewed 1961 by Georgie Yeats. Reprinted with the permission of A. P. Watt, Ltd. on behalf of Michael Yeats. Source: *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats* (Macmillan, 1989)

**L21. The Legend By** [**Garrett Hongo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/garrett-hongo)

In Chicago, it is snowing softly

and a man has just done his wash for the week.

He steps into the twilight of early evening,

carrying a wrinkled shopping bag

full of neatly folded clothes,

and, for a moment, enjoys

the feel of warm laundry and crinkled paper,

flannellike against his gloveless hands.

There’s a Rembrandt glow on his face,

a triangle of orange in the hollow of his cheek

as a last flash of sunset

blazes the storefronts and lit windows of the street.

He is Asian, Thai or Vietnamese,

and very skinny, dressed as one of the poor

in rumpled suit pants and a plaid mackinaw,

dingy and too large.

He negotiates the slick of ice

on the sidewalk by his car,

opens the Fairlane’s back door,

leans to place the laundry in,

and turns, for an instant,

toward the flurry of footsteps

and cries of pedestrians

as a boy—that’s all he was—

backs from the corner package store

shooting a pistol, firing it,

once, at the dumbfounded man

who falls forward,

grabbing at his chest.

A few sounds escape from his mouth,

a babbling no one understands

as people surround him

bewildered at his speech.

The noises he makes are nothing to them.

The boy has gone, lost

in the light array of foot traffic

dappling the snow with fresh prints.

Tonight, I read about Descartes’

grand courage to doubt everything

except his own miraculous existence

and I feel so distinct

from the wounded man lying on the concrete

I am ashamed.

Let the night sky cover him as he dies.

Let the weaver girl cross the bridge of heaven

and take up his cold hands.

IN MEMORY OF JAY KASHIWAMURA

NOTES: POL Participants: The reciting of the footnote is optional.

Garret Hongo, “The Legend” from *The River of Heaven* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987). Copyright © 1988 by Garret Hongo. Used by permission of the Darhansoff Verrill Feldman Literary Agents. Source: *The River of Heaven* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988)

**L22. Lenten Song By** [**Phillis Levin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/phillis-levin)

That the dead are real to us

Cannot be denied,

That the living are more real

When they are dead

Terrifies, that the dead can rise

As the living do is possible

Is possible to surmise,

But all the stars cannot come near

All we meet in an eye.

Flee from me, fear, as soot

Flies in a breeze, do not burn

Or settle in my sight,

I’ve tasted you long enough,

Let me savor

Something otherwise.

Who wakes beside me now

Suits my soul, so I turn to words

Only to say he changes

Into his robe, rustles a page,

He raises the lid of the piano

To release what’s born in its cage.

If   words come back

To say they compromise

Or swear again they have died,

There’s no news in that, I reply,

But a music without notes

These notes comprise, still

As spring beneath us lies,

Already something otherwise.

**L23. Let Evening Come By** [**Jane Kenyon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-kenyon)

Let the light of late afternoon

shine through chinks in the barn, moving

up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing

as a woman takes up her needles

and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned

in long grass. Let the stars appear

and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.

Let the wind die down. Let the shed

go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop

in the oats, to air in the lung

let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don’t

be afraid. God does not leave us

comfortless, so let evening come.

Jane Kenyon, “Let Evening Come” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 2005 by the Estate of Jane Kenyon. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *Let Evening Come: Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1990)

**L24. Let It Be Forgotten By** [**Sara Teasdale**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sara-teasdale)

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,

Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,

Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,

Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten

Long and long ago,

As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall

In a long forgotten snow.

Sara Teasdale, “Let It Be Forgotten” from *Flame and Shadow* (New York: Macmillan, 1924). Copyright 1924 by Sara Teasdale. Reprinted with the permission of the Office for Resources, Wellesley College.

**L25. Let the Light Enter By** [**Frances Ellen Watkins Harper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frances-ellen-watkins-harper)

*The Dying Words of Goethe*

“Light! more light! the shadows deepen,

And my life is ebbing low,

Throw the windows widely open:

Light! more light! before I go.

“Softly let the balmy sunshine

Play around my dying bed,

E’er the dimly lighted valley

I with lonely feet must tread.

“Light! more light! for Death is weaving

Shadows ‘round my waning sight,

And I fain would gaze upon him

Through a stream of earthly light.”

Not for greater gifts of genius;

Not for thoughts more grandly bright,

All the dying poet whispers

Is a prayer for light, more light.

Heeds he not the gathered laurels,

Fading slowly from his sight;

All the poet’s aspirations

Centre in that prayer for light.

Gracious Saviour, when life’s day-dreams

Melt and vanish from the sight,

May our dim and longing vision

Then be blessed with light, more light.

**L26. Let Us Consider By** [**Russell Edson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/russell-edson)

Let us consider the farmer who makes his straw hat his   
sweetheart; or the old woman who makes a floor lamp her son;   
or the young woman who has set herself the task of scraping   
her shadow off a wall....   
  
Let us consider the old woman who wore smoked cows’   
tongues for shoes and walked a meadow gathering cow chips   
in her apron; or a mirror grown dark with age that was given   
to a blind man who spent his nights looking into it, which   
saddened his mother, that her son should be so lost in   
vanity....   
  
Let us consider the man who fried roses for his dinner,   
whose kitchen smelled like a burning rose garden; or the man   
who disguised himself as a moth and ate his overcoat, and for   
dessert served himself a chilled fedora....

Russell Edson, "Let Us Consider" from *The Rooster's Wife*. Copyright © 2005 by Russell Edson. Reprinted by permission of BOA Editions, Ltd.

Source: *The Rooster’s Wife* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2005)

**L27. A Letter to her Husband, absent upon Publick employment By** [**Anne Bradstreet**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-bradstreet)

My head, my heart, mine Eyes, my life, nay more,

My joy, my Magazine of earthly store,

If two be one, as surely thou and I,

How stayest thou there, whilst I at *Ipswich* lye?

So many steps, head from the heart to sever

If but a neck, soon should we be together:

I like the earth this season, mourn in black,

My Sun is gone so far in’s Zodiack,

Whom whilst I ’joy’d, nor storms, nor frosts I felt,

His warmth such frigid colds did cause to melt.

My chilled limbs now nummed lye forlorn;

Return, return sweet *Sol* from *Capricorn*;

In this dead time, alas, what can I more

Then view those fruits which through thy heat I bore?

Which sweet contentment yield me for a space,

True living Pictures of their Fathers face.

O strange effect! now thou art *Southward* gone,

I weary grow, the tedious day so long;

But when thou *Northward* to me shalt return,

I wish my Sun may never set, but burn

Within the Cancer of my glowing breast,

The welcome house of him my dearest guest.

Where ever, ever stay, and go not thence,

Till natures sad decree shall call thee hence;

Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,

I here, thou there, yet both but one.

**L28. Life By** [**Edith Wharton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edith-wharton)

Life, like a marble block, is given to all,

A blank, inchoate mass of years and days,

Whence one with ardent chisel swift essays

Some shape of strength or symmetry to call;

One shatters it in bits to mend a wall;

One in a craftier hand the chisel lays,

And one, to wake the mirth in Lesbia’s gaze,

Carves it apace in toys fantastical.

But least is he who, with enchanted eyes

Filled with high visions of fair shapes to be,

Muses which god he shall immortalize

In the proud Parian’s perpetuity,

Till twilight warns him from the punctual skies

That the night cometh wherein none shall see.

**L29. Life Cycle of Common Man By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

Roughly figured, this man of moderate habits,

This average consumer of the middle class,

Consumed in the course of his average life span

Just under half a million cigarettes,

Four thousand fifths of gin and about

A quarter as much vermouth; he drank

Maybe a hundred thousand cups of coffee,

And counting his parents’ share it cost

Something like half a million dollars

To put him through life. How many beasts

Died to provide him with meat, belt and shoes

Cannot be certainly said.

But anyhow,

It is in this way that a man travels through time,

Leaving behind him a lengthening trail

Of empty bottles and bones, of broken shoes,

Frayed collars and worn out or outgrown

Diapers and dinnerjackets, silk ties and slickers.

Given the energy and security thus achieved,

He did . . . ? What? The usual things, of course,

The eating, dreaming, drinking and begetting,

And he worked for the money which was to pay

For the eating, et cetera, which were necessary

If he were to go on working for the money, et cetera,

But chiefly he talked. As the bottles and bones

Accumulated behind him, the words proceeded

Steadily from the front of his face as he

Advanced into the silence and made it verbal.

Who can tally the tale of his words? A lifetime

Would barely suffice for their repetition;

If you merely printed all his commas the result

Would be a very large volume, and the number of times

He said “thank you” or “very little sugar, please,”

Would stagger the imagination. There were also

Witticisms, platitudes, and statements beginning

“It seems to me” or “As I always say.”

Consider the courage in all that, and behold the man

Walking into deep silence, with the ectoplastic

Cartoon’s balloon of speech proceeding

Steadily out of the front of his face, the words

Borne along on the breath which is his spirit

Telling the numberless tale of his untold Word

Which makes the world his apple, and forces him to eat.

Howard Nemerov, "Life Cycle of Common Man" from *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov*. Copyright © 1977 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov* (The University of Chicago Press, 1977)

**L30. Life in a Love By** [**Robert Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-browning)

Escape me?

Never—

Beloved!

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,

While the one eludes, must the other pursue.

My life is a fault at last, I fear:

It seems too much like a fate, indeed!

Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,

To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And, baffled, get up and begin again,—

So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.

While, look but once from your farthest bound

At me so deep in the dust and dark,

No sooner the old hope goes to ground

Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,

I shape me—

Ever

Removed!

**L31. Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing By** [**James Weldon Johnson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-weldon-johnson)

Lift ev’ry voice and sing,

Till earth and heaven ring,

Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;

Let our rejoicing rise

High as the list’ning skies,

Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,

Bitter the chast’ning rod,

Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;

Yet with a steady beat,

Have not our weary feet

Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,

Out from the gloomy past,

Till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,

God of our silent tears,

Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;

Thou who has by Thy might,

Led us into the light,

Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,

Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;

Shadowed beneath Thy hand,

May we forever stand.

True to our God,

True to our native land.

**L32. The Light the Dead See By** [**Frank Stanford**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frank-stanford)

There are many people who come back

After the doctor has smoothed the sheet

Around their body

And left the room to make his call.

They die but they live.

They are called the dead who lived through their deaths,

And among my people

They are considered wise and honest.

They float out of their bodies

And light on the ceiling like a moth,

Watching the efforts of everyone around them.

The voices and the images of the living

Fade away.

A roar sucks them under

The wheels of a darkness without pain.

Off in the distance

There is someone

Like a signalman swinging a lantern.

The light grows, a white flower.

It becomes very intense, like music.

They see the faces of those they loved,

The truly dead who speak kindly.

They see their father sitting in a field.

The harvest is over and his cane chair is mended.

There is a towel around his neck,

The odor of bay rum.

Then they see their mother

Standing behind him with a pair of shears.

The wind is blowing.

She is cutting his hair.

The dead have told these stories

To the living.

Frank Stanford, "The Light the Dead See" from *The Light the Dead See: Selected Poems of Frank Stanford*. Copyright © 1991 by Frank Stanford. Reprinted by permission of University of Arkansas Press.

Source: *The Light the Dead See: Selected Poems of Frank Stanford* (University of Arkansas Press, 1991)

**L33. Light Shining out of Darkness By** [**William Cowper**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-cowper)

1

God moves in a mysterious way,

His wonders to perform;

He plants his footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.

2

Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never-failing skill,

He treasures up his bright designs,

And works his sov'reign will.

3

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head.

4

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,

But trust him for his grace;

Behind a frowning providence

He hides a smiling face.

5

His purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding ev'ry hour;

The bud may have a bitter taste,

But sweet will be the flow'r.

6

Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan his work in vain;

God is his own interpreter,

And he will make it plain.

**L34. Like Rousseau By** [**Amiri Baraka**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amiri-baraka)

She stands beside me, stands away,

the vague indifference

of her dreams. Dreaming, to go on,

and go on there, like animals fleeing

the rise of the earth. But standing

intangible, my lust a worked anger

a sweating close covering, for the crudely salty soul.

Then back off, and where you go? Box of words

and pictures. Steel balloons tied to our mouths.

The room fills up, and the house. Street tilts.

City slides, and buildings slide into the river.

What is there left, to destroy? That is not close,

or closer. Leaning away in the angle of language.

Pumping and pumping, all our eyes criss cross

and flash. It is the lovers pulling down empty structures.

They wait and touch and watch their dreams

eat the morning.

Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), “Like Rousseau” from *Poetry* (December 1964). Copyright © 1964 by Amiri Baraka. Reprinted with the permission of Sll/Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (December 1964).

**L35. Lincoln By** [**Vachel Lindsay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/vachel-lindsay)

Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all,

That which is gendered in the wilderness

From lonely prairies and God’s tenderness.

Imperial soul, star of a weedy stream,

Born where the ghosts of buffaloes still dream,

Whose spirit hoof-beats storm above his grave,

Above that breast of earth and prairie-fire—

Fire that freed the slave.

Source: *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems* (1913)

**L36. Lines Written in Early Spring By** [**William Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-wordsworth)

I heard a thousand blended notes,

While in a grove I sate reclined,

In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts

Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link

The human soul that through me ran;

And much it grieved my heart to think

What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,

The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;

And ’tis my faith that every flower

Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,

Their thoughts I cannot measure:—

But the least motion which they made

It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,

To catch the breezy air;

And I must think, do all I can,

That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,

If such be Nature’s holy plan,

Have I not reason to lament

What man has made of man?

Source: *The Longman Anthology of Poetry* (Pearson, 2006)

**L37. Linnaeus in Lapland By** [**Lorine Niedecker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorine-niedecker)

Nothing worth noting

except an Andromeda

with quadrangular shoots—

the boots

of the people

wet inside: they must swim

to church thru the floods

or be taxed—the blossoms

from the bosoms

of the leaves

\*

Fog-thick morning—

I see only

where I now walk. I carry

my clarity

with me.

\*

Hear

where her snow-grave is

the *You*

*ah you*

of mourning doves

Lorine Niedecker, “Linnaeus in Lapland” from *Collected Works*, edited by Jenny Penberthy, Copyright © 2002 Regents of the University of California. Published by University of California Press.

Source: *Collected Works* (University of California Press, 2004)

**L38. Lions By** [**Sandra McPherson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sandra-mcpherson)

Lions don’t need your help. In the Serengeti,

For instance, one thousand like the very rich

Hold sway over more than Connecticut. The mane

Of the lion, like the hooked jaw of the male salmon,

Acts as a shield for defense and is the gift

Of sexual selection. His eyes are fathomless amber.

The lion is the most social of the big cats.

Pride members are affectionate among themselves.

They rub cheeks when they meet. They rest

And hunt together. And cubs suckle indiscriminately.

But strangers or members of a neighboring pride are not

Usually accepted. If a pride male meets a strange female

He may greet her in a friendly fashion

And even mate with her

But the pride females will drive her off.

Male lions, usually depicted as indolent freeloaders

Who let the lionesses do all the hunting, are not mere

Parasites. They maintain the integrity of the territory.

Lions eat communally but completely lack table manners.

Indeed, lions give the impression that their evolution

Toward a social existence is incomplete—that cooperation

In achieving a task does not yet include

The equal division of the spoils.

More bad news: lions are not good parents.

But prowess, that they have. Their courage comes

From being built, like an automobile,

For power. A visible lion is usually a safe lion,

But one should never feel safe

Because almost always there is something one can’t see.

Given protection and power

A lion does not need to be clever.

Now, lions are not the most likable kind of animal

Unless you are a certain type of person,

That is, not necessarily leonine in the sense of manly

Or ferocious, but one who wouldn’t mind resting twenty

Of twenty-four hours a day and who is not beyond

Stealing someone else’s kill

About half the time.

Lions are not my favorite kind of animal,

Gazelles seem nicer,

A zebra has his own sort of appealing pathos,

Especially when he is sure prey for the lion.

Lions have little to offer the spirit.

If we made of ourselves parks and placed the lion

In the constituent he most resembled

He would be in our blood.

Sandra McPherson, “Lions” from *Elegies for the Hot Season* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970). Copyright © 1970 by Sandra McPherson. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Elegies for the Hot Season* (Ecco Press, 1970)

**L39. The Listeners By** [**Walter de La Mare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walter-de-la-mare)

‘Is there anybody there?’ said the Traveller,

Knocking on the moonlit door;

And his horse in the silence champed the grasses

Of the forest’s ferny floor:

And a bird flew up out of the turret,

Above the Traveller’s head:

And he smote upon the door again a second time;

‘Is there anybody there?’ he said.

But no one descended to the Traveller;

No head from the leaf-fringed sill

Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,

Where he stood perplexed and still.

But only a host of phantom listeners

That dwelt in the lone house then

Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight

To that voice from the world of men:

Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,

That goes down to the empty hall,

Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken

By the lonely Traveller’s call.

And he felt in his heart their strangeness,

Their stillness answering his cry,

While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,

’Neath the starred and leafy sky;

For he suddenly smote on the door, even

Louder, and lifted his head:—

‘Tell them I came, and no one answered,

That I kept my word,’ he said.

Never the least stir made the listeners,

Though every word he spake

Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house

From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,

And the sound of iron on stone,

And how the silence surged softly backward,

When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Walter de la Mare* (1979)

**L40. Listening By** [**Jean Valentine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jean-valentine)

My whole life I was swimming listening

beside the daylight world like a dolphin beside a boat

—no, swallowed up, young, like Jonah,

sitting like Jonah in the red room

behind that curving smile from the other side

but kept, not spat out,

kept, for love,

not for anything I did, or had,

I had nothing but our inside-

outside smile-skin ...

my paper and pen ...

but I was made for this: listening:

“Lightness wouldn't last if it wasn't used up on the lyre.”

Jean Valentine, “Listening” from *Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems, 1965-2003.* Copyright © 2004 by Jean Valentine. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems 1965-2003* (Wesleyan University Press, 2004)

**L41. Little Father By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

I buried my father

in the sky.

Since then, the birds

clean and comb him every morning

and pull the blanket up to his chin

every night.

I buried my father underground.

Since then, my ladders

only climb down,

and all the earth has become a house

whose rooms are the hours, whose doors

stand open at evening, receiving

guest after guest.

Sometimes I see past them

to Tl41he tables spread for a wedding feast.

I buried my father in my heart.

Now he grows in me, my strange son,

my little root who won’t drink milk,

little pale foot sunk in unheard-of night,

little clock spring newly wet

in the fire, little grape, parent to the future

wine, a son the fruit of his own son,

little father I ransom with my life.

Li-Young Lee, “Little Father” from *Book of My Nights.* Copyright © 2001 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org). Source: *Book of My Nights* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2003)

**L42. Little Girl By** [**Tami Haaland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tami-haaland)

She’s with Grandma in front

of Grandma’s house, backed

by a willow tree, gladiola and roses.

Who did she ever want

to please? But Grandma

seems half-pleased and annoyed.

No doubt Mother frowns

behind the lens, wants

to straighten this sassy face.

Maybe laughs, too.

Little girl with her mouth wide,

tongue out, yelling

at the camera. See her little

white purse full of treasure,

her white sandals?

She has things to do,

you can tell. Places to explore

beyond the frame,

and these women picking flowers

and taking pictures.

Why won’t they let her go?

“Little Girl” from *When We Wake in the Night*, by Tami Haaland, ©2012 WordTech Editions, Cincinnati, Ohio. Poem reprinted by permission of Tami Haaland and the publisher.

**L43. The Loaf By** [**Paul Muldoon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-muldoon)

When I put my finger to the hole they've cut for a dimmer switch

in a wall of plaster stiffened with horsehair

it seems I've scratched a two-hundred-year-old itch

*with a pink and a pink and a pinkie-pick.*

When I put my ear to the hole I'm suddenly aware

of spades and shovels turning up the gain

all the way from Raritan to the Delaware

*with a clink and a clink and a clinky-click.*

When I put my nose to the hole I smell the floodplain

of the canal after a hurricane

and the spots of green grass where thousands of Irish have lain

*with a stink and a stink and a stinky-stick.*

When I put my eye to the hole I see one holding horse dung to the rain

in the hope, indeed, indeed,

of washing out a few whole ears of grain

*with a wink and a wink and a winkie-wick.*

And when I do at last succeed

in putting my mouth to the horsehair-fringed niche

I can taste the small loaf of bread he baked from that whole seed

*with a link and a link and a linky-lick.*

Source: *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2002)

**L44. A Locked House By** [**W. D. Snodgrass**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-d-snodgrass)

As we drove back, crossing the hill,

The house still

Hidden in the trees, I always thought—

A fool’s fear—that it might have caught

Fire, someone could have broken in.

As if things must have been

Too good here. Still, we always found

It locked tight, safe and sound.

I mentioned that, once, as a joke;

No doubt we spoke

Of the absurdity

To fear some dour god’s jealousy

Of our good fortune. From the farm

Next door, our neighbors saw no harm

Came to the things we cared for here.

What did we have to fear?

Maybe I should have thought: all

Such things rot, fall—

Barns, houses, furniture.

We two are stronger than we were

Apart; we’ve grown

Together. Everything we own

Can burn; we know what counts—some such

Idea. We said as much.

We’d watched friends driven to betray;

Felt that love drained away

Some self they need.

We’d said love, like a growth, can feed

On hate we turn in and disguise;

We warned ourselves. That you might despise

Me—hate all we both loved best—

None of us ever guessed.

The house still stands, locked, as it stood

Untouched a good

Two years after you went.

Some things passed in the settlement;

Some things slipped away. Enough’s left

That I come back sometimes. The theft

And vandalism were our own.

Maybe we should have known.

W.D. Snodgrass, “A Locked House” from *Selected Poems, 1957-1987* (New York: Soho Press, 1987). Copyright © 1987 by W.D. Snodgrass. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Selected Poems 1957-1987* (1987)

**L45. London By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

I wander thro' each charter'd street,

Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.

And mark in every face I meet

Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,

In every Infants cry of fear,

In every voice: in every ban,

The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry

Every blackning Church appalls,

And the hapless Soldiers sigh

Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear

How the youthful Harlots curse

Blasts the new-born Infants tear

And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

**L46. Looking into History By** [**Richard Wilbur**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-wilbur)

**I.**

Five soldiers fixed by Mathew Brady’s eye

Stand in a land subdued beyond belief.

Belief might lend them life again. I try

Like orphaned Hamlet working up his grief

To see my spellbound fathers in these men

Who, breathless in their amber atmosphere,

Show but the postures men affected then

And the hermit faces of a finished year.

The guns and gear and all are strange until

Beyond the tents I glimpse a file of trees

Verging a road that struggles up a hill.

They’re sycamores.

The long-abated breeze

Flares in those boughs I know, and hauls the sound

Of guns and a great forest in distress.

Fathers, I know my cause, and we are bound

Beyond that hill to fight at Wilderness.

**II.**

But trick your eyes with Birnam Wood, or think

How fire-cast shadows of the bankside trees

Rode on the back of Simois to sink

In the wide waters. Reflect how history’s

Changes are like the sea’s, which mauls and mulls

Its salvage of the world in shifty waves,

Shrouding in evergreen the oldest hulls

And yielding views of its confounded graves

To the new moon, the sun, or any eye

That in its shallow shoreward version sees

The pebbles charging with a deathless cry

And carageen memorials of trees.

**III.**

Now, old man of the sea,

I start to understand:

The will will find no stillness

Back in a stilled land.

The dead give no command

And shall not find their voice

Till they be mustered by

Some present fatal choice.

Let me now rejoice

In all impostures, take

The shape of lion or leopard,

Boar, or watery snake,

Or like the comber break,

Yet in the end stand fast

And by some fervent fraud

Father the waiting past,

Resembling at the last

The self-established tree

That draws all waters toward

Its live formality.

Richard Wilbur, “Looking into History” from *Collected Poems 1943-2004.* Copyright © 2004 by Richard Wilbur. Reprinted with the permission of Harcourt, Inc. This material may not be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *Collected Poems 1943-2004* (2004)

**L47. The Lost Land By** [**Eavan Boland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eavan-boland)

I have two daughters.

They are all I ever wanted from the earth.

Or almost all.

I also wanted one piece of ground:

One city trapped by hills. One urban river.

An island in its element.

So I could say *mine. My own.*

And mean it.

Now they are grown up and far away

and memory itself

has become an emigrant,

wandering in a place

where love dissembles itself as landscape:

Where the hills

are the colours of a child's eyes,

where my children are distances, horizons:

At night,

on the edge of sleep,

I can see the shore of Dublin Bay.

Its rocky sweep and its granite pier.

Is this, I say

how they must have seen it,

backing out on the mailboat at twilight,

shadows falling

on everything they had to leave?

And would love forever?

And then

I imagine myself

at the landward rail of that boat

searching for the last sight of a hand.

I see myself

on the underworld side of that water,

the darkness coming in fast, saying

all the names I know for a lost land:

*Ireland. Absence. Daughter.*

“The Lost Land” from THE LOST LAND by Eavan Boland. Copyright ©1998 by Eavan Boland. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Source: *The Lost Land* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1998)

**L48. Love Armed By** [**Aphra Behn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/aphra-behn)

Song from Abdelazar

Love in Fantastic Triumph sat,

Whilst Bleeding Hearts around him flowed,

For whom Fresh pains he did Create,

And strange Tyrannic power he showed;

From thy Bright Eyes he took his fire,

Which round about, in sport he hurled;

But ’twas from mine he took desire

Enough to undo the Amorous World.

From me he took his sighs and tears,

From thee his Pride and Cruelty;

From me his Languishments and Fears,

And every Killing Dart from thee;

Thus thou and I, the God have armed,

And set him up a Deity;

But my poor Heart alone is harmed,

Whilst thine the Victor is, and free.

**L49. Love (III) By** [**George Herbert**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-herbert)

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back**Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back** compare Song of Solomon 5:6. "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had with drawen himself" (Authorized Version, 1611). "Bade" is past tense of "bid," and in Herbert's time was pronounced like "bad."

Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack**slack** hesitant. Compare Herbert's use of the word in his poem *The Church-Porch*: "Who keeps no guard upon himself, is slack, / And rots to nothing at the next great thaw." (*Perirrhanterium* 24, lines 139-140)

From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,

If I lacked any thing.**If I lacked any thing.** echoes a version of Psalm 23, which begins: "The Lorde is my shepehearde: therfore can I lack nothing" (Psalms in the Version of the Great Bible, 1539)

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:

Love said, You shall be he.

I the unkind**unkind** undutiful., ungrateful? Ah my dear**Ah my dear** Hopkins adopts this phrase in "The Windhover". As Norman H. MacKenzie notes, "Hopkins as an undergraduate was strongly attracted to George Herbert, an anglican divine and poet, and traces of that influence can be found throughout his writings".,

I cannot look on thee.

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred**marred**to mar: "to do fatal or destructive bodily harm" (*OED*, 4a) them: let my shame

Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

My dear, then I will serve**I will serve** compare Luke 12:37. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he commeth, shall find watching: Verily, I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit downe to meat, and will come foorth and serve them." (Authorized Version, 1611) Compare also to the second stanza of Herbert's poem "Faith": "Hungry I was, and had no meat: / I did conceit a most delicious feast; / I had it straight, and did as truly eat, / As ever did a welcome guest.".

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat: **You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:** compare Luke 12:37. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he commeth, shall find watching: Verily, I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit downe to meat, and will come foorth and serve them." (Authorized Version, 1611) Compare also to the second stanza of Herbert's poem "Faith": "Hungry I was, and had no meat: / I did conceit a most delicious feast; / I had it straight, and did as truly eat, / As ever did a welcome guest."

So I did sit and eat.**So I did sit and eat.** compare Luke 12:37. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he commeth, shall find watching: Verily, I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit downe to meat, and will come foorth and serve them." (Authorized Version, 1611) Compare also to the second stanza of Herbert's poem "Faith": "Hungry I was, and had no meat: / I did conceit a most delicious feast; / I had it straight, and did as truly eat, / As ever did a welcome guest."

Source: *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1978)

**L50. Love Lives Beyond the Tomb By** [**John Clare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-clare)

Love lives beyond

The tomb, the earth, which fades like dew—

I love the fond,

The faithful, and the true

Love lives in sleep,

'Tis happiness of healthy dreams

Eve’s dews may weep,

But love delightful seems.

'Tis seen in flowers,

And in the even's pearly dew

On earth's green hours,

And in the heaven's eternal blue.

‘Tis heard in spring

When light and sunbeams, warm and kind,

On angels’ wing

Bring love and music to the wind.

And where is voice,

So young, so beautiful and sweet

As nature’s choice,

Where Spring and lovers meet?

Love lives beyond

The tomb, the earth, the flowers, and dew.

I love the fond,

The faithful, young and true.

**L51. "Love of My Flesh, Living Death" By** [**Lorna Dee Cervantes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorna-dee-cervantes)

after García Lorca

Once I wasn’t always so plain.

I was strewn feathers on a cross

of dune, an expanse of ocean

at my feet, garlands of gulls.

Sirens and gulls. They couldn’t tame you.

You know as well as they: to be

a dove is to bear the falcon

at your breast, your nights, your seas.

My fear is simple, heart-faced

above a flare of etchings, a lineage

in letters, my sudden stare. It’s you.

*It’s you!* sang the heart upon its mantel

pelvis. Blush of my breath, catch

of my see—beautiful bird—It’s you.

"'Love of My Flesh, Living Death'" by Lorna Dee Cervantes, from *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger*. Copyright © 1991 by Lorna Dee Cervantes, Used with permission of Arte Público Press, [www.arte.uh.edu](http://www.arte.uh.edu/) Source: *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger* (Arte Público Press, 1991)

**L52. Love’s Philosophy By** [**Percy Bysshe Shelley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/percy-bysshe-shelley)

The fountains mingle with the river

And the rivers with the ocean,

The winds of heaven mix for ever

With a sweet emotion;

Nothing in the world is single;

All things by a law divine

In one spirit meet and mingle.

Why not I with thine?—

See the mountains kiss high heaven

And the waves clasp one another;

No sister-flower would be forgiven

If it disdained its brother;

And the sunlight clasps the earth

And the moonbeams kiss the sea:

What is all this sweet work worth

If thou kiss not me?

**L53. Love Song By** [**Dorothy Parker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dorothy-parker)

My own dear love, he is strong and bold

And he cares not what comes after.

His words ring sweet as a chime of gold,

And his eyes are lit with laughter.

He is jubilant as a flag unfurled—

Oh, a girl, she’d not forget him.

My own dear love, he is all my world,—

And I wish I’d never met him.

My love, he’s mad, and my love, he’s fleet,

And a wild young wood-thing bore him!

The ways are fair to his roaming feet,

And the skies are sunlit for him.

As sharply sweet to my heart he seems

As the fragrance of acacia.

My own dear love, he is all my dreams,—

And I wish he were in Asia.

My love runs by like a day in June,

And he makes no friends of sorrows.

He’ll tread his galloping rigadoon

In the pathway of the morrows.

He’ll live his days where the sunbeams start,

Nor could storm or wind uproot him.

My own dear love, he is all my heart,—

And I wish somebody’d shoot him.

Dorothy Parker, “Love Song” from *The Portable Dorothy Parker,* edited by Brendan Gill. Copyright 1926 and renewed 1954 by Dorothy Parker. Reprinted with the permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. Source: *The Portable Dorothy Parker* (Penguin Books, 2006)

**L54. Lovers' Infiniteness By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

If yet I have not all thy love,

Dear, I shall never have it all;

I cannot breathe one other sigh, to move,

Nor can intreat one other tear to fall;

And all my treasure, which should purchase thee—

Sighs, tears, and oaths, and letters—I have spent.

Yet no more can be due to me,

Than at the bargain made was meant;

If then thy gift of love were partial,

That some to me, some should to others fall,

Dear, I shall never have thee all.

Or if then thou gavest me all,

All was but all, which thou hadst then;

But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall

New love created be, by other men,

Which have their stocks entire, and can in tears,

In sighs, in oaths, and letters, outbid me,

This new love may beget new fears,

For this love was not vow'd by thee.

And yet it was, thy gift being general;

The ground, thy heart, is mine; whatever shall

Grow there, dear, I should have it all.

Yet I would not have all yet,

He that hath all can have no more;

And since my love doth every day admit

New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards in store;

Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,

If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it;

Love's riddles are, that though thy heart depart,

It stays at home, and thou with losing savest it;

But we will have a way more liberal,

Than changing hearts, to join them; so we shall

Be one, and one another's all.

**L55. Lucinda Matlock By** [**Edgar Lee Masters**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-lee-masters)

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,

And played snap-out at Winchester.

One time we changed partners,

Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,

And then I found Davis.

We were married and lived together for seventy years,

Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,

Eight of whom we lost

Ere I had reached the age of sixty.

I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,

I made the garden, and for holiday

Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,

And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,

And many a flower and medicinal weed —

Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.

At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,

And passed to a sweet repose.

What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,

Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?

Degenerate sons and daughters,

Life is too strong for you —

It takes life to love Life.

**L56. The Luggage By** [**Constance Urdang**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/constance-urdang)

Travel is a vanishing act

Only to those who are left behind.

What the traveler knows

Is that he accompanies himself,

Unwieldy baggage that can’t be checked,

Stolen, or lost, or mistaken.

So one took, past outposts of empire,

“Calmly as if in the British Museum,”

Not only her Victorian skirts,

Starched shirtwaists, and umbrella, but her faith

In the civilizing mission of women,

Her backaches and insomnia, her innocent valor;

Another, friend of witch-doctors,

Living on native chop,

Trading tobacco and hooks for fish and fetishes,

Heralded her astonishing arrival

Under shivering stars

By calling, “It’s only me!” A third,

Intent on savage customs, and to demonstrate

That a woman could travel as easily as a man,

Carried a handkerchief damp with wifely tears

And only once permitted a tribal chieftain

To stroke her long, golden hair.

**L57. Luke Havergal By** [**Edwin Arlington Robinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edwin-arlington-robinson)

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,

There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,

And in the twilight wait for what will come.

The leaves will whisper there of her, and some,

Like flying words, will strike you as they fall;

But go, and if you listen she will call.

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal—

Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies

To rift the fiery night that’s in your eyes;

But there, where western glooms are gathering,

The dark will end the dark, if anything:

God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,

And hell is more than half of paradise.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—

In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,

Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss

That flames upon your forehead with a glow

That blinds you to the way that you must go.

Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,

Bitter, but one that faith may never miss.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this—

To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,

There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.

Go, for the winds are tearing them away,—

Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,

Nor any more to feel them as they fall;

But go, and if you trust her she will call.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal—

Luke Havergal.

Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

**L58. Luna Moth By** [**Carl Phillips**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-phillips)

No eye that sees could fail to remark you:

like any leaf the rain leaves fixed to and

flat against the barn’s gray shingle. But

what leaf, this time of year, is so pale,

the pale of leaves when they’ve lost just

enough green to become the green that *means*

loss and more loss, approaching? Give up

the flesh enough times, and whatever is lost

gets forgotten: that was the thought that I

woke to, those words in my head. I rose,

I did not dress, I left no particular body

sleeping and, stepping into the hour, I saw

you, strange sign, at once transparent and

impossible to entirely see through. and how

still: the still of being unmoved, and then

the still of no longer being able to be

moved. If I think of a heart, his, as I’ve

found it.... If I think of, increasingly, my

own.... If I look at you now, as from above,

and see the diva when she is caught in mid-

triumph, arms half-raised, the body as if

set at last free of the green sheath that has—

how many nights?—held her, it is not

without remembering another I once saw:

like you, except that something, a bird, some

wild and necessary hunger, had gotten to it;

and like the diva, but now broken, splayed

and torn, the green torn piecemeal from her.

I remember the hands, and—how small they

seemed, bringing the small ripped thing to me.

Carl Phillips, “Luna Moth” from *From the Devotions.* Copyright © 1998 by Carl Phillips. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *From the Devotions* (Graywolf Press, 1998)

**L59. Lunar Baedeker By** [**Mina Loy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mina-loy)

A silver Lucifer**Lunar Baedeker...Lucifer** A Baedeker is a series name of popular guidebooks. Another modern poem with “Baedeker” in the title is T. S. Eliot’s “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar” (1919). Lucifer is the former angel name for Satan, which has been used to name the morning star, that is the planet Venus

serves

cocaine in cornucopia

To some somnambulists

of adolescent thighs

draped

in satirical draperies

Peris**Peris** “In Persian myth, an elf or fairy, male or female, represented as a descendant of fallen angels, excluded from Paradise till their penance is accomplished” (*Century Dictionary*) in livery**in livery** Dressed for their job

prepare

Lethe**Lethe** River of forgetfulness in Hades

for posthumous parvenues**parvenues** Those who have recently come into wealth

Delirious Avenues

lit

with the chandelier souls

of infusoria**infusoria** Class of protozoa; “so called because found in infusions of decaying animal or vegetable matter” (*OED*)

from Pharoah’s tombstones

lead

to mercurial doomsdays**doomsdays** The end of the world or Judgment Day, usually in the singular

Odious oasis

in furrowed phosphorous**phosphorous** “Phosphorous” (with a capital “P”) is Venus, the morning star, archaically referred to as Lucifer, mentioned in the first line of this poem.

the eye-white sky-light

white-light district**white-light district** Possible alternative to red-light district. The term appears in Theodore Dreiser's book *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916).

of lunar lusts

Stellectric**Stellectric** A word formed from “stellar” (star) and “electric” signs

“Wing shows on Starway”

“Zodiac carrousel”

Cyclones

of ecstatic dust

and ashes whirl

crusaders

from hallucinatory citadels

of shattered glass

into evacuate craters

A flock of dreams

browse on Necropolis**Necropolis** Literally: a city of corpses

From the shores

of oval oceans

in the oxidized Orient

Onyx-eyed Odalisques**Odalisques** “Female slaves or concubines in an Eastern harem” (*OED*)

and ornithologists

observe

the flight

of Eros**Eros** God of Love in Greek mythology; also, the name of an asteroid, discovered in 1898 obsolete

And “Immortality”

mildews ...

in the museums of the moon

“Nocturnal cyclops”

“Crystal concubine”

Pocked with personification

the fossil virgin of the skies

waxes and wanes

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Source: *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy. Reprinted by permission of Roger Conover, Literary Executor.* (1996)

**L60. Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy’s Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota By** [**James Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-wright)

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly,

Asleep on the black trunk,

Blowing like a leaf in green shadow.

Down the ravine behind the empty house,

The cowbells follow one another

Into the distances of the afternoon.

To my right,

In a field of sunlight between two pines,

The droppings of last year’s horses

Blaze up into golden stones.

I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on.

A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.

I have wasted my life.

James Wright, “Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy’s Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota” from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose.* Copyright � 1990 by James Wright. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.  
  
Source: *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose* (1990)

**POL M-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**M1**](#M1)[**M2**](#M2)[**M3**](#M3)[**M4**](#M4)[**M5**](#M5)[**M6**](#M6)[**M7**](#M7)[**M8**](#M8)[**M9**](#M9)[**M10**](#M10)[**M11**](#M11)[**M12**](#M12)[**M13**](#M13)

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**M53 M54 M55 M56 M57 M58 M59 M60 M61 M62 M63 M64 M65**

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**M79 M80 M81 M82 M83 M84 M85 M86 M87 M88 M89 M90 M91**

**M92 M93 M94 M95 M96 M97 M98 M99 M100 M101 M102 M103 M104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**M1. Machines By** [**Michael Donaghy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-donaghy)

Dearest, note how these two are alike:

This harpsicord pavane by Purcell

And the racer’s twelve-speed bike.

The machinery of grace is always simple.

This chrome trapezoid, one wheel connected

To another of concentric gears,

Which Ptolemy dreamt of and Schwinn perfected,

Is gone. The cyclist, not the cycle, steers.

And in the playing, Purcell’s chords are played away.

So this talk, or touch if I were there,

Should work its effortless gadgetry of love,

Like Dante’s heaven, and melt into the air.

If it doesn’t, of course, I’ve fallen. So much is chance,

So much agility, desire, and feverish care,

As bicyclists and harpsicordists prove

Who only by moving can balance,

Only by balancing move.

Michael Donaghy, “Machines” from *Dances Learned Last Night: Poems 1975-1995*. Copyright © 2000 by Michael Donaghy. Reprinted with the permission of Macmillan. Source: *Poetry* (September 1988).

**M2. Mad Song By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

The wild winds weep,

And the night is a-cold;

Come hither, Sleep,

And my griefs infold:

But lo! the morning peeps

Over the eastern steeps,

And the rustling birds of dawn

The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault

Of paved heaven,

With sorrow fraught

My notes are driven:

They strike the ear of night,

Make weep the eyes of day;

They make mad the roaring winds,

And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud

With howling woe,

After night I do croud,

And with night will go;

I turn my back to the east,

From whence comforts have increas'd;

For light doth seize my brain

With frantic pain.

**M3. Magnitudes By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

Earth’s Wrath at our assaults is slow to come

But relentless when it does. It has to do

With catastrophic change, and with the limit

At which one order more of Magnitude

Will bring us to a qualitative change

And disasters drastically different

From those we daily have to know about.

As with the speed of light, where speed itself

Becomes a limit and an absolute;

As with the splitting of the atom

And a little later of the nucleus;

As with the millions rising into billions—

The piker’s kind in terms of money, yes,

But a million2 in terms of time and space

As the universe grew vast while the earth

Our habitat diminished to the size

Of a billiard ball, both relative

To the cosmos and to the numbers of ourselves,

The doubling numbers, the earth could accommodate.

We stand now in the place and limit of time

Where hardest knowledge is turning into dream,

And nightmares still contained in sleeping dark

Seem on the point of bringing into day

The sweating panic that starts the sleeper up.

One or another nightmare may come true,

And what to do then? What in the world to do?

Howard Nemerov, “Magnitudes” from *Trying Conclusions: New and Selected Poems, 1961-1991*. Copyright © 1992 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted by permission of Margaret Nemerov. source: *Trying Conclusions: New and Selected Poems 1961-1991* (1992)

**M4. The Maid’s Lament By** [**Walter Savage Landor**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walter-savage-landor)

I loved him not; and yet, now he is gone,

I feel I am alone.

I check’d him while he spoke; yet, could he speak,

Alas! I would not check.

For reasons not to love him once I sought,

And wearied all my thought

To vex myself and him: I now would give

My love could he but live

Who lately lived for me, and, when he found

’Twas vain, in holy ground

He hid his face amid the shades of death.

I waste for him my breath

Who wasted his for me! but mine returns,

And this lorn bosom burns

With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,

And waking me to weep

Tears that had melted his soft heart: for years

Wept he as bitter tears.

*Merciful God!* such was his latest prayer,

*These may she never share.*

Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold,

Than daisies in the mould,

Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,

His name and life’s brief date.

Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe’er you be,

And oh! pray too for me!

**M5. Make a Law So That the Spine Remembers Wings By** [**Larry Levis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/larry-levis)

So that the truant boy may go steady with the State,

So that in his spine a memory of wings

Will make his shoulders tense & bend

Like a thing already flown

When the bracelets of another school of love

Are fastened to his wrists,

Make a law that doesn’t have to wait

Long until someone comes along to break it.

So that in jail he will have the time to read

How the king was beheaded & the hawk that rode

The king’s wrist died of a common cold,

And learn that chivalry persists,

And what first felt like an insult to the flesh

Was the blank ‘o’ of love.

Put the fun back into punishment.

Make a law that loves the one who breaks it.

So that no empty court will make a  judge recall

Ice fishing on some overcast bay,

Shivering in the cold beside his father, it ought

To be an interesting law,

The kind of thing that no one can obey,

A law that whispers “Break me.”

Let the crows roost & caw.

A good judge is an example to us all.

So that the patrolman can still whistle

“The Yellow Rose of Texas” through his teeth

And even show some faint gesture of respect

While he cuffs the suspect,

Not ungently, & says things like *ok,*

*That’s it*

, *relax*,

*It’ll go better for you if you don’t resist*

,

*Lean back just a little*

, *against me.*

**M6.The Maldive Shark By** [**Herman Melville**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/herman-melville)

About the Shark, phlegmatical one,

Pale sot of the Maldive sea,

The sleek little pilot-fish, azure and slim,

How alert in attendance be.

From his saw-pit of mouth, from his charnel of maw

They have nothing of harm to dread,

But liquidly glide on his ghastly flank

Or before his Gorgonian head;

Or lurk in the port of serrated teeth

In white triple tiers of glittering gates,

And there find a haven when peril’s abroad,

An asylum in jaws of the Fates!

They are friends; and friendly they guide him to prey,

Yet never partake of the treat—

Eyes and brains to the dotard lethargic and dull,

Pale ravener of horrible meat.

**M7. A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road Unknown By** [**Walt Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walt-whitman)

A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown,

A route through a heavy wood with muffled steps in the darkness,

Our army foil’d with loss severe, and the sullen remnant retreating,

Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-lighted building,

We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-lighted building,

’Tis a large old church at the crossing roads, now an impromptu hospital

Entering but for a minute I see a sight beyond all the pictures and poems ever made,

Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles and lamps,

And by one great pitchy torch stationary with wild red flame and clouds of smoke,

By these, crowds, groups of forms vaguely I see on the floor, some in the pews laid down,

At my feet more distinctly a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the abdomen,)

I stanch the blood temporarily, (the youngster’s face is white as a lily,)

Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o’er the scene fain to absorb it all,

Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity, some of them dead,

Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether, the odor of blood,

The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms, the yard outside also fill’d,

Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some in the death-spasm sweating,

An occasional scream or cry, the doctor’s shouted orders or calls,

The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of the torches,

These I resume as I chant, I see again the forms, I smell the odor,

Then hear outside the orders given, Fall in, my men, fall in;

But first I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open, a half-smile gives he me,

Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the darkness,

Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks,

The unknown road still marching.

Source: *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959)

**M8. May You Always be the Darling of Fortune By** [**Jane Miller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-miller)

March 10th and the snow flees like eloping brides

into rain. The imperceptible change begins

out of an old rage and glistens, chaste, with its new

craving, spring. May your desire always overcome

your need; your story that you have to tell,

enchanting, mutable, may it fill the world

you believe: a sunny view, flowers lunging

from the sill, the quilt, the chair, all things

fill with you and empty and fill. And hurry, because

now as I tire of my studied abandon, counting

the days, I’m sad. Yet I trust your absence, in everything

wholly evident: the rain in the white basin, and I

vigilant.

Jane Miller, "May You Always be the Darling of Fortune" from *Many Junipers, Heartbeats*, published by Copper Beech Press. Copyright © 1980 by Jane Miller. Reprinted by permission of Jane Miller.  
  
Source: *Many Junipers, Heartbeats* (Copper Beech Press, 1980)

**M9. Mechanism By** [**A. R. Ammons**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-r-ammons)

Honor a going thing, goldfinch, corporation, tree,

morality: any working order,

animate or inanimate: it

has managed directed balance,

the incoming and outgoing energies are working right,

some energy left to the mechanism,

some ash, enough energy held

to maintain the order in repair,

assure further consumption of entropy,

expending energy to strengthen order:

honor the persisting reactor,

the container of change, the moderator: the yellow

bird flashes black wing-bars

in the new-leaving wild cherry bushes by the bay,

startles the hawk with beauty,

flitting to a branch where

flash vanishes into stillness,

hawk addled by the sudden loss of sight:

honor the chemistries, platelets, hemoglobin kinetics,

the light-sensitive iris, the enzymic intricacies

of control,

the gastric transformations, seed

dissolved to acrid liquors, synthesized into

chirp, vitreous humor, knowledge,

blood compulsion, instinct: honor the

unique genes,

molecules that reproduce themselves, divide into

sets, the nucleic grain transmitted

in slow change through ages of rising and falling form,

some cells set aside for the special work, mind

or perception rising into orders of courtship,

territorial rights, mind rising

from the physical chemistries

to guarantee that genes will be exchanged, male

and female met, the satisfactions cloaking a deeper

racial satisfaction:

heat kept by a feathered skin:

the living alembic, body heat maintained (bunsen

burner under the flask)

so the chemistries can proceed, reaction rates

interdependent, self-adjusting, with optimum

efficiency—the vessel firm, the flame

staying: isolated, contained reactions! the precise and

necessary worked out of random, reproducible,

the handiwork redeemed from chance, while the

goldfinch, unconscious of the billion operations

that stay its form, flashes, chirping (not a

great songster) in the bay cherry bushes wild of leaf. ﻿

A. R. Ammons, “Mechanism” from *Collected Poems: 1951-1971*. Copyright © 1960 by A. R. Ammons. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.﻿

Source: *Collected Poems: 1951-1971﻿* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1972)

**M10. Meditation at Lagunitas By** [**Robert Hass**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-hass)

All the new thinking is about loss.

In this it resembles all the old thinking.

The idea, for example, that each particular erases

the luminous clarity of a general idea. That the clown-

faced woodpecker probing the dead sculpted trunk

of that black birch is, by his presence,

some tragic falling off from a first world

of undivided light. Or the other notion that,

because there is in this world no one thing

to which the bramble of *blackberry* corresponds,

a word is elegy to what it signifies.

We talked about it late last night and in the voice

of my friend, there was a thin wire of grief, a tone

almost querulous. After a while I understood that,

talking this way, everything dissolves: *justice,*

*pine, hair, woman, you*

and *I*. There was a woman

I made love to and I remembered how, holding

her small shoulders in my hands sometimes,

I felt a violent wonder at her presence

like a thirst for salt, for my childhood river

with its island willows, silly music from the pleasure boat,

muddy places where we caught the little orange-silver fish

called *pumpkinseed*. It hardly had to do with her.

Longing, we say, because desire is full

of endless distances. I must have been the same to her.

But I remember so much, the way her hands dismantled bread,

the thing her father said that hurt her, what

she dreamed. There are moments when the body is as numinous

as words, days that are the good flesh continuing.

Such tenderness, those afternoons and evenings,

saying *blackberry, blackberry, blackberry*.

Robert Hass, “Meditation at Lagunitas” from *Praise.* Copyright © 1979 by Robert Hass. Reprinted with the permission of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

**M11. Meditation on a Grapefruit By** [**Craig Arnold**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/craig-arnold)

To wake when all is possible

before the agitations of the day

have gripped you

To come to the kitchen

and peel a little basketball

for breakfast

To tear the husk

like cotton padding a cloud of oil

misting out of its pinprick pores

clean and sharp as pepper

To ease

each pale pink section out of its case

so carefully without breaking

a single pearly cell

To slide each piece

into a cold blue china bowl

the juice pooling until the whole

fruit is divided from its skin

and only then to eat

so sweet

a discipline

precisely pointless a devout

involvement of the hands and senses

a pause a little emptiness

each year harder to live within

each year harder to live without

**M12. Medusa By** [**Louise Bogan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louise-bogan)

I had come to the house, in a cave of trees,

Facing a sheer sky.

Everything moved,—a bell hung ready to strike,

Sun and reflection wheeled by.

When the bare eyes were before me

And the hissing hair,

Held up at a window, seen through a door.

The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead

Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now.

Nothing will ever stir.

The end will never brighten it more than this,

Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall, and will not fall,

And the tipped bell make no sound.

The grass will always be growing for hay

Deep on the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow

Under the great balanced day,

My eyes on the yellow dust, that was lifting in the wind,

And does not drift away.

Source: *Body of this Death: Poems* (1923)

**M13. Meeting at Night By** [**Robert Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-browning)

**I**

The grey sea and the long black land;

And the yellow half-moon large and low;

And the startled little waves that leap

In fiery ringlets from their sleep,

As I gain the cove with pushing prow,

And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

**II**

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;

Three fields to cross till a farm appears;

A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch

And blue spurt of a lighted match,

And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,

Than the two hearts beating each to each!

**M14. Memory As a Hearing Aid By** [**Tony Hoagland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tony-hoagland)

Somewhere, someone is asking a question,

and I stand squinting at the classroom

with one hand cupped behind my ear,

trying to figure out where that voice is coming from.

I might be already an old man,

attempting to recall the night

his hearing got misplaced,

front-row-center at a battle of the bands,

where a lot of leather-clad, second-rate musicians,

amped up to dinosaur proportions,

test drove their equipment through our ears.

Each time the drummer threw a tantrum,

the guitarist whirled and sprayed us with machine-gun riffs,

as if they wished that they could knock us

quite literally dead.

We called that fun in 1970,

when we weren’t sure our lives were worth surviving.

I’m here to tell you that they were,

and many of us did, despite ourselves,

though the road from there to here

is paved with dead brain cells,

parents shocked to silence,

and squad cars painting the whole neighborhood

the quaking tint and texture of red jelly.

Friends, we should have postmarks on our foreheads

to show where we have been;

we should have pointed ears, or polka-dotted skin

to show what we were thinking

when we hot-rodded over God’s front lawn,

and Death kept blinking.

But here I stand, an average-looking man

staring at a room

where someone blond in braids

with a beautiful belief in answers

is still asking questions.

Through the silence in my dead ear,

I can almost hear the future whisper

to the past: it says that this is not a test

and everybody passes.

Tony Hoagland, “Memory As a Hearing Aid” from *Donkey Gospel*. Copyright © 1998 by Tony Hoagland. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *Donkey Gospel* (1998)

**M15. Mending Wall By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,

And spills the upper boulders in the sun;

And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

The work of hunters is another thing:

I have come after them and made repair

Where they have left not one stone on a stone,

But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,

To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,

No one has seen them made or heard them made,

But at spring mending-time we find them there.

I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;

And on a day we meet to walk the line

And set the wall between us once again.

We keep the wall between us as we go.

To each the boulders that have fallen to each.

And some are loaves and some so nearly balls

We have to use a spell to make them balance:

"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"

We wear our fingers rough with handling them.

Oh, just another kind of out-door game,

One on a side. It comes to little more:

There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across

And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder

If I could put a notion in his head:

*"Why* do they make good neighbours? Isn't it

Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,

And to whom I was like to give offence.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather

He said it for himself. I see him there

Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top

In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.

He moves in darkness as it seems to me,

Not of woods only and the shade of trees.

He will not go behind his father's saying,

And he likes having thought of it so well

He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

**M16. The Metal and the Flower By** [**P. K. Page**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/p-k-page)

Intractable between them grows

a garden of barbed wire and roses.

Burning briars like flames devour

their too innocent attire.

Dare they meet, the blackened wire

tears the intervening air.

Trespassers have wandered through

texture of flesh and petals.

Dogs like arrows moved along

pathways that their noses knew.

While the two who laid it out

find the metal and the flower

fatal underfoot.

Black and white at midnight glows

this garden of barbed wire and roses.

Doused with darkness roses burn

coolly as a rainy moon:

beneath a rainy moon or none

silver the sheath on barb and thorn.

Change the garden, scale and plan;

wall it, make it annual.

There the briary flower grew.

There the brambled wire ran.

While they sleep the garden grows,

deepest wish annuls the will:

perfect still the wire and rose.

P. K. Page, "The Metal and the Flower" from *The Hidden Room*. Copyright © 1997 by P. K. Page. Reprinted by permission of The Porcupine’s Quill, Inc. Source: *The Hidden Room* (The Porcupine's Quill, 1997)

**M17. Mezzo Cammin By** [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let

The years slip from me and have not fulfilled

The aspiration of my youth, to build

Some tower of song with lofty parapet.

Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret

Of restless passions that would not be stilled,

But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,

Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;

Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past

Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,—

A city in the twilight dim and vast,

With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights,—

And hear above me on the autumnal blast

The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

Source: *Longfellow: Poems and Other Writings* (The Library of America, 2000)

**M18. The Man He Killed By** [**Thomas Hardy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hardy)

"Had he and I but met

By some old ancient inn,

We should have sat us down to wet

Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,

And staring face to face,

I shot at him as he at me,

And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because —

Because he was my foe,

Just so: my foe of course he was;

That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,

Off-hand like — just as I —

Was out of work — had sold his traps —

No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!

You shoot a fellow down

You'd treat if met where any bar is,

Or help to half-a-crown."

**M19. Mi Historia By** [**David Dominguez**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-dominguez)

My red pickup choked on burnt oil

as I drove down Highway 99.

In wind-tattered garbage bags

I had packed my whole life:

two pairs of jeans, a few T-shirts,

an a pair of work boots.

My truck needed work, and through

the blue smoke rising from under the hood,

I saw almond orchards, plums,

and raisins spread out on paper trays,

and acres of Mendota cotton my mother picked as a child.

My mother crawled through the furrows

and plucked cotton balls that filled

the burlap sack she dragged,

shoulder-slung, through dried-up bolls,

husks, weevils, dirt clods,

and dust that filled the air with thirst.

But when she grew tired,

she slept on her mother’s burlap,

stuffed thick as a mattress,

and Grandma dragged her over the land

where time was told by the setting sun. . . .

History cried out to me from the earth,

in the scream of starling flight,

and pounded at the hulls of seeds to be set free.

History licked the asphalt with rubber,

sighed in the windows of abandoned barns,

slumped in the wind-blasted palms,

groaned in the heat, and whispered its soft curses.

I wanted my own history—not the earth’s,

nor the history of blood, nor of memory,

and not the job founded for me at Galdini Sausage.

I sought my own—a new bruise to throb hard

as the asphalt that pounded the chassis of my truck.

David Dominguez, “Mi Historia” from *Work Done Right*. Copyright © 2003 by David Dominguez. Reprinted by permission of University of Arizona Press.

Source: *Work Done Right* (University of Arizona Press, 2003)

**M20. Mingus at the Showplace By** [**William Matthews**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-matthews)

I was miserable, of course, for I was seventeen,

and so I swung into action and wrote a poem,

and it was miserable, for that was how I thought

poetry worked: you digested experience and shat

literature. It was 1960 at The Showplace, long since

defunct, on West 4th St., and I sat at the bar,

casting beer money from a thin reel of ones,

the kid in the city, big ears like a puppy.

And I knew Mingus was a genius. I knew two

other things, but they were wrong, as it happened.

So I made him look at the poem.

“There’s a lot of that going around,” he said,

and Sweet Baby Jesus he was right. He laughed

amiably. He didn’t look as if he thought

bad poems were dangerous, the way some poets do.

If they were baseball executives they’d plot

to destroy sandlots everywhere so that the game

could be saved from children. Of course later

that night he fired his pianist in mid-number

and flurried him from the stand.

“We’ve suffered a diminuendo in personnel,”

he explained, and the band played on.

William Matthews, “Mingus at the Showplace” from *Time and Money: New Poems.* Copyright © 1995 by William Matthews. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October 1991).

**M21. Miniver Cheevy By** [**Edwin Arlington Robinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edwin-arlington-robinson)

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,

Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;

He wept that he was ever born,

And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old

When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;

The vision of a warrior bold

Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,

And dreamed, and rested from his labors;

He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,

And Priam’s neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown

That made so many a name so fragrant;

He mourned Romance, now on the town,

And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,

Albeit he had never seen one;

He would have sinned incessantly

Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace

And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;

He missed the mediæval grace

Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,

But sore annoyed was he without it;

Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,

And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,

Scratched his head and kept on thinking;

Miniver coughed, and called it fate,

And kept on drinking.

**M22. The Minks By** [**Toi Derricotte**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/toi-derricotte)

In the backyard of our house on Norwood,

there were five hundred steel cages lined up,

each with a wooden box

roofed with tar paper;

inside, two stories, with straw

for a bed. Sometimes the minks would pace

back and forth wildly, looking for a way out;

or else they’d hide in their wooden houses, even when

we’d put the offering of raw horse meat on their trays, as if

they knew they were beautiful

and wanted to deprive us.

In spring the placid kits

drank with glazed eyes.

Sometimes the mothers would go mad

and snap their necks.

My uncle would lift the roof like a god

who might lift our roof, look down on us

and take us out to safety.

Sometimes one would escape.

He would go down on his hands and knees,

aiming a flashlight like

a bullet of light, hoping to catch

the orange gold of its eyes.

He wore huge boots, gloves

so thick their little teeth couldn’t bite through.

“They’re wild,” he’d say. “Never trust them.”

Each afternoon when I put the scoop of raw meat rich

with eggs and vitamins on their trays,

I’d call to each a greeting.

Their small thin faces would follow as if slightly curious.

In fall they went out in a van, returning

sorted, matched, their skins hanging down on huge metal

hangers, pinned by their mouths.

My uncle would take them out when company came

and drape them over his arm—the sweetest cargo.

He’d blow down the pelts softly

and the hairs would part for his breath

and show the shining underlife which, like

the shining of the soul, gives us each

character and beauty.

Toi Derricotte, “The Minks” from *Captivity*. Copyright © 1989 by Toi Derricotte. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, www.upress.pitt.edu/~press/. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Captivity* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989)

**M23. Mirror By** [**James Merrill**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-merrill)

I grow old under an intensity

Of questioning looks. *Nonsense*,

I try to say, *I cannot teach you children*

*How to live.—If not you, who will?*

Cries one of them aloud, grasping my gilded

Frame till the world sways. *If not you, who will?*

Between their visits the table, its arrangement

Of Bible, fern and Paisley, all past change,

Does very nicely. If ever I feel curious

As to what others endure,

Across the parlor *you* provide examples,

Wide open, sunny, of everything I am

Not. You embrace a whole world without once caring

To set it in order. That takes thought. Out there

Something is being picked. The red-and-white bandannas

Go to my heart. A fine young man

Rides by on horseback. Now the door shuts. Hester

Confides in me her first unhappiness.

This much, you see, would never have been fitted

Together, but for me. Why then is it

They more and more neglect me? Late one sleepless

Midsummer night I strained to keep

Five tapers from your breathing. *No*, the widowed

Cousin said, *let them go out*. I did.

The room brimmed with gray sound, all the instreaming

Muslin of your dream . . .

Years later now, two of the grown grandchildren

Sit with novels face-down on the sill,

Content to muse upon your tall transparence,

Your clouds, brown fields, persimmon far

And cypress near. One speaks. *How superficial*

*Appearances are!*

Since then, as if a fish

Had broken the perfect silver of my reflectiveness,

I have lapses. I suspect

Looks from behind, where nothing is, cool gazes

Through the blind flaws of my mind. As days,

As decades lengthen, this vision

Spreads and blackens. I do not know whose it is,

But I think it watches for my last silver

To blister, flake, float leaf by life, each milling-

Downward dumb conceit, to a standstill

From which not even you strike any brilliant

Chord in me, and to a faceless will,

Echo of mine, I am amenable.

James Merrill, “Mirror” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 2001 by James Merrill. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (February 1958).

**M24. Mockingbird By** [**Hailey Leithauser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hailey-leithauser)

No other song

or swoop (part

quiver, part swivel and

plash) with

tour de force

stray the course note

liquefactions

(its new,

bawdy air an

aria hangs in) en-

thralls,

trills, loops, soars,

startles, out-warbles,

out-brawns, more

juicily,

lifts up

the dawn, outlaws from

sackcloth, the cool

sloth of bed sheets,

from pillows

and silks

and blue-quilted, feminine

bolsters, fusses

of coverlets;

nips as the switch

of a juvenile willow, fuzz

of a nettle, to

window and window

and window and ever

toward egress, to

flurry, pollen

and petal shed,

to wet street

and wet pavement,

all sentiment intemperate,

all sentience

ephemeral.

**M25. Momma Said By** [**Calvin Forbes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/calvin-forbes)

The slice I ate I want it back

Those crumbs I swept up

I’d like my share again

I can still taste it like it was

The memory by itself is delicious

Each bite was a small miracle

Both nourishing and sweet

I wish I had saved just a little bit

I know it wasn’t a literal cake

It’s the thought that counts

Like a gift that’s not store-bought

Making it even more special

Like a dream that makes you

Want to go back to sleep

You can’t have your cake

And eat it too Momma said

I was defiant and hardheaded

And answered yes I can too

The look she gave me said boy

I hope you aren’t a fool all your life

**M26. Monet Refuses the Operation By** [**Lisel Mueller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lisel-mueller)

Doctor, you say there are no haloes

around the streetlights in Paris

and what I see is an aberration

caused by old age, an affliction.

I tell you it has taken me all my life

to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,

to soften and blur and finally banish

the edges you regret I don’t see,

to learn that the line I called the horizon

does not exist and sky and water,

so long apart, are the same state of being.

Fifty-four years before I could see

Rouen cathedral is built

of parallel shafts of sun,

and now you want to restore

my youthful errors: fixed

notions of top and bottom,

the illusion of three-dimensional space,

wisteria separate

from the bridge it covers.

What can I say to convince you

the Houses of Parliament dissolve

night after night to become

the fluid dream of the Thames?

I will not return to a universe

of objects that don’t know each other,

as if islands were not the lost children

of one great continent. The world

is flux, and light becomes what it touches,

becomes water, lilies on water,

above and below water,

becomes lilac and mauve and yellow

and white and cerulean lamps,

small fists passing sunlight

so quickly to one another

that it would take long, streaming hair

inside my brush to catch it.

To paint the speed of light!

Our weighted shapes, these verticals,

burn to mix with air

and change our bones, skin, clothes

to gases. Doctor,

if only you could see

how heaven pulls earth into its arms

and how infinitely the heart expands

to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

Lisel Mueller, "Monet Refuses the Operation" from *Second Language*. Copyright © 1996 by Lisel Mueller. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.

Source: *Second Language* (Louisiana State University Press, 1996)

**M27. Monstrance Man By** [**Ricardo Pau-Llosa**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ricardo-pau-llosa)

As a boy he had trouble speaking,

past three before a real word preened

from his lips. And for the longest time,

malaprops haunted him. His older sister

did what she could to train the bitten seal

of   his brain to twirl the red ball

on the nose of eloquence, and his grandmother

tired of   insisting he utter the names

of   toys or foods — for every desire

was coded — and gave him whatever

he grunted and pointed to.

O, the man then a boy

thought, when I tower among them

I should invent my own speech

and leave others empty and afraid

that they did not know it, could not ask

or plead their case in the one tongue

that mattered. I shall have them

look upon the simplest things,

the man then a boy thought,

and fill up with stolen awe,

and point with their faces,

their pupils wide as blackened coins,

and hope with all the revenue

shattered heart-glass can muster

that someone had grasped

their need as need and not

as the monstrous coupling

of   sounds in a trance of whims.

Then, the grind of   his teeth

vowed, then the plazas of my city

will fill with my name,

and their blood will matter

as little to them as to me.

**M28. The moon now rises to her absolute rule By** [**Henry David Thoreau**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-david-thoreau)

The moon now rises to her absolute rule,

And the husbandman and hunter

Acknowledge her for their mistress.

Asters and golden reign in the fields

And the life everlasting withers not.

The fields are reaped and shorn of their pride

But an inward verdure still crowns them;

The thistle scatters its down on the pool

And yellow leaves clothe the river—

And nought disturbs the serious life of men.

But behind the sheaves and under the sod

There lurks a ripe fruit which the reapers have not gathered,

The true harvest of the year—the boreal fruit

Which it bears forever,

With fondness annually watering and maturing it.

But man never severs the stalk

Which bears this palatable fruit.

Source: *Poets of the English Language* (Viking Press, 1950)

**M29. More Lies By** [**Karin Gottshall**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/karin-gottshall)

Sometimes I say I’m going to meet my sister at the café—

even though I have no sister—just because it’s such

a beautiful thing to say. I’ve always thought so, ever since

I read a novel in which two sisters were constantly meeting

in cafés. Today, for example, I walked alone

on the wet sidewalk, wearing my rain boots, expecting

someone might ask where I was headed. I bought

a steno pad and a watch battery, the store windows

fogged up. Rain in April is a kind of promise, and it costs

nothing. I carried a bag of books to the café and ordered

tea. I like a place that’s lit by lamps. I like a place

where you can hear people talk about small things,

like the difference between azure and cerulean,

and the price of tulips. It’s going down. I watched

someone who could be my sister walk in, shaking the rain

from her hair. I thought, even now florists are filling

their coolers with tulips, five dollars a bundle. All over

the city there are sisters. Any one of them could be mine.

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**M30.Mortal Sorrows By** [**Rodney Jones**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rodney-jones)

The tortures of lumbago consumed Aunt Madge,

And Leah Vest, once resigned from schoolmarming,

Could not be convinced to leave the house,

And Mrs. Mary Hogan, after birthing her fifth son,

Lay bedfast for the last fifty-two years of her life,

Reporting shooting pains that would begin

High in her back and shear downward to the feet,

As though, she said, she had been glazed in lightning;

And also, men, broken on bridges and mills,

Shell-shocked veterans, religious alcoholics—

Leldon Kilpatrick, Johnson Suggs, Whitey Carlyle:

They came and sat there too, leafing through

Yellowing *Pageants and Progressive Farmers*;

And, one by one, all entered in and talked

While the good doctor gargled a dark chaff

In his pipe and took down symptoms,

Annotating them on his hidden chart—

Numbness, neuralgia, the knotted lymph,

The clammy palms—and then he’d scratch

His temple’s meaningful patch of white

And scrawl out his unfailing barbiturate prescription

To be filled by his pharmacist brother-in-law

Until half the county had gathered as in a lap—

The quantum ache, the mutiny in every house.

How much pain, how many diseases

Consigned to the mythological, the dropped

Ovaries, the torn-up nerves, what women

Said, what men wanted to believe? Part of it

Laughable, I know. Still I want someone

To see, now that they lie safe in graves

Beyond the vacant stores, that someone

Listened and, hearing the wrong at the heart,

Named it something that sounded real, whatever

They lived through and died of. I remember

Mrs. Lyle who called it a thorn in the flesh,

And Mr. Appleton, who had no roof in his mouth.

Rodney Jones, “Mortal Sorrows” from *Things That Happen Once.* Copyright © 1997 by Rodney Jones. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 1995).

**M31. The Mothering Blackness By** [**Maya Angelou**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/maya-angelou)

She came home running

back to the mothering blackness

deep in the smothering blackness

white tears icicle gold plains of her face

She came home running

She came down creeping

here to the black arms waiting

now to the warm heart waiting

rime of alien dreams befrosts her rich brown face

She came down creeping

She came home blameless

black yet as Hagar’s daughter

tall as was Sheba’s daughter

threats of northern winds die on the desert’s face

She came home blameless

Maya Angelou, “The Mothering Blackness” from *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water Before I Die.* Copyright © 1971 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (Random House Inc., 1994)

**M32. Mourning Poem for the Queen of Sunday By** [**Robert Hayden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-hayden)

Lord’s lost Him His mockingbird,

His fancy warbler;

Satan sweet-talked her,

four bullets hushed her.

Who would have thought

she’d end that way?

Four bullets hushed her. And the world a-clang with evil.

Who’s going to make old hardened sinner men tremble now

and the righteous rock?

Oh who and oh who will sing Jesus down

to help with struggling and doing without and being colored

all through blue Monday?

Till way next Sunday?

All those angels

in their cretonne clouds and finery

the true believer saw

when she rared back her head and sang,

all those angels are surely weeping.

Who would have thought

she’d end that way?

Four holes in her heart. The gold works wrecked.

But she looks so natural in her big bronze coffin

among the Broken Hearts and Gates-Ajar,

it’s as if any moment she’d lift her head

from its pillow of chill gardenias

and turn this quiet into shouting Sunday

and make folks forget what she did on Monday.

Oh, Satan sweet-talked her,

and four bullets hushed her.

Lord’s lost Him His diva,

His fancy warbler’s gone.

Who would have thought,

who would have thought she’d end that way?

Robert Hayden, “Mourning Poem for the Queen of Sunday” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1966 by Robert Hayden. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1985)

**M33. Movement Song By** [**Audre Lorde**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/audre-lorde)

I have studied the tight curls on the back of your neck

moving away from me

beyond anger or failure

your face in the evening schools of longing

through mornings of wish and ripen

we were always saying goodbye

in the blood in the bone over coffee

before dashing for elevators going

in opposite directions

without goodbyes.

Do not remember me as a bridge nor a roof

as the maker of legends

nor as a trap

door to that world

where black and white clericals

hang on the edge of beauty in five oclock elevators

twitching their shoulders to avoid other flesh

and now

there is someone to speak for them

moving away from me into tomorrows

morning of wish and ripen

your goodbye is a promise of lightning

in the last angels hand

unwelcome and warning

the sands have run out against us

we were rewarded by journeys

away from each other

into desire

into mornings alone

where excuse and endurance mingle

conceiving decision.

Do not remember me

as disaster

nor as the keeper of secrets

I am a fellow rider in the cattle cars

watching

you move slowly out of my bed

saying we cannot waste time

only ourselves.

Audre Lorde, “Movement Song” from *From a Land Where Other People Live*. Copyright © 1973 by Audre Lorde. Reprinted with the permission of the Charlotte Sheedy Literary Agency

Source: *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1997)

**M34. The Mower By** [**Philip Larkin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-larkin)

The mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found

A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,

Killed. It had been in the long grass.

I had seen it before, and even fed it, once.

Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world

Unmendably. Burial was no help:

Next morning I got up and it did not.

The first day after a death, the new absence

Is always the same; we should be careful

Of each other, we should be kind

While there is still time.

Philip Larkin, “The Mower” from *Collected Poems.* Used by permission of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Philip Larkin.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2001)

**M35. Mowing By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,

And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.

What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;

Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,

Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound—

And that was why it whispered and did not speak.

It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,

Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:

Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak

To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,

Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers

(Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.

The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.

My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

**M36. Mrs. Adam By** [**Kathleen Norris**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kathleen-norris)

I have lately come to the conclusion that I am Eve,  
alias Mrs. Adam. You know, there is no account  
of her death in the Bible, and why am I not Eve?  
Emily Dickinson in a letter,  
12 January, 1846

Wake up,

you’ll need your wits about you.

This is not a dream,

but a woman who loves you, speaking.

She was there

when you cried out;

she brushed the terror away.

She knew

when it was time to sin.

You were wise

to let her handle it,

and leave that place.

We couldn’t speak at first

for the bitter knowledge,

the sweet taste of memory

on our tongues.

Listen, it’s time.

You were chosen too,

to put the world together.

Kathleen Norris, “Mrs. Adam” from *Poetry* 156 (April 1990). Used by permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (April 1990).

**M37. Mrs. Caldera’s House of Things By** [**Gregory Djanikian**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gregory-djanikian)

You are sitting in Mrs. Caldera’s kitchen,

you are sipping a glass of lemonade

and trying not to be too curious about

the box of plastic hummingbirds behind you,

the tray of tineless forks at your elbow.

You have heard about the backroom

where no one else has ever gone

and whatever enters, remains,

refrigerator doors, fused coils,

mower blades, milk bottles, pistons, gears.

“You never know,” she says, rummaging

through a cedar chest of recipes,

“when something will come of use.”

There is a vase of pencil tips on the table,

a bowl full of miniature wheels and axles.

Upstairs, where her children slept,

the doors will not close,

the stacks of magazines are burgeoning,

there are snow shoes and lampshades,

bedsprings and picture tubes,

and boxes and boxes of irreducibles!

You imagine the headline in the *Literalist Express:*

House Founders Under Weight Of Past.

But Mrs Caldera is baking cookies,

she is humming a song from childhood,

her arms are heavy and strong,

they have held babies, a husband,

tractor parts and gas tanks,

what have they not found a place for?

It is getting dark, you have sat for a long time.

If you move, you feel something will be disturbed,

there is room enough only for your body.

“Stay awhile,” Mrs. Caldera says,

and never have you felt so valuable.

Gregory Djanikian, “Mrs. Caldera’s House of Things” from *About Distance.* Copyright © 1995 by Gregory Djanikian. Used by permission of Carnegie Mellon University Press.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (May 1989).

**M38. Mrs. Kessler By** [**Edgar Lee Masters**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-lee-masters)

Mr. Kessler, you know, was in the army,

And he drew six dollars a month as a pension,

And stood on the corner talking politics,

Or sat at home reading Grant’s *Memoirs*;

And I supported the family by washing,

Learning the secrets of all the people

From their curtains, counterpanes, shirts and skirts.

For things that are new grow old at length,

They’re replaced with better or none at all:

People are prospering or falling back.

And rents and patches widen with time;

No thread or needle can pace decay,

And there are stains that baffle soap,

And there are colors that run in spite of you,

Blamed though you are for spoiling a dress.

Handkerchiefs, napery, have their secrets

The laundress, Life, knows all about it.

And I, who went to all the funerals

Held in Spoon River, swear I never

Saw a dead face without thinking it looked

Like something washed and ironed.

**M39. Much Madness is divinest Sense - (620) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

Much Madness is divinest Sense -

To a discerning Eye -

Much Sense - the starkest Madness -

’Tis the Majority

In this, as all, prevail -

Assent - and you are sane -

Demur - you’re straightway dangerous -

And handled with a Chain -

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Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

**M40. mulberry fields By** [**Lucille Clifton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lucille-clifton)

they thought the field was wasting

and so they gathered the marker rocks and stones and

piled them into a barn they say that the rocks were shaped

some of them scratched with triangles and other forms they

must have been trying to invent some new language they say

the rocks went to build that wall there guarding the manor and

some few were used for the state house

crops refused to grow

i say the stones marked an old tongue and it was called eternity

and pointed toward the river i say that after that collection

no pillow in the big house dreamed i say that somewhere under

here moulders one called alice whose great grandson is old now

too and refuses to talk about slavery i say that at the

masters table only one plate is set for supper i say no seed

can flourish on this ground once planted then forsaken wild

berries warm a field of bones

bloom how you must i say

Lucille Clifton, “mulberry fields” from *Mercy.* Copyright © 2004 by Lucille Clifton. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Mercy* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2004)

**M41. Musical Moment By** [**Virginia Hamilton Adair**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/virginia-hamilton-adair)

Always the caravan of sound made us halt

to admire the swinging and the swift go-by

of beasts with enormous hooves and heads

beating the earth or reared against the sky.

Do not reread, I mean glance ahead to see

what has become of the colossal forms:

everything happened at the instant of passing:

the hoof-beat, the whinny, the bells on the harness,

the creak of the wheels, the monkey’s fandango

in double time over the elephant’s back.

When the marching was over and we were free to go on

there was never before us a dungfall or a track

on the road-sands of any kind:

only the motion of footprints being made

crossing and recrossing in the trampled mind.

Virginia Hamilton Adair, “Musical Moment” from *Ants on the Melon.* Copyright © 1996 by Virginia Hamilton Adair. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.  
  
Source: *Ants on the Melon: A Collection of Poems* (Random House Inc., 1996)

**M42. The Man with the Hoe By** [**Edwin Markham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edwin-markham)

*Written after seeing Millet’s World-Famous Painting*   
  
God made man in His own image,   
in the image of God made He him. *—Genesis.*

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans

Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,

The emptiness of ages in his face,

And on his back the burden of the world.

Who made him dead to rapture and despair,

A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,

Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?

Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?

Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?

Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave

To have dominion over sea and land;

To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;

To feel the passion of Eternity?

Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns

And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?

Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf

There is no shape more terrible than this—

More tongued with censure of the world’s blind greed—

More filled with signs and portents for the soul—

More fraught with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!

Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him

Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?

What the long reaches of the peaks of song,

The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?

Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;

Time’s tragedy is in that aching stoop;

Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,

Plundered, profaned and disinherited,

Cries protest to the Judges of the World,

A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,

is this the handiwork you give to God,

This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched ?

How will you ever straighten up this shape;

Touch it again with immortality;

Give back the upward looking and the light;

Rebuild in it the music and the dream;

Make right the immemorial infamies,

Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,

How will the Future reckon with this Man?

How answer his brute question in that hour

When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?

How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—

With those who shaped him to the thing he is—

When this dumb Terror shall reply to God

After the silence of the centuries?

Source: *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (Doubleday, 1921)

**M43. The Man with Night Sweats By** [**Thom Gunn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thom-gunn)

I wake up cold, I who

Prospered through dreams of heat

Wake to their residue,

Sweat, and a clinging sheet.

My flesh was its own shield:

Where it was gashed, it healed.

I grew as I explored

The body I could trust

Even while I adored

The risk that made robust,

A world of wonders in

Each challenge to the skin.

I cannot but be sorry

The given shield was cracked,

My mind reduced to hurry,

My flesh reduced and wrecked.

I have to change the bed,

But catch myself instead

Stopped upright where I am

Hugging my body to me

As if to shield it from

The pains that will go through me,

As if hands were enough

To hold an avalanche off.

Thom Gunn, “The Man with Night Sweats” from *Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2009 by Thom Gunn. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux .

Source: *Selected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2009)

**M44. My Brother, the Artist, at Seven By** [**Philip Levine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-levine)

As a boy he played alone in the fields

behind our block, six frame houses

holding six immigrant families,

the parents speaking only gibberish

to their neighbors. Without the kids

they couldn't say "Good morning" and be

understood. Little wonder

he learned early to speak to himself,

to tell no one what truly mattered.

How much can matter to a kid

of seven? Everything. The whole world

can be his. Just after dawn he sneaks

out to hide in the wild, bleached grasses

of August and pretends he's grown up,

someone complete in himself without

the need for anyone, a warrior

from the ancient places our fathers

fled years before, those magic places:

Kiev, Odessa, the Crimea,

Port Said, Alexandria, Lisbon,

the Canaries, Caracas, Galveston.

In the damp grass he recites the names

over and over in a hushed voice

while the sun climbs into the locust tree

to waken the houses. The husbands leave

for work, the women return to bed, the kids

bend to porridge and milk. He advances

slowly, eyes fixed, an animal or a god,

while beneath him the earth holds its breath.

Source: *Poetry* (January 2003).

**M45. My Father in the Night Commanding No By** [**Louis Simpson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louis-simpson)

My father in the night commanding No

Has work to do. Smoke issues from his lips;

He reads in silence.

The frogs are croaking and the street lamps glow.

And then my mother winds the gramophone;

The Bride of Lammermoor begins to shriek—

Or reads a story—

About a prince, a castle, and a dragon.

The moon is glittering above the hill.

I stand before the gateposts of the King—

So runs the story

Of Thule, at midnight when the mice are still.

And I have been in Thule! It has come true—

The journey and the danger of the world,

All that there is

To bear and to enjoy, endure and do.

Landscapes, seascapes ... where have I been led?

The names of cities—Paris, Venice, Rome—

Held out their arms.

A feathered god, seductive, went ahead.

Here is my house. Under a red rose tree

A child is swinging; another gravely plays.

They are not surprised

That I am here; they were expecting me.

And yet my father sits and reads in silence,

My mother sheds a tear, the moon is still,

And the dark wind

Is murmuring that nothing ever happens.

Beyond his jurisdiction as I move

Do I not prove him wrong? And yet, it’s true

*They* will not change

There, on the stage of terror and of love.

The actors in that playhouse always sit

In fixed positions—father, mother, child

With painted eyes.

How sad it is to be a little puppet!

Their heads are wooden. And you once pretended

To understand them! Shake them as you will,

They cannot speak.

Do what you will, the comedy is ended.

Father, why did you work? Why did you weep,

Mother? Was the story so important?

“*Listen!*” the wind

Said to the children, and they fell asleep.

Louis Simpson, “My Father in the Night Commanding No” from *The Owner of the House: New Collected Poems 1940-2001*. Copyright © 2003 by Louis Simpson. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org). Source: *Collected Poems* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1988)

**M46. My Grandmother’s Love Letters By** [**Hart Crane**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hart-crane)

There are no stars tonight

But those of memory.

Yet how much room for memory there is

In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough

For the letters of my mother’s mother,

Elizabeth,

That have been pressed so long

Into a corner of the roof

That they are brown and soft,

And liable to melt as snow.

Over the greatness of such space

Steps must be gentle.

It is all hung by an invisible white hair.

It trembles as birch limbs webbing the air.

And I ask myself:

“Are your fingers long enough to play

Old keys that are but echoes:

Is the silence strong enough

To carry back the music to its source

And back to you again

As though to her?”

Yet I would lead my grandmother by the hand

Through much of what she would not understand;

And so I stumble. And the rain continues on the roof

With such a sound of gently pitying laughter.

Source: *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane* (2000)

**M47 [My mother saw the green tree toad] By** [**Lorine Niedecker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorine-niedecker)

My mother saw the green tree toad

on the window sill

her first one

since she was young.

We saw it breathe

and swell up round.

My youth is no sure sign

I’ll find this kind of thing

tho it does sing.

Let’s take it in

I said so grandmother can see

but she could not

it changed to brown

and town

changed us, too.

Lorine Niedecker, “[My mother saw the green tree toad]” from *Collected Works*, edited by Jenny Penberthy, Copyright © 2002 Regents of the University of California. Published by University of California Press. Source: *Collected Works* (University of California Press, 2004)

**M48. My Papa’s Waltz By** [**Theodore Roethke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/theodore-roethke)

The whiskey on your breath

Could make a small boy dizzy;

But I hung on like death:

Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans

Slid from the kitchen shelf;

My mother’s countenance

Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist

Was battered on one knuckle;

At every step you missed

My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head

With a palm caked hard by dirt,

Then waltzed me off to bed

Still clinging to your shirt.

Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke.* Copyright 1942 by Hearst Magazines, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (1961)

**M49. [My prime of youth is but a frost of cares] By** [**Chidiock Tichborne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/chidiock-tichborne)

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,

My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,

My crop of corn is but a field of tares,

And all my good is but vain hope of gain.

The day is gone and yet I saw no sun,

And now I live, and now my life is done.

The spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung,

The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green,

My youth is gone, and yet I am but young,

I saw the world, and yet I was not seen,

My thread is cut, and yet it was not spun,

And now I live, and now my life is done.

I sought my death and found it in my womb,

I lookt for life and saw it was a shade,

I trode the earth and knew it was my tomb,

And now I die, and now I am but made.

The glass is full, and now the glass is run,

And now I live, and now my life is done.

**M50. My Sad Captains By** [**Thom Gunn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thom-gunn)

One by one they appear in

the darkness: a few friends, and

a few with historical

names. How late they start to shine!

but before they fade they stand

perfectly embodied, all

the past lapping them like a

cloak of chaos. They were men

who, I thought, lived only to

renew the wasteful force they

spent with each hot convulsion.

They remind me, distant now.

True, they are not at rest yet,

but now that they are indeed

apart, winnowed from failures,

they withdraw to an orbit

and turn with disinterested

hard energy, like the stars.

Thom Gunn, “My Sad Captains” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by Thom Gunn. Used by permission of Noonday Press, a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1994)

**M51. The Mystery of the Hunt By** [**Michael McClure**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-mcclure)

It’s the mystery of the hunt that intrigues me,

That drives us like lemmings, but cautiously—

The search for a bright square cloud—the scent of lemon verbena—

Or to learn rules for the game the sea otters

Play in the surf.

It is these small things—and the secret behind them

That fill the heart.

The pattern, the spirit, the fiery demon

That link them together

And pull their freedom into our senses,

The smell of a shrub, a cloud, the action of animals

—The rising, the exuberance, when the mystery is unveiled.

It is these small things

That when brought into vision become an inferno.

﻿

Michael McClure, "The Mystery of the Hunt" from *Of Indigo and Saffron: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2011 by Michael McClure. Reprinted by permission of University of California Press.﻿

Source: *Of Indigo and Saffron: New and Selected Poems﻿* (University of California Press, 2011)

**M52. Mysticism for Beginners By** [**Adam Zagajewski**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adam-zagajewski)

The day was mild, the light was generous.

The German on the café terrace

held a small book on his lap.

I caught sight of the title:

*Mysticism for Beginners*.

Suddenly I understood that the swallows

patrolling the streets of Montepulciano

with their shrill whistles,

and the hushed talk of timid travelers

from Eastern, so-called Central Europe,

and the white herons standing—yesterday? the day before?—

like nuns in fields of rice,

and the dusk, slow and systematic,

erasing the outlines of medieval houses,

and olive trees on little hills,

abandoned to the wind and heat,

and the head of the *Unknown Princess*

that I saw and admired in the Louvre,

and stained-glass windows like butterfly wings

sprinkled with pollen,

and the little nightingale practicing

its speech beside the highway,

and any journey, any kind of trip,

are only mysticism for beginners,

the elementary course, prelude

to a test that's been

postponed.

Adam Zagajewski, "Mysticism for Beginners" from *Without End: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2002 by Adam Zagajewski. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, www.fsgbooks.com. All rights reserved.   
  
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Source: *Without End: New and Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002)

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**N1**](#N1)[**N2**](#N2)[**N3**](#N3)[**N4**](#N4)[**N5**](#N5)[**N6**](#N6)[**N7**](#N7)[**N8**](#N8)[**N9**](#N9)[**N10**](#N10)[**N11**](#N11)[**N12**](#N12)[**N13**](#N13)

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**N79 N80 N81 N82 N83 N84 N85 N86 N87 N88 N89 N90 N91**

**N92 N93 N94 N95 N96 N97 N98 N99 N100 N101 N102 N103 N104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**N1. The Nail By** [**C. K. Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/c-k-williams)

Some dictator or other had gone into exile, and now reports were coming about his regime,

the usual crimes, torture, false imprisonment, cruelty and corruption, but then a detail:

that the way his henchmen had disposed of enemies was by hammering nails into their skulls.

Horror, then, what mind does after horror, after that first feeling that you’ll never catch your breath,

mind imagines—how not be annihilated by it?—the preliminary tap, feels it in the tendons of the hand,

feels the way you do with *your* nail when you’re fixing something, making something, shelves, a bed;

the first light tap to set the slant, and then the slightly harder tap, to em-bed the tip a little more ...

No, no more: this should be happening in myth, in stone, or paint, not in reality, not here;

it should be an emblem of itself, not itself, something that would *mean,* not really have to happen,

something to go out, expand in implication from that unmoved mass of matter in the breast;

as in the image of an anguished face, in grief for us, not us as us, us as in a myth, a moral tale,

a way to tell the truth that grief is limitless, a way to tell us we must always understand

it’s we who do such things, we who set the slant, embed the tip, lift the sledge and drive the nail,

drive the nail which is the axis upon which turns the brutal human world upon the world.

C. K. Williams, “The Nail” from *Repair.* Copyright © 1999 by C. K. Williams. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Source: *Repair* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999)

**N2. A narrow fellow in the grass (1096) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

A narrow fellow in the grass

Occasionally rides;

You may have met him—did you not

His notice sudden is,

The grass divides as with a comb,

A spotted shaft is seen,

And then it closes at your feet,

And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,

A floor too cool for corn,

But when a boy and barefoot,

I more than once at noon

Have passed, I thought, a whip lash,

Unbraiding in the sun,

When stooping to secure it,

It wrinkled and was gone.

Several of nature’s people

I know, and they know me;

I feel for them a transport

Of cordiality.

But never met this fellow,

Attended or alone,

Without a tighter breathing,

And zero at the bone.

Emily Dickinson, "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, Ralph W. Franklin, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.   
Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

**N3. The Natural Child By** [**Helen Leigh**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/helen-leigh)

Let not the title of my verse offend,

Nor let the pride contract her rigid brow;

That helpless Innocence demands a friend,

Virtue herself will cheerfully allow:

And should my pencil prove too weak to paint,

The ills attendant on the babe ere born;

Whose parents swerved from virtue’s mild restraint,

Forgive the attempt, nor treat the Muse with scorn.

Yon rural farm, where Mirth was wont to dwell,

Of Melancholy, now appears the seat;

Solemn and silent as the hermit’s cell —

Say what, my muse, has caused a change so great?

This hapless morn, an infant first saw light,

Whose innocence a better fate might claim,

Than to be shunned as hateful to the sight,

And banished soon as it receives a name.

No joy attends its entrance into life,

No smile upon its mother’s face appears,

She cannot smile, alas! she is no wife;

But vents the sorrow of her heart in tears.

No father flies to clasp it to his breast,

And bless the power that gave it to his arms;

To see his form, in miniature expressed,

Or trace, with ecstacy, its mother’s charms.

Unhappy babe! thy father is thy foe!

Oft shall he wish thee numbered with the dead;

His crime entails on thee a load of woe,

And sorrow heaps on thy devoted head.

Torn from its breast, by shame or pride,

No matter which — to hireling hands assigned;

A parent’s tenderness, when thus denied,

Can it be thought its nurse is overkind?

Too many, like this infant may we see,

Exposed, abandoned, helpless and forlorn;

Till death, misfortune’s friend, has set them free,

From a rude world, which gave them nought but scorn.

Too many mothers — horrid to relate!

Soon as their infants breathe the vital air,

Deaf to their plaintive cries, their helpless state,

Led on by shame, and driven by despair,

Fell murderers to become — Here cease, my pen,

And leave these wretched victims of despair;

But oh! what punishments await the men,

Who in such depths of misery plunge the fair.

**N4. Nature, That Washed Her Hands in Milk By** [**Sir Walter Ralegh**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sir-walter-ralegh)

Nature, that washed her hands in milk,

And had forgot to dry them,

Instead of earth took snow and silk,

At love’s request to try them,

If she a mistress could compose

To please love’s fancy out of those.

Her eyes he would should be of light,

A violet breath, and lips of jelly;

Her hair not black, nor overbright,

And of the softest down her belly;

As for her inside he’d have it

Only of wantonness and wit.

At love’s entreaty such a one

Nature made, but with her beauty

She hath framed a heart of stone;

So as love, by ill destiny,

Must die for her whom nature gave him,

Because her darling would not save him.

But time (which nature doth despise,

And rudely gives her love the lie,

Makes hope a fool, and sorrow wise)

His hands do neither wash nor dry;

But being made of steel and rust,

Turns snow and silk and milk to dust.

The light, the belly, lips, and breath,

He dims, discolors, and destroys;

With those he feeds but fills not death,

Which sometimes were the food of joys.

Yea, time doth dull each lively wit,

And dries all wantonness with it.

Oh, cruel time! which takes in trust

Our youth, our joys, and all we have,

And pays us but with age and dust;

Who in the dark and silent grave

When we have wandered all our ways

Shuts up the story of our days.

**N5. Negative By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

Wake to find everything black

what was white, all the vice

versa—white maids on TV, black

sitcoms that star white dwarfs

cute as pearl buttons. Black Presidents,

Black Houses. White horse

candidates. All bleach burns

clothes black. Drive roads

white as you are, white songs

on the radio stolen by black bands

like secret pancake recipes, white back-up

singers, ball-players & boxers all

white as tar. Feathers on chickens

dark as everything, boiling in the pot

that called the kettle honky. Even

whites of the eye turn dark, pupils

clear & changing as a cat's.

Is this what we've wanted

& waited for? to see snow

covering everything black

as Christmas, dark pages written

white upon? All our eclipses bright,

dark stars shooting across pale

sky, glowing like ash in fire, shower

every skin. Only money keeps

green, still grows & burns like grass

under dark daylight.

Kevin Young, "Negative" from *To Repel Ghosts: The Remix*. Copyright © 2005 by Kevin Young, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Steerforth Press.

Source: *To Repel Ghosts: The Remix* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2005)

**N6. The Negro Speaks of Rivers By** [**Langston Hughes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/langston-hughes)

I’ve known rivers:

I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by The Estate of Langston Hughes. Reprinted with the permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated.

Source: *Selected Poems* (Vintage Books, 1987)

**N7. The New Colossus By** [**Emma Lazarus**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emma-lazarus)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,

With conquering limbs astride from land to land;

Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name

Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand

Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she

With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Source: *Emma Lazarus: Selected Poems and Other Writings* (2002)

**N8. The New Decalogue By** [**Ambrose Bierce**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ambrose-bierce)

Have but one God: thy knees were sore

If bent in prayer to three or four.

Adore no images save those

The coinage of thy country shows.

Take not the Name in vain. Direct

Thy swearing unto some effect.

Thy hand from Sunday work be held—

Work not at all unless compelled.

Honor thy parents, and perchance

Their wills thy fortunes may advance.

Kill not—death liberates thy foe

From persecution’s constant woe.

Kiss not thy neighbor’s wife. Of course

There’s no objection to divorce.

To steal were folly, for ’tis plain

In cheating there is greater gain.

Bear not false witness. Shake your head

And say that you have “heard it said.”

Who stays to covet ne’er will catch

An opportunity to snatch.

**N9. New Folk By** [**Terrance Hayes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/terrance-hayes)

I said Folk was dressed in Blues but hairier and hemped.

After "We acoustic banjo disciples!" Jebediah said, "When

and whereforth shall the bucolic blacks with good tempers

come to see us pluck as Elizabeth Cotton intended?"

We stole my Uncle Windchime's minivan, penned a simple

ballad about the drag of lovelessness and drove the end

of the chitlin' circuit to a joint skinny as a walk-in temple

where our new folk was not that new, but strengthened

by our twelve bar conviction. A month later, in pulled

a parade of well meaning alabaster post adolescents.

We noticed the sand-tanned and braless ones piled

in the ladder-backed front row with their boyfriends

first because beneath our twangor slept what I'll call

a hunger for the outlawable. One night J asked me when

sisters like Chapman would arrive. I shook my chin wool

then, and placed my hand over the guitar string's wind-

ow til it stilled. "When the moon's black," I said. "Be faithful."

**N10. The New World By** [**Amiri Baraka**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amiri-baraka)

The sun is folding, cars stall and rise

beyond the window. The workmen leave

the street to the bums and painters’ wives

pushing their babies home. Those who realize

how fitful and indecent consciousness is

stare solemnly out on the emptying street.

The mourners and soft singers. The liars,

and seekers after ridiculous righteousness. All

my doubles, and friends, whose mistakes cannot

be duplicated by machines, and this is all of our

arrogance. Being broke or broken, dribbling

at the eyes. Wasted lyricists, and men

who have seen their dreams come true, only seconds

after they knew those dreams to be horrible conceits

and plastic fantasies of gesture and extension,

shoulders, hair and tongues distributing misinformation

about the nature of understanding. No one is that simple

or priggish, to be alone out of spite and grown strong

in its practice, mystics in two-pants suits. Our style,

and discipline, controlling the method of knowledge.

Beatniks, like Bohemians, go calmly out of style. And boys

are dying in Mexico, who did not get the word.

The lateness of their fabrication: mark their holes

with filthy needles. The lust of the world. This will not

be news. The simple damning lust,

float flat magic in low changing

evenings. Shiver your hands

in dance. Empty all of me for

knowing, and will the danger

of identification,

Let me sit and go blind in my dreaming

and be that dream in purpose and device.

A fantasy of defeat, a strong strong man

older, but no wiser than the defect of love.

Amiri Baraka, “The New World” from *Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones, 1961-1995* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1995). Copyright © 1995 by Amiri Baraka. Reprinted with the permission of Sll/Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc. Source: *Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones 1961-1995* (1995)

**N11. News By** [**Thomas Traherne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-traherne)

News from a foreign country came,

As if my treasures and my joys lay there;

So much it did my heart inflame,

’Twas wont to call my soul into mine ear;

Which thither went to meet

Th’ approaching sweet,

And on the threshold stood

To entertain the secret good;

It hover’d there

As if ’twould leave mine ear,

And was so eager to embrace

Th’ expected tidings as they came,

That it could change its dwelling place

To meet the voice of fame.

As if new tidings were the things

Which did comprise my wished unknown treasure,

Or else did bear them on their wings,

With so much joy they came, with so much pleasure,

My soul stood at the gate

To recreate

Itself with bliss, and woo

Its speedier approach; a fuller view

It fain would take,

Yet journeys back would make

Unto my heart, as if ’twould fain

Go out to meet, yet stay within,

Fitting a place to entertain

And bring the tidings in.

What sacred instinct did inspire

My soul in childhood with an hope so strong?

What secret force mov’d my desire

T’ expect my joys beyond the seas, so young?

Felicity I knew

Was out of view;

And being left alone,

I thought all happiness was gone

From earth; for this

I long’d for absent bliss,

Deeming that sure beyond the seas,

Or else in something near at hand

Which I knew not, since nought did please

I knew, my bliss did stand.

But little did the infant dream

That all the treasures of the world were by,

And that himself was so the cream

And crown of all which round about did lie.

Yet thus it was! The gem,

The diadem,

The ring enclosing all

That stood upon this earthen ball;

The heav’nly eye,

Much wider than the sky,

Wherein they all included were;

The love, the soul, that was the king

Made to possess them, did appear

A very little thing.

**N12. Night Nurse By** [**Michael Earl Craig**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-earl-craig)

This night nurse is different.

She walks into my room and does not turn the light on.

She thinks I am sleeping.

I have just barely opened my left eye,

am looking through the slightest slit,

as moonlight exposes the room

for what it really is — a collection

of surfaces; lines and planes, mostly.

The night nurse puts a foot up on the radiator

and braces her clipboard on her knee

as she appears to take down a few notes.

I imagine she is working on a sonnet,

and that her ankle looks like polished walnut.

You imagine she is working on a crossword,

and that her feet are killing her.

The slightest slit is like an old gate

at a Japanese tea garden at night,

in the rain, that is supposed to be closed,

that is supposed to be locked.

“Someone has locked up poorly,” you’d say.

“Incorrectly.” But no one has asked you.

**N13. The Night of the Shirts By** [**W. S. Merwin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-merwin)

Oh pile of white shirts who is coming

to breathe in your shapes to carry your numbers

to appear

what hearts

are moving toward their garments here

their days

what troubles beating between arms

you look upward through

each other saying nothing has happened

and it has gone away and is sleeping

having told the same story

and we exist from within

eyes of the gods

you lie on your backs

and the wounds are not made

the blood has not heard

the boat has not turned to stone

and the dark wires to the bulb

are full of the voice of the unborn

W. S. Merwin, “The Night of the Shirts” from *The Second Four Books of Poems* (Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 1993). Copyright © 1993 by W. S. Merwin. Reprinted with the permission of The Wylie Agency, Inc.

Source: *The Second Four Books of Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1993)

**N14. No Coward Soul Is Mine By** [**Emily Brontë**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-bronte)

No coward soul is mine

No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere

I see Heaven's glories shine

And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear

O God within my breast

Almighty ever-present Deity

Life, that in me hast rest,

As I Undying Life, have power in Thee

Vain are the thousand creeds

That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,

Worthless as withered weeds

Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one

Holding so fast by thy infinity,

So surely anchored on

The steadfast rock of Immortality.

With wide-embracing love

Thy spirit animates eternal years

Pervades and broods above,

Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears

Though earth and moon were gone

And suns and universes ceased to be

And Thou wert left alone

Every Existence would exist in thee

There is not room for Death

Nor atom that his might could render void

Since thou art Being and Breath

And what thou art may never be destroyed.

**N15. No Moon Floods the Memory of That Night By** [**Etheridge Knight**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/etheridge-knight)

No moon floods the memory of that night

only the rain I remember the cold rain

against our faces and mixing with your tears

only the rain I remember the cold rain

and your mouth soft and warm

no moon no stars no jagged pain

of lightning only my impotent tongue

and the red rage within my brain

knowing that the chilling rain was our forever

even as I tried to explain:

“A revolutionary is a doomed man

with no certainties but love and history.”

“But our children must grow up with certainties

and they will make the revolution.”

“By example we must show the way so plain

that our children can go neither right

nor left but straight to freedom.”

“No,” you said. And you left.

No moon floods the memory of that night

only the rain I remember the cold rain

and praying that like the rain

returns to the sky you would return to me again.

"No Moon Floods the Memory of That Night" from *The Essential Etheridge Knight*, by Etheridge Knight, copyright 1986. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *The Essential Etheridge Knight* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986)

**N16. Nocturne By** [**Li-Young Lee**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/li-young-lee)

That scraping of iron on iron when the wind

rises, what is it? Something the wind won’t

quit with, but drags back and forth.

Sometimes faint, far, then suddenly, close, just

beyond the screened door, as if someone there

squats in the dark honing his wares against

my threshold. Half steel wire, half metal wing,

nothing and anything might make this noise

of saws and rasps, a creaking and groaning

of bone-growth, or body-death, marriages of rust,

or ore abraded. Tonight, something bows

that should not bend. Something stiffens that should

slide. Something, loose and not right,

rakes or forges itself all night.

Li-Young Lee, “Nocturne” from *Rose*. Copyright © 1986 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Rose* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1986)

**N17. Nocturne By** [**Louise Glück**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louise-gluck)

Mother died last night,

Mother who never dies.

Winter was in the air,

many months away

but in the air nevertheless.

It was the tenth of May.

Hyacinth and apple blossom

bloomed in the back garden.

We could hear

Maria singing songs from Czechoslovakia —

*How alone I am*—

songs of that kind.

*How alone I am,*

*no mother, no father —*

*my brain seems so empty without them*.

Aromas drifted out of the earth;

the dishes were in the sink,

rinsed but not stacked.

Under the full moon

Maria was folding the washing;

the stiff  sheets became

dry white rectangles of  moonlight.

*How alone I am, but in music*

*my desolation is my rejoicing*

.

It was the tenth of May

as it had been the ninth, the eighth.

Mother slept in her bed,

her arms outstretched, her head

balanced between them.

**N18. A Noiseless Patient Spider By** [**Walt Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walt-whitman)

A noiseless patient spider,

I mark’d where on a little promontory it stood isolated,

Mark’d how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,

It launch’d forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,

Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,

Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,

Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,

Till the bridge you will need be form’d, till the ductile anchor hold,

Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

**N19.Not for That City By** [**Charlotte Mew**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charlotte-mew)

Not for that city of the level sun,

Its golden streets and glittering gates ablaze—

The shadeless, sleepless city of white days,

White nights, or nights and days that are as one—

We weary, when all is said , all thought, all done.

We strain our eyes beyond this dusk to see

What, from the threshold of eternity

We shall step into. No, I think we shun

The splendour of that everlasting glare,

The clamour of that never-ending song.

And if for anything we greatly long,

It is for some remote and quiet stair

Which winds to silence and a space for sleep

Too sound for waking and for dreams too deep.

**N20. Not Guilty By** [**David Rivard**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-rivard)

The days are dog-eared, the edges torn,

ragged—like those pages

I ripped once out of library books,

for their photos

of Vallejo and bootless Robert Johnson.

A fine needs paying now

it’s true, but

not by me.

I am no more guilty

than that thrush is

who sits there stripping moss

off the wet bark of a tree.

A red fleck, like his, glows

at the back of my head—a beauty mark,

left by the brain’s after-jets.

I would not wish for the three brains

Robert required

to double-clutch his guitar

and chase those sounds he had to know

led down

and into a troubled dusky river, always.

Three brains did Johnson no earthly good,

neither his nor Vallejo’s 4 & 1/2

worked right exactly—O bunglers,

O banged-up pans of disaster!

Crying for days, said Cesar, & singing for months.

How can I be so strong some times,

at others weak? I wish to be free,

but free to do what? To leave myself behind?

To switch channels remotely?

Better to sing.

Not like the bird, but as they sang,

Cesar & Robert—

with the shocked & seeded

sweetness of an apple

split open by a meat cleaver.

David Rivard, “Not Guilty” from *Bewitched Playground*. Copyright © 2000 by David Rivard. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *Bewitched Playground* (Graywolf Press, 2000)

**N21. Not Here By** [**Jane Kenyon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-kenyon)

Searching for pillowcases trimmed

with lace that my mother-in-law

once made, I open the chest of drawers

upstairs to find that mice

have chewed the blue and white linen

dishtowels to make their nest,

and bedded themselves

among embroidered dresser scarves

and fingertip towels.

Tufts of fibers, droppings like black

caraway seeds, and the stains of birth

and afterbirth give off the strong

unforgettable attar of mouse

that permeates an old farmhouse

on humid summer days.

A couple of hickory nuts

roll around as I lift out

the linens, while a hail of black

sunflower shells

falls on the pillowcases,

yellow with age, but intact.

I’ll bleach them and hang them in the sun

to dry. There’s almost no one left

who knows how to crochet lace....

The bright-eyed squatters are not here.

They’ve scuttled out to the fields

for summer, as they scuttled in

for winter—along the wall, from chair

to skirted chair, making themselves

flat and scarce while the cat

dozed with her paws in the air,

and we read the mail

or evening paper, unaware.

Jane Kenyon, “Not Here” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 2005 by the Estate of Jane Kenyon. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

Source: *Constance: Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1993)

**N22. Not Waving but Drowning By** [**Stevie Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stevie-smith)

Nobody heard him, the dead man,

But still he lay moaning:

I was much further out than you thought

And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking**larking** Playing tricks, kidding, fooling around.

And now he’s dead

It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,

They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always

(Still the dead one lay moaning)

I was much too far out all my life

And not waving but drowning.

Stevie Smith, “Not Waving but Drowning” from *Collected Poems of Stevie Smith.* Copyright © 1972 by Stevie Smith. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *New Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1988)

**N23. Novel By** [**Arthur Rimbaud**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arthur-rimbaud)

I

We aren't serious when we're seventeen.

—One fine evening, to hell with beer and lemonade,

Noisy cafés with their shining lamps!

We walk under the green linden trees of the park

The lindens smell good in the good June evenings!

At times the air is so scented that we close our eyes.

The wind laden with sounds—the town isn't far—

Has the smell of grapevines and beer . . .

II

—There you can see a very small patch

Of dark blue, framed by a little branch,

Pinned up by a naughty star, that melts

In gentle quivers, small and very white . . .

Night in June! Seventeen years old! —We are overcome by it all

The sap is champagne and goes to our head . . .

We talked a lot and feel a kiss on our lips

Trembling there like a small insect . . .

III

Our wild heart moves through novels like Robinson Crusoe,

—When, in the light of a pale street lamp,

A girl goes by attractive and charming

Under the shadow of her father's terrible collar . . .

And as she finds you incredibly naïve,

While clicking her little boots,

She turns abruptly and in a lively way . . .

—Then *cavatinas* die on your lips . . .

IV

You are in love. Occupied until the month of August.

You are in love. —Your sonnets make Her laugh.

All your friends go off, you are ridiculous.

—Then one evening the girl you worship deigned to write to you . . . !

—That evening, . . . —you return to the bright cafés,

You ask for beer or lemonade . . .

—We're not serious when we are seventeen

And when we have green linden trees in the park.

Arthur Rimbaud, "Novel" from *Complete Works, Selected Letters*. Copyright © 2005 by Arthur Rimbaud. Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press. Source: *Complete Works, Selected Letters* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)

**N24. November Cotton Flower By** [**Jean Toomer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jean-toomer)

Boll-weevil’s coming, and the winter’s cold,

Made cotton-stalks look rusty, seasons old,

And cotton, scarce as any southern snow,

Was vanishing; the branch, so pinched and slow,

Failed in its function as the autumn rake;

Drouth fighting soil had caused the soil to take

All water from the streams; dead birds were found

In wells a hundred feet below the ground—

Such was the season when the flower bloomed.

Old folks were startled, and it soon assumed

Significance. Superstition saw

Something it had never seen before:

Brown eyes that loved without a trace of fear,

Beauty so sudden for that time of year.

Jean Toomer, "November Cotton Flower" from *Cane*. Copyright 1923 by Boni & Liveright, renewed 1951 by Jean Toomer. Reprinted with the permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Cane* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1923)

**N25. Nude Descending a Staircase By** [**X J Kennedy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/x-j-kennedy)

Toe after toe, a snowing flesh,

a gold of lemon, root and rind,

she sifts in sunlight down the stairs

with nothing on. Nor on her mind.

We spy beneath the banister

a constant thresh of thigh on thigh;

her lips imprint the swinging air

that parts to let her parts go by.

One-woman waterfall, she wears

her slow descent like a long cape

and pausing on the final stair,

collects her motions into shape.

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Source: *Poetry* (January 1960).

**N26. Nuit Blanche By** [**Amy Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-lowell)

I want no horns to rouse me up to-night,

And trumpets make too clamorous a ring

To fit my mood, it is so weary white

I have no wish for doing any thing.

A music coaxed from humming strings would please;

Not plucked, but drawn in creeping cadences

Across a sunset wall where some Marquise

Picks a pale rose amid strange silences.

Ghostly and vaporous her gown sweeps by

The twilight dusking wall, I hear her feet

Delaying on the gravel, and a sigh,

Briefly permitted, touches the air like sleet

And it is dark, I hear her feet no more.

A red moon leers beyond the lily-tank.

A drunken moon ogling a sycamore,

Running long fingers down its shining flank.

A lurching moon, as nimble as a clown,

Cuddling the flowers and trees which burn like glass.

Red, kissing lips, I feel you on my gown—

Kiss me, red lips, and then pass—pass.

Music, you are pitiless to-night.

And I so old, so cold, so languorously white.

Amy Lowell, “Nuit Blanche” from *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell.* Copyright © 1955 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © renewed 1983 by Houghton Mifflin Company, Brinton P. Roberts, and G. D'Andelot, Esquire. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Selected Poems of Amy Lowell* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002)

**N27. Numbers By** [**Mary Cornish**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-cornish)

I like the generosity of numbers.

The way, for example,

they are willing to count

anything or anyone:

two pickles, one door to the room,

eight dancers dressed as swans.

I like the domesticity of addition—

*add two cups of milk and stir—*

the sense of plenty: six plums

on the ground, three more

falling from the tree.

And multiplication’s school

of fish times fish,

whose silver bodies breed

beneath the shadow

of a boat.

Even subtraction is never loss,

just addition somewhere else:

five sparrows take away two,

the two in someone else’s

garden now.

There’s an amplitude to long division,

as it opens Chinese take-out

box by paper box,

inside every folded cookie

a new fortune.

And I never fail to be surprised

by the gift of an odd remainder,

footloose at the end:

forty-seven divided by eleven equals four,

with three remaining.

Three boys beyond their mother’s call,

two Italians off to the sea,

one sock that isn't anywhere you look.

Mary Cornish, “Numbers” from *Red Studio*. Copyright © 2007 by Mary Cornish. Reprinted by permission of Oberlin College Press.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 2000).

**N28. Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent’s Narrow Room By** [**William Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-wordsworth)

Nuns fret not at their convent’s narrow room;

And hermits are contented with their cells;

And students with their pensive citadels;

Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,

Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,

High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,

Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:

In truth the prison, into which we doom

Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,

In sundry moods, ’twas pastime to be bound

Within the Sonnet’s scanty plot of ground;

Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)

Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,

Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

NOTES: POL Participants: in January 2014, a typo was corrected in line 4: “this loom” was corrected to “his loom.” Readers should not be penalized for reciting “this loom.”

Source: *The Longman Anthology of Poetry* (Pearson, 2006)

**N29. Nurture By** [**Maxine W. Kumin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/maxine-w-kumin)

From a documentary on marsupials I learn

that a pillowcase makes a fine

substitute pouch for an orphaned kangaroo.

I am drawn to such dramas of animal rescue.

They are warm in the throat. I suffer, the critic proclaims,

from an overabundance of maternal genes.

Bring me your fallen fledgling, your bummer lamb,

lead the abused, the starvelings, into my barn.

Advise the hunted deer to leap into my corn.

And had there been a wild child—

*filthy and fierce as a ferret*, he is called

in one nineteenth-century account—

a wild child to love, it is safe to assume,

given my fireside inked with paw prints,

there would have been room.

Think of the language we two, same and not-same,

might have constructed from sign,

scratch, grimace, grunt, vowel:

Laughter our first noun, and our long verb, howl.

Maxine Kumin, “Nurture” from *Selected Poems 1960-1990.* Copyright © 1989 by Maxine Kumin. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October/November 1987).

**N30. The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd By** [**Sir Walter Ralegh**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sir-walter-ralegh)

If all the world and love were young,

And truth in every Shepherd’s tongue,

These pretty pleasures might me move,

To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,

When Rivers rage and Rocks grow cold,

And *Philomel* becometh dumb,

The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,

To wayward winter reckoning yields,

A honey tongue, a heart of gall,

Is fancy’s spring, but sorrow’s fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,

Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies

Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:

In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,

The Coral clasps and amber studs,

All these in me no means can move

To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,

Had joys no date, nor age no need,

Then these delights my mind might move

To live with thee, and be thy love.

**POL O-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**O1**](#O1)[**O2**](#O2)[**O3**](#O3)[**O4**](#O4)[**O5**](#O5)[**O6**](#O6)[**O7**](#O7)[**O8**](#O8)[**O9**](#O9)[**O10**](#O10)[**O11**](#O11)[**O12**](#O12)[**O13**](#O13)

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**O53 O54 O55 O56 O57 O58 O59 O60 O61 O62 O63 O64 O65**

**O66 O67 O68 O69 O70 O71 O72 O73 O74 O75 O76 O77 O78**

**O79 O80 O81 O82 O83 O84 O85 O86 O87 O88 O89 O90 O91**

**O92 O93 O94 O95 O96 O97 O98 O99 O100 O101 O102 O103 O104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**O1. O Carib Isle! By** [**Hart Crane**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/hart-crane)

O Carib Isle!

The tarantula rattling at the lily’s foot

Across the feet of the dead, laid in white sand

Near the coral beach—nor zigzag fiddle crabs

Side-stilting from the path (that shift, subvert

And anagrammatize your name)—No, nothing here

Below the palsy that one eucalyptus lifts

In wrinkled shadows—mourns.

And yet suppose

I count these nacreous frames of tropic death,

Brutal necklaces of shells around each grave

Squared off so carefully. Then

To the white sand I may speak a name, fertile

Albeit in a stranger tongue. Tree names, flower names

Deliberate, gainsay death’s brittle crypt. Meanwhile

The wind that knots itself in one great death—

Coils and withdraws. So syllables want breath.

But where is the Captain of this doubloon isle

Without a turnstile? Who but catchword crabs

Patrols the dry groins of the underbrush?

What man, or What

Is Commissioner of mildew throughout the ambushed senses?

His Carib mathematics web the eyes’ baked lenses!

Under the poinciana, of a noon or afternoon

Let fiery blossoms clot the light, render my ghost

Sieved upward, white and black along the air

Until it meets the blue’s comedian host.

Let not the pilgrim see himself again

For slow evisceration bound like those huge terrapin

Each daybreak on the wharf, their brine-caked eyes;

—Spiked, overturned; such thunder in their strain!

And clenched beaks coughing for the surge again!

Slagged of the hurricane—I, cast within its flow,

Congeal by afternoons here, satin and vacant.

You have given me the shell, Satan,—carbonic amulet

Sere of the sun exploded in the sea.

Hart Crane, "O Carib Isle!" from *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane*, edited by Marc SImon. Copyright © 1933, 1958, 1966 by Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright © 1986 by Marc Simon. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October 1927).

**O2. The Obligation to Be Happy By** [**Linda Pastan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-pastan)

It is more onerous

than the rites of beauty

or housework, harder than love.

But you expect it of me casually,

the way you expect the sun

to come up, not in spite of rain

or clouds but because of them.

And so I smile, as if my own fidelity

to sadness were a hidden vice—

that downward tug on my mouth,

my old suspicion that health

and love are brief irrelevancies,

no more than laughter in the warm dark

strangled at dawn.

Happiness. I try to hoist it

on my narrow shoulders again—

a knapsack heavy with gold coins.

I stumble around the house,

bump into things.

Only Midas himself

would understand.

Linda Pastan, "The Obligation to be Happy" from *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998*, published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Copyright © 1998 by Linda Pastan. Reprinted with the permission of the Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency, Inc.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (December 1996).

**O3. The Ocean By** [**Nathaniel Hawthorne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/nathaniel-hawthorne)

The Ocean has its silent caves,

Deep, quiet, and alone;

Though there be fury on the waves,

Beneath them there is none.

The awful spirits of the deep

Hold their communion there;

And there are those for whom we weep,

The young, the bright, the fair.

Calmly the wearied seamen rest

Beneath their own blue sea.

The ocean solitudes are blest,

For there is purity.

The earth has guilt, the earth has care,

Unquiet are its graves;

But peaceful sleep is ever there,

Beneath the dark blue waves.

Source: *The Mariner's Library or Voyager's Companion* (1833)

**O4. Ode ﻿ By** [**Arthur O'Shaughnessy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arthur-oshaughnessy)

We are the music-makers,

And we are the dreamers of dreams,

Wandering by lone sea-breakers

And sitting by desolate streams;

World losers and world forsakers,

On whom the pale moon gleams:

Yet we are the movers and shakers

Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties

We build up the world’s great cities.

And out of a fabulous story

We fashion an empire’s glory:

One man with a dream, at pleasure,

Shall go forth and conquer a crown;

And three with a new song’s measure

Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying

In the buried past of the earth,

Built Nineveh with our sighing,

And Babel itself with our mirth;

And o’erthrew them with prophesying

To the old of the new world’s worth;

For each age is a dream that is dying,

Or one that is coming to birth.

**O5. Ode for the American Dead in Asia By** [**Thomas McGrath**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-mcgrath)

1.

God love you now, if no one else will ever,

Corpse in the paddy, or dead on a high hill

In the fine and ruinous summer of a war

You never wanted. All your false flags were

Of bravery and ignorance, like grade school maps:

Colors of countries you would never see—

Until that weekend in eternity

When, laughing, well armed, perfectly ready to kill

The world and your brother, the safe commanders sent

You into your future. Oh, dead on a hill,

Dead in a paddy, leeched and tumbled to

A tomb of footnotes. We mourn a changeling: you:

Handselled to poverty and drummed to war

By distinguished masters whom you never knew.

2.

The bee that spins his metal from the sun,

The shy mole drifting like a miner ghost

Through midnight earth—all happy creatures run

As strict as trains on rails the circuits of

Blind instinct. Happy in your summer follies,

You mined a culture that was mined for war:

The state to mold you, church to bless, and always

ThE elders to confirm you in your ignorance.

No scholar put your thinking cap on nor

Warned that in dead seas fishes died in schools

Before inventing legs to walk the land.

The rulers stuck a tennis racket in your hand,

An Ark against the flood. In time of change

Courage is not enough: the blind mole dies,

And you on your hill, who did not know the rules.

3.

Wet in the windy counties of the dawn

The lone crow skirls his draggled passage home:

And God (whose sparrows fall aslant his gaze,

Like grace or confetti) blinks and he is gone,

And you are gone. Your scarecrow valor grows

And rusts like early lilac while the rose

Blooms in Dakota and the stock exchange

Flowers. Roses, rents, all things conspire

To crown your death with wreaths of living fire.

And the public mourners come: the politic tear

Is cast in the Forum. But, in another year,

We will mourn you, whose fossil courage fills

The limestone histories: brave: ignorant: amazed:

Dead in the rice paddies, dead on the nameless hills.

Thomas McGrath, “Ode for the American Dead in Asia” from *Selected Poems 1938-1998*. Copyright © 1988 by Thomas McGrath. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press. Source: *Selected Poems 1938-1998* (Copper Canyon Press, 1988)

**O6. Ode on a Grecian Urn By** [**John Keats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-keats)

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,

Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?

What little town by river or sea shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede

Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

**O7. Ode on Solitude By** [**Alexander Pope**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alexander-pope)

Happy the man, whose wish and care

A few paternal acres bound,

Content to breathe his native air,

In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,

Whose flocks supply him with attire,

Whose trees in summer yield him shade,

In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find

Hours, days, and years slide soft away,

In health of body, peace of mind,

Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,

Together mixed; sweet recreation;

And innocence, which most does please,

With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;

Thus unlamented let me die;

Steal from the world, and not a stone

Tell where I lie.

**O8. Ode to the Hotel Near the Children's Hospital By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

Praise the restless beds

Praise the beds that do not adjust

that won't lift the head to feed

or lower for shots

or blood

or raise to watch the tinny TV

Praise the hotel TV that won't quit

its murmur & holler

Praise the room service

that doesn't exist

just the slow delivery to the front desk

of cooling pizzas

& brown bags leaky

greasy & clear

Praise the vending machines

Praise the change

Praise the hot water

& the heat

or the loud cool

that helps the helpless sleep.

Praise the front desk

who knows to wake

Rm 120 when the hospital rings

Praise the silent phone

Praise the dark drawn

by thick daytime curtains

after long nights of waiting,

awake.

Praise the waiting & then praise the nothing

that's better than bad news

Praise the wakeup call

at 6 am

Praise the sleeping in

Praise the card hung on the door

like a whisper

lips pressed silent

Praise the stranger's hands

that change the sweat of sheets

Praise the checking out

Praise the going home

to beds unmade

for days

Beds that won't resurrect

or rise

that lie there like a child should

sleeping, tubeless

Praise this mess

that can be left

Kevin Young, "Ode to the Hotel Near the Children’s Hospital" from *Dear Darkness*. Copyright © 2008 by Kevin Young. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. All Rights Reserved. Source: *Dear Darkness* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008)

**O9. Ode to the Midwest By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

The country I come from   
Is called the Midwest   
—Bob Dylan

I want to be doused

in cheese

*&* fried. I want

to wander

the aisles, my heart's

supermarket stocked high

as cholesterol. I want to die

wearing a sweatsuit—

I want to live

forever in a Christmas sweater,

a teddy bear nursing

off the front. I want to write

a check in the express lane.

I want to scrape

my driveway clean

myself, early, before

anyone's awake—

that'll put em to shame—

I want to see what the sun

sees before it tells

the snow to go. I want to be

the only black person I know.

I want to throw

out my back *&* not

complain about it.

I wanta drive

two blocks. Why walk—

I want love, n stuff—

I want to cut

my sutures myself.

I want to jog

down to the river

*&* make it my bed—

I want to walk

its muddy banks

*&* make me a withdrawal.

I tried jumping in,

found it frozen—

I'll go home, I guess,

to my rooms where the moon

changes *&* shines

like television.

**O10. Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow By** [**Robert Duncan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-duncan)

as if it were a scene made-up by the mind,

that is not mine, but is a made place,

that is mine, it is so near to the heart,

an eternal pasture folded in all thought

so that there is a hall therein

that is a made place, created by light

wherefrom the shadows that are forms fall.

Wherefrom fall all architectures I am

I say are likenesses of the First Beloved

whose flowers are flames lit to the Lady.

She it is Queen Under The Hill

whose hosts are a disturbance of words within words

that is a field folded.

It is only a dream of the grass blowing

east against the source of the sun

in an hour before the sun’s going down

whose secret we see in a children’s game

of ring a round of roses told.

Often I am permitted to return to a meadow

as if it were a given property of the mind

that certain bounds hold against chaos,

that is a place of first permission,

everlasting omen of what is.

Robert Duncan, “Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow” from *The Opening of the Field.* Copyright © 1960 by Robert Duncan. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993)

**O11. ['Often rebuked, yet always back returning'] By** [**Emily Brontë**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-bronte)

Often rebuked, yet always back returning

To those first feelings that were born with me,

And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning

For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region;

Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;

And visions rising, legion after legion,

Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I’ll walk, but not in old heroic traces,

And not in paths of high morality,

And not among the half-distinguished faces,

The clouded forms of long-past history.

I’ll walk where my own nature would be leading:

It vexes me to choose another guide:

Where the gray flocks in ferny glens are feeding;

Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?

More glory and more grief than I can tell:

The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling

Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

**O12. "oh antic God" By** [**Lucille Clifton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lucille-clifton)

oh antic God

return to me

my mother in her thirties

leaned across the front porch

the huge pillow of her breasts

pressing against the rail

summoning me in for bed.

I am almost the dead woman’s age times two.

I can barely recall her song

the scent of her hands

though her wild hair scratches my dreams

at night. return to me, oh Lord of then

and now, my mother’s calling,

her young voice humming my name.

Lucille Clifton, “ ‘oh antic God’ ” from *Mercy.* Copyright © 2004 by Lucille Clifton. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Mercy* (2004)

**O13. Oh, Hope! thou soother sweet of human woes By** [**Charlotte Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charlotte-smith)

Oh, Hope! thou soother sweet of human woes!

How shall I lure thee to my haunts forlorn!

For me wilt thou renew the withered rose,

And clear my painful path of pointed thorn?

Ah come, sweet nymph! in smiles and softness drest,

Like the young hours that lead the tender year

Enchantress come! and charm my cares to rest:

Alas! the flatterer flies, and will not hear!

A prey to fear, anxiety, and pain,

Must I a sad existence still deplore?

Lo! the flowers fade, but all the thorns remain,

‘For me the vernal garland blooms no more.’

Come then, ‘pale Misery’s love!’ be thou my cure,

And I will bless thee, who though slow art sure.

**O14. Old Ironsides By** [**Oliver Wendell Holmes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/oliver-wendell-holmes)

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!

Long has it waved on high,

And many an eye has danced to see

That banner in the sky;

Beneath it rung the battle shout,

And burst the cannon’s roar;—

The meteor of the ocean air

Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes’ blood

Where knelt the vanquished foe,

When winds were hurrying o’er the flood

And waves were white below,

No more shall feel the victor’s tread,

Or know the conquered knee;—

The harpies of the shore shall pluck

The eagle of the sea!

O, better that her shattered hulk

Should sink beneath the wave;

Her thunders shook the mighty deep,

And there should be her grave;

Nail to the mast her holy flag,

Set every thread-bare sail,

And give her to the god of storms,—

The lightning and the gale!

**O15. The Old Liberators By** [**Robert Hedin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-hedin)

Of all the people in the mornings at the mall,

it’s the old liberators I like best,

those veterans of the Bulge, Anzio, or Monte Cassino

I see lost in Automotive or back in Home Repair,

bored among the paints and power tools.

Or the really old ones, the ones who are going fast,

who keep dozing off in the little orchards

of shade under the distant skylights.

All around, from one bright rack to another,

their wives stride big as generals,

their handbags bulging like ripe fruit.

They are almost all gone now,

and with them they are taking the flak

and fire storms, the names of the old bombing runs.

Each day a little more of their memory goes out,

darkens the way a house darkens,

its rooms quietly filling with evening,

until nothing but the wind lifts the lace curtains,

the wind bearing through the empty rooms

the rich far off scent of gardens

where just now, this morning,

light is falling on the wild philodendrons.

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**O16. Old Mama Saturday By** [**Marie Ponsot**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marie-ponsot)

*“Saturday’s child must work for a living.”*

“I’m moving from Grief  Street.

Taxes are high here

though the mortgage’s cheap.

The house is well built.

With stuff to protect, that

mattered to me,

the security.

These things that I mind,

you know, aren’t mine.

I mind minding them.

They weigh on my mind.

I don’t mind them well.

I haven’t got the knack

of  kindly minding.

I say Take them back

but you never do.

When I throw them out

it may frighten you

and maybe me too.

Maybe

it will empty me

too emptily

and keep me here

asleep, at sea

under the guilt quilt,

under the you tree.”

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Source: *Poetry* (May 2013).

**O17. Old Men Pitching Horseshoes By** [**X J Kennedy**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/x-j-kennedy)

Back in a yard where ringers groove a ditch,

These four in shirtsleeves congregate to pitch

Dirt-burnished iron. With appraising eye,

One sizes up a peg, hoists and lets fly—

A clang resounds as though a smith had struck

Fire from a forge. His first blow, out of luck,

Rattles in circles. Hitching up his face,

He swings, and weight once more inhabits space,

Tumbles as gently as a new-laid egg.

Extended iron arms surround their peg

Like one come home to greet a long-lost brother.

Shouts from one outpost. Mutters from the other.

Now changing sides, each withered pitcher moves

As his considered dignity behooves

Down the worn path of earth where August flies

And sheaves of air in warm distortions rise,

To stand ground, fling, kick dust with all the force

Of shoes still hammered to a living horse.

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**O18. Old Men Playing Basketball By** [**B. H. Fairchild**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/b-h-fairchild)

The heavy bodies lunge, the broken language

of fake and drive, glamorous jump shot

slowed to a stutter. Their gestures, in love

again with the pure geometry of curves,

rise toward the ball, falter, and fall away.

On the boards their hands and fingertips

tremble in tense little prayers of reach

and balance. Then, the grind of bone

and socket, the caught breath, the sigh,

the grunt of the body laboring to give

birth to itself. In their toiling and grand

sweeps, I wonder, do they still make love

to their wives, kissing the undersides

of their wrists, dancing the old soft-shoe

of desire? And on the long walk home

from the VFW, do they still sing

to the drunken moon? Stands full, clock

moving, the one in army fatigues

and houseshoes says to himself, *pick and roll*,

and the phrase sounds musical as ever,

radio crooning songs of love after the game,

the girl leaning back in the Chevy’s front seat

as her raven hair flames in the shuddering

light of the outdoor movie, and now he drives,

gliding toward the net. A glass wand

of autumn light breaks over the backboard.

Boys rise up in old men, wings begin to sprout

at their backs. The ball turns in the darkening air.

B. H. Fairchild, “Old Men Playing Basketball” from *The Art of the Lathe.* Copyright © 1998 by B. H. Fairchild. Reprinted with the permission of Alice James Books. Source: *Poetry* (July 1993).

**O19. The Oldest Living Thing in L.A. By** [**Larry Levis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/larry-levis)

At Wilshire & Santa Monica I saw an opossum

Trying to cross the street. It was late, the street

Was brightly lit, the opossum would take

A few steps forward, then back away from the breath

Of moving traffic. People coming out of the bars

Would approach, as if to help it somehow.

It would lift its black lips & show them

The reddened gums, the long rows of incisors,

Teeth that went all the way back beyond

The flames of Troy & Carthage, beyond sheep

Grazing rock-strewn hills, fragments of ruins

In the grass at San Vitale. It would back away

Delicately & smoothly, stepping carefully

As it always had. It could mangle someone’s hand

In twenty seconds. Mangle it for good. It could

Sever it completely from the wrist in forty.

There was nothing to be done for it. Someone

Or other probably called the LAPD, who then

Called Animal Control, who woke a driver, who

Then dressed in mailed gloves, the kind of thing

Small knights once wore into battle, who gathered

Together his pole with a noose on the end,

A light steel net to snare it with, someone who hoped

The thing would have vanished by the time he got there.

Larry Levis, “The Oldest Living Thing in L.A.” from *Elegy.* Copyright © 1997 by Larry Levis. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, www.upress.pitt.edu.

Source: *Elegy* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997)

**O20. On a Drop of Dew By** [**Andrew Marvell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/andrew-marvell)

See how the orient dew,

Shed from the bosom of the morn

Into the blowing roses,

Yet careless of its mansion new,

For the clear region where ’twas born

Round in itself incloses:

And in its little globe’s extent,

Frames as it can its native element.

How it the purple flow’r does slight,

Scarce touching where it lies,

But gazing back upon the skies,

Shines with a mournful light,

Like its own tear,

Because so long divided from the sphere.

Restless it rolls and unsecure,

Trembling lest it grow impure,

Till the warm sun pity its pain,

And to the skies exhale it back again.

So the soul, that drop, that ray

Of the clear fountain of eternal day,

Could it within the human flow’r be seen,

Remembering still its former height,

Shuns the sweet leaves and blossoms green,

And recollecting its own light,

Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express

The greater heaven in an heaven less.

In how coy a figure wound,

Every way it turns away:

So the world excluding round,

Yet receiving in the day,

Dark beneath, but bright above,

Here disdaining, there in love.

How loose and easy hence to go,

How girt and ready to ascend,

Moving but on a point below,

It all about does upwards bend.

Such did the manna’s sacred dew distill,

White and entire, though congealed and chill,

Congealed on earth : but does, dissolving, run

Into the glories of th’ almighty sun.

Source: *Complete Poems* (1996)

**O21. On An Unsociable Family By** [**Elizabeth Hands**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-hands)

O what a strange parcel of creatures are we,

Scarce ever to quarrel, or even agree;

We all are alone, though at home altogether,

Except to the fire constrained by the weather;

Then one says, ‘’Tis cold’, which we all of us know,

And with unanimity answer, ‘’Tis so’:

With shrugs and with shivers all look at the fire,

And shuffle ourselves and our chairs a bit nigher;

Then quickly, preceded by silence profound,

A yawn epidemical catches around:

Like social companions we never fall out,

Nor ever care what one another’s about;

To comfort each other is never our plan,

For to please ourselves, truly, is more than we can.

**O22. On Education By** [**Elizabeth Bentley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-bentley)

December 1789

When infant Reason first exerts her sway,

And new-formed thoughts their earliest charms display;

Then let the growing race employ your care

Then guard their opening minds from Folly’s snare;

Correct the rising passions of their youth,

Teach them each serious, each important truth;

Plant heavenly virtue in the tender breast,

Destroy each vice that might its growth molest;

Point out betimes the course they should pursue;

Then with redoubled pleasure shall you view

Their reason strengthen as their years increase,

Their virtue ripen and their follies cease;

Like corn sown early in the fertile soil,

The richest harvest shall repay your toil.

**O23. On Inhabiting an Orange By** [**Josephine Miles**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/josephine-miles)

All our roads go nowhere.

Maps are curled

To keep the pavement definitely

On the world.

All our footsteps, set to make

Metric advance,

Lapse into arcs in deference

To circumstance.

All our journeys nearing Space

Skirt it with care,

Shying at the distances

Present in air.

Blithely travel-stained and worn,

Erect and sure,

All our travels go forth,

Making down the roads of Earth

Endless detour.

Josephine Miles, “On Inhabiting an Orange” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright � 1983 by Josephine Miles. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Illinois Press.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (September 1934).

**O24. On Monsieur’s Departure By** [**Queen Elizabeth I**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/queen-elizabeth-i)

I grieve and dare not show my discontent,

I love and yet am forced to seem to hate,

I do, yet dare not say I ever meant,

I seem stark mute but inwardly do prate.

I am and not, I freeze and yet am burned,

Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun,

Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,

Stands and lies by me, doth what I have done.

His too familiar care doth make me rue it.

No means I find to rid him from my breast,

Till by the end of things it be supprest.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,

For I am soft and made of melting snow;

Or be more cruel, love, and so be kind.

Let me or float or sink, be high or low.

Or let me live with some more sweet content,

Or die and so forget what love ere meant.

**O25. On Pickiness By** [**Rodney Jones**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rodney-jones)

When the first mechanical picker had stripped the field,

It left such a copious white dross of disorderly wispiness

That my mother could not console herself to the waste

And insisted on having it picked over with human hands,

Though anyone could see there was not enough for ten sheets

And the hands had long since gone into the factories.

No matter how often my father pointed this out,

She worried it the way I’ve worried the extra words

In poems that I conceived with the approximate

Notion that each stanza should have the same number

Of lines and each line the same number of syllables—

And disregarded it, telling myself a ripple

Or botch on the surface, like the stutter of a speaker,

Is all I have to affirm the deep fluency below.

The Hebrews distrusted Greek poetry (which embodied

Harmony and symmetry, and, therefore, revision)

Not for aesthetic reasons, but because they believed

That to change the first words, which rose unsmelted

From the trance, amounted to sacrilege against God.

In countries where, because of the gross abundance

Of labor, it’s unlawful to import harvesting machines,

I see the women in the fields and think of how,

When my mother used to pick, you could tell

Her row by the bare stalks and the scant poundage

That tumbled from her sack so pristinely white

And devoid of burrs, it seemed to have already

Passed through the spiked mandibles of the gin.

Dr. Williams said of Eliot that his poems were so

Cautiously wrought that they seemed to come

To us already digested in all four stomachs of the cow.

What my father loved about my mother was not

Just the beauty of her body and face, but the practice

Of her ideas and the intelligence of her hands

As they made the house that abides in us still

As worry and bother, but also the perfect freedom beyond—

As cleanliness is next to godliness but is not God.

Rodney Jones, “On Pickiness” from *Things That Happen Once.* Copyright © 1997 by Rodney Jones. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Things That Happen Once* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1996)

**O26. On Quitting By** [**Edgar Albert Guest**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-albert-guest)

How much grit do you think you’ve got?

Can you quit a thing that you like a lot?

You may talk of pluck; it’s an easy word,

And where’er you go it is often heard;

But can you tell to a jot or guess

Just how much courage you now possess?

You may stand to trouble and keep your grin,

But have you tackled self-discipline?

Have you ever issued commands to you

To quit the things that you like to do,

And then, when tempted and sorely swayed,

Those rigid orders have you obeyed?

Don’t boast of your grit till you’ve tried it out,

Nor prate to men of your courage stout,

For it’s easy enough to retain a grin

In the face of a fight there’s a chance to win,

But the sort of grit that is good to own

Is the stuff you need when you’re all alone.

How much grit do you think you’ve got?

Can you turn from joys that you like a lot?

Have you ever tested yourself to know

How far with yourself your will can go?

If you want to know if you have grit,

Just pick out a joy that you like, and quit.

It’s bully sport and it’s open fight;

It will keep you busy both day and night;

For the toughest kind of a game you’ll find

Is to make your body obey your mind.

And you never will know what is meant by grit

Unless there’s something you’ve tried to quit.

**O27. On Shakespeare. 1630 By** [**John Milton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-milton)

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones,

The labor of an age in pilèd stones,

Or that his hallowed relics should be hid

Under a star-ypointing pyramid?

Dear son of Memory, great heir of fame,

What need’st thou such weak witness of thy name?

Thou in our wonder and astonishment

Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

For whilst to th’ shame of slow-endeavouring art,

Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart

Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book

Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,

Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,

Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;

And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie,

That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983)

**O28. On the Death of Anne Brontë By** [**Charlotte Brontë**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charlotte-bronte)

THERE 's little joy in life for me,

And little terror in the grave;

I 've lived the parting hour to see

Of one I would have died to save.

Calmly to watch the failing breath,

Wishing each sigh might be the last;

Longing to see the shade of death

O'er those belovèd features cast.

The cloud, the stillness that must part

The darling of my life from me;

And then to thank God from my heart,

To thank Him well and fervently;

Although I knew that we had lost

The hope and glory of our life;

And now, benighted, tempest-tossed,

Must bear alone the weary strife.

**O29. On the Death of Richard West By** [**Thomas Gray**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-gray)

In vain to me the smiling Mornings shine,

And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;

The birds in vain their amorous descant join;

Or cheerful fields resume their green attire;

These ears, alas! for other notes repine,

A different object do these eyes require;

My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;

And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.

Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,

And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;

The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;

To warm their little loves the birds complain;

I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,

And weep the more because I weep in vain.

**O30. On the Existence of the Soul By** [**Pattiann Rogers**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/pattiann-rogers)

How confident I am it is there. Don’t I bring it,

As if it were enclosed in a fine leather case,

To particular places solely for its own sake?

Haven’t I set it down before the variegated canyon

And the undeviating bald salt dome?

Don’t I feed it on ivory calcium and ruffled

Shell bellies, shore boulders, on the sight

Of the petrel motionless over the sea, its splayed

Feet hanging? Don’t I make sure it apprehends

The invisibly fine spray more than once?

I have seen that it takes in every detail

I can manage concerning the garden wall and its borders.

I have listed for it the comings and goings

Of one hundred species of insects explicitly described.

I have named the chartreuse stripe

And the fimbriated antenna, the bulbed thorax

And the multiple eye. I have sketched

The brilliant wings of the trumpet vine and invented

New vocabularies describing the interchanges between rocks

And their crevices, between the holly lip

And its concept of itself.

And if not for its sake, why would I go

Out into the night alone and stare deliberately

Straight up into 15 billion years ago and more?

I have cherished it. I have named it.

By my own solicitations

I have proof of its presence.

Pattiann Rogers, “On the Existence of the Soul” from *Firekeeper: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1994 by Pattiann Rogers. Reprinted with the permission of Milkweed Editions.

Source: *Firekeeper: New and Selected Poems* (Milkweed Editions, 1994)

**O31. On the Lawn at the Villa By** [**Louis Simpson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louis-simpson)

On the lawn at the villa—

That’s the way to start, eh, reader?

We know where we stand—somewhere expensive—

You and I *imperturbes*, as Walt would say,

Before the diversions of wealth, you and I *engagés*.

On the lawn at the villa

Sat a manufacturer of explosives,

His wife from Paris,

And a young man named Bruno,

And myself, being American,

Willing to talk to these malefactors,

The manufacturer of explosives, and so on,

But somehow superior. By that I mean democratic.

It’s complicated, being an American,

Having the money and the bad conscience, both at the same time.

Perhaps, after all, this is not the right subject for a poem.

We were all sitting there paralyzed

In the hot Tuscan afternoon,

And the bodies of the machine-gun crew were draped over the balcony.

So we sat there all afternoon.

Louis Simpson, “On the Lawn at the Villa” from *The Owner of the House: New Collected Poems 1940-2001*. Copyright © 2003 by Louis Simpson. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Collected Poems* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1988)

**O32. On Virtue By** [**Phillis Wheatley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/phillis-wheatley)

O thou bright jewel in my aim I strive

To comprehend thee. Thine own words declare

Wisdom is higher than a fool can reach.

I cease to wonder, and no more attempt

Thine height t’explore, or fathom thy profound.

But, O my soul, sink not into despair,

*Virtue* is near thee, and with gentle hand

Would now embrace thee, hovers o’er thine head.

Fain would the heaven-born soul with her converse,

Then seek, then court her for her promised bliss.

Auspicious queen, thine heavenly pinions spread,

And lead celestial *Chastity* along;

Lo! now her sacred retinue descends,

Arrayed in glory from the orbs above.

Attend me, *Virtue*, thro’ my youthful years!

O leave me not to the false joys of time!

But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.

*Greatness*, or *Goodness*, say what I shall call thee,

To give an higher appellation still,

Teach me a better strain, a nobler lay,

O Thou, enthroned with Cherubs in the realms of day!

**O33. On What Planet By** [**Kenneth Rexroth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-rexroth)

Uniformly over the whole countryside

The warm air flows imperceptibly seaward;

The autumn haze drifts in deep bands

Over the pale water;

White egrets stand in the blue marshes;

Tamalpais, Diablo, St. Helena

Float in the air.

Climbing on the cliffs of Hunter’s Hill

We look out over fifty miles of sinuous

Interpenetration of mountains and sea.

Leading up a twisted chimney,

Just as my eyes rise to the level

Of a small cave, two white owls

Fly out, silent, close to my face.

They hover, confused in the sunlight,

And disappear into the recesses of the cliff.

All day I have been watching a new climber,

A young girl with ash blonde hair

And gentle confident eyes.

She climbs slowly, precisely,

With unwasted grace.

While I am coiling the ropes,

Watching the spectacular sunset,

She turns to me and says, quietly,

“It must be very beautiful, the sunset,

On Saturn, with the rings and all the moons.”

Kenneth Rexroth, "On What Planet" from *The Collected Shorter Poems*. Copyright © 1940 by New Directions Publishing Corporation. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *The Collected Shorter Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2003)

**O34. One Art By** [**Elizabeth Bishop**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-bishop)

The art of losing isn’t hard to master;

so many things seem filled with the intent

to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster

of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.

The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:

places, and names, and where it was you meant

to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother’s watch. And look! my last, or

next-to-last, of three loved houses went.

The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,

some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.

I miss them, but it wasn’t a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture

I love) I shan’t have lied. It’s evident

the art of losing’s not too hard to master

though it may look like (*Write* it!) like disaster.

Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” from *The Complete Poems 1926-1979*. Copyright © 1979, 1983 by Alice Helen Methfessel. Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. Source: *The Complete Poems 1926-1979* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983)

**O35. One Hundred Love Sonnets: XVII By** [**Pablo Neruda**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/pablo-neruda)

I don’t love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,

or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:

I love you as one loves certain obscure things,

secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn’t bloom but carries

the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself,

and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose

from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,

I love you directly without problems or pride:

I love you like this because I don’t know any other way to love,

except in this form in which I am not nor are you,

so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,

so close that your eyes close with my dreams.

Pablo Neruda, “One Hundred Love Sonnets: XVII” from *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems,* edited by Mark Eisner. Copyright © 2004 City Lights Books.

Source: *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems* (City Lights Books, 2004)

**O36. Onions By** [**William Matthews**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-matthews)

How easily happiness begins by

dicing onions. A lump of sweet butter

slithers and swirls across the floor

of the sauté pan, especially if its

errant path crosses a tiny slick

of olive oil. Then a tumble of onions.

This could mean soup or risotto

or chutney (from the Sanskrit

*chatni*, to lick). Slowly the onions

go limp and then nacreous

and then what cookbooks call clear,

though if they were eyes you could see

clearly the cataracts in them.

It’s true it can make you weep

to peel them, to unfurl and to tease

from the taut ball first the brittle,

caramel-colored and decrepit

papery outside layer, the least

recent the reticent onion

wrapped around its growing body,

for there’s nothing to an onion

but skin, and it’s true you can go on

weeping as you go on in, through

the moist middle skins, the sweetest

and thickest, and you can go on

in to the core, to the bud-like,

acrid, fibrous skins densely

clustered there, stalky and in-

complete, and these are the most

pungent, like the nuggets of nightmare

and rage and murmury animal

comfort that infant humans secrete.

This is the best domestic perfume.

You sit down to eat with a rumor

of onions still on your twice-washed

hands and lift to your mouth a hint

of a story about loam and usual

endurance. It’s there when you clean up

and rinse the wine glasses and make

a joke, and you leave the minutest

whiff of it on the light switch,

later, when you climb the stairs.

William Matthews, “Onions” from *Selected Poems and Translations, 1969-1991*. Copyright © 1992 by William Matthews. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved, [www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com](http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com).  
  
Source: *Poetry* (August 1989).

**O37. Or, By** [**Thomas Sayers Ellis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-sayers-ellis)

Or Oreo, or

worse. Or ordinary.

Or your choice

of category

or

Color

or any color

other than Colored

or Colored Only.

Or “Of Color”

or

Other

or theory or discourse

or oral territory.

Oregon or Georgia

or Florida Zora

or

Opportunity

or born poor

or Corporate. Or Moor.

Or a Noir Orpheus

or Senghor

or

Diaspora

or a horrendous

and tore-up journey.

Or performance. Or allegory’s armor

of ignorant comfort

or

Worship

or reform or a sore chorus.

Or Electoral Corruption

or important ports

of Yoruba or worry

or

Neighbor

or fear of . . .

of terror or border.

Or all organized

minorities.

Source: *Poetry* (October 2006).

**O38. The Origin of Order By** [**Pattiann Rogers**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/pattiann-rogers)

Stellar dust has settled.

It is green underwater now in the leaves

Of the yellow crowfoot. Its vacancies are gathered together

Under pine litter as emerging flower of the pink arbutus.

It has gained the power to make itself again

In the bone-filled egg of osprey and teal.

One could say this toothpick grasshopper

Is a cloud of decayed nebula congealed and perching

On his female mating. The tortoise beetle,

Leaving the stripped veins of morning glory vines

Like licked bones, is a straw-colored swirl

Of clever gases.

At this moment there are dead stars seeing

Themselves as marsh and forest in the eyes

Of muskrat and shrew, disintegrated suns

Making songs all night long in the throats

Of crawfish frogs, in the rubbings and gratings

Of the red-legged locust. There are spirits of orbiting

Rock in the shells of pointed winkles

And apple snails, ghosts of extinct comets caught

In the leap of darting hare and bobcat, revolutions

Of rushing stone contained in the sound of these words.

The paths of the Pleiades and Coma clusters

Have been compelled to mathematics by the mind

Contemplating the nature of itself

In the motions of stars. The patterns

Of any starry summer night might be identical

To the summer heavens circling inside the skull.

I can feel time speeding now in all directions

Deeper and deeper into the black oblivion

Of the electrons directly behind my eyes.

Flesh of the sky, child of the sky, the mind

Has been obligated from the beginning

To create an ordered universe

As the only possible proof of its own inheritance.

Pattiann Rogers, “The Origin of Order” from *Firekeeper: Selected Poems.* Copyright © 2003 by Pattiann Rogers. Reprinted with the permission of Milkweed Editions, [www.milkweed.org](http://www.milkweed.org).  
  
Source: *Poetry* (December 1982).

**O39. The Other Side of This World By** [**Calvin Forbes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/calvin-forbes)

Put my glad rags in a cardboard box—

This old jiggerboo never grew mature.

Is everthing in its place except me?

Don’t be surprised; I called all day

And the only person I could reach was

The operator; and it’s a sorry day when

Nothing is coming down but your foot.

And how deep is your stomach cause

That’s how far your heart will fall!

When I’m gone I might come back cause

I’m always forgetting something special.

A crease in my overalls, my collar stiff,

I cried as many tears as I have teeth.

And I only got two in my mouth. Son of the

Sun look out: as you get black you burn.

Is everything in its place except me?

Calvin Forbes, “The Other Side of This World” from *Ploughshares* (1974).  
  
Source: *Ploughshares* (1974)

**O40. Our Nature By** [**Rae Armantrout**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rae-armantrout)

The very flatness

of portraits

makes for nostalgia

in the connoisseur.

Here’s the latest

little lip of wave

to flatten

and spread thin.

Let’s say

it shows our recklessness,

our fast gun,

our self-consciousness

which was really

our infatuation

with our own fame,

our escapes,

the easy way

we’d blend in

with the peasantry,

our loyalty

to our old gang

from among whom

it was our nature

to be singled out

Rae Armantrout, "Our Nature" from *Veil*. Copyright © 2001 by Rae Armantrout. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Veil* (Wesleyan University Press, 2001)

**O41. Ovation By** [**Carol Muske-Dukes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carol-muske-dukes)

I try to make myself afraid,

the way you must have been afraid,

stepping out onto this stage—

but with a fear so pure, so

perfectly informed that you strode

out shouting. Here, where

the neon yellow arrows painted

on the floor shoot forward underfoot

in blackness—beneath the hanging

sequence of tinted skies—out toward

that mindless immortalizing light, now

dark. Now I think I feel the heat you

must have felt rising from the front rows.

A gaping fire door, a furnace:

your single body standing here

with no shadow, swinging on itself.

Had you been a fool, you might have thought

that they loved you. They never love you,

you said. They are hungry for the god

in his gold eclipse, the pure you on fire.

John and I move quickly, each with a handful

of ash, scattering. The sound of no sound falling

into the cracks in the boards, the footlights,

the first row. A small personal snow: a prince

of dust, a villain of dust. Each part you played

drifting up again, recomposing. I open my hand,

I let you go—back into the lines you learned,

back into the body and the body's beauty—

back into the standing ovation: bow after bow after bow.

Carol Muske-Dukes, “Ovation” from *Sparrow.* Copyright © 2003 by Carol Muske-Dukes. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Source: *Sparrow: Poems* (Random House Inc., 2003)

**O42. Over and Under By** [**John Brehm**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-brehm)

So sexy to slide under-

neath a river,

to sit inside this

snakelike sub-

marine-like

subway car and

freely imagine

the world above—

the Brooklyn

Bridge invisibly

trembling with the

weight of its

own beauty,

the East River

still guided by

the grooves

Walt Whitman's

eyes wore in it,

the bulldog tug-

boats pushing the

passively impressive

broad-bottomed

barges around,

and the double-

decker orange

and black Staten

Island ferries,

with their aura

of overworked

pack-mule

mournfulness,

and beyond them

the Atlantic Ocean

which I lately learned

was brought here

by ice comets three

billion years ago,

which explains

a few things, like

why everybody

feels so alienated,

and of course

the thoughts being

thought by every

person in New

York City at

this moment—

vast schools of

undulating fish

curving and rising

in the cloud-swirling

wind-waved sky,

surrounded by

the vaster emptiness

of non-thought

which holds them

and which they try

not to think

about and you

lying in bed in

your sixth-floor

walk-up sublet

on St. Mark's Place—

such a breath-

taking ascension!

imagining me

rising now to meet you.

Source: *Poetry* (July/August 2007).

**O43. Over the Roofs By** [**Sara Teasdale**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sara-teasdale)

**I**

Oh chimes set high on the sunny tower

Ring on, ring on unendingly,

Make all the hours a single hour,

For when the dusk begins to flower,

The man I love will come to me! ...

But no, go slowly as you will,

I should not bid you hasten so,

For while I wait for love to come,

Some other girl is standing dumb,

Fearing her love will go.

**II**

Oh white steam over the roofs, blow high!

Oh chimes in the tower ring clear and free!

Oh sun awake in the covered sky,

For the man I love, loves me! ...

Oh drifting steam disperse and die,

Oh tower stand shrouded toward the south,—

Fate heard afar my happy cry,

And laid her finger on my mouth.

**III**

The dusk was blue with blowing mist,

The lights were spangles in a veil,

And from the clamor far below

Floated faint music like a wail.

It voiced what I shall never speak,

My heart was breaking all night long,

But when the dawn was hard and gray,

My tears distilled into a song.

**IV**

I said, “I have shut my heart

As one shuts an open door,

That Love may starve therein

And trouble me no more.”

But over the roofs there came

The wet new wind of May,

And a tune blew up from the curb

Where the street-pianos play.

My room was white with the sun

And Love cried out to me,

“I am strong, I will break your heart

Unless you set me free.”

Originally published in *Poetry*, March 1914. Source: *Poetry* (March 1914).

**O44. The Owl By** [**Edward Thomas**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edward-thomas)

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;

Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof

Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest

Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,

Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.

All of the night was quite barred out except

An owl’s cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,

No merry note, nor cause of merriment,

But one telling me plain what I escaped

And others could not, that night, as in I went.

And salted was my food, and my repose,

Salted and sobered, too, by the bird’s voice

Speaking for all who lay under the stars,

Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.

Source: *Poems* (1917)

**O45. Ox Cart Man By** [**Donald Hall**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/donald-hall)

In October of the year,

he counts potatoes dug from the brown field,

counting the seed, counting

the cellar’s portion out,

and bags the rest on the cart’s floor.

He packs wool sheared in April, honey

in combs, linen, leather

tanned from deerhide,

and vinegar in a barrel

hooped by hand at the forge’s fire.

He walks by his ox’s head, ten days

to Portsmouth Market, and sells potatoes,

and the bag that carried potatoes,

flaxseed, birch brooms, maple sugar, goose

feathers, yarn.

When the cart is empty he sells the cart.

When the cart is sold he sells the ox,

harness and yoke, and walks

home, his pockets heavy

with the year’s coin for salt and taxes,

and at home by fire’s light in November cold

stitches new harness

for next year’s ox in the barn,

and carves the yoke, and saws planks

building the cart again.

Donald Hall, “Ox Cart Man” from *Old and New Poems.* Copyright © 1990 by Donald Hall. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Source: *Old and New Poems* (1990)

**O46. Ozymandias By** [**Percy Bysshe Shelley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/percy-bysshe-shelley)

I met a traveller from an antique land,

Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal, these words appear:

My name is Ozymandias**Ozymandias** Pharaoh Rameses II (reigned 1279-1213 BCE). According to the *OED*, the statue was once 57 feet tall., King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

Source: *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose* (1977)

**POL P-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**P1**](#P1)[**P2**](#P2)[**P3**](#P3)[**P4**](#P4)[**P5**](#P5)[**P6**](#P6)[**P7**](#P7)[**P8**](#P8)[**P9**](#P9)[**P10**](#P10)[**P11**](#P11)[**P12**](#P12)[**P13**](#P13)

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[**P40**](#P40)[**P41**](#P41)[**P42**](#P42)[**P43**](#P43)[**P44**](#P44)[**P45**](#P45)[**P46**](#P46)[**P47**](#P47)[**P48**](#P48) **P49 P50 P51 P52**

**P53 P54 P55 P56 P57 P58 P59 P60 P61 P62 P63 P64 P65**

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**P79 P80 P81 P82 P83 P84 P85 P86 P87 P88 P89 P90 P91**

**P92 P93 P94 P95 P96 P97 P98 P99 P100 P101 P102 P103 P104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**P1. The Painter By** [**John Ashbery**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-ashbery)

Sitting between the sea and the buildings

He enjoyed painting the sea’s portrait.

But just as children imagine a prayer

Is merely silence, he expected his subject

To rush up the sand, and, seizing a brush,

Plaster its own portrait on the canvas.

So there was never any paint on his canvas

Until the people who lived in the buildings

Put him to work: “Try using the brush

As a means to an end. Select, for a portrait,

Something less angry and large, and more subject

To a painter’s moods, or, perhaps, to a prayer.”

How could he explain to them his prayer

That nature, not art, might usurp the canvas?

He chose his wife for a new subject,

Making her vast, like ruined buildings,

As if, forgetting itself, the portrait

Had expressed itself without a brush.

Slightly encouraged, he dipped his brush

In the sea, murmuring a heartfelt prayer:

“My soul, when I paint this next portrait

Let it be you who wrecks the canvas.”

The news spread like wildfire through the buildings:

He had gone back to the sea for his subject.

Imagine a painter crucified by his subject!

Too exhausted even to lift his brush,

He provoked some artists leaning from the buildings

To malicious mirth: “We haven’t a prayer

Now, of putting ourselves on canvas,

Or getting the sea to sit for a portrait!”

Others declared it a self-portrait.

Finally all indications of a subject

Began to fade, leaving the canvas

Perfectly white. He put down the brush.

At once a howl, that was also a prayer,

Arose from the overcrowded buildings.

They tossed him, the portrait, from the tallest of the buildings;

And the sea devoured the canvas and the brush

As though his subject had decided to remain a prayer.

John Ashbery, “The Painter” from *Some Trees.* Copyright © 1956 by John Ashbery. Reprinted with the permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc. on behalf of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (December 1955).

**P2. The Paradox By** [**Paul Laurence Dunbar**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-laurence-dunbar)

I am the mother of sorrows,

I am the ender of grief;

I am the bud and the blossom,

I am the late-falling leaf.

I am thy priest and thy poet,

I am thy serf and thy king;

I cure the tears of the heartsick,

When I come near they shall sing.

White are my hands as the snowdrop;

Swart are my fingers as clay;

Dark is my frown as the midnight,

Fair is my brow as the day.

Battle and war are my minions,

Doing my will as divine;

I am the calmer of passions,

Peace is a nursling of mine.

Speak to me gently or curse me,

Seek me or fly from my sight;

I am thy fool in the morning,

Thou art my slave in the night.

Down to the grave will I take thee,

Out from the noise of the strife;

Then shalt thou see me and know me—

Death, then, no longer, but life.

Then shalt thou sing at my coming,

Kiss me with passionate breath,

Clasp me and smile to have thought me

Aught save the foeman of Death.

Come to me, brother, when weary,

Come when thy lonely heart swells;

I’ll guide thy footsteps and lead thee

Down where the Dream Woman dwells.

Source: *African-American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology* (University of Illinois Press, 1992)

**P3. Part for the Whole By** [**Robert Francis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-francis)

When others run to windows or out of doors

To catch the sunset whole, he is content

With any segment anywhere he sits.

From segment, fragment, he can reconstruct

The whole, prefers to reconstruct the whole,

As if to say, I see more seeing less.

A window to the east will serve as well

As window to the west, for eastern sky

Echoes the western sky. And even less—

A patch of light that picture-glass happens

To catch from window-glass, fragment of fragment,

Flawed, distorted, dulled, nevertheless

Gives something unglassed nature cannot give:

The old obliquity of art, and proves

Part may be more than whole, least may be best.

Robert Francis, “Part for the Whole” from *Robert Francis: Collected Poems 1936-1976.* Copyright © 1976 by Robert Francis. Reprinted with the permission of The University of Massachusetts Press. Source: *Poetry* (June 1945).

**P4. Passing By** [**Toi Derricotte**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/toi-derricotte)

A professor invites me to his “Black Lit” class; they’re

reading Larson’s *Passing*. One of the black

students says, “Sometimes light-skinned blacks

think they can fool other blacks,

but *I* can always tell,” looking

right through me.

After I tell them I am black,

I ask the class, “Was I passing

when I was just sitting here,

before I told you?” A white woman

shakes her head desperately, as if

I had deliberately deceived her.

She keeps examining my face,

then turning away

as if she hopes I’ll disappear. Why presume

“passing” is based on what I leave out

and not what she fills in?

In one scene in the book, in a restaurant,

she’s “passing,”

though no one checked her at the door—

“Hey, you black?”

My father, who looked white,

told me this story: every year

when he’d go to get his driver’s license,

the man at the window filling

out the form would ask,

“White or black?” pencil poised, without looking up.

My father wouldn’t pass, but he might

use silence to trap a devil.

When he didn’t speak, the man

would look up at my father’s face.

“What did he write?”

my father quizzed me.

“Passing” is from *Tender*, by Toi Derricotte, © 1997. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press. Source: *Tender* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997)

**P5. The Passionate Shepherd to His Love By** [**Christopher Marlowe**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christopher-marlowe)

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove,

That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,

Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,

Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow Rivers to whose falls

Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses

And a thousand fragrant posies,

A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool

Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;

Fair lined slippers for the cold,

With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,

With Coral clasps and Amber studs:

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds’ Swains shall dance and sing

For thy delight each May-morning:

If these delights thy mind may move,

Then live with me, and be my love.

**P6. Past-Lives Therapy By** [**Charles Simic**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-simic)

They explained to me the bloody bandages

On the floor in the maternity ward in Rochester, N.Y.,

Cured the backache I acquired bowing to my old master,

Made me stop putting thumbtacks round my bed.

They showed me an officer on horseback,

Waving a saber next to a burning farmhouse

And a barefoot woman in a nightgown,

Throwing stones after him and calling him Lucifer.

I was a straw-headed boy in patched overalls.

Come dark a chicken would roost in my hair.

Some even laid eggs as I played my ukulele

And my mother and father crossed themselves.

Next, I saw myself inside an abandoned gas station

Constructing a spaceship out of a coffin,

Red traffic cone, cement mixer and ear warmers,

When a church lady fainted seeing me in my underwear.

Some days, however, they opened door after door,

Always to a different room, and could not find me.

There’d be only a small squeak now and then,

As if a miner’s canary got caught in a mousetrap.

Charles Simic, “Past-Lives Therapy” from *The Voice at 3:00 AM: Selected Late and New Poems.* Copyright © 2003 by Charles Simic. Reprinted with the permission of Harcourt, Inc. This material may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. Source: *The Voice at 3:00 AM: Selected Late and New Poems* (Harcourt Inc., 2003)

**P7. Pastoral Dialogue By** [**Anne Killigrew**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-killigrew)

Remember when you love, from that same hour

Your peace you put into your lover’s power;

From that same hour from him you laws receive,

And as he shall ordain, you joy, or grieve,

Hope, fear, laugh, weep; Reason aloof does stand,

Disabled both to act, and to command.

Oh cruel fetters! rather wish to feel

On your soft limbs, the galling weight of steel;

Rather to bloody wounds oppose your breast.

No ill, by which the body can be pressed

You will so sensible a torment find

As shackles on your captived mind.

The mind from heaven its high descent did draw,

And brooks uneasily any other law

Than what from Reason dictated shall be.

Reason, a kind of innate deity,

Which only can adapt to ev’ry soul

A yoke so fit and light, that the control

All liberty excels; so sweet a sway,

The same ’tis to be happy, and obey;

Commands so wise, and with rewards so dressed,

That the according soul replies “I’m blessed.”

**P8. Peace Lilies By** [**Cathy Smith Bowers**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/cathy-smith-bowers)

I collect them now, it seems. Like

sea-shells or old

thimbles. One for

Father. One for

Mother. Two for my sweet brothers.

Odd how little

they require of

me. Unlike the

ones they were sent in memory

of. No sudden

shrilling of the

phone. No harried

midnight flights. Only a little

water now and

then. Scant food and

light. See how I’ve

brought them all together here in

this shaded space

beyond the stairs.

Even when they

thirst, they summon me with nothing

more than a soft,

indifferent furl-

ing of their leaves.﻿

Poem copyright ©2004 by Cathy Smith Bowers, whose most recent book of poetry is *The Candle I Hold Up to See You*, Iris Press, 2009. Poem reprinted from *A Book of Minutes*, Iris Press, 2004, by permission of Cathy Smith Bowers and the publisher.﻿

**P9. The Peace of Wild Things By** [**Wendell Berry**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wendell-berry)

When despair for the world grows in me

and I wake in the night at the least sound

in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake

rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things

who do not tax their lives with forethought

of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars

waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry, "The Peace of Wild Things" from *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry.* Copyright © 1998. Published and reprinted by arrangement with Counterpoint Press.

Source: *Collected Poems 1957-1982* (Counterpoint Press, 1985)

**P10. Peach By** [**Jennifer Tonge**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jennifer-tonge)

Come here’s

a peach he said

and held it out just far

enough to reach beyond his lap

and off-

ered me

a room the one

room left he said in all

of Thessaloniki that night

packed with

traders

The peach was lush

I hadn’t slept for days

it was like velvet lips a lamp

he smiled

patted

the bed for me

I knew it was in fact

the only room the only bed

The peach

trembled

and he said Come

nodding to make me

agree I wanted the peach and

the bed

he said

to take it see

how nice it was and I

thought how I could take it ginger-

ly my

finger-

tips only touch-

ing only it Not in

or out I stayed in the doorway

watching

a fly

He stroked the peach

and asked where I was from

I said the States he smiled and asked

how long

I’d stay

The fly had found

the peach I said I’d leave

for Turkey in the morning I

wanted

so much

to sleep and on

a bed I thought of all

the ways to say that word

and that

they must

have gradient

meanings He asked me did

I want the peach and I said sure

and took

it from

his hand He asked

then if I’d take the room

It costs too much I said and turned

to go

He said

to stay a while

and we could talk The sun

was going down I said no thanks

I’d head

out on

the late train but

could I still have the peach

and what else could he say to that

but yes

Jennifer Tonge, “Peach” from *Poetry* (February 1999). Reprinted with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (February 1999).

**P11. Pentatina for Five Vowels By** [**Campbell McGrath**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/campbell-mcgrath)

Today is a trumpet to set the hounds baying.

The past is a fox the hunters are flaying.

Nothing unspoken goes without saying.

Love’s a casino where lovers risk playing.

The future’s a marker our hearts are prepaying.

The future’s a promise there’s no guaranteeing.

Today is a fire the field mice are fleeing.

Love is a marriage of feeling and being.

The past is a mirror for wishful sightseeing.

Nothing goes missing without absenteeing.

Nothing gets cloven except by dividing.

The future is chosen by atoms colliding.

The past’s an elision forever eliding.

Today is a fog bank in which I am hiding.

Love is a burn forever debriding.

Love’s an ascent forever plateauing.

Nothing is granted except by bestowing.

Today is an anthem the cuckoos are crowing.

The future’s a convolute river onflowing.

The past is a lawn the neighbor is mowing.

The past is an answer not worth pursuing,

Nothing gets done except by the doing.

The future’s a climax forever ensuing.

Love is only won by wooing.

Today is a truce between reaping and rueing.

**P12. The People, Yes By** [**Carl Sandburg**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carl-sandburg)

Lincoln?

He was a mystery in smoke and flags

Saying yes to the smoke, yes to the flags,

Yes to the paradoxes of democracy,

Yes to the hopes of government

Of the people by the people for the people,

No to debauchery of the public mind,

No to personal malice nursed and fed,

Yes to the Constitution when a help,

No to the Constitution when a hindrance

Yes to man as a struggler amid illusions,

Each man fated to answer for himself:

Which of the faiths and illusions of mankind

Must I choose for my own sustaining light

To bring me beyond the present wilderness?

Lincoln? Was he a poet?

And did he write verses?

“I have not willingly planted a thorn

in any man’s bosom.”

I shall do nothing through malice: what

I deal with is too vast for malice.”

Death was in the air.

So was birth.

Carl Sandburg, from "The People, Yes" from *The People, Yes.* Copyright © 1936 by Carl Sandburg. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Source: *The People, Yes* (Harcourt Inc., 1936)

**P13. Photo of a Girl on a Beach By** [**Carmen Giménez Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carmen-gimenez-smith)

Once when I was harmless

and didn’t know any better,

a mirror to the front of me

and an ocean behind,

I lay wedged in the middle of daylight,

paper-doll thin, dreaming,

then I vanished. I gave the day a fingerprint,

then forgot.

I sat naked on a towel

on a hot June Monday.

The sun etched the inside of my eyelids,

while a boy dozed at my side.

The smell of all oceans was around us—

steamy salt, shell, and sweat,

but I reached for the distant one.

A tide rose while I slept,

and soon I was alone. Try being

a figure in memory. It’s hollow there.

For truth’s sake, I’ll say she was on a beach

and her eyes were closed.

She was bare in the sand, long,

and the hour took her bit by bit.

Carmen Giménez Smith, “Photo of a Girl on a Beach” from *Odalisque in Pieces*. Copyright © 2009 by Carmen Gimenez Smith. Reprinted by permission of University of Arizona Press.  
  
Source: *Odalisque in Pieces* (University of Arizona Press, 2009)

**P14. Piano By** [**D. H. Lawrence**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/d-h-lawrence)

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;

Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see

A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings

And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song

Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong

To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside

And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour

With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour

Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast

Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

**P15. Pietà By** [**Kevin Young**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-young)

I hunted heaven

for him.

No dice.

Too uppity,

it was. Not enough

music, or dark dirt.

I begged the earth empty

of him. Death

believes in us whether

we believe

or not. For a long while

I watch the sound

of a boy bouncing a ball

down the block

take its time

to reach me. Father,

find me when

you want. I’ll wait.

**P16. The Pilgrim By** [**John Bunyan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-bunyan)

Who would true Valour see

Let him come hither;

One here will Constant be,

Come Wind, come Weather.

There's no *Discouragement*,

Shall make him once *Relent*,

His first avow'd *Intent,*

*To be a Pilgrim*

.

Who so beset him round,

With dismal *Storys*,

Do but themselves Confound;

His Strength the *more is*.

No *Lyon* can him fright,

He'l with a *Gyant* Fight,

But he will have a right*,*

*To be a Pilgrim*.

*Hobgoblin*, nor foul *Fiend*,

Can *daunt* his Spirit*:*

He knows, he *at the end,*

*Shall Life Inherit*.

Then Fancies fly away,

He'l fear not what men say,

He'l labour Night and Day*,*

*To be a Pilgrim*.

**P17. The Pilgrims By** [**John McCrae**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-mccrae)

An uphill path, sun-gleams between the showers,

Where every beam that broke the leaden sky

Lit other hills with fairer ways than ours;

Some clustered graves where half our memories lie;

And one grim Shadow creeping ever nigh:

And this was Life.

Wherein we did another's burden seek,

The tired feet we helped upon the road,

The hand we gave the weary and the weak,

The miles we lightened one another's load,

When, faint to falling, onward yet we strode:

This too was Life.

Till, at the upland, as we turned to go

Amid fair meadows, disky in the night,

The mists fell back upon the road below;

Broke on our tired eyes the western light;

The very graves were for a moment bright:

And this was Death.

**P18. Pity the Beautiful By** [**Dana Gioia**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dana-gioia)

Pity the beautiful,

the dolls, and the dishes,

the babes with big daddies

granting their wishes.

Pity the pretty boys,

the hunks, and Apollos,

the golden lads whom

success always follows.

The hotties, the knock-outs,

the tens out of ten,

the drop-dead gorgeous,

the great leading men.

Pity the faded,

the bloated, the blowsy,

the paunchy Adonis

whose luck’s gone lousy.

Pity the gods,

no longer divine.

Pity the night

the stars lose their shine.

Poem copyright ©2011 by Dana Gioia, whose most recent book of poems is <em>Pity the Beautiful,</em> Graywolf Press, 2012. Poem reprinted from <em>Poetry,</em> May 2011, by permission of Dana Gioia and the publisher. Source: *Poetry* (May 2011).

**P19. Piute Creek By** [**Gary Snyder**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gary-snyder)

One granite ridge

A tree, would be enough

Or even a rock, a small creek,

A bark shred in a pool.

Hill beyond hill, folded and twisted

Tough trees crammed

In thin stone fractures

A huge moon on it all, is too much.

The mind wanders. A million

Summers, night air still and the rocks

Warm. Sky over endless mountains.

All the junk that goes with being human

Drops away, hard rock wavers

Even the heavy present seems to fail

This bubble of a heart.

Words and books

Like a small creek off a high ledge

Gone in the dry air.

A clear, attentive mind

Has no meaning but that

Which sees is truly seen.

No one loves rock, yet we are here.

Night chills. A flick

In the moonlight

Slips into Juniper shadow:

Back there unseen

Cold proud eyes

Of Cougar or Coyote

Watch me rise and go.

Gary Snyder, "Piute Creek" from *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*. Copyright © 2009 by Gary Snyder. Reprinted by permission of Counterpoint Press.

Source: *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (Counterpoint Press, 2009)

**P20. Plaint in a Major Key By** [**Jorge Sánchez**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jorge-sanchez)

Without even leaving one’s door,   
One can know the whole world.  
—Laozi

The rumble of the night sounds

even in the bright daylight

of morning. Life blooms amid

the Ten Thousand Things, but

does not bloom amid the Ten

Thousand Things. Shrivel-eyed

I wake up and tend to the One

here and now, clamoring to be

let out. Down with the gate,

out with the boy, to the rooms

of life’s necessities, first

to void and next to fill.

The Order is only order which

is disorder, the only Disorder

is the disorder that is order.

We usher ourselves, each in our

own way, back down the way

for various brushings, combings,

other groomings. Each in our

own way we urge the other

toward some kind of growth:

one to assume, the other

to renounce; one to grow larger,

the other to grow smaller,

thereby growing larger. Words

do not work, and when they do not,

other words might. This makes

more sense than it seems, works

more often than it doesn’t,

except when it really doesn’t,

and then that disorder creeps

back in. In five minutes,

a different challenge. In five

hours, a different One. Six

more hours, the One is rubbing

eyes, untangled like a dragon,

shucked and undone like an oyster.

The night slowly rolls abed

and the words form stories form

sleep, the sleep of the Ten

Thousand Things, the sleep

that will echo the next day

in the night’s rumbling sounds,

in the bright light of morning.

**P21. Planetarium By** [**Adrienne Rich**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adrienne-rich)

Thinking of Caroline Herschel (1750—1848)   
astronomer, sister of William; and others.

A woman in the shape of a monster

a monster in the shape of a woman

the skies are full of them

a woman ‘in the snow

among the Clocks and instruments

or measuring the ground with poles’

in her 98 years to discover

8 comets

she whom the moon ruled

like us

levitating into the night sky

riding the polished lenses

Galaxies of women, there

doing penance for impetuousness

ribs chilled

in those spaces of the mind

An eye,

‘virile, precise and absolutely certain’

from the mad webs of Uranusborg

encountering the NOVA

every impulse of light exploding

from the core

as life flies out of us

Tycho whispering at last

‘Let me not seem to have lived in vain’

What we see, we see

and seeing is changing

the light that shrivels a mountain

and leaves a man alive

Heartbeat of the pulsar

heart sweating through my body

The radio impulse

pouring in from Taurus

I am bombarded yet I stand

I have been standing all my life in the

direct path of a battery of signals

the most accurately transmitted most

untranslatable language in the universe

I am a galactic cloud so deep so invo-

luted that a light wave could take 15

years to travel through me And has

taken I am an instrument in the shape

of a woman trying to translate pulsations

into images for the relief of the body

and the reconstruction of the mind.

Adrienne Rich, “Planetarium” from *The Fact of a Doorframe: Selected Poems 1950-2001.* Copyright © 2002 by Adrienne Rich. Reprinted with the permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *The Fact of a Doorframe: Selected Poems 1950-2001* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002)

**P22. Pleasures By** [**Denise Levertov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/denise-levertov)

I like to find

what's not found

at once, but lies

within something of another nature,

in repose, distinct.

Gull feathers of glass, hidden

in white pulp: the bones of squid

which I pull out and lay

blade by blade on the draining board—

tapered as if for swiftness, to pierce

the heart, but fragile, substance

belying design. Or a fruit, *mamey*,

cased in rough brown peel, the flesh

rose-amber, and the seed:

the seed a stone of wood, carved and

polished, walnut-colored, formed

like a brazilnut, but large,

large enough to fill

the hungry palm of a hand.

I like the juicy stem of grass that grows

within the coarser leaf folded round,

and the butteryellow glow

in the narrow flute from which the morning-glory

opens blue and cool on a hot morning.

Denise Levertov, “Pleasures” from *Collected Earlier Poems 1940-1960*. Copyright © 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1979 by Denise Levertov. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm). Source: *Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2002)

**P23. Poem By** [**Muriel Rukeyser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/muriel-rukeyser)

I lived in the first century of world wars.

Most mornings I would be more or less insane,

The newspapers would arrive with their careless stories,

The news would pour out of various devices

Interrupted by attempts to sell products to the unseen.

I would call my friends on other devices;

They would be more or less mad for similar reasons.

Slowly I would get to pen and paper,

Make my poems for others unseen and unborn.

In the day I would be reminded of those men and women,

Brave, setting up signals across vast distances,

Considering a nameless way of living, of almost unimagined values.

As the lights darkened, as the lights of night brightened,

We would try to imagine them, try to find each other,

To construct peace, to make love, to reconcile

Waking with sleeping, ourselves with each other,

Ourselves with ourselves. We would try by any means

To reach the limits of ourselves, to reach beyond ourselves,

To let go the means, to wake.

I lived in the first century of these wars.

Muriel Rukeyser, “Poem” from *The Speed of Darkness*. Copyright © 1968 by Muriel Rukeyser. Reprinted by permission of International Creative Management. Source: *The Speed of Darkness* (Vintage Books, 1968)

**P24. Poem about People By** [**Robert Pinsky**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-pinsky)

The jaunty crop-haired graying

Women in grocery stores,

Their clothes boyish and neat,

New mittens or clean sneakers,

Clean hands, hips not bad still,

Buying ice cream, steaks, soda,

Fresh melons and soap—or the big

Balding young men in work shoes

And green work pants, beer belly

And white T-shirt, the porky walk

Back to the truck, polite; possible

To feel briefly like Jesus,

A gust of diffuse tenderness

Crossing the dark spaces

To where the dry self burrows

Or nests, something that stirs,

Watching the kinds of people

On the street for a while—

But how love falters and flags

When anyone’s difficult eyes come

Into focus, terrible gaze of a unique

Soul, its need unlovable: my friend

In his divorced schoolteacher

Apartment, his own unsuspected

Paintings hung everywhere,

Which his wife kept in a closet—

Not, he says, that she wasn’t

Perfectly right; or me, mis-hearing

My rock radio sing my self-pity:

“The Angels Wished Him Dead”—all

The hideous, sudden stare of self,

Soul showing through like the lizard

Ancestry showing in the frontal gaze

Of a robin busy on the lawn.

In the movies, when the sensitive

Young Jewish soldier nearly drowns

Trying to rescue the thrashing

Anti-semitic bully, swimming across

The river raked by nazi fire,

The awful part is the part truth:

*Hate my whole kind,* but me,

Love me for myself. The weather

Changes in the black of night,

And the dream-wind, bowling across

The sopping open spaces

Of roads, golf courses, parking lots,

Flails a commotion

In the dripping treetops,

Tries a half-rotten shingle

Or a down-hung branch, and we

All dream it, the dark wind crossing

The wide spaces between us.

Robert Pinsky, “Poem About People” from *Sadness and Happiness.* Copyright © 1975 by Princeton University Press, renewed 2003. Reprinted with the permission of Princeton University Press.

Source: *The Figured Wheel: New and Collected Poems 1966-1996* (1996)

**P25. Poem for Haruko By** [**June Jordan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/june-jordan)

I never thought I’d keep a record of my pain

or happiness

like candles lighting the entire soft lace

of the air

around the full length of your hair/a shower

organized by God

in brown and auburn

undulations luminous like particles

of flame

But now I do

retrieve an afternoon of apricots

and water interspersed with cigarettes

and sand and rocks

we walked across:

How easily you held

my hand

beside the low tide

of the world

Now I do

relive an evening of retreat

a bridge I left behind

where all the solid heat

of lust and tender trembling

lay as cruel and as kind

as passion spins its infinite

tergiversations in between the bitter

and the sweet

Alone and longing for you

now I do

June Jordan, “Poem for Haruko” from *Directed by Desire*. Copyright © 2005 by June Jordan. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press  
  
Source: *Directed by Desire* (Copper Canyon Press, 2005)

**P26. Poem for My Twentieth Birthday By** [**Kenneth Koch**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-koch)

Passing the American graveyard, for my birthday

the crosses stuttering, white on tropical green,

the years’ quick focus of faces I do not remember . . .

The palm trees stalking like deliberate giants

for my birthday, and all the hot adolescent memories

seen through a screen of water . . .

For my birthday thrust into the adult and actual:

expected to perform the action, not to ponder

the reality beyond the fact,

the man standing upright in the dream.

Kenneth Koch, “Poem for My Twentieth Birthday” from *Poetry* 67 (November 1945). Used by permission of the Estate of Kenneth Koch.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (November 1945).

**P27. The Poet By** [**Yone Noguchi**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/yone-noguchi)

Out of the deep and the dark,

A sparkling mystery, a shape,

Something perfect,

Comes like the stir of the day:

One whose breath is an odor,

Whose eyes show the road to stars,

The breeze in his face,

The glory of heaven on his back.

He steps like a vision hung in air,

Diffusing the passion of eternity;

HisP26. abode is the sunlight of morn,

The music of eve his speech:

In his sight,

One shall turn from the dust of the grave,

And move upward to the woodland.

Source: *Poetry* (May 1913).

**P28. The Poet at Seventeen By** [**Larry Levis**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/larry-levis)

My youth? I hear it mostly in the long, volleying

Echoes of billiards in the pool halls where

I spent it all, extravagantly, believing

My delicate touch on a cue would last for years.

Outside the vineyards vanished under rain,

And the trees held still or seemed to hold their breath

When the men I worked with, pruning orchards, sang

Their lost songs: *Amapola; La Paloma;*

*Jalisco, No Te Rajes*—the corny tunes

Their sons would just as soon forget, at recess,

Where they lounged apart in small groups of their own.

Still, even when they laughed, they laughed in Spanish.

I hated high school then, & on weekends drove

A tractor through the widowed fields. It was so boring

I memorized poems above the engine’s monotone.

Sometimes whole days slipped past without my noticing,

And birds of all kinds flew in front of me then.

I learned to tell them apart by their empty squabblings,

The slightest change in plumage, or the inflection

Of a call. And why not admit it? I was happy

Then. I believed in no one. I had the kind

Of solitude the world usually allows

Only to kings & criminals who are extinct,

Who disdain this world, & who rot, corrupt & shallow

As fields I disced: I turned up the same gray

Earth for years. Still, the land made a glum raisin

Each autumn, & made that little hell of days—

The vines must have seemed like cages to the Mexicans

Who were paid seven cents a tray for the grapes

They picked. Inside the vines it was hot, & spiders

Strummed their emptiness. Black Widow, Daddy Longlegs.

The vine canes whipped our faces. None of us cared.

And the girls I tried to talk to after class

Sailed by, then each night lay enthroned in my bed,

With nothing on but the jewels of their embarrassment.

Eyes, lips, dreams. No one. The sky & the road.

A life like that? It seemed to go on forever—

Reading poems in school, then driving a stuttering tractor

Warm afternoons, then billiards on blue October

Nights. The thick stars. But mostly now I remember

The trees, wearing their mysterious yellow sullenness

Like party dresses. And parties I didn’t attend.

And then the first ice hung like spider lattices

Or the embroideries of Great Aunt No One,

And then the first dark entering the trees—

Larry Levis, “The Poet at Seventeen” from *Winter Stars.* Copyright © 1985 by Larry Levis. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, www.upress.pitt.edu. Source: *Winter Stars* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985)

And inside, the adults with their cocktails before dinner,

The way they always seemed afraid of something,

And sat so rigidly, although the land was theirs.

**P29. The Poet Orders His Tomb By** [**Edgar Bowers**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-bowers)

I summon up Panofskv from his bed

Among the famous dead

To build a tomb which, since I am not read,

Suffers the stone’s mortality instead;

Which, by the common iconographies

Of simple visual ease,

Usurps the place of the complexities

Of sound survivors once preferred to noise:

Monkeys fixed on one bough, an almost holy

Nightmarish sloth, a tree

Of parrots in a pride of family,

Immortal skunks, unaromatically;

Some deaf bats in a cave, a porcupine

Quill-less, a superfine

Flightless eagle, and, after them, a line

Of geese, unnavigating by design;

Dogs in the frozen haloes of their barks,

A hundred porous arks

Aground and lost, where elephants like quarks

Ape mother mules or imitation sharks—

And each of them half-venerated by

A mob, impartially

Scaled, finned, or feathered, all before a dry

Unable mouth, symmetrically awry.

But how shall I, in my brief space, describe

A tomb so vast, a tribe

So desperately existent for a scribe

Knowingly of the fashions’ diatribe,

I who have sought time’s memory afoot,

Grateful for every root

Of trees that fill the garden with their fruit,

Their fragrance and their shade? Even as I do it,

I see myself unnoticed on the stair

That, underneath a clear

Welcome of bells, had promised me a fair

Attentive hearing’s joy, sometime, somewhere.

Edgar Bowers, “The Poet Orders His Tomb” from *Collected Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997). Copyright © 1997 by Edgar Bowers. Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of Edgar Bowers.  
  
Source: *Collected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)

**P30. The Poets light but Lamps — (930) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

The Poets light but Lamps —

Themselves — go out —

The Wicks they stimulate

If vital Light

Inhere as do the Suns —

Each Age a Lens

Disseminating their

Circumference —

Emily Dickinson, "The Poets light but Lamps" from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*, ed by Ralph W. Franklin. Copyright © 1998 by Emily Dickinson. Reprinted by permission of The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998)

**P31. A Poison Tree By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

I was angry with my friend;

I told my wrath, my wrath did end.

I was angry with my foe:

I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,

Night & morning with my tears:

And I sunned it with smiles,

And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.

Till it bore an apple bright.

And my foe beheld it shine,

And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,

When the night had veild the pole;

In the morning glad I see;

My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

**P32. Pome By** [**Elizabeth Spires**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-spires)

From flowering gnarled trees

they come, weighing down

the branches, dropping

with a soft sound onto

the loamy ground. Falling

and fallen. That’s a pome.

Common as an apple. Or

more rare. A quince or pear.

A knife paring away soft skin

exposes tart sweet flesh.

And deeper in, five seeds in a core

are there to make more pomes.

Look how it fits in my hand.

What to do? What to do?

I could give it to you.

Or leave it on the table

with a note both true and untrue:

*Ceci n’est pas un poème*.

I could paint it as a still life,

a small window of light

in the top right corner

(only a dab of the whitest white),

a place to peer in and watch it

change and darken as pomes will do.

O I remember days....

Climbing the branches of a tree

ripe and heavy with pomes.

Taking whatever I wanted.

There were always enough then.

Always enough.

**P33.Poor Angels By** [**Edward Hirsch**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edward-hirsch)

At this hour the soul floats weightlessly

through the city streets, speechless and invisible,

astonished by the smoky blend of grays and golds

seeping out of the air, the dark half-tones

of dusk suddenly filling the urban sky

while the body sits listlessly by the window

sullen and heavy, too exhausted to move,

too weary to stand up or to lie down.

At this hour the soul is like a yellow wing

slipping through the treetops, a little ecstatic

cloud hovering over the sidewalks, calling out

to the approaching night, “Amaze me, amaze me,”

while the body sits glumly by the window

listening to the clear summons of the dead

transparent as glass, clairvoyant as crystal.

Some nights it is almost ready to join them.

Oh, this is a strange, unlikely tethering,

a furious grafting of the quick and the slow:

when the soul flies up, the body sinks down

and all night—locked in the same cramped room—

they go on quarreling, stubbornly threatening

to leave each other, wordlessly filling the air

with the sound of a low internal burning.

How long can this bewildering marriage last?

At midnight the soul dreams of a small fire

of stars flaming on the other side of the sky,

but the body stares into an empty night sheen,

a hollow-eyed darkness. Poor luckless angels,

feverish old loves: don’t separate yet.

Let what rises live with what descends.

Edward Hirsch, “Poor Angels” from *Wild Gratitude.* Copyright © 2003 by Edward Hirsch. Reprinted with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (February 1984).

**P34. Portrait d'une Femme By** [**Ezra Pound**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ezra-pound)

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,

London has swept about you this score years

And bright ships left you this or that in fee:

Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,

Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.

Great minds have sought you — lacking someone else.

You have been second always. Tragical?

No. You preferred it to the usual thing:

One dull man, dulling and uxorious,

One average mind — with one thought less, each year.

Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit

Hours, where something might have floated up.

And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.

You are a person of some interest, one comes to you

And takes strange gain away:

Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;

Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,

Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else

That might prove useful and yet never proves,

That never fits a corner or shows use,

Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:

The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;

Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,

These are your riches, your great store; and yet

For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,

Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:

In the slow float of differing light and deep,

No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,

Nothing that's quite your own.

Yet this is you.

**P35. Possible Answers to Prayer By** [**Scott Cairns**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/scott-cairns)

Your petitions—though they continue to bear

just the one signature—have been duly recorded.

Your anxieties—despite their constant,

relatively narrow scope and inadvertent

entertainment value—nonetheless serve

to bring your person vividly to mind.

Your repentance—all but obscured beneath

a burgeoning, yellow fog of frankly more

conspicuous resentment—is sufficient.

Your intermittent concern for the sick,

the suffering, the needy poor is sometimes

recognizable to me, if not to them.

Your angers, your zeal, your lipsmackingly

righteous indignation toward the many

whose habits and sympathies offend you—

these must burn away before you’ll apprehend

how near I am, with what fervor I adore

precisely these, the several who rouse your passions.

Scott Cairns, “Possible Answers to Prayer” from *Philokalia: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 2002 by Scott Cairns. Reprinted with the permission of Zoo Press. Source: *Philokalia: New and Selected Poems* (Zoo Press, 2002)

**P36. The Powwow at the End of the World By** [**Sherman Alexie**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sherman-alexie)

I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall

after an Indian woman puts her shoulder to the Grand Coulee Dam

and topples it. I am told by many of you that I must forgive

and so I shall after the floodwaters burst each successive dam

downriver from the Grand Coulee. I am told by many of you

that I must forgive and so I shall after the floodwaters find

their way to the mouth of the Columbia River as it enters the Pacific

and causes all of it to rise. I am told by many of you that I must forgive

and so I shall after the first drop of floodwater is swallowed by that salmon

waiting in the Pacific. I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall

after that salmon swims upstream, through the mouth of the Columbia

and then past the flooded cities, broken dams and abandoned reactors

of Hanford. I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall

after that salmon swims through the mouth of the Spokane River

as it meets the Columbia, then upstream, until it arrives

in the shallows of a secret bay on the reservation where I wait alone.

I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall after

that salmon leaps into the night air above the water, throws

a lightning bolt at the brush near my feet, and starts the fire

which will lead all of the lost Indians home. I am told

by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall

after we Indians have gathered around the fire with that salmon

who has three stories it must tell before sunrise: one story will teach us

how to pray; another story will make us laugh for hours;

the third story will give us reason to dance. I am told by many

of you that I must forgive and so I shall when I am dancing

with my tribe during the powwow at the end of the world.

Sherman Alexie, “The Powwow at the End of the World” from *The Summer of Black Widows*. Copyright © 1996 by Sherman Alexie. Used by permission of Hanging Loose Press.

Source: *The Summer of Black Widows* (Story Line Press, 1996)

**P37. Prayer By** [**Jorie Graham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jorie-graham)

Over a dock railing, I watch the minnows, thousands, swirl

themselves, each a minuscule muscle, but also, without the

way to *create* current, making of their unison (turning, re-

infolding,

entering and exiting their own unison in unison) making of themselves a

visual current, one that cannot freight or sway by

minutest fractions the water’s downdrafts and upswirls, the

dockside cycles of finally-arriving boat-wakes, there where

they hit deeper resistance, water that seems to burst into

itself (it has those layers), a real current though mostly

invisible sending into the visible (minnows) arrowing

motion that forces change—

this is freedom. This is the force of faith. Nobody gets

what they want. Never again are you the same. The longing

is to be pure. What you get is to be changed. More and more by

each glistening minute, through which infinity threads itself,

also oblivion, of course, the aftershocks of something

at sea. Here, hands full of sand, letting it sift through

in the wind, I look in and say take this, this is

what I have saved, take this, hurry. And if I listen

now? Listen, I was not saying anything. It was only

something I did. I could not choose words. I am free to go.

I cannot of course come back. Not to this. Never.

It is a ghost posed on my lips. Here: never.

NOTES: PRAYER (“minnows”) was written as a turn-of-the-millennium poem for the New York Times Op-Ed page, and was originally dated 12.31.00

Jorie Graham, “Prayer” from *Never.* Copyright © 2002 by Jorie Graham. Used with the permission of HarperCollins Publishers. Source: *Never* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2002)

**P38. Prayer for My Father By** [**Robert Bly**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-bly)

Your head is still

restless, rolling

east and west.

That body in you

insisting on living

is the old hawk

for whom the world

darkens.

If I am not

with you when you die,

that is just.

It is all right.

That part of you cleaned

my bones more

than once. But I

will meet you

in the young hawk

whom I see

inside both

you and me; he

will guide

you to the Lord of Night,

who will give you

the tenderness

you wanted here.

Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Poetry* (October/November 1987).

**P39. Prayer Rug By** [**Agha Shahid Ali**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/agha-shahid-ali)

Those intervals

between the day’s

five calls to prayer

the women of the house

pulling thick threads

through vegetables

rosaries of ginger

of rustling peppers

in autumn drying for winter

in those intervals this rug

part of Grandma’s dowry

folded

so the Devil’s shadow

would not desecrate

Mecca scarlet-woven

with minarets of gold

but then the sunset

call to prayer

the servants

their straw mats unrolled

praying or in the garden

in summer on grass

the children wanting

the prayers to end

the women’s foreheads

touching Abraham’s

silk stone of sacrifice

black stone descended

from Heaven

the pilgrims in white circling it

this year my grandmother

also a pilgrim

in Mecca she weeps

as the stone is unveiled

she weeps holding on

to the pillars

(for Begum Zafar Ali)

Agha Shahid Ali, “Prayer Rug” from *The Half-Inch Himalayas.* Copyright © 1987 by Agha Shahid Ali. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress/](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *The Half-Inch Himalayas* (1987)

**P40. Pride By** [**Yusef Komunyakaa**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/yusef-komunyakaa)

Crowned with a feathered helmet,

Not for disguise or courtship

Dance, he looks like something

Birthed by swallowing its tail,

Woven from a selfish design

& guesswork. As if masked

With a see-through caul

From breast to hipbone,

His cold breath silvers

Panes of his hilltop house

Into a double reflection.

Silhouetted almost into a woman,

He can beg forgiveness now

As he leans against a window

Overlooking Narcissus’s pond

Choked with a memory of lilies.

Yusef Komunyakaa, “Pride” from *Talking Dirty To The Gods*. Originally in *Poetry* (October 1999). Copyright © 1999 by Yusef Komunyakaa. Reprinted with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October 1999).

**P41. The Princess: Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal By** [**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alfred-tennyson)

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;

Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;

Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.

The firefly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,

And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,

And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves

A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,

And slips into the bosom of the lake.

So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip

Into my bosom and be lost in me.

Source: *The Longman Anthology of Poetry* (2006)

**P42. Prison Song By** [**Alan Dugan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alan-dugan)

The skin ripples over my body like moon-wooed water,

rearing to escape me. Where could it find another

animal as naked as the one it hates to cover?

Once it told me what was happening outside,

who was attacking, who caressing, and what the air

was doing to feed or freeze me. Now I wake up

dark at night, in a textureless ocean of ignorance,

or fruit bites back and water bruises like a stone.

It’s jealousy, because I look for other tools to know

with, and other armor, better girded to my wish.

So let it lie, turn off the clues or try to leave:

sewn on me seamless like those painful shirts

the body-hating saints wore, the sheath of hell

is pierced to my darkness nonetheless: what traitors

labor in my face, what hints they smuggle through

its arching guard! But even in the night it jails,

with nothing but its lies and silences to feed upon,

the jail itself can make a scenery, sing prison songs,

and set off fireworks to praise a homemade day.

Alan Dugan, “Prison Song” from *Poems Seven: New and Complete Poetry.* Copyright © 2001 by Alan Dugan. Reprinted with the permission of Seven Stories Press, www.sevenstories.com.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (September 1953).

**P43. Prisoners By** [**Denise Levertov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/denise-levertov)

Though the road turn at last

to death’s ordinary door,

and we knock there, ready

to enter and it opens

easily for us,

yet

all the long journey

we shall have gone in chains,

fed on knowledge-apples

acrid and riddled with grubs.

We taste other food that life,

like a charitable farm-girl,

holds out to us as we pass—

but our mouths are puckered,

a taint of ash on the tongue.

It’s not joy that we’ve lost—

wildfire, it flares

in dark or shine as it will.

What’s gone

is common happiness,

plain bread we could eat

with the old apple of knowledge.

That old one—it griped us sometimes,

but it was firm, tart,

sometimes delectable ...

The ashen apple of these days

grew from poisoned soil. We are prisoners

and must eat

our ration. All the long road

in chains, even if, after all,

we come to

death’s ordinary door, with time

smiling its ordinary

long-ago smile.

Denise Levertov, “Prisoners” from *Oblique Prayers*. Copyright © 1984 by Denise Levertov. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).

Source: *Oblique Prayers* (Bloodaxe Books, 1984)

**P44. The Promise By** [**Jane Hirshfield**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-hirshfield)

Stay, I said

to the cut flowers.

They bowed

their heads lower.

Stay, I said to the spider,

who fled.

Stay, leaf.

It reddened,

embarrassed for me and itself.

Stay, I said to my body.

It sat as a dog does,

obedient for a moment,

soon starting to tremble.

Stay, to the earth

of riverine valley meadows,

of fossiled escarpments,

of limestone and sandstone.

It looked back

with a changing expression, in silence.

Stay, I said to my loves.

Each answered,

*Always.*

Poem copyright ©2011 by Jane Hirshfield, from her most recent book of poems, *Come, Thief,* Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. Poem reprinted by permission of Jane Hirshfield and the publisher.

**P45. The Properly Scholarly Attitude By** [**Adelaide Crapsey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adelaide-crapsey)

The poet pursues his beautiful theme;

The preacher his golden beatitude;

And I run after a vanishing dream—

The glittering, will-o’-the-wispish gleam

Of the properly scholarly attitude—

The highly desirable, the very advisable,

The hardly acquirable, properly scholarly attitude.

I envy the savage without any clothes,

Who lives in a tropical latitude;

It’s little of general culture he knows.

But then he escapes the worrisome woes

Of the properly scholarly attitude—

The unceasingly sighed over, wept over, cried over,

The futilely died over, properly scholarly attitude.

I work and I work till I nearly am dead,

And could say what the watchman said—that I could!

But still, with a sigh and a shake of the head,

“You don’t understand,” it is ruthlessly said,

“The properly scholarly attitude—

The aye to be sought for, wrought for and fought for,

The ne’er to be caught for, properly scholarly attitude—”

I really am sometimes tempted to say

That it’s merely a glittering platitude;

That people have just fallen into the way,

When lacking a subject, to tell of the sway

Of the properly scholarly attitude—

The easily preachable, spread-eagle speechable,

In practice unreachable, properly scholarly attitude.

**P46. Psalm By** [**George Oppen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-oppen)

Veritas sequitur ...

In the small beauty of the forest

The wild deer bedding down—

That they are there!

Their eyes

Effortless, the soft lips

Nuzzle and the alien small teeth

Tear at the grass

The roots of it

Dangle from their mouths

Scattering earth in the strange woods.

They who are there.

Their paths

Nibbled thru the fields, the leaves that shade them

Hang in the distances

Of sun

The small nouns

Crying faith

In this in which the wild deer

Startle, and stare out.

“Psalm” by George Oppen, from *New Collected Poems,* copyright © 1975 by George Oppen. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Poetry* (July 1963).

**P47. The Pull Toy By** [**A. E. Stallings**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ae-stallings)

You squeezed its leash in your fist,

It followed where you led:

Tick, tock, tick, tock,

Nodding its wooden head.

Wagging a tail on a spring,

Its wheels gearing lackety-clack,

Dogging your heels the length of the house,

Though you seldom glanced back.

It didn’t mind being dragged

When it toppled on its side

Scraping its coat of primary colors:

Love has no pride.

But now that you run and climb

And leap, it has no hope

Of keeping up, so it sits, hunched

At the end of its short rope

And dreams of a rummage sale

Where it’s snapped up for a song,

And of somebody—somebody just like you—

Stringing it along.

Poem copyright ©2012 by A. E. Stallings, whose most recent book of poems is *Olives,* Northwestern University Press, 2012. Poem reprinted from *Five Points,* Vol. 14, no. 3, by permission of A. E. Stallings and the publisher.

**P48. The Pulley By** [**George Herbert**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-herbert)

When God at first made man,

Having a glass of blessings standing by,

“Let us,” said he, “pour on him all we can.

Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,

Contract into a span.”

So strength first made a way;

Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.

When almost all was out, God made a stay,

Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,

Rest in the bottom lay.

“For if I should,” said he,

“Bestow this jewel also on my creature,

He would adore my gifts instead of me,

And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;

So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,

But keep them with repining restlessness;

Let him be rich and weary, that at least,

If goodness lead him not, yet weariness

May toss him to my breast.”

**POL Q-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**Q1**](#Q1)[**Q2**](#Q2)[**Q3**](#Q3)[**Q4**](#Q4) **Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12 Q13**

**Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20 Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24 Q25 Q26**

**Q27 Q28 Q29 Q30 Q31 Q32 Q33 Q34 Q35 Q36 Q37 Q38 Q39**

**Q40 Q41 Q42 Q43 Q44 Q45 Q46 Q47 Q48 Q49 Q50 Q51 Q52**

**Q53 Q54 Q55 Q56 Q57 Q58 Q59 Q60 Q61 Q62 Q63 Q64 Q65**

**Q66 Q67 Q68 Q69 Q70 Q71 Q72 Q73 Q74 Q75 Q76 Q77 Q78**

**Q79 Q80 Q81 Q82 Q83 Q84 Q85 Q86 Q87 Q88 Q89 Q90 Q91**

**Q92 Q93 Q94 Q95 Q96 Q97 Q98 Q99 Q100 Q101 Q102 Q103 Q104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**Q1. Queen-Anne’s Lace By** [**William Carlos Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-carlos-williams)

Her body is not so white as

anemony petals nor so smooth—nor

so remote a thing. It is a field

of the wild carrot taking

the field by force; the grass

does not raise above it.

Here is no question of whiteness,

white as can be, with a purple mole

at the center of each flower.

Each flower is a hand’s span

of her whiteness. Wherever

his hand has lain there is

a tiny purple blemish. Each part

is a blossom under his touch

to which the fibres of her being

stem one by one, each to its end,

until the whole field is a

white desire, empty, a single stem,

a cluster, flower by flower,

a pious wish to whiteness gone over—

or nothing.

William Carlos Williams, “Queen-Anne’s Lace” from *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume I, 1909-1939,* edited by Christopher MacGowan. Copyright 1938, 1944, 1945 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *The Collected Poems: Volume I 1909-1939* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1938)

**Q2. Queens By** [**J. M. Synge**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/j-m-synge)

Seven dog-days we let pass

Naming Queens in Glenmacnass,

All the rare and royal names

Wormy sheepskin yet retains,

Etain, Helen, Maeve, and Fand,

Golden Deirdre's tender hand,

Bert, the big-foot, sung by Villon,

Cassandra, Ronsard found in Lyon.

Queens of Sheba, Meath and Connaught,

Coifed with crown, or gaudy bonnet,

Queens whose finger once did stir men,

Queens were eaten of fleas and vermin,

Queens men drew like Monna Lisa,

Or slew with drugs in Rome and Pisa,

We named Lucrezia Crivelli,

And Titian's lady with amber belly,

Queens acquainted in learned sin,

Jane of Jewry's slender shin:

Queens who cut the bogs of Glanna,

Judith of Scripture, and Gloriana,

Queens who wasted the East by proxy,

Or drove the ass-cart, a tinker's doxy,

Yet these are rotten — I ask their pardon —

And we've the sun on rock and garden,

These are rotten, so you're the Queen

Of all the living, or have been.

**Q3. Queens Cemetery, Setting Sun By** [**Lawrence Ferlinghetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lawrence-ferlinghetti)

Airport bus from JFK

cruising through Queens

passing huge endless cemetery

by Long Island’s old expressway

(once a dirt path for wheelless Indians)

myriad small tombstones tilted up

gesturing statues on parapets

stone arms or wings upraised

lost among illegible inscriptions

And the setting yellow sun

painting all of them

on one side only

with an ochre brush

Rows and rows and rows and rows

of small stone slabs

tilted toward the sun forever

While on the far horizon

Mannahatta’s great stone slabs

skyscraper tombs and parapets

casting their own long black shadows

over all these long-haired graves

the final restless places

of old-country potato farmers

dustbin pawnbrokers

dead dagos and Dublin bouncers

tinsmiths and blacksmiths and roofers

house painters and house carpenters

cabinet makers and cigar makers

garment workers and streetcar motormen

railroad switchmen and signal salesmen

swabbers and sweepers and swampers

steam-fitters and key-punch operators

ward heelers and labor organizers

railroad dicks and smalltime mafiosi

shopkeepers and saloon keepers and doormen

icemen and middlemen and conmen

housekeepers and housewives and dowagers

French housemaids and Swedish cooks

Brooklyn barmaids and Bronxville butlers

opera singers and gandy dancers

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Queens Cemetery, Setting Sun” from *These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1993 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).

Source: *These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993)

pitchers and catchers

in the days of ragtime baseball

poolroom hustlers and fight promoters

Catholic sisters of charity

parish priests and Irish cops

Viennese doctors of delirium

now all abandoned in eternity

parcels in a dead-letter office

inscrutable addresses on them

beyond further deliverance

in an America wheeling past them

and disappearing oblivious

into East River’s echoing tunnels

down the great American drain

**Q4. Question By** [**May Swenson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/may-swenson)

Body my house

my horse my hound

what will I do

when you are fallen

Where will I sleep

How will I ride

What will I hunt

Where can I go

without my mount

all eager and quick

How will I know

in thicket ahead

is danger or treasure

when Body my good

bright dog is dead

How will it be

to lie in the sky

without roof or door

and wind for an eye

With cloud for shift

how will I hide?

May Swenson, “Question” from *Nature: Poems Old and New.* Copyright © 1994 by May Swenson. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Nature: Poems Old and New* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1994)

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[**R14**](#R14)[**R15**](#R15)[**R16**](#R16)[**R17**](#R17)[**R18**](#R18)[**R19**](#R19)[**R20**](#R20)[**R21**](#R21)[**R22**](#R22)[**R23**](#R23)[**R24**](#R24) **R25 R26**

**R27 R28 R29 R30 R31 R32 R33 R34 R35 R36 R37 R38 R39**

**R40 R41 R42 R43 R44 R45 R46 R47 R48 R49 R50 R51 R52**

**R53 R54 R55 R56 R57 R58 R59 R60 R61 R62 R63 R64 R65**

**R66 R67 R68 R69 R70 R71 R72 R73 R74 R75 R76 R77 R78**

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| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**R1. Rain By** [**Kazim Ali**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kazim-ali)

With thick strokes of ink the sky fills with rain.

Pretending to run for cover but secretly praying for more rain.

Over the echo of the water, I hear a voice saying my name.

No one in the city moves under the quick sightless rain.

The pages of my notebook soak, then curl. I’ve written:

“Yogis opened their mouths for hours to drink the rain.”

The sky is a bowl of dark water, rinsing your face.

The window trembles; liquid glass could shatter into rain.

I am a dark bowl, waiting to be filled.

If I open my mouth now, I could drown in the rain.

I hurry home as though someone is there waiting for me.

The night collapses into your skin. I am the rain.

Kazim Ali, "Rain" from *The Far Mosque*. Copyright © 2005 by Kazim Ali. Reprinted by permission of Alice James Books. Source: *The Far Mosque* (Alice James Books, 2005)

**R2. The Rain By** [**Robert Creeley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-creeley)

All night the sound had

come back again,

and again falls

this quiet, persistent rain.

What am I to myself

that must be remembered,

insisted upon

so often? Is it

that never the ease,

even the hardness,

of rain falling

will have for me

something other than this,

something not so insistent—

am I to be locked in this

final uneasiness.

Love, if you love me,

lie next to me.

Be for me, like rain,

the getting out

of the tiredness, the fatuousness, the semi-

lust of intentional indifference.

Be wet

with a decent happiness.

Robert Creeley, “The Rain” from *Selected Poems of Robert Creeley*. Copyright © 1991 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press.  
  
Source: *Selected Poems of Robert Creeley* (University of California Press, 1991)

**R3. Rain of Statues By** [**Sarah Lindsay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sarah-lindsay)

From the Mithridatic Wars,  first century BC

Our general was elsewhere, but we drowned.

While he rested, he shipped us home

with the bulk of  his spoils

that had weighed his army down.

The thrashing storm

that caught us cracked the hulls

and made us offerings to the sea floor —

a rain of statues, gold, and men.

Released from service,

done with war,

the crash and hiss muted,

we fell through streams of creatures

whose lives were their purpose.

We settled with treasure looted

from temples of rubbled Athenian Greece;

among us, bronze and marble gods and goddesses

moored without grace,

dodged by incurious fish.

Their power was never meant to buoy us —

our pleasures were incidental gifts —

but, shaken by their radiance in our dust,

we had given them our voices.

Their faces, wings, and limbs

lie here with our sanded bones

and motionless devices.

Little crabs attempt to don rings

set with agate and amethyst,

and many an octopus,

seeking an hour of rest,

finds shelter in our brain-cases.

So we are still of use.

**R4. Recuerdo By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

We were very tired, we were very merry—

We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.

It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—

But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,

We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;

And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—

We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;

And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,

From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;

And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,

And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,

We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.

We hailed, “Good morrow, mother!” to a shawl-covered head,

And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;

And she wept, “God bless you!” for the apples and pears,

And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.

Source: *Poetry* (May 1919).

**R5. A Red, Red Rose By** [**Robert Burns**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-burns)

O my Luve is like a red, red rose

That’s newly sprung in June;

O my Luve is like the melody

That’s sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,

So deep in luve am I;

And I will luve thee still, my dear,

Till a’ the seas gang dry.

Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,

And the rocks melt wi’ the sun;

I will love thee still, my dear,

While the sands o’ life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!

And fare thee weel awhile!

And I will come again, my luve,

Though it were ten thousand mile

**R6. The Redeemer By** [**Siegfried Sassoon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/siegfried-sassoon)

Darkness: the rain sluiced down; the mire was deep;

It was past twelve on a mid-winter night,

When peaceful folk in beds lay snug asleep;

There, with much work to do before the light,

We lugged our clay-sucked boots as best we might

Along the trench; sometimes a bullet sang,

And droning shells burst with a hollow bang;

We were soaked, chilled and wretched, every one;

Darkness; the distant wink of a huge gun.

I turned in the black ditch, loathing the storm;

A rocket fizzed and burned with blanching flare,

And lit the face of what had been a form

Floundering in mirk. He stood before me there;

I say that He was Christ; stiff in the glare,

And leaning forward from His burdening task,

Both arms supporting it; His eyes on mine

Stared from the woeful head that seemed a mask

Of mortal pain in Hell’s unholy shine.

No thorny crown, only a woollen cap

He wore—an English soldier, white and strong,

Who loved his time like any simple chap,

Good days of work and sport and homely song;

Now he has learned that nights are very long,

And dawn a watching of the windowed sky.

But to the end, unjudging, he’ll endure

Horror and pain, not uncontent to die

That Lancaster on Lune may stand secure.

He faced me, reeling in his weariness,

Shouldering his load of planks, so hard to bear.

I say that He was Christ, who wrought to bless

All groping things with freedom bright as air,

And with His mercy washed and made them fair.

Then the flame sank, and all grew black as pitch,

While we began to struggle along the ditch;

And someone flung his burden in the muck,

Mumbling: ‘O Christ Almighty, now I’m stuck!’

Source: *Selected Poems* (1968)

**R7. Reflections on History in Missouri By** [**Constance Urdang**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/constance-urdang)

This old house lodges no ghosts!

Those swaggering specters who found their way

Across the Atlantic

Were left behind

With their old European grudges

In the farmhouses of New England

And Pennsylvania

Like so much jettisoned baggage

Too heavy

To lug over the Piedmont.

The flatlands are inhospitable

To phantoms. Here

Shadows are sharp and arbitrary

Not mazy, obscure,

Cowering in corners

Behind scary old boots in a cupboard

Or muffled in empty coats, deserted

By long-dead cousins

(Who appear now and then

But only in photographs

Already rusting at the edges)—

Setting out in the creaking wagon

Tight-lipped, alert to move on,

The old settlers had no room

For illusions.

Their dangers were real.

Now in the spare square house

Their great-grandchildren

Tidy away the past

Until the polished surfaces

Reflect not apparitions, pinched,

Parched, craving, unsatisfied,

But only their own faces.

Constance Urdang, “Reflections on History in Missouri” from *The Lone Woman and Others.* Copyright © 1980. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *The Lone Woman and Others* (1980)

**R8. Refusing Silence By** [**Tess Gallagher**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tess-gallagher)

Heartbeat trembling

your kingdom

of leaves

near the ceremony

of water, I never

insisted on you. I admit

I delayed. I was the Empress

of Delay. But it can’t be

put off now. On the sacred branch

of my only voice – I insist.

Insist for us all,

which is the job

of the voice, and especially

of the poet. Else

what am I for, what use

am I if I don’t

insist?

There are messages to send.

Gatherings and songs.

Because we need

to insist. Else what are we

for? What use

are we?

Tess Gallagher, “Refusing Silence” from *Amplitude: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1987 by Tess Gallagher. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press, www.graywolfpress.org  
  
Source: *Amplitude: New and Selected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1987)

**R9. Remarks on Poetry and the Physical World By** [**Mary Barnard**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-barnard)

After reading *Ash Wednesday*

she looked once at the baked beans

and fled. Luncheonless, poor girl,

she observed a kind of poetic Lent—

and I had thought I liked poetry

better than she did.

I do. But to me its most endearing

quality is its unsuitableness;

and, conversely, the chief wonder in heaven

(whither I also am sometimes transported)

is the kind of baggage I bring with me.

Surely there is no more exquisite jointure

in the anatomy of life than that at which

poetry dovetails with the inevitable meal

and Mrs. B. sits murmuring of avocados.

Mary Barnard, “Remarks on Poetry and the Physical World” from *Collected Poems* (Portland: Breitenbush, 1979). Used by permission of the Estate of Mary Barnard.   
Source: *Poetry* (August 1938).

**R10. Requests for Toy Piano By** [**Tony Hoagland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tony-hoagland)

Play the one about the family of the ducks

where the ducks go down to the river

and one of them thinks the water will be cold

but then they jump in anyway

and like it and splash around.

No, I must play the one

about the nervous man from Palestine in row 14

with a brown bag in his lap

in which a gun is hidden in a sandwich.

Play the one about the handsome man and woman

standing on the steps of her apartment

and how the darkness and her perfume and the beating of their hearts

conjoin to make them feel

like leaping from the edge of chance—

No, I should play the one about

the hard rectangle of the credit card

hidden in the man’s back pocket

and how the woman spent an hour

plucking out her brows, and how her perfume

was made from the destruction of a hundred flowers.

Then play the one about the flower industry

in which the migrant workers curse their own infected hands

from tossing sheaves of roses and carnations

into the back of the refrigerated trucks.

No, I must play the one about the single yellow daffodil

standing on my kitchen table

whose cut stem draws the water upwards

so the plant is flushed with the conviction

that the water has been sent

to find and raise it up

from somewhere so deep inside the earth

not even flowers can remember.

**R11. Retired Ballerinas, Central Park West By** [**Lawrence Ferlinghetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lawrence-ferlinghetti)

Retired ballerinas on winter afternoons

walking their dogs

in Central Park West

(or their cats on leashes—

the cats themselves old highwire artists)

The ballerinas

leap and pirouette

through Columbus Circle

while winos on park benches

(laid back like drunken Goudonovs)

hear the taxis trumpet together

like horsemen of the apocalypse

in the dusk of the gods

It is the final witching hour

when swains are full of swan songs

And all return through the dark dusk

to their bright cells

in glass highrises

or sit down to oval cigarettes and cakes

in the Russian Tea Room

or climb four flights to back rooms

in Westside brownstones

where faded playbill photos

fall peeling from their frames

like last year’s autumn leaves

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Retired Ballerinas, Central Park West” from *These Are My Rivers*. Copyright © 1981 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).

Source: *These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1993)

**R12. Revenge By** [**Letitia Elizabeth Landon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/letitia-elizabeth-landon)

Ay, gaze upon her rose-wreathed hair,

And gaze upon her smile;

Seem as you drank the very air

Her breath perfumed the while:

And wake for her the gifted line,

That wild and witching lay,

And swear your heart is as a shrine,

That only owns her sway.

’Tis well: I am revenged at last,—

Mark you that scornful cheek,—

The eye averted as you pass’d,

Spoke more than words could speak.

Ay, now by all the bitter tears

That I have shed for thee,—

The racking doubts, the burning fears,—

Avenged they well may be—

By the nights pass’d in sleepless care,

The days of endless woe;

All that you taught my heart to bear,

All that yourself will know.

I would not wish to see you laid

Within an early tomb;

I should forget how you betray’d,

And only weep your doom:

But this is fitting punishment,

To live and love in vain,—

Oh my wrung heart, be thou content,

And feed upon his pain.

Go thou and watch her lightest sigh,—

Thine own it will not be;

And bask beneath her sunny eye,—

It will not turn on thee.

’Tis well: the rack, the chain, the wheel,

Far better hadst thou proved;

Ev’n I could almost pity feel,

For thou art nor beloved.

**R13. Reverie in Open Air By** [**Rita Dove**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

I acknowledge my status as a stranger:

Inappropriate clothes, odd habits

Out of sync with wasp and wren.

I admit I don’﻿t know how

To sit still or move without purpose.

I prefer books to moonlight, statuary to trees.

But this lawn has been leveled for looking,

So I kick off my sandals and walk its cool green.

Who claims we’﻿re mere muscle and fluids?

My feet are the primitives here.

As for the rest—ah, the air now

Is a tonic of absence, bearing nothing

But news of a breeze.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2003).

**R14. Richard Cory By** [**Edwin Arlington Robinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edwin-arlington-robinson)

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,

We people on the pavement looked at him:

He was a gentleman from sole to crown,

Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,

And he was always human when he talked;

But still he fluttered pulses when he said,

"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—

And admirably schooled in every grace:

In fine, we thought that he was everything

To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,

And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;

And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,

Went home and put a bullet through his head.

**R15. Riprap By** [**Gary Snyder**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gary-snyder)

Lay down these words

Before your mind like rocks.

placed solid, by hands

In choice of place, set

Before the body of the mind

in space and time:

Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall

riprap of things:

Cobble of milky way,

straying planets,

These poems, people,

lost ponies with

Dragging saddles—

and rocky sure-foot trails.

The worlds like an endless

four-dimensional

Game of *Go.*

ants and pebbles

In the thin loam, each rock a word

a creek-washed stone

Granite: ingrained

with torment of fire and weight

Crystal and sediment linked hot

all change, in thoughts,

As well as things.

Gary Snyder, “Riprap” from *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems.* Copyright © 2003 by Gary Snyder. Reprinted by permission of Shoemaker & Hoard Publishers.

Source: *No Nature: New and Selected Poems* (1992)

**R16. The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter By** [**Ezra Pound**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ezra-pound)

After Li Po

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.

You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,

You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.

And we went on living in the village of Chōkan:

Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.

I never laughed, being bashful.

Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.

Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,

I desired my dust to be mingled with yours

Forever and forever, and forever.

Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed

You went into far Ku-tō-en, by the river of swirling eddies,

And you have been gone five months.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.

By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,

Too deep to clear them away!

The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.

The paired butterflies are already yellow with August

Over the grass in the West garden;

They hurt me.

I grow older.

If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,

Please let me know beforehand,

And I will come out to meet you

As far as Chō-fū-Sa.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1957)

**R17. The River Now By** [**Richard Hugo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-hugo)

Hardly a ghost left to talk with. The slavs moved on

or changed their names to something green. Greeks gave up

old dishes and slid into repose. Runs of salmon thin

and thin until a ripple in October might mean carp.

Huge mills bang and smoke. Day hangs thick with commerce

and my favorite home, always overgrown with roses,

collapsed like moral advice. Tugs still pound against

the outtide pour but real, running on some definite fuel.

I can’t dream anything, not some lovely woman

murdered in a shack, not saw mills going broke,

not even wild wine and a landslide though I knew both well.

The blood still begs direction home. This river points

the way north to the blood, the blue stars certain

in their swing, their fix. I pass the backwash where

the cattails still lean north, familiar grebes pop up,

the windchill is the same. And it comes back with the odor

of the river, some way I know the lonely sources

of despair break down from too much love. No matter

how this water fragments in the reeds, it rejoins

the river and the bright bay north receives it all,

new salmon on their way to open ocean,

the easy tub returned.

Richard Hugo, “The River Now” from *Making Certain It Goes On: The Collected Poems of Richard Hugo.* Copyright © 1984 by The Estate of Richard Hugo. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Making Certain It Goes On: The Collected Poems of Richard Hugo* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983)

**R18. The River of Bees By** [**W. S. Merwin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-merwin)

In a dream I returned to the river of bees

Five orange trees by the bridge and

Beside two mills my house

Into whose courtyard a blindman followed

The goats and stood singing

Of what was older

Soon it will be fifteen years

He was old he will have fallen into his eyes

I took my eyes

A long way to the calendars

Room after room asking how shall I live

One of the ends is made of streets

One man processions carry through it

Empty bottles their

Image of hope

It was offered to me by name

Once once and once

In the same city I was born

Asking what shall I say

He will have fallen into his mouth

Men think they are better than grass

I return to his voice rising like a forkful of hay

He was old he is not real nothing is real

Nor the noise of death drawing water

We are the echo of the future

On the door it says what to do to survive

But we were not born to survive

Only to live

W. S. Merwin, “The River of Bees” from *The Second Four Books of Poems* (Port Townsend, Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 1993). Copyright © 1993 by W. S. Merwin. Reprinted with the permission of The Wylie Agency, Inc.

Source: *The Second Four Books of Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1993)

**R19. The Road Not Taken By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

**R20.Rocket By** [**Todd Boss**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/todd-boss)

Despite that you

wrote your name

and number

on its fuselage

in magic marker

neither your quiet

hours at the kitchen

table assembling

it with glue

nor your choice of

paint and lacquer

nor your seemingly

equally perfect

choice of a seemingly

breezeless day

for the launch of

your ambition

nor the thrill

of its swift ignition

nor the heights

it streaks

nor the dancing

way you chase

beneath its

dot

across that

seemingly endless

childhood field

will ever be

restored to you

by the people

in the topmost

branches of whose trees

unseen

it may yet from

its plastic

chute

on thin

white

string

still swing.

**R21. Romance By** [**Claude McKay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/claude-mckay)

To clasp you now and feel your head close-pressed,

Scented and warm against my beating breast;

To whisper soft and quivering your name,

And drink the passion burning in your frame;

To lie at full length, taut, with cheek to cheek,

And tease your mouth with kisses till you speak

Love words, mad words, dream words, sweet senseless words,

Melodious like notes of mating birds;

To hear you ask if I shall love always,

And myself answer: Till the end of days;

To feel your easeful sigh of happiness

When on your trembling lips I murmur: Yes;

It is so sweet. We know it is not true.

What matters it? The night must shed her dew.

We know it is not true, but it is sweet—

The poem with this music is complete.

Claude McKay, "Romance" from *Harlem Shadows: The Poems of Claude McKay* (New York: Harcourt, 1922). Courtesy of the Literary Representative for the Works of Claude McKay, Schombourg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tildeen Foundations.  
  
Source: *Harlem Shadows: The Poems of Claude McKay* (Harcourt Inc., 1922)

**R22. Rondeau By** [**Leigh Hunt**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/leigh-hunt)

Jenny kissed me when we met,

Jumping from the chair she sat in;

Time, you thief, who love to get

Sweets into your list, put that in:

Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,

Say that health and wealth have missed me,

Say I'm growing old, but add,

Jenny kissed me.

**R23. The Rose By** [**Jean Valentine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jean-valentine)

a labyrinth,

as if at its center,

god would be there—

but at the center, only rose,

where rose came from,

where rose grows—

& us, inside of the lips & lips:

the likenesses, the eyes, & the hair,

we are born of,

fed by, & marry with,

only flesh itself, only its passage

—out of where? to where?

Then god the mother said to Jim, in a dream,

Never mind you, Jim,

come rest again on the country porch of my knees.

Jean Valentine, "The Rose" from Little Boat © 2007 by Jean Valentine and reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. www.wesleyan.edu/wespress

Source: *Little Boat* (Wesleyan University Press, 2007)

**R24. Russell Market By** [**Maurya Simon**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/maurya-simon)

What I want most is what I deeply fear:

loss of self; yet here I stand, a “memsahib,”

all decked out in wonder, and still a stranger

amid the harvest, old gaffar at my side.

Here’s a pandit preaching in the flower stall:

he turns funeral wreaths into wheels of rapture.

I must shrug off my notion of knowing anything

of substance about the world, about the spirit.

Sparrows dart between the columns like music.

Huge pupae, bananas split their golden skins;

flies moisten their hands in bands of dew.

Lepers limp by on crutches, in slow motion.

Where is there order in the world? None,

none, I think—no order, only spirals of power.

The pyramids of onion, guava, melon—all defy

my reason: they shine like galaxy-driven planets.

A balancing scale becomes a barge of plenty,

a cornucopia endlessly filling up and emptying.

The wages of sin are more sin: virtue’s wages,

more virtue—and all such earnings, weightless.

I’ve forgotten my errand; I float now through

myself like a howl through a phantom mouth—

the world’s an illusory marketplace where I

must bargain hardest for what I hope I’m worth.

Maurya Simon, “Russell Market” from *Poetry* 164 (July 1994). Used by permission of the author. Source: *Poetry* (July 1994).

**POL S-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**S1**](#S1)[**S2**](#S2)[**S3**](#S3)[**S4**](#S4)[**S5**](#S5)[**S6**](#S6)[**S7**](#S7)[**S8**](#S8)[**S9**](#S9)[**S10**](#S10)[**S11**](#S11)[**S12**](#S12)[**S13**](#S13)

[**S14**](#S14)[**S15**](#S15)[**S16**](#S16)[**S17**](#S17)[**S18**](#S18)[**S19**](#S19)[**S20**](#S20)[**S21**](#S21)[**S22**](#S22)[**S23**](#S23)[**S24**](#S24)[**S25**](#S25)[**S26**](#S26)

[**S27**](#S27)[**S28**](#S28)[**S29**](#S29)[**S30**](#S30)[**S31**](#S31)[**S32**](#S32)[**S33**](#S33)[**S34**](#S34)[**S35**](#S35)[**S36**](#S36)[**S37**](#S37)[**S38**](#S38)[**S39**](#S39)

[**S40**](#S40)[**S41**](#S41)[**S42**](#S42)[**S43**](#S43)[**S44**](#S44)[**S45**](#S45)[**S46**](#S46)[**S47**](#S47)[**S48**](#S48)[**S49**](#S49)[**S50**](#S50)[**S51**](#S51)[**S52**](#S52)

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**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**S1. Boy's Sad Boy By** [**Charles Bernstein**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-bernstein)

I ruin my hats and all the mat slides glad

I hop my girls and all is skip again

I jump I run you up inside my truck

The car goes looping out in dark and light

And yellow hat slides in

I run my mats and all the girl slides glad

I hoped you skipped me into luck

And jump me black, ruin me glad

I jump I run you up inside my truck

I jump my slopes and all the dopes slide glad

I glide my luck and all is slip again

I jump my hopes and all the rope glides sad

I skip you jump the way you said

But I run old and sigh your name

I ruin my mats and all the girl slides glad

At least when luck hops it skips back again

A rune my mats and all the girls slide glad

I jump I run you up inside my truck

*After "Mad Girl's Love Song" by Sylvia Plath* Source: *Poetry* (June 2007).

**S2. Sadie and Maud By** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

Maud went to college.

Sadie stayed at home.

Sadie scraped life

With a fine-tooth comb.

She didn’t leave a tangle in.

Her comb found every strand.

Sadie was one of the livingest chits

In all the land.

Sadie bore two babies

Under her maiden name.

Maud and Ma and Papa

Nearly died of shame.

When Sadie said her last so-long

Her girls struck out from home.

(Sadie had left as heritage

Her fine-tooth comb.)

Maud, who went to college,

Is a thin brown mouse.

She is living all alone

In this old house.

Gwendolyn Brooks, “Sadie and Maud” from *Selected Poems*. Reprinted by consent of Brooks Permissions. Source: *Selected Poems* (1963)

**S3. Safe in their Alabaster Chambers (124) By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers -

Untouched by Morning -

and untouched by noon -

Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection,

Rafter of Satin and Roof of Stone -

Grand go the Years,

In the Crescent above them -

Worlds scoop their Arcs -

and Firmaments - row -

Diadems - drop -

And Doges surrender -

Soundless as Dots,

On a Disk of Snow.

Dickinson poems are electronically reproduced courtesy of the publishers and the Trustees of Amherst College from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, Ralph W. Franklin, ed., Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University of Press, Copyright © 1988 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson, edited by R.W. Franklin* (Harvard University Press, 1999)

**S4. Saguaro By** [**Brenda Hillman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/brenda-hillman)

Often visitors there, saddened

by lack of trees, go out

to a promontory.

Then, backed by the banded

sunset, the trail

of the Conquistadores,

the father puts on the camera,

the leather albatross,

and has the children

imitate saguaros. One

at a time they stand there smiling,

fingers up like the tines of a fork

while the stately saguaro

goes on being entered

by wrens, diseases, and sunlight.

The mother sits on a rock,

arms folded

across her breasts. To her

the cactus looks scared,

its needles

like hair in cartoons.

With its arms in preacher

or waltz position,

it gives the impression

of great effort

in every direction,

like the mother.

Thousands of these gray-green

cacti cross the valley:

nature repeating itself,

children repeating nature,

father repeating children

and mother watching.

Later, the children think

the cactus was moral,

had something to teach them,

some survival technique

or just regular beauty.

But what else could it do?

The only protection

against death

was to love solitude.

Brenda Hillman, “Saguaro” from *Fortress.* Copyright © 1989 by Brenda Hillman. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press. Source: *Fortress* (Wesleyan University Press, 1989)

**S5. Saint Francis and the Sow By** [**Galway Kinnell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/galway-kinnell)

The bud

stands for all things,

even for those things that don’t flower,

for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;

though sometimes it is necessary

to reteach a thing its loveliness,

to put a hand on its brow

of the flower

and retell it in words and in touch

it is lovely

until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing;

as Saint Francis

put his hand on the creased forehead

of the sow, and told her in words and in touch

blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow

began remembering all down her thick length,

from the earthen snout all the way

through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail,

from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine

down through the great broken heart

to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and shuddering

from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and blowing beneath them:

the long, perfect loveliness of sow.

Galway Kinnell, “Saint Francis and the Sow” from *Three Books*. Copyright © 2002 by Galway Kinnell. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved, [www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com](http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com).

Source: *Three Books* (2002)

**S6. The Salutation By** [**Thomas Traherne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-traherne)

These little limbs,

These eyes and hands which here I find,

These rosy cheeks wherewith my life begins,

Where have ye been? behind

What curtain were ye from me hid so long?

Where was, in what abyss, my speaking tongue?

When silent I

So many thousand, thousand years

Beneath the dust did in a chaos lie,

How could I smiles or tears,

Or lips or hands or eyes or ears perceive?

Welcome ye treasures which I now receive.

I that so long

Was nothing from eternity,

Did little think such joys as ear or tongue

To celebrate or see:

Such sounds to hear, such hands to feel, such feet,

Beneath the skies on such a ground to meet.

New burnished joys,

Which yellow gold and pearls excel!

Such sacred treasures are the limbs in boys,

In which a soul doth dwell;

Their organizèd joints and azure veins

More wealth include than all the world contains.

From dust I rise,

And out of nothing now awake;

These brighter regions which salute mine eyes,

A gift from God I take.

The earth, the seas, the light, the day, the skies,

The sun and stars are mine if those I prize.

Long time before

I in my mother’s womb was born,

A God, preparing, did this glorious store,

The world, for me adorn.

Into this Eden so divine and fair,

So wide and bright, I come His son and heir.

A stranger here

Strange things doth meet, strange glories see;

Strange treasures lodged in this fair world appear,

Strange all and new to me;

But that they mine should be, who nothing was,

That strangest is of all, yet brought to pass.

**S7. Sanctuary By** [**Jean Valentine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jean-valentine)

People pray to each other. The way I say "you" to someone else,   
respectfully, intimately, desperately. The way someone says   
"you" to me, hopefully, expectantly, intensely ...   
—Huub Oosterhuis

You who I don’t know I don’t know how to talk to you

—What is it like for you there?

Here ... well, wanting solitude; and talk; friendship—

The uses of solitude. To imagine; to hear.

Learning braille. To imagine other solitudes.

But they will not be mine;

to wait, in the quiet; not to scatter the voices—

What are you afraid of?

What will happen. All this leaving. And meetings, yes. But death.

What happens when you die?

“... not scatter the voices,”

Drown out. Not make a house, out of my own words. To be quiet in

another throat; other eyes; listen for what it is like there. What

word. What silence. Allowing. Uncertain: to drift, in the

restlessness ... Repose. To run like water—

What is it like there, right now?

Listen: the crowding of the street; the room. Everyone hunches in

against the crowding; holding their breath: against dread.

What do you dread?

What happens when you die?

What do you dread, in this room, now?

Not listening. Now. Not watching. Safe inside my own skin.

To die, not having listened. Not having asked ... To have scattered

life.

Yes I know: the thread you have to keep finding, over again, to

follow it back to life; I know. Impossible, sometimes.

Jean Valentine, “Sanctuary” from *Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems, 1965-2003.* Copyright © 2004 by Jean Valentine. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems 1965-2003* (Wesleyan University Press, 2004)

**S8. Say not the Struggle nought Availeth By** [**Arthur Hugh Clough**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arthur-hugh-clough)

Say not the struggle nought availeth,

The labour and the wounds are vain,

The enemy faints not, nor faileth,

And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;

It may be, in yon smoke concealed,

Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,

And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking

Seem here no painful inch to gain,

Far back through creeks and inlets making,

Came, silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,

When daylight comes, comes in the light,

In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,

But westward, look, the land is bright.

**S9. Sea Fever By** [**John Masefield**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-masefield)

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,

And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;

And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking,

And a grey mist on the sea’s face, and a grey dawn breaking,

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide

Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;

And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,

And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,

To the gull’s way and the whale’s way where the wind’s like a whetted knife;

And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,

And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick’s over.

**S10. The Season of Phantasmal Peace By** [**Derek Walcott**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/derek-walcott)

Then all the nations of birds lifted together

the huge net of the shadows of this earth

in multitudinous dialects, twittering tongues,

stitching and crossing it. They lifted up

the shadows of long pines down trackless slopes,

the shadows of glass-faced towers down evening streets,

the shadow of a frail plant on a city sill—

the net rising soundless as night, the birds' cries soundless, until

there was no longer dusk, or season, decline, or weather,

only this passage of phantasmal light

that not the narrowest shadow dared to sever.

And men could not see, looking up, what the wild geese drew,

what the ospreys trailed behind them in silvery ropes

that flashed in the icy sunlight; they could not hear

battalions of starlings waging peaceful cries,

bearing the net higher, covering this world

like the vines of an orchard, or a mother drawing

the trembling gauze over the trembling eyes

of a child fluttering to sleep;

it was the light

that you will see at evening on the side of a hill

in yellow October, and no one hearing knew

what change had brought into the raven's cawing,

the killdeer's screech, the ember-circling chough

such an immense, soundless, and high concern

for the fields and cities where the birds belong,

except it was their seasonal passing, Love,

made seasonless, or, from the high privilege of their birth,

something brighter than pity for the wingless ones

below them who shared dark holes in windows and in houses,

and higher they lifted the net with soundless voices

above all change, betrayals of falling suns,

and this season lasted one moment, like the pause

between dusk and darkness, between fury and peace,

but, for such as our earth is now, it lasted long.

Derek Walcott, "The Season of Phantasmal Peace" from *Collected Poems: 1948-1984*. Copyright © 1987 by Derek Walcott. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Source: *Collected Poems 1948-1984* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986)

**S11. The Second Coming By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;

Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*

Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it

Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again; but now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

**S12.The Secret Garden By** [**Rita Dove**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

I was ill, lying on my bed of old papers,

when you came with white rabbits in your arms;

and the doves scattered upwards, flying to mothers,

and the snails sighed under their baggage of stone . . .

Now your tongue grows like celery between us:

Because of our love-cries, cabbage darkens in its nest;

the cauliflower thinks of her pale, plump children

and turns greenish-white in a light like the ocean’s.

I was sick, fainting in the smell of teabags,

when you came with tomatoes, a good poetry.

I am being wooed. I am being conquered

by a cliff of limestone that leaves chalk on my breasts.

Rita Dove, “The Secret Garden” from *Yellow House on the Corner* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1989). Copyright ©1989 by Rita Dove. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Yellow House on the Corner* (1989)

**S13. The Seekers of Lice By** [**Arthur Rimbaud**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/arthur-rimbaud)

When the child's forehead, full of red torments,

Implores the white swarm of indistinct dreams,

There come near his bed two tall charming sisters

With slim fingers that have silvery nails.

They seat the child in front of a wide open

Window where the blue air bathes a mass of flowers

And in his heavy hair where the dew falls

Move their delicate, fearful and enticing fingers.

He listens to the singing of their apprehensive breath.

Which smells of long rosy plant honey

And which at times a hiss interrupts, saliva

Caught on the lip or desire for kisses.

He hears their black eyelashes beating in the perfumed

Silence; and their gentle electric fingers

Make in his half-drunken indolence the death of the little lice

Crackle under their royal nails.

Then the wine of Sloth rises in him,

The sigh of an harmonica which could bring on delirium;

The child feels, according to the slowness of the caresses

Surging in him and dying continuously a desire to cry.

Arthur Rimbaud, "The Seekers of Lice" from *Complete Works, Selected Letters. Copyright* © 2005 by Arthur Rimbaud. Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press. Source: *Complete Works, Selected Letters* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)

**S14. Seen Through a Window By** [**David Ferry**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-ferry)

A man and a woman are sitting at a table.

It is supper time. The air is green. The walls

Are white in the green air, as rocks under water

Retain their own true color, though washed in green.

I do not know either the man or the woman,

Nor do I know whatever they know of each other.

Though washed in my eye they keep their own true color.

The man is all his own hunched strength, the body’s

Self and strength, that bears, like weariness,

Itself upon itself, as a stone’s weight

Bears heavily on itself to be itself.

Heavy the strength that bears the body down.

And the way he feeds is like a dreamless sleep.

The dreaming of a stone is how he feeds.

The woman’s arms are plump, mottled a little

The flesh, like standing milk, and on one arm

A blue bruise, got in some household labor or other,

Flowering in the white. Her staring eye,

Like some bird’s cry called from some deepest wood,

Says nothing of what it is but what it is.

Such silence is the bird’s cry of the stone.

**S15. Self-Employed By** [**David Ignatow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-ignatow)

For Harvey Shapiro

I stand and listen, head bowed,

to my inner complaint.

Persons passing by think

I am searching for a lost coin.

You’re fired, I yell inside

after an especially bad episode.

I’m letting you go without notice

or terminal pay. You just lost

another chance to make good.

But then I watch myself standing at the exit,

depressed and about to leave,

and wave myself back in wearily,

for who else could I get in my place

to do the job in dark, airless conditions?

David Ignatow, “Self-Employed” from *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994.* Copyright © 1993 by David Ignatow. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.  
  
Source: *Against the Evidence: Selected Poems 1934-1994* (Wesleyan University Press, 1993)

**S16. Self-Help By** [**Michael Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-ryan)

What kind of delusion are you under?

The life he hid just knocked you flat.

You see the lightning but not the thunder.

What God hath joined let no man put asunder.

Did God know you’d marry a rat?

What kind of delusion are you under?

His online persona simply stunned her

as it did you when you started to chat.

You see the lightning but not the thunder.

To the victors go the plunder:

you should crown them with a baseball bat.

What kind of delusion are you under?

The kind that causes blunder after blunder.

Is there any other kind than that?

You see the lightning but not the thunder,

and for one second the world’s a wonder.

Just keep it thrilling under your hat.

What kind of delusion are you under?

You see the lightning but not the thunder.

**S17. Self-Inquiry Before the Job Interview By** [**Gary Soto**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gary-soto)

Did you sneeze?

Yes, I rid myself of the imposter inside me.

Did you iron your shirt?

Yes, I used the steam of mother's hate.

Did you wash your hands?

Yes, I learned my hygiene from a raccoon.

I prayed on my knees, and my knees answered with pain.

I gargled. I polished my shoes until I saw who I was.

I inflated my résumé by employing my middle name.

I walked to my interview, early,

The sun like a ring on an electric stove.

I patted my hair when I entered the wind of a revolving door.

The guard said, For a guy like you, it's the 19th floor.

The economy was up. Flags whipped in every city plaza

In America. This I saw for myself as I rode the elevator,

Empty because everyone had a job but me.

Did you clean your ears?

Yes, I heard my fate in the drinking fountain's idiotic drivel.

Did you slice a banana into your daily mush?

I added a pinch of salt, two raisins to sweeten my breath.

Did you remember your pen?

I remembered my fingers when the elevator opened.

I shook hands that dripped like a dirty sea.

I found a chair and desk. My name tag said my name.

Through the glass ceiling, I saw the heavy rumps of CEOs.

Outside my window, the sun was a burning stove,

All of us pushing papers

To keep it going.

Source: *Poetry* (July 2001).

**S18. Self-Portrait By** [**Chase Twichell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/chase-twichell)

I know I promised to stop

talking about her,

but I was talking to myself.

The truth is, she’s a child

who stopped growing,

so I’ve always allowed her

to tag along, and when she brings

her melancholy close to me

I comfort her. Naturally

you’re curious; you want to know

how she became a gnarled branch

veiled in diminutive blooms.

But I’ve told you all I know.

I was sure she had secrets,

but she had no secrets.

I had to tell her mine.

Chase Twichell, "Self Portrait" from *Dog Language*. Copyright © 2005 by Chase Twichell. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press. [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org) Source: *Poetry* (January 2005).

**S19. Self-Portrait By** [**Robert Creeley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-creeley)

He wants to be

a brutal old man,

an aggressive old man,

as dull, as brutal

as the emptiness around him,

He doesn’t want compromise,

nor to be ever nice

to anyone. Just mean,

and final in his brutal,

his total, rejection of it all.

He tried the sweet,

the gentle, the “oh,

let’s hold hands together”

and it was awful,

dull, brutally inconsequential.

Now he’ll stand on

his own dwindling legs.

His arms, his skin,

shrink daily. And

he loves, but hates equally.

Robert Creeley, “Self-Portrait” from *Selected Poems of Robert Creeley*. Copyright © 1991 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press, [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

Source: *Selected Poems* (1991)

**S20. Semblance: Screens By** [**Liz Waldner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/liz-waldner)

A moth lies open and lies

like an old bleached beech leaf,

a lean-to between window frame and sill.

Its death protects a collection of tinier deaths

and other dirts beneath.

Although the white paint is water-stained,

on it death is dirt, and hapless.

The just-severed tiger lily

is drinking its glass of water, I hope.

This hope is sere.

This hope is severe.

What you ruin ruins you, too

and so you hope for favor.

I mean I do.

The underside of a ladybug

wanders the window. I wander

the continent, my undercarriage not as evident,

so go more perilously, it seems to me.

But I am only me; to you it seems clear

I mean to disappear, and am mean

and project on you some ancient fear.

If I were a bug, I hope I wouldn’t be

this giant winged thing, spindly like a crane fly,

skinny-legged like me, kissing the cold ceiling,

fumbling for the face of the other, seeking.

It came in with me last night when I turned on the light.

I lay awake, afraid it would touch my face.

It wants out. I want out, too.

I thought you a way through.

Arms wide for wings,

your suffering mine, twinned.

Screen. Your unbelief drives me in,

doubt for dirt, white sheet for sill—

You don’t stay other enough or still

enough to be likened to.

**S21. September, 1918 By** [**Amy Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-lowell)

This afternoon was the colour of water falling through sunlight;

The trees glittered with the tumbling of leaves;

The sidewalks shone like alleys of dropped maple leaves,

And the houses ran along them laughing out of square, open windows.

Under a tree in the park,

Two little boys, lying flat on their faces,

Were carefully gathering red berries

To put in a pasteboard box.

Some day there will be no war,

Then I shall take out this afternoon

And turn it in my fingers,

And remark the sweet taste of it upon my palate,

And note the crisp variety of its flights of leaves.

To-day I can only gather it

And put it into my lunch-box,

For I have time for nothing

But the endeavour to balance myself

Upon a broken world.

Amy Lowell, “September, 1918” from *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell.* Copyright © 1955 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © renewed 1983 by Houghton Mifflin Company, Brinton P. Roberts, and G. D'Andelot, Esquire. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

Source: *Selected Poems of Amy Lowell* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002)

**S22. Serenade By** [**Mary Weston Fordham**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-weston-fordham)

Sleep, love sleep,

The night winds sigh,

In soft lullaby.

The Lark is at rest

With the dew on her breast.

So close those dear eyes,

That borrowed their hue

From the heavens so blue,

Sleep, love sleep.

Sleep, love sleep,

The pale moon looks down

On the valleys around,

The Glow Moth is flying,

The South wind is sighing,

And I am low lying,

With lute deftly strung,

To pour out my song,

Sleep, love sleep.

Source: *She Wields a Pen: American Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century* (University of Iowa Press, 1997)

**S23. Shall earth no more inspire thee By** [**Emily Brontë**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-bronte)

Shall earth no more inspire thee,

Thou lonely dreamer now?

Since passion may not fire thee

Shall Nature cease to bow?

Thy mind is ever moving

In regions dark to thee;

Recall its useless roving—

Come back and dwell with me.

I know my mountain breezes

Enchant and soothe thee still—

I know my sunshine pleases

Despite thy wayward will.

When day with evening blending

Sinks from the summer sky,

I’ve seen thy spirit bending

In fond idolatry.

I’ve watched thee every hour;

I know my mighty sway,

I know my magic power

To drive thy griefs away.

Few hearts to mortals given

On earth so wildly pine;

Yet none would ask a heaven

More like this earth than thine.

Then let my winds caress thee;

Thy comrade let me be—

Since nought beside can bless thee,

Return and dwell with me.

**S24. Sharks' Teeth By** [**Kay Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kay-ryan)

Everything contains some

silence. Noise gets

its zest from the

small shark's-tooth

shaped fragments

of rest angled

in it. An hour

of city holds maybe

a minute of these

remnants of a time

when silence reigned,

compact and dangerous

as a shark. Sometimes

a bit of a tail

or fin can still

be sensed in parks.

Source: *Poetry* (April 2004).

**S25. She Walks in Beauty By** [**Lord Byron (George Gordon)**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lord-byron)

She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that’s best of dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes;

Thus mellowed to that tender light

Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,

Had half impaired the nameless grace

Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o’er her face;

Where thoughts serenely sweet express,

How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,

So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,

The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent!

**S26. Sheet Music By** [**Brigit Pegeen Kelly**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/brigit-pegeen-kelly)

If you cannot trust the dog, the faithful one?

And is this anyway a dog? The shadows move,

Dog and dog, two lanky figures, three, sniffing

The garden’s charred terrain, the darkening grass

The bleeding beds of flowers, sniffing the stones

And lunging at the rabbits that spring from the beds,

Wet creatures, mad with haste, mad and wet

And white as the half-hearted moon that stepped

Behind the clouds and has not come back....The rain

Fell hard, and now the mist rises, consolidates, disperses,

That thought, this, your face, mine, the shapes

Complicating the air around the abandoned birdhouse,

Big as a summer hotel, thirty rooms

For thirty birds, thirty perches from which to sing.

Such is the moon when it is full. A giant birdhouse

Tilted high on a steel pole, a pale blue box

Full of the shredded sheet music of long-dead birds....

The dogs move fast. How will I follow? And which one?

They are not in agreement. If the dog cannot be trusted,

Then what? The foot? But the foot is blind, the grass

Cold through the thin socks, the instep bared like a neck.

And now the flowers rise. The mums and asters,

The tall gladioli knocked back as the rain creeps up

In the mist, and the mist thickens and moves about me

Like a band of low-bred mummers, dripping scent,

Pulling my hair, my arms, trying to distract me,

But still I hear it, the dark sound that begins at the edge

Of the mind, at the far edge of the uncut field

Beyond the garden—a low braying, donkey

Or wolf, a low insistent moan. If I whistle

Will the dogs come? Can I gather their trailing leashes

And hold them in my hand? They cannot be held.

How pale the paint of the birdhouse. How ghastly pale

The sound of the cry coming closer....If I forsake

The dogs?.... If I forsake the mummers?....If I step

Like a fool into the glassy outer darkness?.... *O self....*

Brigit Pegeen Kelly, “Sheet Music” from *The Orchard*. Copyright © 2004 by Brigit Pegeen Kelly. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *The Orchard* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2004)

**S27. Sheltered Garden By** [**H. D.**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/h-d)

I have had enough.

I gasp for breath.

Every way ends, every road,

every foot-path leads at last

to the hill-crest—

then you retrace your steps,

or find the same slope on the other side,

precipitate.

I have had enough—

border-pinks, clove-pinks, wax-lilies,

herbs, sweet-cress.

O for some sharp swish of a branch—

there is no scent of resin

in this place,

no taste of bark, of coarse weeds,

aromatic, astringent—

only border on border of scented pinks.

Have you seen fruit under cover

that wanted light—

pears wadded in cloth,

protected from the frost,

melons, almost ripe,

smothered in straw?

Why not let the pears cling

to the empty branch?

All your coaxing will only make

a bitter fruit—

let them cling, ripen of themselves,

test their own worth,

nipped, shrivelled by the frost,

to fall at last but fair

with a russet coat.

Or the melon—

let it bleach yellow

in the winter light,

even tart to the taste—

it is better to taste of frost—

the exquisite frost—

than of wadding and of dead grass.

For this beauty,

beauty without strength,

chokes out life.

I want wind to break,

scatter these pink-stalks,

snap off their spiced heads,

fling them about with dead leaves—

spread the paths with twigs,

limbs broken off,

trail great pine branches,

hurled from some far wood

right across the melon-patch,

break pear and quince—

leave half-trees, torn, twisted

but showing the fight was valiant.

O to blot out this garden

to forget, to find a new beauty

in some terrible

wind-tortured place.

**S28. Shiloh: A Requiem (April, 1862) By** [**Herman Melville**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/herman-melville)

Skimming lightly, wheeling still,

The swallows fly low

Over the field in clouded days,

The forest-field of Shiloh—

Over the field where April rain

Solaced the parched ones stretched in pain

Through the pause of night

That followed the Sunday fight

Around the church of Shiloh—

The church so lone, the log-built one,

That echoed to many a parting groan

And natural prayer

Of dying foemen mingled there—

Foemen at morn, but friends at eve—

Fame or country least their care:

(What like a bullet can undeceive!)

But now they lie low,

While over them the swallows skim,

And all is hushed at Shiloh.

**S29. A Shropshire Lad 2: Loveliest of trees, the cherry now By** [**A. E. Housman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-e-housman)

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now

Is hung with bloom along the bough,

And stands about the woodland ride

Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,

Twenty will not come again,

And take from seventy springs a score,

It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom

Fifty springs are little room,

About the woodlands I will go

To see the cherry hung with snow.

1. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1896): 3-4. del H68 S551896 Fisher Rare Book Library

**S30. Sign By** [**George Starbuck**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-starbuck)

Virgin, sappy, gorgeous, the right-now

Flutters its huge prosthetics at us, flung

To the spotlights, frozen in motion, center-ice.

And the first rows, shaken with an afterslice

That’s bowled them into their seats like a big wet ciao.

O daffy panoply O rare device

O flashing leg-iron at a whopping price

Whipping us into ecstasies and how,

The whole galumphing Garden swung and swung,

A rescue helicopter’s bottom rung

Glinting and spinning off, a scud of fluff,

A slash of petals up against the bough,

A juggler’s avalanche of silken stuff

Gushing in white-hot verticals among

Camels and axels and pyramids, oh wow,

Bewilderment is parachute enough.

We jolt. A sidewise stutterstep in chorus.

The other billboards flicker by before us.

Gone! with a budded petulance that stung.

So talented! So targeted! So young!

Such concentration on the bottom line!

We vanish down the IRT. A shine.

A glimmer. Something. Nothing. To think twice

Was to have lost the trick of paradise.

George Starbuck, “Sign” from *The Works: Poems Selected from Five Decades.* Copyright © 2003 by University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa). Reprinted with the permission of The University of Alabama Press. Source: *The Works: Poems Selected from Five Decades* (2003)

**S31. Sign for My Father, Who Stressed the Bunt By** [**David Bottoms**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-bottoms)

On the rough diamond,

the hand-cut field below the dog lot and barn,

we rehearsed the strict technique

of bunting. I watched from the infield,

the mound, the backstop

as your left hand climbed the bat, your legs

and shoulders squared toward the pitcher.

You could drop it like a seed

down either base line. I admired your style,

but not enough to take my eyes off the bank

that served as our center-field fence.

Years passed, three leagues of organized ball,

no few lives. I could homer

into the left-field lot of Carmichael Motors,

and still you stressed the same technique,

the crouch and spring, the lead arm absorbing

just enough impact. That whole tiresome pitch

about basics never changing,

and I never learned what you were laying down.

Like a hand brushed across the bill of a cap,

let this be the sign

I’m getting a grip on the sacrifice.

David Bottoms, "Sign for My Father, Who Stressed the Bunt" from *Armored Hearts: Selected and New Poems*. Copyright © 1995 by David Bottoms. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press. www.coppercanyonpress.org  
  
Source: *Armored Hearts: Selected and New Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1995)

**S32. Silence By** [**Thomas Hood**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-hood)

There is a silence where hath been no sound,

There is a silence where no sound may be,

In the cold grave—under the deep deep sea,

Or in the wide desert where no life is found,

Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;

No voice is hush’d—no life treads silently,

But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,

That never spoke, over the idle ground:

But in green ruins, in the desolate walls

Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,

Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,

And owls, that flit continually between,

Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,

There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.



Source: *Poets of the English Language*

(Viking Press, 1950)

**S33. Since There Is No Escape By** [**Sara Teasdale**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sara-teasdale)

Since there is no escape, since at the end

My body will be utterly destroyed,

This hand I love as I have loved a friend,

This body I tended, wept with and enjoyed;

Since there is no escape even for me

Who love life with a love too sharp to bear:

The scent of orchards in the rain, the sea

And hours alone too still and sure for prayer—

Since darkness waits for me, then all the more

Let me go down as waves sweep to the shore

In pride, and let me sing with my last breath;

In these few hours of light I lift my head;

Life is my lover—I shall leave the dead

If there is any way to baffle death.

Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

**S34. Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight By** [**Yvor Winters**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/yvor-winters)

Reptilian green the wrinkled throat,

Green as a bough of yew the beard;

He bent his head, and so I smote;

Then for a thought my vision cleared.

The head dropped clean; he rose and walked;

He fixed his fingers in the hair;

The head was unabashed and talked;

I understood what I must dare.

His flesh, cut down, arose and grew.

He bade me wait the season’s round,

And then, when he had strength anew,

To meet him on his native ground.

The year declined; and in his keep

I passed in joy a thriving yule;

And whether waking or in sleep,

I lived in riot like a fool.

He beat the woods to bring me meat.

His lady, like a forest vine,

Grew in my arms; the growth was sweet;

And yet what thoughtless force was mine!

By practice and conviction formed,

With ancient stubbornness ingrained,

Although her body clung and swarmed,

My own identity remained.

Her beauty, lithe, unholy, pure,

Took shapes that I had never known;

And had I once been insecure,

Had grafted laurel in my bone.

And then, since I had kept the trust,

Had loved the lady, yet was true,

The knight withheld his giant thrust

And let me go with what I knew.

I left the green bark and the shade,

Where growth was rapid, thick, and still;

I found a road that men had made

And rested on a drying hill.

Yvor Winters, “Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight” from *Collected Poems.* Reprinted with the permission of Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Yvor Winters* (Swallow Press, 1978)

**S35. Skunk Hour By** [**Robert Lowell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-lowell)

*(For Elizabeth Bishop)***Dedication** Lowell’s poem is modeled on Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “The Armadillo,” which Bishop had dedicated to Lowell.

Nautilus Island’s**Nautilus Island’s** Lowell once remarked, “The first four stanzas are meant to give a dawdling more or less amiable picture of a declining Maine sea town.” hermit

heiress still lives through winter in her Spartan cottage;

her sheep still graze above the sea.

Her son’s a bishop. Her farmer

is first selectman in our village;

she’s in her dotage**she’s in her dotage** Echoes “the world is in its dotage”, from Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766)..

Thirsting for

the hierarchic privacy

of Queen Victoria’s century,

she buys up all

the eyesores facing her shore,

and lets them fall.

The season’s ill—

we’ve lost our summer millionaire,

who seemed to leap from an L. L. Bean

catalogue. His nine-knot yawl

was auctioned off to lobstermen.

A red fox stain covers Blue Hill**A red fox stain covers Blue Hill** Lowell wrote, “The red fox stain was merely meant to describe the rusty reddish color of autumn on Blue Hill, a Maine mountain near where we were living.”.

And now our fairy

decorator brightens his shop for fall;

his fishnet’s filled with orange cork,

orange, his cobbler’s bench and awl;

there is no money in his work,

he’d rather marry.

One dark night**One dark night** Echoes The Dark Night of the Soul by St. John of the Cross, a Spanish mystic (1542-1591). In his talk “On ‘Skunk Hour,’” Lowell stated, "I hoped my readers would remember John of the Cross's poem. My night is not gracious, but secular, puritan, and agnostic. An existential night.” ,

my Tudor Ford climbed the hill’s skull**hill’s skull** "When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus" (Luke: 23:33, NRSV). Both "Golgotha,” in Hebrew, and "Calvary," from Latin ("Calvaria") mean "skull".;

I watched for love-cars. Lights turned down,

they lay together, hull to hull,

where the graveyard shelves**shelves** Slopes down on the town. . . .

My mind’s not right.

A car radio bleats,

“Love, O careless Love. . . .”**“Love, O careless Love. . . .** “A popular blues song of the time written by W.C. Handy and performed by [Bessie Smith](http://youtu.be/IDyaEOd6t-w) (1925), in which the narrator threatens to kill his or her wayward lover. The song was performed with slight variations of lyrics by many musicians before Lowell wrote this poem in 1959, including [Fats Domino](http://youtu.be/XqU1d27JanA) (1956). I hear

my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell,

as if my hand were at its throat. . . .

I myself am hell**I myself am hell** An echo of Satan speaking in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: “Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell” (Book 4, line 75);

nobody’s here—

only skunks, that search

in the moonlight for a bite to eat.

They march on their soles up Main Street:

white stripes, moonstruck eyes’ red fire

under the chalk-dry and spar**spar** Nautical term for a mast spire

of the Trinitarian Church.

I stand on top

of our back steps and breathe the rich air—

a mother skunk with her column**column** Figuratively, a military formation of kittens swills the garbage pail

She jabs her wedge-head in a cup

of sour cream, drops her ostrich tail,

and will not scare.

Robert Lowell, “Skunk Hour” from *Life Studies*. Copyright © 1956, 1959 by Robert Lowell, renewed © 1987 by Harriet W. Lowell, Sheridan Lowell, and Caroline Lowell. Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. Source: *Life Studies* (1987)

**S36. Slant By** [**Suji Kwock Kim**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/suji-kwock-kim)

If the angle of an eye is all,

the slant of hope, the slant of dreaming, according to each life,

what is the light of this city,

light of Lady Liberty, possessor of the most famous armpit in the world,

light of the lovers on Chinese soap operas, throwing BBQ’d ducks at each other

with that live-it-up-while-you’re-young, Woo Me kind of love,

light of the old men sitting on crates outside geegaw shops

selling dried seahorses & plastic Temples of Heaven,

light of the Ying ‘n’ Yang Junk Palace,

light of the Golden Phoenix Hair Salon, light of Wig-o-ramas,

light of the suntanners in Central Park turning over like rotisserie chickens sizzling on a spit,

light of the Pluck U & Gone with the Wings fried-chicken shops,

the parking-meter-leaners, the Glamazons,

the oglers wearing fern-wilting quantities of cologne, strutting, trash-talking, glorious:

the immigrants, the refugees, the peddlars, stockbrokers and janitors, stenographers and cooks,

all of us making and unmaking ourselves,

hurrying forwards, toward who we’ll become, one way only, one life only:

free in time but not from it,

here in the city the living make together, and make and unmake over and over

Quick, quick, ask heaven of it, of every mortal relation,

feeling that is fleeing,

for what would the heart be without a heaven to set it on?

I can’t help thinking no word will ever be as full of life as this world,

I can’t help thinking of thanks.

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**S37.[Sleeping sister of a farther sky] By** [**Karen Volkman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/karen-volkman)

Sleeping sister of a farther sky,

dropped from zenith like a tender tone,

the lucid apex of a scale unknown

whose whitest whisper is an opaque cry

of measureless frequency, the spectral sigh

you breath, bright hydrogen and brighter zone

of fissured carbon, consummated moan

and ceaseless rapture of a brilliant why.

Will nothing wake you from your livid rest?

Essence of ether and astral stone

the stunned polarities your substance weaves

in one bright making, like a dream of leaves

in the tree’s mind, summered. Or as a brooding bone

roots constellations in the body’s nest.

Karen Volkman, "[Sleeping sister of a farther sky]" from *Nomina*. Copyright © 2008 by Karen Volkman. Reprinted by permission of BOA Editions, Ltd. www.boaeditions.org

Source: *Nomina* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 2008)

**S38. Snake Oil, Snake Bite By** [**Dilruba Ahmed**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dilruba-ahmed)

They staunched the wound with a stone.

They drew blue venom from his blood

until there was none.

When his veins ran true his face remained

lifeless and all the mothers of the village

wept and pounded their chests until the sky

had little choice

but to grant their supplications. God made

the boy breathe again.

God breathes life into us, it is said,

only once. But this case was an exception.

God drew back in a giant gust and blew life into the boy

and like a stranded fish, he shuddered, oceanless.

It was true: the boy lived.

He lived for a very long time. The toxins

were an oil slick: contaminated, cleaned.

But just as soon as the women

kissed redness back into his cheeks

the boy began to die again.

He continued to die for the rest of   his life.

The dying took place slowly, sweetly.

The dying took a very long time.

**S39. Snow Day By** [**Billy Collins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/billy-collins)

Today we woke up to a revolution of snow,

its white flag waving over everything,

the landscape vanished,

not a single mouse to punctuate the blankness,

and beyond these windows

the government buildings smothered,

schools and libraries buried, the post office lost

under the noiseless drift,

the paths of trains softly blocked,

the world fallen under this falling.

In a while, I will put on some boots

and step out like someone walking in water,

and the dog will porpoise through the drifts,

and I will shake a laden branch

sending a cold shower down on us both.

But for now I am a willing prisoner in this house,

a sympathizer with the anarchic cause of snow.

I will make a pot of tea

and listen to the plastic radio on the counter,

as glad as anyone to hear the news

that the Kiddie Corner School is closed,

the Ding-Dong School, closed.

the All Aboard Children’s School, closed,

the Hi-Ho Nursery School, closed,

along with—some will be delighted to hear—

the Toadstool School, the Little School,

Little Sparrows Nursery School,

Little Stars Pre-School, Peas-and-Carrots Day School

the Tom Thumb Child Center, all closed,

and—clap your hands—the Peanuts Play School.

So this is where the children hide all day,

These are the nests where they letter and draw,

where they put on their bright miniature jackets,

all darting and climbing and sliding,

all but the few girls whispering by the fence.

And now I am listening hard

in the grandiose silence of the snow,

trying to hear what those three girls are plotting,

what riot is afoot,

which small queen is about to be brought down.

Billy Collins, “Snow Day” from *Sailing Alone Around the Room: New and Selected Poems* (New York: Random House, 2001). Copyright © 2001 by Billy Collins. Reprinted with the permission of Sll/Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.

Source: *Sailing Alone Around the Room: New and Selected Poems* (Random House Inc., 2001)

**S40. The Snow Is Deep on the Ground By** [**Kenneth Patchen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-patchen)

The snow is deep on the ground.

Always the light falls

Softly down on the hair of my belovèd.

This is a good world.

The war has failed.

God shall not forget us.

Who made the snow waits where love is.

Only a few go mad.

The sky moves in its whiteness

Like the withered hand of an old king.

God shall not forget us.

Who made the sky knows of our love.

The snow is beautiful on the ground.

And always the lights of heaven glow

Softly down on the hair of my belovèd.

Kenneth Patchen, “The Snow Is Deep on the Ground” from *Collected Poems.* Copyright 1943 by Kenneth Patchen. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Selected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1957)

**S41. The Snow Man By** [**Wallace Stevens**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wallace-stevens)

One must have a mind of winter

To regard the frost and the boughs

Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time

To behold the junipers shagged with ice,

The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think

Of any misery in the sound of the wind,

In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land

Full of the same wind

That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,

And, nothing himself, beholds

Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

Wallace Stevens, "The Snow Man" from *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. Copyright © 1954 by Wallace Stevens and renewed 1982 by Holly Stevens. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved.   
  
Source: *Poetry magazine* (1921)

**S42. The Snow-Storm By** [**Ralph Waldo Emerson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ralph-waldo-emerson)

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,

Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,

Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air

Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,

And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.

The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet

Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit

Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed

In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.

Out of an unseen quarry evermore

Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer

Curves his white bastions with projected roof

Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.

Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work

So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he

For number or proportion. Mockingly,

On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;

A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;

Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,

Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,

A tapering turret overtops the work.

And when his hours are numbered, and the world

Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,

Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art

To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,

Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,

The frolic architecture of the snow.

**S43. Snowflake By** [**William Baer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-baer)

Timing’s everything. The vapor rises

high in the sky, tossing to and fro,

then freezes, suddenly, and crystalizes

into a perfect flake of miraculous snow.

For countless miles, drifting east above

the world, whirling about in a swirling free-

for-all, appearing aimless, just like love,

but sensing, seeking out, its destiny.

Falling to where the two young skaters stand,

hand in hand, then flips and dips and whips

itself about to ever-so-gently land,

a miracle, across her unkissed lips:

as he blocks the wind raging from the south,

leaning forward to kiss her lovely mouth.

William Baer, “Snowflake” from *Borges and Other Sonnets*. Copyright © 2003 by William Baer. Reprinted by permission of Truman State University Press.

Source: *Borges and Other Sonnets* (Truman State University Press, 2003)

**S44. Snowy Owl Near Ocean Shores By** [**Duane Niatum**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/duane-niatum)

A castaway blown south from the arctic tundra

sits on a stump in an abandoned farmer’s field.

Beyond the dunes cattails toss and bend as snappy

as the surf, rushing and crashing down the jetty.

His head a swivel of round glances,

his eyes a deeper yellow than the winter sun,

he wonders if the spot two hundred feet away

is a mouse on the crawl from mud hole

to deer-grass patch.

An hour of wind and sleet whips the air,

nothing darts or passes but the river underground.

A North Pole creature shows us how to last.

The wind ruffles his feathers from crown to claw

while he gazes into zeroes the salt-slick rain.

As a double-rainbow before us arcs

sky and owl, we leave him surrendering

to the echo of his white refrain. Duane Niatum, “Snowy Owl Near Ocean Shores.” Copyright © by Duane Niatum. Reprinted by permission of the author. Source: *Drawings of the Song Animals* (Holy Cow! Press, 1996)

**S45. So This Is Nebraska By** [**Ted Kooser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ted-kooser)

The gravel road rides with a slow gallop

over the fields, the telephone lines

streaming behind, its billow of dust

full of the sparks of redwing blackbirds.

On either side, those dear old ladies,

the loosening barns, their little windows

dulled by cataracts of hay and cobwebs

hide broken tractors under their skirts.

So this is Nebraska. A Sunday

afternoon; July. Driving along

with your hand out squeezing the air,

a meadowlark waiting on every post.

Behind a shelterbelt of cedars,

top-deep in hollyhocks, pollen and bees,

Ted Kooser, “So This Is Nebraska” from *Sure Signs*. Copyright © 1980 by Ted Kooser.

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a pickup kicks its fenders off

and settles back to read the clouds.

You feel like that; you feel like letting

your tires go flat, like letting the mice

build a nest in your muffler, like being

no more than a truck in the weeds,

clucking with chickens or sticky with honey

or holding a skinny old man in your lap

while he watches the road, waiting

for someone to wave to. You feel like

waving. You feel like stopping the car

and dancing around on the road. You wave

instead and leave your hand out gliding

larklike over the wheat, over the houses.

**S46. So We'll Go No More a Roving By** [**Lord Byron (George Gordon)**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lord-byron)

So, we'll go no more a roving

So late into the night,

Though the heart be still as loving,

And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,

And the soul wears out the breast,

And the heart must pause to breathe,

And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,

And the day returns too soon,

Yet we'll go no more a roving

By the light of the moon.

**S47. The Soldier By** [**Rupert Brooke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rupert-brooke)

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there’s some corner of a foreign field

That is for ever England. There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,

Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;

A body of England’s, breathing English air,

Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,

A pulse in the eternal mind, no less

Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;

Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;

And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,

In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

**Poetry Out Loud Note**: This poem has had two titles: “The Soldier” and “Nineteen-Fourteen: The Soldier”. The student may give either title during the recitation.

Source: *Poetry* (April 1915).

**S48. Solitude By** [**Ella Wheeler Wilcox**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ella-wheeler-wilcox)

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;

Weep, and you weep alone;

For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,

But has trouble enough of its own.

Sing, and the hills will answer;

Sigh, it is lost on the air;

The echoes bound to a joyful sound,

But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;

Grieve, and they turn and go;

They want full measure of all your pleasure,

But they do not need your woe.

Be glad, and your friends are many;

Be sad, and you lose them all,—

There are none to decline your nectared wine,

But alone you must drink life’s gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;

Fast, and the world goes by.

Succeed and give, and it helps you live,

But no man can help you die.

There is room in the halls of pleasure

For a large and lordly train,

But one by one we must all file on

Through the narrow aisles of pain.

**S49. Somewhere By** [**Robert Creeley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-creeley)

The galloping collection of boards

are the house which I afforded

one evening to walk into

just as the night came down.

Dark inside, the candle

lit of its own free will, the attic

groaned then, the stairs

led me up into the air.

From outside, it must have seemed

a wonder that it was

the inside *he* as *me* saw

in the dark there.

Robert Creeley, “Somewhere” from *Selected Poems of Robert Creeley*. Copyright © 1991 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press, [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

Source: *Selected Poems* (1991)

**S50. Song By** [**Edmund Waller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edmund-waller)

Go, lovely rose!

Tell her that wastes her time and me,

That now she knows,

When I resemble her to thee,

How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that’s young,

And shuns to have her graces spied,

That hadst thou sprung

In deserts, where no men abide,

Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth

Of beauty from the light retired;

Bid her come forth,

Suffer herself to be desired,

And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she

The common fate of all things rare

May read in thee;

How small a part of time they share

That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

**S51. Song After Campion By** [**Robert Fitzgerald**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-fitzgerald)

Ravished lute, sing to her virgin ears,

Soft notes thy strings repeating;

Plucked harp, whose amorous song she hears,

Tell her the time is fleeting;

Night-tide and my distress of love

O speak, sweet numbers,

That pity her heart may move

Before she slumbers.

Pale moth, that from the moon doth fly,

Fickle enchantments weaving,

Night faery, come my lady nigh

When the rich masques are leaving;

Tell her who lieth still alone

Love is a treasure

Fair as the frail lute’s tone

And perished measure.

Robert Fitzgerald, “Song after Campion” from *Spring Shade: Poems 1931-1970.* Copyright © 1969 by Robert Fitzgerald. Used by the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *Spring Shade: Poems 1931-1970* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1971)

**S52. Song for the Last Act By** [**Louise Bogan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louise-bogan)

Now that I have your face by heart, I look

Less at its features than its darkening frame

Where quince and melon, yellow as young flame,

Lie with quilled dahlias and the shepherd’s crook.

Beyond, a garden. There, in insolent ease

The lead and marble figures watch the show

Of yet another summer loath to go

Although the scythes hang in the apple trees.

Now that I have your face by heart, I look.

Now that I have your voice by heart, I read

In the black chords upon a dulling page

Music that is not meant for music’s cage,

Whose emblems mix with words that shake and bleed.

The staves are shuttled over with a stark

Unprinted silence. In a double dream

I must spell out the storm, the running stream.

The beat’s too swift. The notes shift in the dark.

Now that I have your voice by heart, I read.

Now that I have your heart by heart, I see

The wharves with their great ships and architraves;

The rigging and the cargo and the slaves

On a strange beach under a broken sky.

O not departure, but a voyage done!

The bales stand on the stone; the anchor weeps

Its red rust downward, and the long vine creeps

Beside the salt herb, in the lengthening sun.

Now that I have your heart by heart, I see.

Louise Bogan, “Song for the Last Act” from *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968.* Copyright © 1968 by Louise Bogan. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Source: *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1968)

**S53. Song: Go and catch a falling star By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Go and catch a falling star,

Get with child a mandrake root,

Tell me where all past years are,

Or who cleft the devil's foot,

Teach me to hear mermaids singing,

Or to keep off envy's stinging,

And find

What wind

Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,

Things invisible to see,

Ride ten thousand days and nights,

Till age snow white hairs on thee,

Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,

All strange wonders that befell thee,

And swear,

No where

Lives a woman true, and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know,

Such a pilgrimage were sweet;

Yet do not, I would not go,

Though at next door we might meet;

Though she were true, when you met her,

And last, till you write your letter,

Yet she

Will be

False, ere I come, to two, or three.

**Poetry Out Loud Note**: In the print anthology, this poem is titled simply "Song." The student may give either title during the recitation.

**S54. Song in a Minor Key By** [**Dorothy Parker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dorothy-parker)

There's a place I know where the birds swing low,

And wayward vines go roaming,

Where the lilacs nod, and a marble god

Is pale, in scented gloaming.

And at sunset there comes a lady fair

Whose eyes are deep with yearning.

By an old, old gate does the lady wait

Her own true love's returning.

But the days go by, and the lilacs die,

And trembling birds seek cover;

Yet the lady stands, with her long white hands

Held out to greet her lover.

And it's there she'll stay till the shadowy day

A monument they grave her.

She will always wait by the same old gate, —

The gate her true love gave her.

**S55. a song in the front yard By** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

I’ve stayed in the front yard all my life.

I want a peek at the back

Where it’s rough and untended and hungry weed grows.

A girl gets sick of a rose.

I want to go in the back yard now

And maybe down the alley,

To where the charity children play.

I want a good time today.

They do some wonderful things.

They have some wonderful fun.

My mother sneers, but I say it’s fine

How they don’t have to go in at quarter to nine.

My mother, she tells me that Johnnie Mae

Will grow up to be a bad woman.

That George’ll be taken to Jail soon or late

(On account of last winter he sold our back gate).

But I say it’s fine. Honest, I do.

And I’d like to be a bad woman, too,

And wear the brave stockings of night-black lace

And strut down the streets with paint on my face.

Gwendolyn Brooks, “a song in the front yard” from *Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1963 by Gwendolyn Brooks. Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of Gwendolyn Brooks.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1963)

**S56. Song: “Blow, blow, thou winter wind” By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,

Thou art not so unkind

As man’s ingratitude;

Thy tooth is not so keen,

Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:*

*Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:*

*Then, heigh-ho, the holly!*

*This life is most jolly.*

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,

That dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot:

Though thou the waters warp,

Thy sting is not so sharp

As friend remembered not.

*Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly...*

**S57. Song: “You charm'd me not with that fair face” By** [**John Dryden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-dryden)

from *An Evening's Love*

You charm'd me not with that fair face

Though it was all divine:

To be another's is the grace,

That makes me wish you mine.

The Gods and Fortune take their part

Who like young monarchs fight;

And boldly dare invade that heart

Which is another's right.

First mad with hope we undertake

To pull up every bar;

But once possess'd, we faintly make

A dull defensive war.

Now every friend is turn'd a foe

In hope to get our store:

And passion makes us cowards grow,

Which made us brave before.

***S58. Song of Myself*: 35 By** [**Walt Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walt-whitman)

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?

Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?

List to the yarn, as my grandmother’s father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,)

His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be;

Along the lower’d eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch’d,

My captain lash’d fast with his own hands.

We had receiv’d some eighteen pound shots under the water,

On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,

Ten o’clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of water reported,

The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,

They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,

The other asks if we demand quarter?

If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,

*We have not struck,* he composedly cries, we have just begun our part of the fighting.

Only three guns are in use,

One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy’s mainmast,

Two well serv’d with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top,

They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment’s cease,

The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,

He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,

His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

Source: *Walt Whitman: Poetry and Prose* (The Library of America, 1996)

**S59. Song of the Powers By** [**David Mason**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-mason)

Mine, said the stone,

mine is the hour.

I crush the scissors,

such is my power.

Stronger than wishes,

my power, alone.

Mine, said the paper,

mine are the words

that smother the stone

with imagined birds,

reams of them, flown

from the mind of the shaper.

Mine, said the scissors,

mine all the knives

gashing through paper’s

ethereal lives;

nothing’s so proper

as tattering wishes.

As stone crushes scissors,

as paper snuffs stone

and scissors cut paper,

all end alone.

So heap up your paper

and scissor your wishes

and uproot the stone

from the top of the hill.

They all end alone

as you will, you will.

David Mason, “Song of the Powers” from *The Country I Remember* (Brownsville, Oregon: Story Line Press, 1996). Copyright © 1996 by David Mason. Used with the permission of the author.

Source: *The Country I Remember* (Story Line Press, 1996)

**S60. Song of the Shattering Vessels By** [**Peter Cole**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/peter-cole)

Either the world is coming together,

or else the world is falling apart —

here — now — along these letters,

against the walls of every heart.

Today, tomorrow, within its weather,

the end or beginning’s about to start —

the world impossibly coming together

or very possibly falling apart.

Now the lovers’ mouths are open —

maybe the miracle’s about to start:

the world within us coming together,

because all around us it’s falling apart.

Even as they speak, he wonders,

even as the fear departs:

*Is* that the world coming together?

Can they keep it from falling apart?

The image, gradually, is growing sharper;

now the sound is like a dart:

It seemed their world was coming together,

but in fact it was falling apart.

That’s the nightmare, that’s the terror,

that’s the Isaac of this art —

which sees that the world might come together

if only we’re willing to take it apart.

The dream, the lure, is the prayer’s answer,

which can’t be plotted on any chart —

as we know the world that’s coming together

without our knowing is falling apart.

## **S61. The Song of the Smoke By** [**W. E. B. Du Bois**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-e-b-du-bois)

I am the Smoke King

I am black!

I am swinging in the sky,

I am wringing worlds awry;

I am the thought of the throbbing mills,

I am the soul of the soul-toil kills,

Wraith of the ripple of trading rills;

Up I’m curling from the sod,

I am whirling home to God;

I am the Smoke King

I am black.

I am the Smoke King,

I am black!

I am wreathing broken hearts,

I am sheathing love’s light darts;

Inspiration of iron times

Wedding the toil of toiling climes,

Shedding the blood of bloodless crimes—

Lurid lowering ’mid the blue,

Torrid towering toward the true,

I am the Smoke King,

I am black.

I am the Smoke King,

I am black!

I am darkening with song,

I am hearkening to wrong!

I will be black as blackness can—

The blacker the mantle, the mightier the man!

For blackness was ancient ere whiteness began.

I am daubing God in night,

I am swabbing Hell in white:

I am the Smoke King

I am black.

I am the Smoke King

I am black!

I am cursing ruddy morn,

I am hearsing hearts unborn:

Souls unto me are as stars in a night,

I whiten my black men—I blacken my white!

What’s the hue of a hide to a man in his might?

Hail! great, gritty, grimy hands—

Sweet Christ, pity toiling lands!

I am the Smoke King

I am black.

W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Song of the Smoke” from *Creative Writings by W. E. B Du Bois* (KrausThomson Organization Limited, 1985). Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of W. E. B. Du Bois.  
  
Source: *Creative Writings by W. E. B. Du Bois* (Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1985)

**S62. Song: to Celia [Come, my Celia, let us prove] By** [**Ben Jonson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ben-jonson)

Come, my Celia, let us prove,

While we can, the sports of love;

Time will not be ours forever;

He at length our good will sever.

Spend not then his gifts in vain.

Suns that set may rise again;

But if once we lose this light,

’Tis with us perpetual night.

Why should we defer our joys?

Fame and rumor are but toys.

Cannot we delude the eyes

Of a few poor household spies,

Or his easier ears beguile,

So removèd by our wile?

’Tis no sin love’s fruit to steal;

But the sweet thefts to reveal,

To be taken, to be seen,

These have crimes accounted been.

**S63. Song: to Celia [“Drink to me only with thine eyes”] By** [**Ben Jonson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ben-jonson)

Drink to me only with thine eyes,

And I will pledge with mine;

Or leave a kiss but in the cup,

And I’ll not look for wine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise

Doth ask a drink divine;

But might I of Jove’s nectar sup,

I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,

Not so much honouring thee

As giving it a hope, that there

It could not withered be.

But thou thereon didst only breathe,

And sent’st it back to me;

Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,

Not of itself, but thee.

***S64. The Songs of Maximus*: Song 1 By** [**Charles Olson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-olson)

colored pictures

of all things to eat: dirty

postcards

And words, words, words

all over everything

No eyes or ears left

to do their own doings (all

invaded, appropriated, outraged, all senses

including the mind, that worker on what is

And that other sense

made to give even the most wretched, or any of us, wretched,

that consolation (greased

lulled

even the street-cars

song

Charles Olson, “The Songs of Maximus: ‘Song 1’ ” from *The Maximus Poems,* published by the University of California Press. Copyright © 1983 by Charles Olson. Reprinted with the permission of The Literary Estate of Charles Olson.

Source: *The Maximus Poems* (University of California Press, 1987)

***S65. The Songs of Maximus*: Song 2 By** [**Charles Olson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-olson)

all

wrong

And I am asked—ask myself (I, too, covered

with the gurry of it) where

shall we go from here, what can we do

when even the public conveyances

sing?

how can we go anywhere,

even cross-town

how get out of anywhere (the bodies

all buried

in shallow graves?

Charles Olson, “The Songs of Maximus: ‘Song 2’ ” from *The Maximus Poems,* published by the University of California Press. Copyright © 1983 by Charles Olson. Reprinted with the permission of The Literary Estate of Charles Olson.

Source: *The Maximus Poems* (University of California Press, 1987)

**S66. Sonnet 1 ﻿ By** [**Philip Sidney**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-sidney)

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,

That the dear She might take some pleasure of my pain,

Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,

Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—

I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,

Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,

Oft turning others’ leaves, to see if thence would flow

Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.

But words came halting forth, wanting Invention’s stay:

Invention, Nature’s child, fled step-dame Study’s blows,

And others’ feet still seemed but strangers in my way.

Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,

Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite:

“Fool,” said my Muse to me, “look in thy heart and write.”

**S67. Sonnet 15: When I consider everything that grows By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

When I consider everything that grows

Holds in perfection but a little moment,

That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

When I perceive that men as plants increase,

Cheered and check'd even by the selfsame sky,

Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,

And wear their brave state out of memory;

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay

Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,

Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay

To change your day of youth to sullied night;

And all in war with Time for love of you,

As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

**S68. Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer’s lease hath all too short a date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;

Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

**S69. Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent By** [**John Milton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-milton)

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one Talent which is death to hide

Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide;

“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”

I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need

Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:

They also serve who only stand and wait.”

**S70. Sonnet 23: Methought I saw my late espoused saint By** [**John Milton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-milton)

Methought I saw my late espoused saint

Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,

Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,

Rescu'd from death by force, though pale and faint.

Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint

Purification in the old Law did save,

And such as yet once more I trust to have

Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,

Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;

Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight

Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd

So clear as in no face with more delight.

But Oh! as to embrace me she inclin'd,

I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

**S71. Sonnet 29: When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven’s gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

**S72. Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

Not marble nor the gilded monuments

Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn

The living record of your memory.

’Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the Judgement that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1983)

**S73. Sonnet 84: While one sere leaf, that parting Autumn yields By** [**Anna Seward**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anna-seward)

While one sere leaf, that parting Autumn yields,

Trembles upon the thin, and naked spray,

November, dragging on this sunless day,

Lours, cold and sullen, on the watery fields;

And Nature to the waste dominion yields,

Stripped her last robes, with gold and purple gay —

So droops my life, of your soft beams despoiled,

Youth, Health, and Hope, that long exulting smiled;

And the wild carols, and the bloomy hues

Of merry Spring-time, spruce on every plain

Her half-blown bushes, moist with sunny rain,

More pensive thoughts in my sunk heart infuse

Than Winter’s grey, and desolate domain

Faded like my lost Youth, that no bright Spring renews.

**S74. Sonnet 91: On the fleet streams, the Sun, that late arose By** [**Anna Seward**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anna-seward)

On the fleet streams, the Sun, that late arose,

In amber radiance plays; the tall young grass

No foot hath bruised; clear morning, as I pass,

Breathes the pure gale, that on the blossom blows;

And, as with gold yon green hill’s summit glows,

The lake inlays the vale with molten glass:

Now is the year’s soft youth, yet one, alas!

Cheers not as it was wont; impending woes

Weigh on my heart; the joys, that once were mine,

Spring leads not back; and those that yet remain

Fade while she blooms. Each hour more lovely shine

Her crystal beams, and feed her floral train,

But oh with pale, and warring fires, decline

Those eyes, whose light my filial hopes sustain.

**S75. Sonnets from the Portuguese 43: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways By** [**Elizabeth Barrett Browning**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-barrett-browning)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of being and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day’s

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

**Poetry Out Loud Note**: In the print anthology, this poem is titled simply "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." The student may give either title during their recitation.

**S76.The Sorrow of Love By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

The brawling of a sparrow in the eaves,

The brilliant moon and all the milky sky,

And all that famous harmony of leaves,

Had blotted out man's image and his cry.

A girl arose that had red mournful lips

And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,

Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships

And proud as Priam murdered with his peers;

Arose, and on the instant clamorous eaves,

A climbing moon upon an empty sky,

And all that lamentation of the leaves,

Could but compose man's image and his cry.

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

**S77. The Sorrow of True Love ﻿ By** [**Edward Thomas**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edward-thomas)

The sorrow of true love is a great sorrow

And true love parting blackens a bright morrow:

Yet almost they equal joys, since their despair

Is but hope blinded by its tears, and clear

Above the storm the heavens wait to be seen.

But greater sorrow from less love has been

That can mistake lack of despair for hope

And knows not tempest and the perfect scope

Of summer, but a frozen drizzle perpetual

Of drops that from remorse and pity fall

And cannot ever shine in the sun or thaw,

Removed eternally from the sun’s law.

**S78. Sparklers By** [**Barbara Crooker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/barbara-crooker)

We’re writing our names with sizzles of light

to celebrate the fourth. I use the loops of cursive,

make a big *B* like the sloping hills on the west side

of the lake. The rest, little *a*, *r*, one small *b*,

spit and fizz as they scratch the night. On the side

of the shack where we bought them, a handmade sign:

*Trailer Full of Sparkles Ahead*, and I imagine crazy

chrysanthemums, wheels of fire, glitter bouncing

off metal walls. Here, we keep tracing in tiny

pyrotechnics the letters we were given at birth,

branding them on the air. And though my mother’s

name has been erased now, I write it, too:

a big swooping *I*, a hissing *s*, an *a* that sighs

like her last breath, and then I ring

*belle, belle, belle* in the sulphuric smoky dark.

Poem copyright ©2013 by Barbara Crooker from her most recent book of poems, *Gold*, Cascade Books, 2013. Poem reprinted by permission of Barbara Crooker and the publisher.

**S79. Speak By** [**Phillip B. Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/phillip-b-williams)

A storm and so a gift.

Its swift approach

lifts gravel from the road.

A fence is flattened in

the course of   the storm’s

worse attempt at language —

thunder’s umbrage. A tree

is torn apart,

blown upward through a bedroom

window. A boy winnows

through the pile

of shards for the sharpest parts

from the blown-apart

glass. He has

a bag that holds found edges

jagged as a stag’s

horns or smooth as

a single pane smashed into

smaller panes that he sticks

his hand into

to make blood web across

his ache-less skin flexing

like fish gills

O-lipped for a scream

it cannot make.

He wants to feel

what his friends have felt,

the slant of fear on their faces

he could never

recreate, his body configured

without pain. When his skin’s

pouting welts

don’t rake a whimper

from his mouth, he runs

outside, arms up

for the storm, aluminum

baseball bat held out

to the sky

until lightning with an electric

tongue makes his viscera

luminescent;

the boy’s first word for pain

is the light’s

new word for home.

**S80. The Speakers By** [**Weldon Kees**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/weldon-kees)

“A equals X,” says Mister One.

“A equals B,” says Mister Two.

“A equals nothing under the sun

But A,” says Mister Three. A few

Applaud; some wipe their eyes;

Some linger in the shade to see

One and Two in neat disguise

Decapitating Mister Three.

“This age is not entirely bad.”

It’s bad enough, God knows, but you

Should know Elizabethans had

Sweeneys and Mrs. Porters too.

The past goes down and disappears,

The present stumbles home to bed,

The future stretches out in years

That no one knows, and you’ll be dead.

Weldon Kees, "The Speakers" from *The Collected Poems of Weldon Kees* edited by Donald Justice by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1962, 1975, by the University of Nebraska Press. © renewed 2003 by the University of Nebraska Press. Source: *Poetry* (May 1939).

**S81. The Spirit Is Too Blunt an Instrument By** [**Anne Stevenson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-stevenson)

The spirit is too blunt an instrument

to have made this baby.

Nothing so unskilful as human passions

could have managed the intricate

exacting particulars: the tiny

blind bones with their manipulating tendons,

the knee and the knucklebones, the resilient

fine meshings of ganglia and vertebrae,

the chain of the difficult spine.

Observe the distinct eyelashes and sharp crescent

fingernails, the shell-like complexity

of the ear, with its firm involutions

concentric in miniature to minute

ossicles. Imagine the

infinitesimal capillaries, the flawless connections

of the lungs, the invisible neural filaments

through which the completed body

already answers to the brain.

Then name any passion or sentiment

possessed of the simplest accuracy.

No, no desire or affection could have done

with practice what habit

has done perfectly, indifferently,

through the body's ignorant precision.

It is left to the vagaries of the mind to invent

love and despair and anxiety

and their pain.

Anne Stevenson, "The Spirit is Too Blunt an Instrument" from *Poems 1955-2005*. Copyright © 2005 by Anne Stevenson. Reprinted with the permission of Bloodaxe Books Ltd. [www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com) Source: *Poems 1955-2005* (Bloodaxe Books, 2005)

**S82. The Spring By** [**Thomas Carew**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-carew)

Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost

Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost

Candies the grass, or casts an icy cream

Upon the silver lake or crystal stream;

But the warm sun thaws the benumbed earth,

And makes it tender; gives a sacred birth

To the dead swallow; wakes in hollow tree

The drowsy cuckoo, and the humble-bee.

Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring

In triumph to the world the youthful Spring.

The valleys, hills, and woods in rich array

Welcome the coming of the long'd-for May.

Now all things smile, only my love doth lour;

Nor hath the scalding noonday sun the power

To melt that marble ice, which still doth hold

Her heart congeal'd, and makes her pity cold.

The ox, which lately did for shelter fly

Into the stall, doth now securely lie

In open fields; and love no more is made

By the fireside, but in the cooler shade

Amyntas now doth with his Chloris sleep

Under a sycamore, and all things keep

Time with the season; only she doth carry

June in her eyes, in her heart January.

**S83. Spring By** [**Gerard Manley Hopkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerard-manley-hopkins)

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrush’s eggs look little low heavens, and thrush

Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring

The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush

With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth’s sweet being in the beginning

In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,

Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,

Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,

Most, O maid’s child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

Source: *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985)

**S84. Spring By** [**William Shakespeare**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-shakespeare)

When daisies pied and violets blue

And lady-smocks all silver-white

And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue

Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,

Mocks married men; for thus sings he,

Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo: Oh word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,

And merry larks are plowmen’s clocks,

When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,

And maidens bleach their summer smocks,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,

Mocks married men; for thus sings he,

Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo: Oh word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

**S85. Spring and Fall By** [**Gerard Manley Hopkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerard-manley-hopkins)

to a young child

Márgarét, áre you gríeving

Over Goldengrove unleaving?

Leáves like the things of man, you

With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?

Ah! ás the heart grows older

It will come to such sights colder

By and by, nor spare a sigh

Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;

And yet you wíll weep and know why.

Now no matter, child, the name:

Sórrow’s spríngs áre the same.

Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed

What heart heard of, ghost guessed:

It ís the blight man was born for,

It is Margaret you mourn for.

Source: *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985)

**S86. Squirrels By** [**Nate Klug**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/nate-klug)

Something blurred, warmed

in the eye’s corner, like woodsmoke

becoming tears;

but when you turned to look

the stoop was still, the pumpkin

and tacky mum pot wouldn’t talk —

just a rattle

at the gutter and a sense

of curtains, somewhere, pulled.

Five of   them later, scarfing the oak’s

black bole,

laying a dream of snakes.

Needy and reticent

at once, these squirrels in charred November

recall, in Virgil,

what it is to feel:

moods, half-moods,

swarming, then darting loose; obscure

hunches that refuse

to speak, but still expect

in some flash of   luck

to be revealed. The less you try

to notice them,

the more they will know of  you.

**S87. Stanzas in Meditation: Stanza 83 By** [**Gertrude Stein**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gertrude-stein)

Why am I if I am uncertain reasons may inclose.

Remain remain propose repose chose.

I call carelessly that the door is open

Which if they may refuse to open

No one can rush to close.

Let them be mine therefor.

Everybody knows that I chose.

Therefor if therefore before I close.

I will therefore offer therefore I offer this.

Which if I refuse to miss may be miss is mine.

I will be well welcome when I come.

Because I am coming.

Certainly I come having come.

These stanzas are done.

Gertrude Stein, Stanza LXXXIII from *Stanzas in Meditation and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994). Copyright © 1956 by Alice B. Toklas. Copyright © 1980 by Calman A. Levin, Executor of the Estate of Gertrude Stein. Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of Gertrude Stein.  
  
Source: *Stanzas in Meditation and Other Poems* (Sun & Moon Press, 1994)

**S88. The Star By** [**Ann Taylor, Jane Taylor**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jane-taylor)

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are !

Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,

When he nothing shines upon,

Then you show your little light,

Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the trav'ller in the dark,

Thanks you for your tiny spark,

He could not see which way to go,

If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,

And often thro' my curtains peep,

For you never shut your eye,

Till the sun is in the sky.

'Tis your bright and tiny spark,

Lights the trav'ller in the dark :

Tho' I know not what you are,

Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

NOTES: co-author: Jane Taylor

**S89. The Statesmen By** [**Ambrose Bierce**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ambrose-bierce)

How blest the land that counts among

Her sons so many good and wise,

To execute great feats of tongue

When troubles rise.

Behold them mounting every stump,

By speech our liberty to guard.

Observe their courage—see them jump,

And come down hard!

"Walk up, walk up!" each cries aloud,

"And learn from me what you must do

To turn aside the thunder cloud,

The earthquake too.

"Beware the wiles of yonder quack

Who stuffs the ears of all that pass.

I—I alone can show that black

Is white as grass."

They shout through all the day and break

The silence of the night as well.

They'd make—I wish they'd *go* and make—

Of Heaven a Hell.

A advocates free silver, B

Free trade and C free banking laws.

Free board, clothes, lodging would from me

Win warm applause.

Lo, D lifts up his voice: "You see

The single tax on land would fall

On all alike." More evenly

No tax at all.

"With paper money," bellows E,

"We'll all be rich as lords." No doubt—

And richest of the lot will be

The chap without.

As many "cures" as addle-wits

Who know not what the ailment is!

Meanwhile the patient foams and spits

Like a gin fizz.

Alas, poor Body Politic,

Your fate is all too clearly read:

To be not altogether quick,

Nor very dead.

You take your exercise in squirms,

Your rest in fainting fits between.

'Tis plain that your disorder's worms—

Worms fat and lean.

Worm Capital, Worm Labor dwell

Within your maw and muscle's scope.

Their quarrels make your life a Hell,

Your death a hope.

God send you find not such an end

To ills however sharp and huge!

God send you convalesce! God send

You vermifuge.

**S90. Stone Canyon Nocturne By** [**Charles Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-wright)

Ancient of Days, old friend, no one believes you’ll come back.

No one believes in his own life anymore.

The moon, like a dead heart, cold and unstartable, hangs by a thread

At the earth’s edge,

Unfaithful at last, splotching the ferns and the pink shrubs.

In the other world, children undo the knots in their tally strings.

They sing songs, and their fingers blear.

And here, where the swan hums in his socket, where bloodroot

And belladonna insist on our comforting,

Where the fox in the canyon wall empties our hands, ecstatic for more,

Like a bead of clear oil the Healer revolves through the night wind,

Part eye, part tear, unwilling to recognize us.

C Wright, “Stone Canyon Nocturne” from *Country Music: Selected Early Poems*. Copyright © 1982 by C Wright. Reprinted with the permission of

Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *Country Music: Selected Early Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 1982)

**S91. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening By** [**Robert Frost**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-frost)

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound’s the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” from *The Poetry of Robert Frost,* edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1923, © 1969 by Henry Holt and Company, Inc., renewed 1951, by Robert Frost. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Source: *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (Library of America, 1995)

**S92. Strange Meeting By** [**Wilfred Owen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wilfred-owen)

It seemed that out of battle I escaped

Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped

Through granites which titanic wars had groined.

Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,

Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.

Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared

With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,

Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.

And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,—

By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.

With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;

Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,

And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.

“Strange friend,” I said, “here is no cause to mourn.”

“None,” said that other, “save the undone years,

The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,

Was my life also; I went hunting wild

After the wildest beauty in the world,

Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,

But mocks the steady running of the hour,

And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.

For by my glee might many men have laughed,

And of my weeping something had been left,

Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,

The pity of war, the pity war distilled.

Now men will go content with what we spoiled.

Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.

They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.

None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.

Courage was mine, and I had mystery;

Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:

To miss the march of this retreating world

Into vain citadels that are not walled.

Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,

I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,

Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.

I would have poured my spirit without stint

But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.

Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.

“I am the enemy you killed, my friend.

I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned

Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.

I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.

Let us sleep now. . . .”

NOTES: Poetry Out Loud Participants: changes to punctuation, stanza breaks, and a few words were made in May 2014.

Source: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen, edited by Jon Stallworthy* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)

**S93. The Strength of Fields By** [**James L. Dickey**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-l-dickey)

... a separation from the world,   
a penetration to some source of power   
and a life-enhancing return ...   
Van Gennep: *Rites de Passage*

Moth-force a small town always has,

Given the night.

What field-forms can be,

Outlying the small civic light-decisions over

A man walking near home?

Men are not where he is

Exactly now, but they are around him around him like the strength

Of fields. The solar system floats on

Above him in town-moths.

Tell me, train-sound,

With all your long-lost grief,

what I can give.

Dear Lord of all the fields

what am I going to *do*?

Street-lights, blue-force and frail

As the homes of men, tell me how to do it how

To withdraw how to penetrate and find the source

Of the power you always had

light as a moth, and rising

With the level and moonlit expansion

Of the fields around, and the sleep of hoping men.

You? I? What difference is there? We can all be saved

By a secret blooming. Now as I walk

The night and you walk with me we know simplicity

Is close to the source that sleeping men

Search for in their home-deep beds.

We know that the sun is away we know that the sun can be conquered

By moths, in blue home-town air.

The stars splinter, pointed and wild. The dead lie under

The pastures. They look on and help. Tell me, freight-train,

When there is no one else

To hear. Tell me in a voice the sea

Would have, if it had not a better one: as it lifts,

Hundreds of miles away, its fumbling, deep-structured roar

Like the profound, unstoppable craving

Of nations for their wish.

Hunger, time and the moon:

The moon lying on the brain

as on the excited sea as on

The strength of fields. Lord, let me shake

With purpose. Wild hope can always spring

From tended strength. Everything is in that.

That and nothing but kindness. More kindness, dear Lord

Of the renewing green. That is where it all has to start:

With the simplest things. More kindness will do nothing less

Than save every sleeping one

And night-walking one

Of us.

My life belongs to the world. I will do what I can.

James Dickey, “The Strength of Fields” from *The Whole Motion: Collected Poems 1945-1992*. Copyright © 1992 by James Dickey. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press, [www.wesleyan.edu/wespress](http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress). Source: *James Dickey: The Selected Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 1998)

**S94. Sugar Dada By** [**J. Allyn Rosser**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/j-allyn-rosser)

Go home. It's never what you think it is,

The kiss, the diamond, the slamdance pulse in the wrist.

Nothing is true, my dear, not even this

Rumor of passion you'll doubtless insist

On perceiving in my glance. Please just

Go. Home is never what you think it is.

Meaning lies in meaning's absence. The mist

Is always almost just about to lift.

Nothing is truer. Dear, not even this

Candle can explain its searing twist

Of flame mounted on cool amethyst.

Go on home—not where you think it is,

But where you would expect its comfort least,

In still-black stars our century will miss

Seeing. Nothingness is not as true as this

Faith we grind up with denial: grist

To the midnight mill; morning's catalyst.

Come, let's go home, wherever you think it is.

Nothing is true, my dear. Not even this.

Source: *Poetry* (February 2001).

**S95. Summer at North Farm By** [**Stephen Kuusisto**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-kuusisto)

Finnish rural life, ca. 1910

Fires, always fires after midnight,

the sun depending in the purple birches

and gleaming like a copper kettle.

By the solstice they’d burned everything,

the bad-luck sleigh, a twisted rocker,

things “possessed” and not-quite-right.

The bonfire coils and lurches,

big as a house, and then it settles.

The dancers come, dressed like rainbows

(if rainbows could be spun),

and linking hands they turn

to the melancholy fiddles.

A red bird spreads its wings now

and in the darker days to come.

Stephen Kuusisto, “Summer at North Farm” from *Only Bread Only Light.* Copyright © 2000 by Stephen Kuusisto. Used with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).   
Source: *Poetry* (August 1989).

**S96. The Sun Rising By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

Busy old fool, unruly sun,

Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains call on us?

Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?

Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide

Late school boys and sour prentices**prentices** apprentices,

Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,**the king will ride** James I, the king of England at the time of Donne’s writing, had a known passion for riding horses and hunting.

Call country ants to harvest offices,

Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,

Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.**rags of time** a figure of speech meaning that such things are passing and immaterial. Donne uses this phrase in one of his sermons.

Thy beams, so reverend**reverend** worthy of high respect and strong

Why shouldst thou think?

I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,

But that I would not lose her sight so long;

If her eyes have not blinded thine,

Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,

Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine**both th’ Indias of spice and mine** the East Indies for spices and the West Indies for gold. In a 1623 letter to Sir Robert Ker, Donne wrote: “Your way into *Spain* was Eastward, and that is the way to the land of Perfumes and Spices; their way hither is Westward, and that is the way to the land of Gold, and of Mynes.” [*John Donne: Selected Prose.* Edited by Helen Gardner and Timothy Healy, p. 155]

Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.

Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,

And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,

Nothing else is.

Princes do but play us; compared to this,

All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy**alchemy** figuratively, not the real thing. The speculative practice of alchemy involved a search for chemically turning base metals, such as iron, into highly valuable metals, such as gold..

Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,

In that the world's contracted thus.

Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be

To warm the world, that's done in warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;

This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.

**S97. Surfaces By** [**Kay Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kay-ryan)

Surfaces serve

their own purposes,

strive to remain

constant (all lives

want that). There is

a skin, not just on

peaches but on oceans

(note the telltale

slough of foam on beaches).

Sometimes it’s loose,

as in the case

of cats: you feel how a

second life slides

under it. Sometimes it

fits. Take glass.

Sometimes it outlasts

its underside. Take reefs.

The private lives of surfaces

are innocent, not devious.

Take the one-dimensional

belief of enamel in itself,

the furious autonomy

of luster (crush a pearl—

it’s powder), the whole

curious seamlessness

of how we’re each surrounded

and what it doesn’t teach.

Kay Ryan, “Surfaces” from *Elephant Rocks: Poems.* Copyright © 1997 by Kay Ryan. Reprinted with the permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Source: *Elephant Rocks* (Grove/Atlantic Inc., 1997)

**S98. Susie Asado By** [**Gertrude Stein**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gertrude-stein)

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

Susie Asado.

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

Susie Asado.

Susie Asado which is a told tray sure.

A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers.

When the ancient light grey is clean it is yellow, it is a silver seller.

This is a please this is a please there are the saids to jelly. These are the wets these say the sets to leave a crown to Incy.

Incy is short for incubus.

A pot. A pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees tremble, the old vats are in bobbles, bobbles which shade and shove and render clean, render clean must.

Drink pups.

Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold, see it shine and a bobolink has pins. It shows a nail.

What is a nail. A nail is unison.

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

Gertrude Stein, “Susie Asado” from *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein.* (New York: Peter Smith Publishing, 1992). Copyright © 1992 by Calman A. Levin, Executor of the Estate of Gertrude Stein. Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of Gertrude Stein.  
  
Source: *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry Third Edition* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2003)

**S99. The Sweater of Vladimir Ussachevsky By** [**John Haines**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-haines)

Facing the wind of the avenues

one spring evening in New York,

I wore under my thin jacket

a sweater given me by the wife

of a genial Manchurian.

The warmth in that sweater changed

the indifferent city block by block.

The buildings were mountains

that fled as I approached them.

The traffic became sheep and cattle

milling in muddy pastures.

I could feel around me the large

movements of men and horses.

It was spring in Siberia or Mongolia,

wherever I happened to be.

Rough but honest voices called to me

out of that solitude:

they told me we are all tired

of this coiling weight,

the oppression of a long winter;

that it was time to renew our life,

burn the expired contracts,

elect new governments.

The old Imperial sun has set,

and I must write a poem to the Emperor.

I shall speak it like the man

I should be, an inhabitant of the frontier,

clad in sweat-darkened wool,

my face stained by wind and smoke.

Surely the Emperor and his court

will want to know what a fine

and generous revolution begins tomorrow

in one of his remote provinces...

(1967)

"The Sweater of Vladimir Ussachevsky". Copyright © 1993 by John Haines. Reprinted from *The Owl in the Mask of the Dreamer* with the permission of Graywolf Press, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Source: *The Owl in the Mask of the Dreamer: Collected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1993)

**S100. Sweet Tooth By** [**Russell Edson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/russell-edson)

A little girl made of sugar and spice and everything nice was eaten by someone with a sweet tooth the size of an elephant’s tusk.   
Ah, he said, this darn tooth, it’s driving me nuts.   
  
Then another voice is heard. It’s the little girl’s father who says, have you seen a little girl made of sugar and spice and everything nice?--Incidentally, what’s that thing sticking out of your mouth like an elephant’s tusk?   
My sweet tooth, and it’s really driving me nuts.   
You ought to see a dentist.   
But he might want to pull it, and I don’t like people pulling at me. If they want to pull they should pull at their own pullables.   
So true, said the little girl’s father, people should pull at their own pullables and let other people's pullables alone. But still, he asked again, I wonder if you’ve seen a little girl made of sugar and spice and everything nice?

“Sweet Tooth” from *The Tormented Mirror: Poems by Russell Edson* © 2001. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *The Tormented Mirror* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001)

**S101. Sweetness By** [**Stephen Dunn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-dunn)

Just when it has seemed I couldn’t bear

one more friend

waking with a tumor, one more maniac

with a perfect reason, often a sweetness

has come

and changed nothing in the world

except the way I stumbled through it,

for a while lost

in the ignorance of loving

someone or something, the world shrunk

to mouth-size,

hand-size, and never seeming small.

I acknowledge there is no sweetness

that doesn’t leave a stain,

no sweetness that’s ever sufficiently sweet ....

Tonight a friend called to say his lover

was killed in a car

he was driving. His voice was low

and guttural, he repeated what he needed

to repeat, and I repeated

the one or two words we have for such grief

until we were speaking only in tones.

Often a sweetness comes

as if on loan, stays just long enough

to make sense of what it means to be alive,

then returns to its dark

source. As for me, I don’t care

where it’s been, or what bitter road

it’s traveled

to come so far, to taste so good.

Stephen Dunn, “Sweetness” from *New and Selected Poems 1974-1994.* Copyright © 1989 by Stephen Dunn. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (June 1987).

**S102. Syrinx By** [**Amy Clampitt**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/amy-clampitt)

Like the foghorn that’s all lung,

the wind chime that’s all percussion,

like the wind itself, that’s merely air

in a terrible fret, without so much

as a finger to articulate

what ails it, the aeolian

syrinx, that reed

in the throat of a bird,

when it comes to the shaping of

what we call consonants, is

too imprecise for consensus

about what it even seems to

be saying: is it *o-ka-lee*

or *con-ka-ree,* is it really *jug jug,*

is it *cuckoo* for that matter?—

much less whether a bird’s call

means anything in

particular, or at all.

Syntax comes last, there can be

no doubt of it: came last,

can be thought of (is

thought of by some) as a

higher form of expression:

is, in extremity, first to

be jettisoned: as the diva

onstage, all soaring

pectoral breathwork,

takes off, pure vowel

breaking free of the dry,

the merely fricative

husk of the particular, rises

past saving anything, any

more than the wind in

the trees, waves breaking,

or Homer’s gibbering

*Thespesiae iachē:*

those last-chance vestiges

above the threshold, the all-

but dispossessed of breath.

Amy Clampitt, “Syrinx” from *The Collected Poems of Amy Clampitt.* Copyright © 1997 by the Estate of Amy Clampitt. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Amy Clampitt* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)

**POL T-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**T1**](#T1)[**T2**](#T2)[**T3**](#T3)[**T4**](#T4)[**T5**](#T5)[**T6**](#T6)[**T7**](#T7)[**T8**](#T8)[**T9**](#T9)[**T10**](#T10)[**T11**](#T11)[**T12**](#T12)[**T13**](#T13)

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**T66 T67 T68 T69 T70 T71 T72 T73 T74 T75 T76 T77 T78**

**T79 T80 T81 T82 T83 T84 T85 T86 T87 T88 T89 T90 T91**

**T92 T93 T94 T95 T96 T97 T98 T99 T100 T101 T102 T103 T104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**T1. The Tables Turned By** [**William Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-wordsworth)

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;

Or surely you'll grow double:

Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;

Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun above the mountain's head,

A freshening lustre mellow

Through all the long green fields has spread,

His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:

Come, hear the woodland linnet,

How sweet his music! on my life,

There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!

He, too, is no mean preacher:

Come forth into the light of things,

Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,

Our minds and hearts to bless—

Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,

Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach you more of man,

Of moral evil and of good,

Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;

Our meddling intellect

Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—

We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;

Close up those barren leaves;

Come forth, and bring with you a heart

That watches and receives.

**T2. Tall Ambrosia By** [**Henry David Thoreau**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-david-thoreau)

Among the signs of autumn I perceive

The Roman wormwood (called by learned men

*Ambrosia elatior*, food for gods,—

For to impartial science the humblest weed

Is as immortal once as the proudest flower—)

Sprinkles its yellow dust over my shoes

As I cross the now neglected garden.

—We trample under foot the food of gods

And spill their nectar in each drop of dew—

My honest shoes, fast friends that never stray

Far from my couch, thus powdered, countryfied,

Bearing many a mile the marks of their adventure,

At the post-house disgrace the Gallic gloss

Of those well dressed ones who no morning dew

Nor Roman wormwood ever have been through,

Who never walk but are *transported* rather—

For what old crime of theirs I do not gather.

Source: *Poets of the English Language* (Viking Press, 1950)

**T3. Tamer and Hawk By** [**Thom Gunn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thom-gunn)

I thought I was so tough,

But gentled at your hands,

Cannot be quick enough

To fly for you and show

That when I go I go

At your commands.

Even in flight above

I am no longer free:

You seeled me with your love,

I am blind to other birds—

The habit of your words

Has hooded me.

As formerly, I wheel

I hover and I twist,

But only want the feel,

In my possessive thought,

Of catcher and of caught

Upon your wrist.

You but half civilize,

Taming me in this way.

Through having only eyes

For you I fear to lose,

I lose to keep, and choose

Tamer as prey.

Thom Gunn, "Tamer and Hawk" from *Collected Poems*. Copyright © 1995 by Thom Gunn. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Source: *Selected Poems 1950-1975* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979)

**T4. Testimonial By** [**Rita Dove**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rita-dove)

Back when the earth was new

and heaven just a whisper,

back when the names of things

hadn't had time to stick;

back when the smallest breezes

melted summer into autumn,

when all the poplars quivered

sweetly in rank and file . . .

the world called, and I answered.

Each glance ignited to a gaze.

I caught my breath and called that life,

swooned between spoonfuls of lemon sorbet.

I was pirouette and flourish,

I was filigree and flame.

How could I count my blessings

when I didn't know their names?

Back when everything was still to come,

luck leaked out everywhere.

I gave my promise to the world,

and the world followed me here.

Rita Dove, "Testimonial" from *On the Bus With Rosa Parks*. Copyright © 1999 by Rita Dove. Used by permission of the author and W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (January 1998).

**T5. A Thank-You Note By** [**Michael Ryan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/michael-ryan)

For John Skoyles

My daughter made drawings with the pens you sent,

line drawings that suggest the things they represent,

different from any drawings she — at ten — had done,

closer to real art, implying what the mind fills in.

For her mother she made a flower fragile on its stem;

for me, a lion, calm, contained, but not a handsome one.

She drew a lion for me once before, on a get-well card,

and wrote I must be brave even when it’s hard.

Such love is healing — as you know, my friend,

especially when it comes unbidden from our children

despite the flaws they see so vividly in us.

Who can love you as your child does?

Your son so ill, the brutal chemo, his looming loss

owning you now — yet you would be this generous

to think of my child. With the pens you sent

she has made I hope a healing instrument.

**T6. That Country By** [**Grace Paley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/grace-paley)

This is about the women of that country

Sometimes they spoke in slogans

They said

We patch the roads as we patch our sweetheart’s trousers

The heart will stop but not the transport

They said

We have ensured production even near bomb craters

Children let your voices sing higher than the explosions

of the bombs

They said

We have important tasks to teach the children

that the people are the collective masters

to bear hardship

to instill love in the family

to guide the good health of the children (they must

wear clothing according to climate)

They said

Once men beat their wives

now they may not

Once a poor family sold its daughter to a rich old man

now the young may love one another

They said

Once we planted our rice any old way

now we plant the young shoots in straight rows

so the imperialist pilot can see how steady our

hands are

In the evening we walked along the shores of the Lake

of the Restored Sword

I said is it true? we are sisters?

They said Yes, we are of one family

Grace Paley, “That Country” from *Begin Again: The Collected Poems of Grace Paley.* Copyright © 1999 by Grace Paley. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Source: *Begin Again: The Collected Poems of Grace Paley* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2000)

**T7. Their Bodies By** [**David Wagoner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-wagoner)

To the students of anatomy   
at Indiana University

That gaunt old man came first, his hair as white

As your scoured tables. Maybe you’ll recollect him

By the scars of steelmill burns on the backs of his hands,

On the nape of his neck, on his arms and sinewy legs,

And her by the enduring innocence

Of her face, as open to all of you in death

As it would have been in life: she would memorize

Your names and ages and pastimes and hometowns

If she could, but she can’t now, so remember her.

They believed in doctors, listened to their advice,

And followed it faithfully. You should treat them

One last time as they would have treated you.

They had been kind to others all their lives

And believed in being useful. Remember somewhere

Their son is trying hard to believe you’ll learn

As much as possible from them, as *he* did,

And will do your best to learn politely and truly.

They gave away the gift of those useful bodies

Against his wish. (They had their own ways

Of doing everything, always.) If you’re not certain

Which ones are theirs, be gentle to everybody.

David Wagoner, "Their Bodies" from *First Light* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983). Copyright © 1983 by David Wagoner. Used with the permission of the author.  
  
  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October 1982).

**T8. Their Story By** [**Stuart Dybek**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stuart-dybek)

They were nearing the end of their story.

The fire was dying, like the fire in the story.

Each page turned was torn and fed

to flames, until word by word the book

burned down to an unmade bed of ash.

Wet kindling from an orchard of wooden spoons,

snow stewing, same old wind on the Gramophone,

same old wounds. Turn up the blue dial

under the kettle until darkness boils

with fables, and mirrors defrost to the quick

before fogging with steam, and dreams

rattle their armor of stovepipes and ladles.

Boots in the corner kick in their sleep.

A jacket hangs from a question mark.

**T9. There Are Birds Here By** [**Jamaal May**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/jamaal-may)

For Detroit

There are birds here,

so many birds here

is what I was trying to say

when they said those birds were metaphors

for what is trapped

between buildings

and buildings. No.

The birds are here

to root around for bread

the girl’s hands tear

and toss like confetti. No,

I don’t mean the bread is torn like cotton,

I said confetti, and no

not the confetti

a tank can make of a building.

I mean the confetti

a boy can’t stop smiling about

and no his smile isn’t much

like a skeleton at all. And no

his neighborhood is not like a war zone.

I am trying to say

his neighborhood

is as tattered and feathered

as anything else,

as shadow pierced by sun

and light parted

by shadow-dance as anything else,

but they won’t stop saying

how lovely the ruins,

how ruined the lovely

children must be in that birdless city.

**T10. There’s been a Death, in the Opposite House By** [**Emily Dickinson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/emily-dickinson)

There’s been a Death, in the Opposite House,

As lately as Today —

I know it, by the numb look

Such Houses have — alway —

The Neighbors rustle in and out —

The Doctor — drives away —

A Window opens like a Pod —

Abrupt — mechanically —

Somebody flings a Mattress out —

The Children hurry by —

They wonder if it died — on that —

I used to — when a Boy —

The Minister — goes stiffly in —

As if the House were His —

And He owned all the Mourners — now —

And little Boys — besides —

And then the Milliner — and the Man

Of the Appalling Trade —

To take the measure of the House —

There’ll be that Dark Parade —

Of Tassels — and of Coaches — soon —

It’s easy as a Sign —

The Intuition of the News —

In just a Country Town —

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Source: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1998)

**T11. They are hostile nations By** [**Margaret Atwood**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/margaret-atwood)

i

In view of the fading animals

the proliferation of sewers and fears

the sea clogging, the air

nearing extinction

we should be kind, we should

take warning, we should forgive each other

Instead we are opposite, we

touch as though attacking,

the gifts we bring

even in good faith maybe

warp in our hands to

implements, to manoeuvres

ii

Put down the target of me

you guard inside your binoculars,

in turn I will surrender

this aerial photograph

(your vulnerable

sections marked in red)

I have found so useful

See, we are alone in

the dormant field, the snow

that cannot be eaten or captured

iii

Here there are no armies

here there is no money

It is cold and getting colder,

We need each others’

breathing, warmth, surviving

is the only war

we can afford, stay

walking with me, there is almost

time / if we can only

make it as far as

the (possibly) last summer

Margaret Atwood, “They are hostile nations” from *Selected Poems 1965-1975.* Copyright © 1974, 1976 by Margaret Atwood. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Source: *Selected Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1976)

**T12. They Feed They Lion By** [**Philip Levine**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/philip-levine)

Out of burlap sacks, out of bearing butter,

Out of black bean and wet slate bread,

Out of the acids of rage, the candor of tar,

Out of creosote, gasoline, drive shafts, wooden dollies,

They Lion grow.

Out of the gray hills

Of industrial barns, out of rain, out of bus ride,

West Virginia to Kiss My Ass, out of buried aunties,

Mothers hardening like pounded stumps, out of stumps,

Out of the bones’ need to sharpen and the muscles’ to stretch,

They Lion grow.

Earth is eating trees, fence posts,

Gutted cars, earth is calling in her little ones,

“Come home, Come home!” From pig balls,

From the ferocity of pig driven to holiness,

From the furred ear and the full jowl come

The repose of the hung belly, from the purpose

They Lion grow.

From the sweet glues of the trotters

Come the sweet kinks of the fist, from the full flower

Of the hams the thorax of caves,

From “Bow Down” come “Rise Up,”

Come they Lion from the reeds of shovels,

The grained arm that pulls the hands,

They Lion grow.

From my five arms and all my hands,

From all my white sins forgiven, they feed,

From my car passing under the stars,

They Lion, from my children inherit,

From the oak turned to a wall, they Lion,

From they sack and they belly opened

And all that was hidden burning on the oil-stained earth

They feed they Lion and he comes.

Philip Levine, “They Feed They Lion” from *New Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1991 by Philip Levine. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *New Selected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

**T13. They Flee From Me By** [**Thomas Wyatt**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-wyatt)

They flee from me that sometime did me seek

With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.

I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,

That now are wild and do not remember

That sometime they put themself in danger

To take bread at my hand; and now they range,

Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise

Twenty times better; but once in special,

In thin array after a pleasant guise,

When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,

And she me caught in her arms long and small;

Therewithall sweetly did me kiss

And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream: I lay broad waking.

But all is turned thorough my gentleness

Into a strange fashion of forsaking;

And I have leave to go of her goodness,

And she also, to use newfangleness.

But since that I so kindly am served

I would fain know what she hath deserved.

**T14. Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird By** [**Wallace Stevens**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/wallace-stevens)

**I**

Among twenty snowy mountains,

The only moving thing

Was the eye of the blackbird.

**II**

I was of three minds,

Like a tree

In which there are three blackbirds.

**III**

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.

It was a small part of the pantomime.

**IV**

A man and a woman

Are one.

A man and a woman and a blackbird

Are one.

**V**

I do not know which to prefer,

The beauty of inflections

Or the beauty of innuendoes,

The blackbird whistling

Or just after.

**VI**

Icicles filled the long window

With barbaric glass.

The shadow of the blackbird

Crossed it, to and fro.

The mood

Traced in the shadow

An indecipherable cause.

**VII**

O thin men of Haddam,

Why do you imagine golden birds?

Do you not see how the blackbird

Walks around the feet

Of the women about you?

**VIII**

I know noble accents

And lucid, inescapable rhythms;

But I know, too,

That the blackbird is involved

In what I know.

**IX**

When the blackbird flew out of sight,

It marked the edge

Of one of many circles.

**X**

At the sight of blackbirds

Flying in a green light,

Even the bawds of euphony

Would cry out sharply.

**XI**

He rode over Connecticut

In a glass coach.

Once, a fear pierced him,

In that he mistook

The shadow of his equipage

For blackbirds.

**XII**

The river is moving.

The blackbird must be flying.

**XIII**

It was evening all afternoon.

It was snowing

And it was going to snow.

The blackbird sat

In the cedar-limbs.

Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” from *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. Copyright 1954 by Wallace Stevens. Reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

**T15. This Most Perfect Hill By** [**Lisa Jarnot**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lisa-jarnot)

On this most perfect hill

with these most perfect dogs

are these most perfect people

and this most perfect fog

In this most perfect fog

that is the middle of the sea

inside the perfect middle of

the things inside that swing

In this most perfect rhyme

that takes up what it sees,

with perfect shelter from the

rain as perfect as can be,

In this most perfect day

at the apex of the sun

runs this most perfect

frog song that is roiling

from the mud

In these most perfect habits

of the waving of the trees,

through this imperfect language

rides a perfect brilliancy.

Lisa Jarnot, "This Most Perfect Hill" from *Black Dog Songs*. Copyright © 2003 by Lisa Jarnot. Reprinted by permission of Flood Editions. Source: *Black Dog Songs* (Flood Editions, 2003)

**T16. Those Various Scalpels By** [**Marianne Moore**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marianne-moore)

Those

various sounds, consistently indistinct, like intermingled echoes

struck from thin glasses successively at random—

the inflection disguised: your hair, the tails of two

fighting-cocks head to head in stone—

like sculptured scimitars repeating the curve of your

ears in reverse order:

your eyes,

flowers of ice and snow

sown by tearing winds on the cordage of disabled ships: your

raised hand

an ambiguous signature: your cheeks, those rosettes

of blood on the stone floors of French châteaux,

with regard to which the guides are so affirmative—

your other hand

a bundle of lances all alike, partly hid by emeralds from Persia

and the fractional magnificence of Florentine

goldwork—a collection of little objects—

sapphires set with emeralds, and pearls with a moonstone, made fine

with enamel in gray, yellow, and dragonfly blue;

a lemon, a pear

and three bunches of grapes, tied with silver: your dress, a magnificent square

cathedral tower of uniform

and at the same time diverse appearance—a

species of vertical vineyard, rustling in the storm

of conventional opinion—are they weapons or scalpels?

Whetted to brilliance

by the hard majesty of that sophistication which is superior to opportunity,

these things are rich instruments with which to experiment.

But why dissect destiny with instruments

more highly specialized than the components of destiny

itself?

Source: *The Poems of Marianne Moore* (Penguin Books, 2005)

**T17. Those Winter Sundays By** [**Robert Hayden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-hayden)

Sundays too my father got up early

and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,

then with cracked hands that ached

from labor in the weekday weather made

banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I’d wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.**breaking. / When** In *A Ballad of Remembrance* (1962), the line between these two lines reads: "and smell the iron and velvet bloom of heat." While this line was deleted, the version in *A Ballad of Remembrance* is still a sonnet. There are other variants between both versions; mostly relating to where the line breaks.

When **breaking. / When** In *A Ballad of Remembrance* (1962), the line between these two lines reads:"and smell the iron and velvet bloom of heat." While this line was deleted, the version in *A Ballad of Remembrance* is still a sonnet. There are other variants between both versions; mostly relating to where the line breaks. the rooms were warm, he’d call,

and slowly I would rise and dress,

fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,

who had **who had** In *A Ballad of Remembrance*: who’d driven out the cold

and polished my good shoes as well.

What did I know, what did I know

of love’s austere**austere** Grave, sober; and lacking adornment and lonely offices?

Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” from *Collected Poems of Robert Hayden*, edited by Frederick Glaysher. Copyright ©1966 by Robert Hayden. Reprinted with the permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation.  
  
Source: *Collected Poems of Robert Hayden* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1985)

**T18. Thou Art My Lute By** [**Paul Laurence Dunbar**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/paul-laurence-dunbar)

Thou art my lute, by thee I sing,—

My being is attuned to thee.

Thou settest all my words a-wing,

And meltest me to melody.

Thou art my life, by thee I live,

From thee proceed the joys I know;

Sweetheart, thy hand has power to give

The meed of love—the cup of woe.

Thou art my love, by thee I lead

My soul the paths of light along,

From vale to vale, from mead to mead,

And home it in the hills of song.

My song, my soul, my life, my all,

Why need I pray or make my plea,

Since my petition cannot fall;

For I’m already one with thee!

**T19. Thoughtless Cruelty By** [**Charles Lamb**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-lamb)

There, Robert, you have kill'd that fly — ,

And should you thousand ages try

The life you've taken to supply,

You could not do it.

You surely must have been devoid

Of thought and sense, to have destroy'd

A thing which no way you annoy'd —

You'll one day rue it.

Twas but a fly perhaps you'll say,

That's born in April, dies in May;

That does but just learn to display

His wings one minute,

And in the next is vanish'd quite.

A bird devours it in his flight —

Or come a cold blast in the night,

There's no breath in it.

The bird but seeks his proper food —

And Providence, whose power endu'd

That fly with life, when it thinks good,

May justly take it.

But you have no excuses for't —

A life by Nature made so short,

Less reason is that you for sport

Should shorter make it.

A fly a little thing you rate —

But, Robert do not estimate

A creature's pain by small or great;

The greatest being

Can have but fibres, nerves, and flesh,

And these the smallest ones possess,

Although their frame and structure less

Escape our seeing.

**T20. A Thousand Martyrs By** [**Aphra Behn**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/aphra-behn)

A thousand martyrs I have made,

All sacrificed to my desire;

A thousand beauties have betrayed,

That languish in resistless fire.

The untamed heart to hand I brought,

And fixed the wild and wandering thought.

I never vowed nor sighed in vain

But both, though false, were well received.

The fair are pleased to give us pain,

And what they wish is soon believed.

And though I talked of wounds and smart,

Love’s pleasures only touched my heart.

Alone the glory and the spoil

I always laughing bore away;

The triumphs, without pain or toil,

Without the hell, the heav’n of joy.

And while I thus at random rove

Despise the fools that whine for love.

**T21. Through a Glass Eye, Lightly By** [**Carolyn Kizer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/carolyn-kizer)

In the laboratory waiting room

containing

one television actor with a teary face

trying a contact lens;

two muscular victims of industrial accidents;

several vain women—I was one of them—

came Deborah, four, to pick up her glass eye.

It was a long day:

Deborah waiting for the blood vessels

painted

on her iris to dry.

Her mother said that, holding Deborah

when she was born,

“First I inspected her, from toes to navel,

then stopped at her head ...”

We wondered why

the inspection hadn’t gone the other way.

“Looking into her eye

was like looking into a volcano:

“Her vacant pupil

went whirling down, down to the foundation

of the world ...

When she was three months old they took it out.

She giggled when she went under

the anaesthetic.

Forty-five minutes later she came back

happy! ...

The gas wore off, she found the hole in her face

(you know, it never bled?),

stayed happy, even when I went to pieces.

She’s five, in June.

“Deborah, you get right down

from there, or I’ll have to slap!”

Laughing, Deborah climbed into the lap

of one vain lady, who

had been discontented with her own beauty.

Now she held on to Deborah, looked her steadily

in the empty eye.

Carolyn Kizer, “Through a Glass Eye, Lightly” from *Cool, Calm, and Collected: Poems 1960-2000*. Copyright © 2001 by Carolyn Kizer. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Source: *Cool Calm and Collected: Poems 1960-2000* (Copper Canyon Press, 2001)

**T22. The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls By** [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow)

The tide rises, the tide falls,

The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;

Along the sea-sands damp and brown

The traveller hastens toward the town,

And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,

But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;

The little waves, with their soft, white hands,

Efface the footprints in the sands,

And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls

Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;

The day returns, but nevermore

Returns the traveller to the shore,

And the tide rises, the tide falls.

**T23. “Time does not bring relief; you all have lied” By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

Time does not bring relief; you all have lied

Who told me time would ease me of my pain!

I miss him in the weeping of the rain;

I want him at the shrinking of the tide;

The old snows melt from every mountain-side,

And last year’s leaves are smoke in every lane;

But last year’s bitter loving must remain

Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.

There are a hundred places where I fear

To go,—so with his memory they brim.

And entering with relief some quiet place

Where never fell his foot or shone his face

I say, “There is no memory of him here!”

And so stand stricken, so remembering him.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, “Time Does Not Bring Relief” from *Collected Poems*. Copyright 1931, © 1958 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis. Reprinted with permission of Elizabeth Barnett and Holly Peppe, Literary Executors, The Millay Society.  
  
Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

**T24. The Time I’ve Lost in Wooing By** [**Thomas Moore**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/thomas-moore)

The time I’ve lost in wooing,

In watching and pursuing

The light, that lies

In woman’s eyes,

Has been my heart’s undoing.

Though Wisdom oft has sought me,

I scorn’d the lore she brought me,

My only books

Were woman’s looks,

And folly’s all they’ve taught me.

Her smile when Beauty granted,

I hung with gaze enchanted,

Like him the Sprite,

Whom maids by night

Oft meet in glen that’s haunted.

Like him, too, Beauty won me,

But while her eyes were on me,

If once their ray

Was turn’d away,

Oh! winds could not outrun me.

And are those follies going?

And is my proud heart growing

Too cold or wise

For brilliant eyes

Again to set it glowing?

No, vain, alas! th’ endeavour

From bonds so sweet to sever;

Poor Wisdom’s chance

Against a glance

Is now as weak as ever.

**T25. Time of the Missile By** [**George Oppen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-oppen)

I remember a square of New York’s Hudson River glinting between warehouses.

Difficult to approach the water below the pier

Swirling, covered with oil the ship at the pier

A steel wall: tons in the water,

Width.

The hand for holding,

Legs for walking,

The eye *sees*! It floods in on us from here to Jersey tangled in the grey bright air!

Become the realm of nations.

My love, my love,

We are endangered

Totally at last. Look

Anywhere to the sight’s limit: space

Which is viviparous:

Place of the mind

And eye. Which can destroy us,

Re-arrange itself, assert

Its own stone chain reaction.

George Oppen, “Time of the Missile” from *New Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1962 by George Oppen. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.

Source: *New Collected Poems* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2002)

**T26. To - By** [**Sarah Helen Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/sarah-helen-whitman)

Vainly my heart had with thy sorceries striven:

It had no refuge from thy love,—no Heaven

But in thy fatal presence;—from afar

It owned thy power and trembled like a star

O’erfraught with light and splendor. Could I deem

How dark a shadow should obscure its beam?—

Could I believe that pain could ever dwell

Where thy bright presence cast its blissful spell?

Thou wert my proud palladium;—could I fear

The avenging Destinies when thou wert near?—

*Thou* wert my Destiny;—thy song, thy fame,

The wild enchantments clustering round thy name,

Were my soul’s heritage, its royal dower;

Its glory and its kingdom and its power!

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (1993)

**T27. To a Mouse By** [**Robert Burns**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-burns)

On Turning up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785

Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim’rous beastie,

O, what a panic’s in thy breastie!

Thou need na start awa sae hasty,

Wi’ bickerin brattle!

I wad be laith to rin an’ chase thee

Wi’ murd’ring pattle!

I’m truly sorry Man’s dominion

Has broken Nature’s social union,

An’ justifies that ill opinion,

Which makes thee startle,

At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,

An’ fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;

What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!

A daimen-icker in a thrave

’S a sma’ request:

I’ll get a blessin wi’ the lave,

An’ never miss ’t!

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!

It’s silly wa’s the win’s are strewin!

An’ naething, now, to big a new ane,

O’ foggage green!

An’ bleak December’s winds ensuin,

Baith snell an’ keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an’ waste,

An’ weary Winter comin fast,

An’ cozie here, beneath the blast,

Thou thought to dwell,

Till crash! the cruel coulter past

Out thro’ thy cell.

That wee-bit heap o’ leaves an’ stibble

Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!

Now thou’s turn’d out, for a’ thy trouble,

But house or hald,

To thole the Winter’s sleety dribble,

An’ cranreuch cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,

In proving foresight may be vain:

The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men

Gang aft agley,

An’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain,

For promis’d joy!

Still, thou art blest, compar’d wi’ me!

The present only toucheth thee:

But Och! I backward cast my e’e,

On prospects drear!

An’ forward tho’ I canna see,

I guess an’ fear!

**T28. To Althea, from Prison By** [**Richard Lovelace**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-lovelace)

When Love with unconfinèd wings

Hovers within my Gates,

And my divine *Althea* brings

To whisper at the Grates;

When I lie tangled in her hair,

And fettered to her eye,

The Gods that wanton in the Air,

Know no such Liberty.

When flowing Cups run swiftly round

With no allaying *Thames*,

Our careless heads with Roses bound,

Our hearts with Loyal Flames;

When thirsty grief in Wine we steep,

When Healths and draughts go free,

Fishes that tipple in the Deep

Know no such Liberty.

When (like committed linnets) I

With shriller throat shall sing

The sweetness, Mercy, Majesty,

And glories of my King;

When I shall voice aloud how good

He is, how Great should be,

Enlargèd Winds, that curl the Flood,

Know no such Liberty.

Stone Walls do not a Prison make,

Nor Iron bars a Cage;

Minds innocent and quiet take

That for an Hermitage.

If I have freedom in my Love,

And in my soul am free,

Angels alone that soar above,

Enjoy such Liberty.

**T29. To an Athlete Dying Young By** [**A. E. Housman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/a-e-housman)

The time you won your town the race

We chaired you through the market-place;

Man and boy stood cheering by,

And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,

Shoulder-high we bring you home,

And set you at your threshold down,

Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away

From fields where glory does not stay,

And early though the laurel grows

It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut

Cannot see the record cut,

And silence sounds no worse than cheers

After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout

Of lads that wore their honours out,

Runners whom renown outran

And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,

The fleet foot on the sill of shade,

And hold to the low lintel up

The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head

Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,

And find unwithered on its curls

The garland briefer than a girl’s.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (1983)

**T30. To Autumn By** [**John Keats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-keats)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring**Conspiring** Working together; literally, to conspire is “to breathe together” (*OED*) with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves**thatch-eves** Thatch-eaves, the edge of thatched roofs run;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,

For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing**winnowing** Separating the wheat from the chaff, the heavy from the light wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook**hook** Scythe

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner**gleaner** One who gathers the remaining food after the reaper has harvested the field thou dost keep

Steady thy laden**laden** Loaded down head across a brook;

Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?**Where are they?** Rhetorical convention known as [ubi sunt](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/learning/glossary-term/Ubi%20sunt), often appearing in poems that meditate on the transitory nature of life and the inevitability of death.

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom**bloom** “to colour with a soft warm tint or glow” (*OED*) the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains**stubble-plains** Fields made up of stubble, the remaining stumps of grain left after reaping with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows**sallows** Willow trees, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft**garden-croft** A croft is a small enclosed field;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

**T31. (to crave what the light does crave) By** [**Kevin Goodan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kevin-goodan)

to crave what the light does crave

to shelter, to flee

to gain desire of every splayed leaf

to calm cattle, to heat the mare

to coax dead flies back from slumber

to turn the gaze of each opened bud

to ripe the fruit to rot the fruit

and drive down under the earth

to lord gentle dust

to lend a glancing grace to llamas

to gather dampness from fields

and divide birds

and divide the ewes from slaughter

and raise the corn and bend the wheat

and drive tractors to ruin

burnish the fox, brother the hawk

shed the snake, bloom the weed

and drive all wind diurnal

to blanch the fire and clot the cloud

to husk, to harvest,

sheave and chaff

to choose the bird

and voice the bird

to sing us, veery, into darkness

Kevin Goodan, “(to crave what the light does crave)” from *Winter Tenor.* Copyright © 2009 by Kevin Goodan. Reprinted by permission of Alice James Books. Source: *Winter Tenor* (Alice James Books, 2009)

**T32. To David, About His Education By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

The world is full of mostly invisible things,

And there is no way but putting the mind’s eye,

Or its nose, in a book, to find them out,

Things like the square root of Everest

Or how many times Byron goes into Texas,

Or whether the law of the excluded middle

Applies west of the Rockies. For these

And the like reasons, you have to go to school

And study books and listen to what you are told,

And sometimes try to remember. Though I don’t know

What you will do with the mean annual rainfall

On Plato’s Republic, or the calorie content

Of the Diet of Worms, such things are said to be

Good for you, and you will have to learn them

In order to become one of the grown-ups

Who sees invisible things neither steadily nor whole,

But keeps gravely the grand confusion of the world

Under his hat, which is where it belongs,

And teaches small children to do this in their turn.

Howard Nemerov, “To David, About His Education” from *War Stories: Poems About Long Ago and Now*. Copyright © 1990 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press. Source: *War Stories: Poems About Long Ago and Now* (The University of Chicago Press, 1990)

**T33. To the Desert By** [**Benjamin Alire Sáenz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/benjamin-alire-saenz)

I came to you one rainless August night.

You taught me how to live without the rain.

You are thirst and thirst is all I know.

You are sand, wind, sun, and burning sky,

The hottest blue. You blow a breeze and brand

Your breath into my mouth. You reach—then *bend*

*Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new*.

You wrap your name tight around my ribs

And keep me warm. I was born for you.

Above, below, by you, by you surrounded.

I wake to you at dawn. Never break your

Knot. Reach, rise, blow, *Sálvame, mi dios*,

*Trágame, mi tierra. Salva, traga,* Break me,

I am bread. I will be the water for your thirst.

Benjamin Alire Sáenz, “To the Desert” from *Dark and Perfect* (El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 1995). Copyright © 1995 by Benjamin Alire Sáenz. Used with the permission of the author.  
  
Source: *Dark and Perfect* (1995)

**T34. To Elsie By** [**William Carlos Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-carlos-williams)

The pure products of America

go crazy—

mountain folk from Kentucky

or the ribbed north end of

Jersey

with its isolate lakes and

valleys, its deaf-mutes, thieves

old names

and promiscuity between

devil-may-care men who have taken

to railroading

out of sheer lust of adventure—

and young slatterns, bathed

in filth

from Monday to Saturday

to be tricked out that night

with gauds

from imaginations which have no

peasant traditions to give them

character

but flutter and flaunt

sheer rags—succumbing without

emotion

save numbed terror

under some hedge of choke-cherry

or viburnum—

which they cannot express—

Unless it be that marriage

perhaps

with a dash of Indian blood

will throw up a girl so desolate

so hemmed round

with disease or murder

that she'll be rescued by an

agent—

reared by the state and

sent out at fifteen to work in

some hard-pressed

house in the suburbs—

some doctor's family, some Elsie—

voluptuous water

expressing with broken

brain the truth about us—

her great

ungainly hips and flopping breasts

addressed to cheap

jewelry

and rich young men with fine eyes

as if the earth under our feet

were

an excrement of some sky

and we degraded prisoners

destined

to hunger until we eat filth

while the imagination strains

after deer

going by fields of goldenrod in

the stifling heat of September

Somehow

it seems to destroy us

It is only in isolate flecks that

something

is given off

No one

to witness

and adjust, no one to drive the car

William Carlos Williams, “To Elsie” from *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume I, 1909-1939,* edited by Christopher MacGowan. Copyright 1938, 1944, 1945 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.  
  
Source: *The Collected Poems: Volume I 1909-1939* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1945)

**T35. To Fashion By** [**Elizabeth Moody**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elizabeth-moody)

Gay Fashion thou Goddess so pleasing,

However imperious thy sway;

Like a mistress capricious and teasing,

Thy slaves tho’ they murmur obey.

The simple, the wise, and the witty,

The learned, the dunce, and the fool,

The crooked, straight, ugly, and pretty,

Wear the badge of thy whimsical school.

Tho’ thy shape be so fickle and changing,

That a Proteus thou art to the view;

And our taste so for ever deranging,

We know not which form to pursue.

Yet wave but thy frolicksome banners,

And hosts of adherents we see;

Arts, morals, religion, and manners,

Yield implicit obedience to thee.

More despotic than beauty thy power,

More than virtue thy rule o’er the mind:

Tho’ transient thy reign as a flower,

That scatters its leaves to the wind.

Ah! while folly thou dealest such measure,

No matter how fleeting thy day!

Be Wisdom, dear goddess, thy pleasure!

Then lasting as time be thy stay.

**T36. To the Harbormaster By** [**Frank O'Hara**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/frank-ohara)

I wanted to be sure to reach you;

though my ship was on the way it got caught

in some moorings. I am always tying up

and then deciding to depart. In storms and

at sunset, with the metallic coils of the tide

around my fathomless arms, I am unable

to understand the forms of my vanity

or I am hard alee with my Polish rudder

in my hand and the sun sinking. To

you I offer my hull and the tattered cordage

of my will. The terrible channels where

the wind drives me against the brown lips

of the reeds are not all behind me. Yet

I trust the sanity of my vessel; and

if it sinks, it may well be in answer

to the reasoning of the eternal voices,

the waves which have kept me from reaching you.

Frank O’Hara, “To the Harbormaster” from *Meditations in an Emergency*. Copyright © 1957 by Frank O’Hara. Reprinted with the permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc., [www.groveatlantic.com](http://www.groveatlantic.com). Source: *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara* (1995)

**T37. To Helen By** [**Edgar Allan Poe**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edgar-allan-poe)

Helen, thy beauty is to me

Like those Nicéan barks of yore,

That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,

The weary, way-worn wanderer bore

To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,

Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,

Thy Naiad airs have brought me home

To the glory that was Greece,

And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche

How statue-like I see thee stand,

The agate lamp within thy hand!

Ah, Psyche, from the regions which

Are Holy-Land!

**T38. To Her Father with Some Verses By** [**Anne Bradstreet**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-bradstreet)

Most truly honoured, and as truly dear,

If worth in me or ought I do appear,

Who can of right better demand the same

Than may your worthy self from whom it came?

The principal might yield a greater sum,

Yet handled ill, amounts but to this crumb;

My stock's so small I know not how to pay,

My bond remains in force unto this day;

Yet for part payment take this simple mite,

Where nothing's to be had, kings loose their right.

Such is my debt I may not say forgive,

But as I can, I'll pay it while I live;

Such is my bond, none can discharge but I,

Yet paying is not paid until I die.

**T39.To Live with a Landscape By** [**Constance Urdang**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/constance-urdang)

1

Take your boulevards, your Locust Street,

Your Chestnut, Pine, your Olive,

Take your Forest Park and Shaw’s Garden,

Your avenues that lead past street-corner violence,

Past your West End, past your Limit,

To shabby suburban crime,

Vandalism in the parking-lot,

Abductions from the shopping mall—

Like making the same mistake over and over

On the piano or typewriter keys,

Always hitting the wrong note—

How “very alive, very American”

They are, how chockful of metaphysics,

Hellbent to obliterate the wilderness.

2

Learn to live with sycamores,

Their sad, peeling trunks, scabbed all over

With shabby patches, their enormous leaves

In dingy shades of ochre and dun

Rattling like castanets, their roots

Thick as a man’s leg, crawling

Like enormous worms out of the broken pavements,

Continually thrusting themselves up

From pools of shade they make,

Sculpturing the street

With dappled dark and light

As glaucoma, a disease of the eye,

Makes the world more beautiful

With its mysterious rainbows.

3

Already in Iowa the monarchs are emerging,

Signaling with their tawny wings;

In regalia of burnt orange and umber

The spangled imperial procession

Meanders along the democratic roadsides,

Across straight state lines,

Over rivers and artificial lakes

And the loneliness of middle America

On the way to Mexico.

The tiny wind of their passing

Is not even recorded

As a disturbance in the atmosphere.

4

Driving back into the American past,

Homesick for forests, flowers without names, vast savannahs,

Lowlands or mountains teeming with game,

Bluffs crowned with cottonwoods, mudbanks

Where crocodiles might sun themselves;

Finding instead the remains of strange picnics,

Replications of old selves, a cacophony of changes

Like a room crowded with chairs

In which no one can sit, as if history were furniture

Grown splintered and shabby;

Studying a picturesque rustic architecture

To master its splendid abstractions,

Shady verandas and porches,

Or the republican simplicity of a cow.

Constance Urdang, “To Live with a Landscape” from *The Lone Woman and Others.* Copyright © 1980. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *The Lone Woman and Others* (1980)

**T40. To Lucasta, Going to the Wars By** [**Richard Lovelace**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/richard-lovelace)

Tell me not (Sweet) I am unkind,

That from the nunnery

Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind

To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,

The first foe in the field;

And with a stronger faith embrace

A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such

As you too shall adore;

I could not love thee (Dear) so much,

Lov’d I not Honour more.

**T41. To Luck By** [**W. S. Merwin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-merwin)

In the cards and at the bend in the road

we never saw you

in the womb and in the crossfire

in the numbers

whatever you had your hand in

which was everything

we were told never to put

our faith in you

to bow to you humbly after all

because in the end there was nothing

else we could do

but not to believe in you

still we might coax you with pebbles

kept warm in the hand

or coins or the relics

of vanished animals

observances rituals

not binding upon you

who make no promises

we might do such things only

not to neglect you

and risk your disfavor

oh you who are never the same

who are secret as the day when it comes

you whom we explain

as often as we can

without understanding

Source: *Poetry* (December 2001).

**T42. To the Memory of Mr. Oldham By** [**John Dryden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-dryden)

Farewell, too little and too lately known,

Whom I began to think and call my own;

For sure our souls were near ally'd; and thine

Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.

One common note on either lyre did strike,

And knaves and fools we both abhorr'd alike:

To the same goal did both our studies drive,

The last set out the soonest did arrive.

Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,

While his young friend perform'd and won the race.

O early ripe! to thy abundant store

What could advancing age have added more?

It might (what nature never gives the young)

Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.

But satire needs not those, and wit will shine

Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.

A noble error, and but seldom made,

When poets are by too much force betray'd.

Thy generous fruits, though gather'd ere their prime

Still show'd a quickness; and maturing time

But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.

Once more, hail and farewell; farewell thou young,

But ah too short, Marcellus of our tongue;

Thy brows with ivy, and with laurels bound;

But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

**T43. To My Dear and Loving Husband By** [**Anne Bradstreet**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-bradstreet)

If ever two were one, then surely we.

If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.

If ever wife was happy in a man,

Compare with me, ye women, if you can.

I prize**prize** Value thy love more than whole mines of gold,

Or all the riches that the East**the East** East Indies, southeast Asia, including India; the English East India Company began in 1600. doth hold.

My love is such that rivers cannot quench,**My ... rivers cannot quench** Compare the Song of Solomon: “Muche water can not quenche love, nether can the floods drowne it." (Geneva Bible) Also, quench could mean to satisfy.

Nor ought**ought** Anything but love from thee give recompense**recompense** Return payment; reward.

Thy love is such I can no way repay;

The heavens reward thee manifold**manifold** In abundance, I pray.

Then while we live, in love let’s so persever**persever** Both to continue steadfastly, and in the Theological sense to remain in a state of grace. An earlier spelling of the word “persevere.”,

That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Source: *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet* (1981)

**T44. To Solitude By** [**Alice Cary**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/alice-cary)

I am weary of the working,

Weary of the long day’s heat;

To thy comfortable bosom,

Wilt thou take me, spirit sweet?

Weary of the long, blind struggle

For a pathway bright and high,—

Weary of the dimly dying

Hopes that never quite all die.

Weary searching a bad cipher

For a good that must be meant;

Discontent with being weary,—

Weary with my discontent.

I am weary of the trusting

Where my trusts but torments prove;

Wilt thou keep faith with me? wilt thou

Be my true and tender love?

I am weary drifting, driving

Like a helmless bark at sea;

Kindly, comfortable spirit,

Wilt thou give thyself to me?

Give thy birds to sing me sonnets?

Give thy winds my cheeks to kiss?

And thy mossy rocks to stand for

The memorials of our bliss?

I in reverence will hold thee,

Never vexed with jealous ills,

Though thy wild and wimpling waters

Wind about a thousand hills.

Source: *American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (The Library of America, 1993)

**T45. To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time By** [**Robert Herrick**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-herrick)

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,

Old Time is still a-flying;

And this same flower that smiles today

Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,

The higher he’s a-getting,

The sooner will his race be run,

And nearer he’s to setting.

That age is best which is the first,

When youth and blood are warmer;

But being spent, the worse, and worst

Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,

And while ye may, go marry;

For having lost but once your prime,

You may forever tarry.

Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry Third Edition* (1983)

**T46. To the Western World By** [**Louis Simpson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louis-simpson)

A siren sang, and Europe turned away

From the high castle and the shepherd’s crook.

Three caravels went sailing to Cathay

On the strange ocean, and the captains shook

Their banners out across the Mexique Bay.

And in our early days we did the same.

Remembering our fathers in their wreck

We crossed the sea from Palos where they came

And saw, enormous to the little deck,

A shore in silence waiting for a name.

The treasures of Cathay were never found.

In this America, this wilderness

Where the axe echoes with a lonely sound,

The generations labor to possess

And grave by grave we civilize the ground.

Louis Simpson, “To the Western World” from *The Owner of the House: New Collected Poems 1940-2001*. Copyright © 2003 by Louis Simpson. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Collected Poems* (BOA Editions Ltd., 1988)

**T47. Tomorrow By** [**Dennis O'Driscoll**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dennis-odriscoll)

I

Tomorrow I will start to be happy.

The morning will light up like a celebratory cigar.

Sunbeams sprawling on the lawn will set

dew sparkling like a cut-glass tumbler of champagne.

Today will end the worst phase of my life.

I will put my shapeless days behind me,

fencing off the past, as a golden rind

of sand parts slipshod sea from solid land.

It is tomorrow I want to look back on, not today.

Tomorrow I start to be happy; today is almost yesterday.

II

Australia, how wise you are to get the day

over and done with first, out of the way.

You have eaten the fruit of knowledge, while

we are dithering about which main course to choose.

How liberated you must feel, how free from doubt:

the rise and fall of stocks, today’s closing prices

are revealed to you before our bidding has begun.

Australia, you can gather in your accident statistics

like a harvest while our roads still have hours to kill.

When we are in the dark, you have sagely seen the light.

III

Cagily, presumptuously, I dare to write 2018.

A date without character or tone. 2018.

A year without interest rates or mean daily temperature.

Its hit songs have yet to be written, its new-year

babies yet to be induced, its truces to be signed.

Much too far off for prophecy, though one hazards

a tentative guess—a so-so year most likely,

vague in retrospect, fizzling out with the usual

end-of-season sales; everything slashed:

your last chance to salvage something of its style.

Dennis O’Driscoll, "Tomorrow" from *New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2004 by Dennis O’Driscoll. Reprinted by permission of Anvil Press Poetry, Ltd..  
  
Source: *Poetry* (July 1999).

**T48. Torque By** [**David Rivard**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-rivard)

After his ham & cheese in the drape factory cafeteria,

having slipped by the bald shipping foreman

to ride a rattling elevator to the attic

where doves flicker into the massive eaves

and where piled boxes of out-of-style

cotton and lace won’t ever be

decorating anyone’s sun parlor windows.

Having dozed off in that hideout he fixed

between five four-by-six cardboard storage cartons

while the rest of us pack Mediterranean Dreams

and Colonial Ruffles and drapes colored like moons,

and he wakes lost—

shot through

into a world of unlocked unlocking light—

suddenly he knows where he is and feels half nuts

and feels like killing some pigeons with a slingshot.

That’s all, and that’s why he pokes

his calloused fingers into the broken machinery,

hunting for loose nuts a half inch wide—

five greasy cold ones that warm in his pocket—

and yanks back the snag-cut strip of inner tube

with a nut snug at the curve to snap it

at the soft chest of a dopey bird.

Then the noise of pigeons flopping down

to creosoted hardwood, and then a grin

the guy gives me & all his other pals later.

And afternoon tightens down on all

our shoulders, until the shift whistle

blasts, blowing through the plant like air

through lace. As it always has, as it does.

That bright. That stunned.

David Rivard, “Torque” from *Torque*. Copyright © 1988 by David Rivard. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, www.upress.pitt.edu. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Torque* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988)

**T49. Translations from the English By** [**George Starbuck**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/george-starbuck)

for Arthur Freeman

*Pigfoot (with Aces Under) Passes*

The heat’s on the hooker.

Drop’s on the lam.

Cops got Booker.

Who give a damn?

The Kid’s been had

But not me yet.

Dad’s in his pad.

No sweat.

*Margaret Are You Drug*

Cool it Mag.

Sure it’s a drag

With all that green flaked out.

Next thing you know they’ll be changing the color of bread.

But look, Chick,

Why panic?

Sevennyeighty years, we’ll *all* be dead.

Roll with it, Kid.

I did.

Give it the old benefit of the doubt.

I mean leaves

Schmeaves.

You sure you aint just feeling sorry for yourself?

*Lamb*

Lamb, what makes you tick?

You got a wind-up, a Battery-Powered,

A flywheel, a plug-in, or what?

You made out of real Reelfur?

You fall out the window you bust?

You shrink? Turn into a No-No?

Zip open and have pups?

I bet you better than that.

I bet you put out by some other outfit.

I bet you don’t do nothin.

I bet you somethin to eat.

*Daddy Gander’s New Found Runes*

Rain, rain, grow the hay.

Grow the weeds another day.

If I die before I wake,

Skip it.

Little Boy Blue come blow.

Can’t Man; learning a new instrument.

What’s with the old one? Where’d you get the new one?

Found it in a haystack Man.

Old Mother Hubbard,

Decently covered,

Went to her final reward.

She had to laugh.

Manger was half

Empty and half kennel.

Ol’ Shep. At it

Again. Livin’ on

Principal.

I fired a missile up.

It came down maybe.

Maybe it stayed up.

Things aint much like they used to be.

George Starbuck, “Translations from the English” from *The Works: Poems Selected from Five Decades.* Copyright © 2003 by University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa). Reprinted with the permission of The University of Alabama Press. Source: *The Works: Poems Selected from Five Decades* (2003)

**T50.Traveling through the Dark By** [**William E. Stafford**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-e-stafford)

Traveling through the dark I found a deer

dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.

It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:

that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car

and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;

she had stiffened already, almost cold.

I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—

her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,

alive, still, never to be born.

Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;

under the hood purred the steady engine.

I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;

around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,

then pushed her over the edge into the river.

William Stafford, “Traveling Through the Dark” from *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems* (St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 1998). Copyright © 1998 by William Stafford. Reprinted with the permission of the Estate of William Stafford. Source: *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 1998)

**T51. The Traveller-Heart By** [**Vachel Lindsay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/vachel-lindsay)

(To a Man who maintained that the Mausoleum is the Stateliest Possible Manner of Interment)

I would be one with the dark, dark earth:—

Follow the plough with a yokel tread.

I would be part of the Indian corn,

Walking the rows with the plumes o'erhead.

I would be one with the lavish earth,

Eating the bee-stung apples red:

Walking where lambs walk on the hills;

By oak-grove paths to the pools be led.

I would be one with the dark-bright night

When sparkling skies and the lightning wed—

Walking on with the vicious wind

By roads whence even the dogs have fled.

I would be one with the sacred earth

On to the end, till I sleep with the dead.

Terror shall put no spears through me.

Peace shall jewel my shroud instead.

I shall be one with all pit-black things

Finding their lowering threat unsaid:

Stars for my pillow there in the gloom,—

Oak-roots arching about my head!

Stars, like daisies, shall rise through the earth,

Acorns fall round my breast that bled.

Children shall weave there a flowery chain,

Squirrels on acorn-hearts be fed:—

Fruit of the traveller-heart of me,

Fruit of my harvest-songs long sped:

Sweet with the life of my sunburned days

When the sheaves were ripe, and the apples red.

Source: *Congo and other poems* (1915)

**T52. The Tree By** [**Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/anne-finch)

Fair tree! for thy delightful shade

'Tis just that some return be made;

Sure some return is due from me

To thy cool shadows, and to thee.

When thou to birds dost shelter give,

Thou music dost from them receive;

If travellers beneath thee stay

Till storms have worn themselves away,

That time in praising thee they spend

And thy protecting pow'r commend.

The shepherd here, from scorching freed,

Tunes to thy dancing leaves his reed;

Whilst his lov'd nymph, in thanks, bestows

Her flow'ry chaplets on thy boughs.

Shall I then only silent be,

And no return be made by me?

No; let this wish upon thee wait,

And still to flourish be thy fate.

To future ages may'st thou stand

Untouch'd by the rash workman's hand,

Till that large stock of sap is spent,

Which gives thy summer's ornament;

Till the fierce winds, that vainly strive

To shock thy greatness whilst alive,

Shall on thy lifeless hour attend,

Prevent the axe, and grace thy end;

Their scatter'd strength together call

And to the clouds proclaim thy fall;

Who then their ev'ning dews may spare

When thou no longer art their care,

But shalt, like ancient heroes, burn,

And some bright hearth be made thy urn.

**T53. Trees By** [**Joyce Kilmer**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/joyce-kilmer)

I think that I shall never see

A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest

Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,

And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear

A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;

Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,

But only God can make a tree.

Source: *Poetry* (August 1913).

**T54. The True-Blue American By** [**Delmore Schwartz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/delmore-schwartz)

Jeremiah Dickson was a true-blue American,

For he was a little boy who understood America, for he felt that he must

Think about *everything*; because that’s *all* there is to think about,

Knowing immediately the intimacy of truth and comedy,

Knowing intuitively how a sense of humor was a necessity

For one and for all who live in America. Thus, natively, and

Naturally when on an April Sunday in an ice cream parlor Jeremiah

Was requested to choose between a chocolate sundae and a banana split

He answered unhesitatingly, having no need to think of it

Being a true-blue American, determined to continue as he began:

Rejecting the either-or of Kierkegaard, and many another European;

Refusing to accept alternatives, refusing to believe the choice of between;

Rejecting selection; denying dilemma; electing absolute affirmation: knowing

in his breast

The infinite and the gold

Of the endless frontier, the deathless West.

“Both: I will have them both!” declared this true-blue American

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, on an April Sunday, instructed

By the great department stores, by the Five-and-Ten,

Taught by Christmas, by the circus, by the vulgarity and grandeur of

Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon,

Tutored by the grandeur, vulgarity, and infinite appetite gratified and

Shining in the darkness, of the light

On Saturdays at the double bills of the moon pictures,

The consummation of the advertisements of the imagination of the light

Which is as it was—the infinite belief in infinite hope—of Columbus,

Barnum, Edison, and Jeremiah Dickson.

Delmore Schwartz, “The True-Blue American” from *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge.* Copyright © 1967 by Delmore Schwartz. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).

Source: *Selected Poems (1938-1958): Summer Knowledge* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1967)

**T55. The Truly Great By** [**Stephen Spender**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stephen-spender)

I think continually of those who were truly great.

Who, from the womb, remembered t he soul’s history

Through corridors of light, where the hours are suns,

Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition

Was that their lips, still touched with fire,

Should tell of the Spirit, clothed from head to foot in song.

And who hoarded from the Spring branches

The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious, is never to forget

The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs

Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.

Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light

Nor its grave evening demand for love.

Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother

With noise and fog, the flowering of the spirit.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,

See how these names are fêted by the waving grass

And by the streamers of white cloud

And whispers of wind in the listening sky.

The names of those who in their lives fought for life,

Who wore at their hearts the fire’s centre.

Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun

And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

Stephen Spender, “The Truly Great” from *Collected Poems 1928-1953*. Copyright © 1955 by Stephen Spender. Reprinted by permission of Ed Victor Ltd.﻿

Source: *Collected Poems 1928-1953﻿* (Random House Inc., 1955)

**T56. truth By** [**Gwendolyn Brooks**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gwendolyn-brooks)

And if sun comes

How shall we greet him?

Shall we not dread him,

Shall we not fear him

After so lengthy a

Session with shade?

Though we have wept for him,

Though we have prayed

All through the night-years—

What if we wake one shimmering morning to

Hear the fierce hammering

Of his firm knuckles

Hard on the door?

Shall we not shudder?—

Shall we not flee

Into the shelter, the dear thick shelter

Of the familiar

Propitious haze?

Sweet is it, sweet is it

To sleep in the coolness

Of snug unawareness.

The dark hangs heavily

Over the eyes.

Gwendolyn Brooks, "truth" from *Blacks*. Copyright © 1987 by Gwendolyn Brooks. Reprinted by consent of Brooks Permissions.

Source: *Blacks* (Third World Press, 1987)

**T57. Truth Serum By** [**Naomi Shihab Nye**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/naomi-shihab-nye)

We made it from the ground-up corn in the old back pasture.

Pinched a scent of night jasmine billowing off the fence,

popped it right in.

That frog song wanting nothing but echo?

We used that.

Stirred it widely. Noticed the clouds while stirring.

Called upon our ancient great aunts and their long slow eyes

of summer. Dropped in their names.

Added a mint leaf now and then

to hearten the broth. Added a note of cheer and worry.

Orange butterfly between the claps of thunder?

Perfect. And once we had it,

had smelled and tasted the fragrant syrup,

placing the pan on a back burner for keeping,

the sorrow lifted in small ways.

We boiled down the lies in another pan till they disappeared.

We washed that pan.

Naomi Shihab Nye, “Truth Serum” from *You and Yours.* Copyright © 2005 by Naomi Shihab Nye. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org). Source: *You & Yours* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2005)

**T58. Try to Praise the Mutilated World By** [**Adam Zagajewski**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adam-zagajewski)

Try to praise the mutilated world.

Remember June's long days,

and wild strawberries, drops of rosé wine.

The nettles that methodically overgrow

the abandoned homesteads of exiles.

You must praise the mutilated world.

You watched the stylish yachts and ships;

one of them had a long trip ahead of it,

while salty oblivion awaited others.

You've seen the refugees going nowhere,

you've heard the executioners sing joyfully.

You should praise the mutilated world.

Remember the moments when we were together

in a white room and the curtain fluttered.

Return in thought to the concert where music flared.

You gathered acorns in the park in autumn

and leaves eddied over the earth's scars.

Praise the mutilated world

and the gray feather a thrush lost,

and the gentle light that strays and vanishes

and returns.

Adam Zagajewski, "Try to Praise the Mutilated World" from *Without End: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2002 by Adam Zagajewski. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, www.fsgbooks.com. All rights reserved.   
  
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Source: *Without End: New and Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002)

**T59. Two Guitars By** [**Victor Hernández Cruz**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/victor-hernandez-cruz)

Two guitars were left in a room all alone

They sat on different corners of the parlor

In this solitude they started talking to each other

My strings are tight and full of tears

The man who plays me has no heart

I have seen it leave out of his mouth

I have seen it melt out of his eyes

It dives into the pores of the earth

When they squeeze me tight I bring

Down the angels who live off the chorus

The trios singing loosen organs

With melodious screwdrivers

Sentiment comes off the hinges

Because a song is a mountain put into

Words and landscape is the feeling that

Enters something so big in the harmony

We are always in danger of blowing up

With passion

The other guitar:

In 1944 New York

When the Trio Los Panchos started

With Mexican & Puerto Rican birds

I am the one that one of them held

Tight like a woman

Their throats gardenia gardens

An airport for dreams

I've been in theaters and cabarets

I played in an apartment on 102nd street

After a baptism pregnant with women

The men flirted and were offered

Chicken soup

Echoes came out of hallways as if from caves

*Someone is opening the door now*

The two guitars hushed and there was a

Resonance in the air like what is left by

The last chord of a bolero.

Victor Hernández Cruz, "Two Guitars" from *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965-2000.* Copyright © 2001 by Victor Hernández Cruz. Reprinted with the permission of Coffee House Press. www.coffeehousepress.org.  
  
Source: *Maraca: New and Selected Poems 1965-2000* (Coffee House Press, 2001)

**T60. The Tyger By** [**William Blake**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-blake)

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,

In the forests of the night;

What immortal hand or eye,

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.

Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

On what wings dare he aspire?

What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,

Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

And when thy heart began to beat,

What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp,

Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears

And water'd heaven with their tears:

Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,

In the forests of the night:

What immortal hand or eye,

Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

**POL U-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**U1**](#U1)[**U2**](#U2)[**U3**](#U3)[**U4**](#U4)[**U5**](#U5)[**U6**](#U6)[**U7**](#U7)[**U8**](#U8) **U9 U10 U11 U12 U13**

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**U53 U54 U55 U56 U57 U58 U59 U60 U61 U62 U63 U64 U65**

**U66 U67 U68 U69 U70 U71 U72 U73 U74 U75 U76 U77 U78**

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**U92 U93 U94 U95 U96 U97 U98 U99 U100 U101 U102 U103 U104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
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11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**U1. Ultima Thule By** [**Linda Bierds**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-bierds)

A little candlewax on the thumbnail, liquid

at first, slipping, then stalled to an ice-hood.

Another layer, another, and the child lies back,

his thumb a hummock, his small knuckle

buckled with cracks.

No snow yet, but

the last white meadows of switchwort and saxifrage

mimic it. Already the bears brush back

through the dwarf willows—Hubbart Point, Cape Henrietta Maria,

the bay's deep arc flattening, lessening

as land extends through the fast-ice and the seam

of open leads stretches, withdraws.

They have come for the pack floes, for the slow

rafting. And repeat on their white faces, the boy thinks,

the low strokes of the borealis: violet mouths,

madder blue at the eyelids. Perhaps he will walk

to the shoreline—no shore, of course, just miles

of land-fast ice stretched over water, stretched out

to water, the line where each begins

a filament, a vapor. By then the bears will be

sailors, or, far to the north, stalled in their waxy sleep.

He yawns, looks down at his slipper, his floormat

of braided fleece. By then the lights

will be thicker, greens and magentas flashing, rolling in

at times like fog. *To go where nothing lives.*

He turns, settles. To extend a little breath

out over that ice—the white, cumbersome bodies

migrating in reverse with the others, dragging

between them a lifeline, plump and intricate,

like a net, like purse seiners dragging a cork net,

its great arc spiraling, tighter, tighter,

now green in those lights, now blue, now

pink as the boy's ear,

where all night a line of cold

traces the rim, the lobe,

circles down, chills, and recedes.

Linda Bierds, “Ultima Thule” from *The Stillness, the Dancing* (New York:   
Henry Holt, 1988). Copyright © 1988 by Linda Bierds. Reprinted with the   
permission of the author.

Source: *The Stillness the Dancing* (Henry Holt & Co., 1988)

**U2. Under Stars By** [**Tess Gallagher**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tess-gallagher)

The sleep of this night deepens

because I have walked coatless from the house

carrying the white envelope.

All night it will say one name

in its little tin house by the roadside.

I have raised the metal flag

so its shadow under the roadlamp

leaves an imprint on the rain-heavy bushes.

Now I will walk back

thinking of the few lights still on

in the town a mile away.

In the yellowed light of a kitchen

the millworker has finished his coffee,

his wife has laid out the white slices of bread

on the counter. Now while the bed they have left

is still warm, I will think of you, you

who are so far away

you have caused me to look up at the stars.

Tonight they have not moved

from childhood, those games played after dark.

Again I walk into the wet grass

toward the starry voices. Again, I

am the found one, intimate, returned

by all I touch on the way.

Tess Gallagher, "Under Stars" from *Midnight Lantern: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 2011 by Tess Gallagher. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press.  
  
Source: *Midnight Lantern: New and Selected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 2011)

**U3. Under the Vulture-Tree By** [**David Bottoms**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-bottoms)

We have all seen them circling pastures,

have looked up from the mouth of a barn, a pine clearing,

the fences of our own backyards, and have stood

amazed by the one slow wing beat, the endless dihedral drift.

But I had never seen so many so close, hundreds,

every limb of the dead oak feathered black,

and I cut the engine, let the river grab the jon boat

and pull it toward the tree.

The black leaves shined, the pink fruit blossomed

red, ugly as a human heart.

Then, as I passed under their dream, I saw for the first time

its soft countenance, the raw fleshy jowls

wrinkled and generous, like the faces of the very old

who have grown to empathize with everything.

And I drifted away from them, slow, on the pull of the river,

reluctant, looking back at their roost,

calling them what I'd never called them, what they are,

those dwarfed transfiguring angels,

who flock to the side of the poisoned fox, the mud turtle

crushed on the shoulder of the road,

who pray over the leaf-graves of the anonymous lost,

with mercy enough to consume us all and give us wings.

David Bottoms, “Under the Vulture-Tree” from *Armored Hearts: Selected and New Poems.* Copyright © 1995 by David Bottoms. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).  
  
Source: *Armored Hearts: Selected and New Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1995)

**U4. The Unforgiven By** [**Russell Edson**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/russell-edson)

After a series of indiscretions a man stumbled homeward, thinking, now that I am going down from my misbehavior I am to be forgiven, because how I acted was not the true self, which I am now returning to. And I am not to be blamed for the past, because I’m to be seen as one redeemed in the present...   
But when he got to the threshold of his house his house said, go away, I am not at home.   
Not at home? A house is always at home; where else can it be? said the man.   
I am not at home to you, said his house.   
  
And so the man stumbled away into another series of indiscretions...

Russell Edson, “The Unforgiven,” in *The Wounded Breakfast* © 1985 by Russell Edson and reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press. www.wesleyan.edu/wespress

Source: *The Wounded Breakfast* (Wesleyan University Press, 1985)

**U5. Unholy Sonnet 1 By** [**Mark Jarman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mark-jarman)

Dear God, Our Heavenly Father, Gracious Lord,

Mother Love and Maker, Light Divine,

Atomic Fingertip, Cosmic Design,

First Letter of the Alphabet, Last Word,

Mutual Satisfaction, Cash Award,

Auditor Who Approves Our Bottom Line,

Examiner Who Says That We Are Fine,

Oasis That All Sands Are Running Toward.

I can say almost anything about you,

O Big Idea, and with each epithet,

Create new reasons to believe or doubt you,

Black Hole, White Hole, Presidential Jet.

But what’s the anything I must leave out? You

Solve nothing but the problems that I set.

Mark Jarman, Sonnet 1 from *Unholy Sonnets.* Copyright © 2000 by Mark Jarman. Reprinted with the permission of Story Line Press.

Source: *Unholy Sonnets* (Story Line Press, 2003)

**U6. The Uniform By** [**Marvin Bell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marvin-bell)

Of the sleeves, I remember their weight, like wet wool,

on my arms, and the empty ends which hung past my hands.

Of the body of the shirt, I remember the large buttons

and larger buttonholes, which made a rack of wheels

down my chest and could not be quickly unbuttoned.

Of the collar, I remember its thickness without starch,

by which it lay against my clavicle without moving.

Of my trousers, the same—heavy, bulky, slow to give

for a leg, a crowded feeling, a molasses to walk in.

Of my boots, I remember the brittle soles, of a material

that had not been made love to by any natural substance,

and the laces: ropes to make prisoners of my feet.

Of the helmet, I remember the webbed, inner liner,

a brittle plastic underwear on which wobbled

the crushing steel pot then strapped at the chin.

Of the mortar, I remember the mortar plate,

heavy enough to kill by weight, which I carried by rope.

Of the machine gun, I remember the way it fit

behind my head and across my shoulder blades

as I carried it, or, to be precise, as it rode me.

Of tactics, I remember the likelihood of shooting

the wrong man, the weight of the rifle bolt, the difficulty

of loading while prone, the shock of noise.

For earplugs, some used cigarette filters or toilet paper.

I don’t hear well now, for a man of my age,

and the doctor says my ears were damaged and asks

if I was in the Army, and of course I was but then

a wounded eardrum wasn’t much in the scheme.

Marvin Bell, “The Uniform” from *Nightworks: Poems 1962-2000.* Copyright © 2000 by Marvin Bell. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org)

Source: *Nightworks: Poems 1962-2000* (Copper Canyon Press, 2000)

**U7. The Universe as Primal Scream By** [**Tracy K. Smith**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/tracy-k-smith)

5pm on the nose. They open their mouths

And it rolls out: high, shrill and metallic.

First the boy, then his sister. Occasionally,

They both let loose at once, and I think

Of putting on my shoes to go up and see

Whether it is merely an experiment

Their parents have been conducting

Upon the good crystal, which must surely

Lie shattered to dust on the floor.

Maybe the mother is still proud

Of the four pink lungs she nursed

To such might. Perhaps, if they hit

The magic decibel, the whole building

Will lift-off, and we'll ride to glory

Like Elijah. If this is it—if this is what

Their cries are cocked toward—let the sky

Pass from blue, to red, to molten gold,

To black. Let the heaven we inherit approach.

Whether it is our dead in Old Testament robes,

Or a door opening onto the roiling infinity of space.

Whether it will bend down to greet us like a father,

Or swallow us like a furnace. I'm ready

To meet what refuses to let us keep anything

For long. What teases us with blessings,

Bends us with grief. Wizard, thief, the great

Wind rushing to knock our mirrors to the floor,

To sweep our short lives clean. How mean

Our racket seems beside it. My stereo on shuffle.

The neighbor chopping onions through a wall.

All of it just a hiccough against what may never

Come for us. And the kids upstairs still at it,

Screaming like the Dawn of Man, as if something

They have no name for has begun to insist

Upon being born.

Tracy K. Smith, "The Universe as Primal Scream" from *Life on Mars*. Copyright © 2011 by Tracy K. Smith. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press. www.graywolfpress.org

Source: *Life on Mars* (Graywolf Press, 2011)

**U8. Up-Hill By** [**Christina Rossetti**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/christina-rossetti)

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day’s journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

Yea, beds for all who come.

**POL V-LIST**

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[**V1**](#V1)[**V2**](#V2)[**V3**](#V3)[**V4**](#V4)[**V5**](#V5)[**V6**](#V6)[**V7**](#V7)[**V8**](#V8)[**V9**](#V9)[**V10**](#V10)[**V11**](#V11) **V12 V13**

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**V66 V67 V68 V69 V70 V71 V72 V73 V74 V75 V76 V77 V78**

**V79 V80 V81 V82 V83 V84 V85 V86 V87 V88 V89 V90 V91**

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**V1. The Vacuum By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

The house is so quiet now

The vacuum cleaner sulks in the corner closet,

Its bag limp as a stopped lung, its mouth

Grinning into the floor, maybe at my

Slovenly life, my dog-dead youth.

I’ve lived this way long enough,

But when my old woman died her soul

Went into that vacuum cleaner, and I can’t bear

To see the bag swell like a belly, eating the dust

And the woolen mice, and begin to howl

Because there is old filth everywhere

She used to crawl, in the corner and under the stair.

I know now how life is cheap as dirt,

And still the hungry, angry heart

Hangs on and howls, biting at air.

Howard Nemerov, “The Vacuum” from *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov.* Copyright © 1977 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted with the permission of Margaret Nemerov. Source: *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov* (The University of Chicago Press, 1977)

**V2. Vain and Careless By** [**Robert Graves**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-graves)

Lady, lovely lady,

Careless and gay!

Once when a beggar called

She gave her child away.

The beggar took the baby,

Wrapped it in a shawl,

“Bring her back,” the lady said,

“Next time you call.”

Hard by lived a vain man,

So vain and so proud,

He walked on stilts

To be seen by the crowd.

Up above the chimney pots,

Tall as a mast,

And all the people ran about

Shouting till he passed.

“A splendid match surely,”

Neighbours saw it plain,

“Although she is so careless,

Although he is so vain.”

But the lady played bobcherry,

Did not see or care,

As the vain man went by her

Aloft in the air.

This gentle-born couple

Lived and died apart.

Water will not mix with oil,

Nor vain with careless heart. Source: *Country Sentiment* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1920)

**V3. A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning By** [**John Donne**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-donne)

As virtuous men pass mildly away,

And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say

The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,

No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;

'Twere profanation of our joys

To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,

Men reckon what it did, and meant;

But trepidation of the spheres,

Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,

That our selves know not what it is,

Inter-assured of the mind,

Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so

As stiff twin compasses are two;

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,

Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans and hearkens after it,

And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

Like th' other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun.

**V4. Valentine By** [**Elinor Wylie**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/elinor-wylie)

Too high, too high to pluck

My heart shall swing.

A fruit no bee shall suck,

No wasp shall sting.

If on some night of cold

It falls to ground

In apple-leaves of gold

I’ll wrap it round.

And I shall seal it up

With spice and salt,

In a carven silver cup,

In a deep vault.

Before my eyes are blind

And my lips mute,

I must eat core and rind

Of that same fruit.

Before my heart is dust

At the end of all,

Eat it I must, I must

Were it bitter gall.

But I shall keep it sweet

By some strange art;

Wild honey I shall eat

When I eat my heart.

O honey cool and chaste

As clover’s breath!

Sweet Heaven I shall taste

Before my death.

Source: *Nets to Catch the Wind* (1921)

**V5. Valentine By** [**Lorna Dee Cervantes**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorna-dee-cervantes)

Cherry plums suck a week’s soak,

overnight they explode into the scenery of before

your touch. The curtains open on the end of our past.

Pink trumpets on the vines bare to the hummingbirds.

Butterflies unclasp from the purse of their couplings, they

light and open on the doubled hands of eucalyptus fronds.

They sip from the pistils for seven generations that bear

them through another tongue as the first year of our

punishing mathematic begins clicking the calendar

forward. They land like seasoned rocks on the

decks of the cliffs. They take another turn

on the spiral of life where the blossoms

blush & pale in a day of dirty dawn

where the ghost of you webs

your limbs through branches

of cherry plum. Rare bird,

extinct color, you stay in

my dreams in x-ray. In

rerun, the bone of you

stripping sweethearts

folds and layers the

shedding petals of

my grief into a

decayed holo-

gram—my

for ever

empty

art.

"Valentine" by Lorna Dee Cervantes, from *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger*. Copyright © 1991 by Lorna Dee Cervantes, Used with permission of Arte Público Press, [www.arte.uh.edu](http://www.arte.uh.edu/)

Source: *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger* (Arte Público Press, 1991)

**V6. Very Large Moth By** [**Craig Arnold**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/craig-arnold)

After D.H.L.

Your first thought when the light snaps on and the black wings

clatter about the kitchen is a bat

the clear part of  your mind considers rabies the other part

does not consider knows only to startle

and cower away from the slap of  its wings though it is soon

clearly not a bat but a moth and harmless

still you are shy of it it clings to the hood of the stove

not black but brown its orange eyes sparkle

like televisions its leg  joints are large enough to count

how could you kill it where would you hide the body

a creature so solid must have room for a soul

and if  this is so why not in a creature

half  its size or half its size again and so on

down to the ants clearly it must be saved

caught in a shopping bag and rushed to the front door

afraid to crush it feeling the plastic rattle

loosened into the night air it batters the porch light

throwing fitful shadows around the landing

*That was a really big moth* is all you can say to the doorman

who has watched your whole performance with a smile

the half-compassion and half-horror we feel for the creatures

we want not to hurt and prefer not to touch

**V7. Video Blues By** [**Mary Jo Salter**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/mary-jo-salter)

My husband has a crush on Myrna Loy,

and likes to rent her movies, for a treat.

It makes some evenings harder to enjoy.

The list of actresses who might employ

him as their slave is too long to repeat.

(My husband has a crush on Myrna Loy,

Carole Lombard, Paulette Goddard, coy

Jean Arthur with that voice as dry as wheat ...)

It makes some evenings harder to enjoy.

Does he confess all this just to annoy

a loyal spouse? I know I can’t compete.

My husband has a crush on Myrna Loy.

And can’t a woman have her dreamboats? Boy,

I wouldn’t say my life is incomplete,

but some evening I could certainly enjoy

two hours with Cary Grant as *my* own toy.

I guess, though, we were destined not to meet.

My husband has a crush on Myrna Loy,

which makes some evenings harder to enjoy.

Mary Jo Salter, "Video Blues" from *A Kiss in Space*. Copyright © 1999 by Mary Jo Salter. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. Source: *A Kiss in Space* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1999)

**V8. A Virginal By** [**Ezra Pound**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ezra-pound)

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.

I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,

For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;

Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly

And left me cloaked as with a gauze of æther;

As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.

Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness

To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,

Soft as spring wind that’s come from birchen bowers.

Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,

As winter’s wound with her sleight hand she staunches,

Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:

As white their bark, so white this lady’s hours.

Source: *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1957)

**V9. Virtuosi By** [**Lisel Mueller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lisel-mueller)

*In memory of my parents ﻿*

People whose lives have been shaped

by history—and it is always tragic—

do not want to talk about it,

would rather dance, give parties

on thrift-shop china. You feel

wonderful in their homes,

two leaky rooms, nests

they stowed inside their hearts

on the road into exile.

They know how to fix potato peelings

and apple cores so you smack your lips.

The words *start over again*

hold no terror for them.

Obediently they rise

and go with only a rucksack

or tote bag. If they weep,

it’s when you’re not looking.

To tame their nightmares, they choose

the most dazzling occupations,

swallow the flames in the sunset sky,

jump through burning hoops

in their elegant tiger suits.

Cover your eyes: there’s one

walking on a thread

thirty feet above us—

shivering points of light

leap across her body,

and she works without a net.

Lisel Mueller, “Virtuosi” from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1996 by Lisel Mueller. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.﻿ Source: *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems﻿* (Louisiana State University Press, 1996)

**V10. Vita Nova By** [**Louise Glück**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louise-gluck)

You saved me, you should remember me.

The spring of the year; young men buying tickets for the ferryboats.

Laughter, because the air is full of apple blossoms.

When I woke up, I realized I was capable of the same feeling.

I remember sounds like that from my childhood,

laughter for no cause, simply because the world is beautiful,

something like that.

Lugano. Tables under the apple trees.

Deckhands raising and lowering the colored flags.

And by the lake’s edge, a young man throws his hat into the water;

perhaps his sweetheart has accepted him.

Crucial

sounds or gestures like

a track laid down before the larger themes

and then unused, buried.

Islands in the distance. My mother

holding out a plate of little cakes—

as far as I remember, changed

in no detail, the moment

vivid, intact, having never been

exposed to light, so that I woke elated, at my age

hungry for life, utterly confident—

By the tables, patches of new grass, the pale green

pieced into the dark existing ground.

Surely spring has been returned to me, this time

not as a lover but a messenger of death, yet

it is still spring, it is still meant tenderly.

Louise Glück, “Vita Nova” from *Vita Nova.* Copyright © 2001 by Louise Glück. Reprinted with the permission of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. Source: *Vita Nova* (HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 1999)

**V11. Vixen By** [**W. S. Merwin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/w-s-merwin)

Comet of stillness princess of what is over

high note held without trembling without voice without sound

aura of complete darkness keeper of the kept secrets

of the destroyed stories the escaped dreams the sentences

never caught in words warden of where the river went

touch of its surface sibyl of the extinguished

window onto the hidden place and the other time

at the foot of the wall by the road patient without waiting

in the full moonlight of autumn at the hour when I was born

you no longer go out like a flame at the sight of me

you are still warmer than the moonlight gleaming on you

even now you are unharmed even now perfect

as you have always been now when your light paws are running

on the breathless night on the bridge with one end I remember you

when I have heard you the soles of my feet have made answer

when I have seen you I have waked and slipped from the calendars

from the creeds of difference and the contradictions

that were my life and all the crumbling fabrications

as long as it lasted until something that we were

had ended when you are no longer anything

let me catch sight of you again going over the wall

and before the garden is extinct and the woods are figures

guttering on a screen let my words find their own

places in the silence after the animals

W. S. Merwin, "Vixen" from *The Vixen*. Copyright © 1996 by W. S. Merwin, used with permission of The Wylie Agency LLC. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with The Wylie Agency. Source: *The Vixen* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996)

**POL W-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**W1**](#W1)[**W2**](#W2)[**W3**](#W3)[**W4**](#W4)[**W5**](#W5)[**W6**](#W6)[**W7**](#W7)[**W8**](#W8)[**W9**](#W9)[**W10**](#W10)[**W11**](#W11)[**W12**](#W12)[**W13**](#W13)

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**W53 W54 W55 W56 W57 W58 W59 W60 W61 W62 W63 W64 W65**

**W66 W67 W68 W69 W70 W71 W72 W73 W74 W75 W76 W77 W78**

**W79 W80 W81 W82 W83 W84 W85 W86 W87 W88 W89 W90 W91**

**W92 W93 W94 W95 W96 W97 W98 W99 W100 W101 W102 W103 W104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**W1. The Waking By** [**Theodore Roethke**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/theodore-roethke)

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.

I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?

I hear my being dance from ear to ear.

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?

God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,

And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?

The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do

To you and me; so take the lively air,

And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.

What falls away is always. And is near.

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

I learn by going where I have to go.

Theodore Roethke, “The Waking” from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke.* Copyright 1953 by Theodore Roethke. Reprinted with the permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (Doubleday, 1961)

**W2. Waking from Sleep By** [**Robert Bly**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-bly)

Inside the veins there are navies setting forth,

Tiny explosions at the waterlines,

And seagulls weaving in the wind of the salty blood.

It is the morning. The country has slept the whole winter.

Window seats were covered with fur skins, the yard was full

Of stiff dogs, and hands that clumsily held heavy books.

Now we wake, and rise from bed, and eat breakfast!

Shouts rise from the harbor of the blood,

Mist, and masts rising, the knock of wooden tackle in the sunlight.

Now we sing, and do tiny dances on the kitchen floor.

Our whole body is like a harbor at dawn;

We know that our master has left us for the day.

Robert Bly, “Waking from Sleep” from *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1962). Copyright © 1962 by Robert Bly. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Source: *Selected Poems* (1986)

**W3. War Ballad By** [**Stanley Moss**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stanley-moss)

(after the Russian)

The piano has crawled into the quarry. Hauled

In last night for firewood, sprawled

With frozen barrels, crates and sticks,

The piano is waiting for the axe.

Legless, a black box, still polished;

It lies on its belly like a lizard,

Droning, heaving, hardly fashioned

For the quarry’s primordial art.

Blood red: his frozen fingers cleft,

Two on the right hand, five on the left,

He goes down on his knees to reach the keyboard,

To strike the lizard’s chord.

Seven fingers pick out rhymes and rhythm,

The frozen skin, steaming, peels off them,

As from a boiled potato. Their schemes,

Their beauty, ivory and anthracite,

Flicker and flash like the great Northern Lights.

Everything played before is a great lie.

The reflections of flaming chandeliers—

Deceit, the white columns, the grand tiers

In warm concert halls—wild lies.

But the steel of the piano howls in me,

I lie in the quarry and I am deft

As the lizard. I accept the gift.

I’ll be a song for Russia, I’ll be

an étude, warmth and bread for everybody.

Stanley Moss, “War Ballad” from *A History of Color: New and Collected Poems.* Reprinted with the permission of Seven Stories Press, [www.sevenstories.com](http://www.sevenstories.com).  
  
Source: *A History of Color: New and Collected Poems* (Seven Stories Press, 2003)

**W4. The War Horse By** [**Eavan Boland**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eavan-boland)

This dry night, nothing unusual

About the clip, clop, casual

Iron of his shoes as he stamps death

Like a mint on the innocent coinage of earth.

I lift the window, watch the ambling feather

Of hock and fetlock, loosed from its daily tether

In the tinker camp on the Enniskerry Road,

Pass, his breath hissing, his snuffling head

Down. He is gone. No great harm is done.

Only a leaf of our laurel hedge is torn—

Of distant interest like a maimed limb,

Only a rose which now will never climb

The stone of our house, expendable, a mere

Line of defence against him, a volunteer

You might say, only a crocus, its bulbous head

Blown from growth, one of the screamless dead.

But we, we are safe, our unformed fear

Of fierce commitment gone; why should we care

If a rose, a hedge, a crocus are uprooted

Like corpses, remote, crushed, mutilated?

He stumbles on like a rumour of war, huge

Threatening. Neighbours use the subterfuge

Of curtains. He stumbles down our short street

Thankfully passing us. I pause, wait,

Then to breathe relief lean on the sill

And for a second only my blood is still

With atavism. That rose he smashed frays

Ribboned across our hedge, recalling days

Of burned countryside, illicit braid:

A cause ruined before, a world betrayed.

Eavan Boland, “The War Horse” from *An Origin Like Water: Collected Poems 1967-1987.* Copyright © 1996 by Eavan Boland. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Source: *Collected Poems* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1995)

**W5. The War in the Air By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

For a saving grace, we didn't see our dead,

Who rarely bothered coming home to die

But simply stayed away out there

In the clean war, the war in the air.

Seldom the ghosts come back bearing their tales

Of hitting the earth, the incompressible sea,

But stayed up there in the relative wind,

Shades fading in the mind,

Who had no graves but only epitaphs

Where never so many spoke for never so few:

Per ardua, said the partisans of Mars,

Per aspera, to the stars.

That was the good war, the war we won

As if there was no death, for goodness's sake.

With the help of the losers we left out there

In the air, in the empty air.

Howard Nemerov, “The War in the Air” from *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov.* Copyright © 1977 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted with the permission of Margaret Nemerov. Source: *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov* (The University of Chicago Press, 1977)

**W6. War Widow By** [**Chris Abani**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/chris-abani)

The telephone never rings. Still

you pick it up, smile into the static,

the breath of those you’ve loved; long dead.

The leaf you pick from the fall

rises and dips away with every ridge.

Fingers stiff from time, you trace.

Staring off into a distance limned

by cataracts and other collected debris,

you have forgotten none of the long-ago joy

of an ice-cream truck and its summer song.

Between the paving stones;

between tea, a cup, and the sound

of you pouring;

between the time you woke that morning

and the time when the letter came,

a tired sorrow: like an old flagellant

able only to tease with a weak sting.

Riding the elevator all day,

floor after floor after floor,

each stop some small victory whittled

from the hard stone of death, you smile.

They used to write epics about moments like this.

Chris Abani, “War Widow” from *Hands Washing Water*. Copyright © 2006 by Chris Abani. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press. Source: *Hands Washing Water* (Copper Canyon Press, 2006)

**W7. The Watchers By** [**William Stanley Braithwaite**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-stanley-braithwaite)

Two women on the lone wet strand

(*The wind's out with a will to roam*)

The waves wage war on rocks and sand,

(*And a ship is long due home.*)

The sea sprays in the women's eyes—

(*Hearts can writhe like the sea's wild foam*)

Lower descend the tempestuous skies,

(*For the wind's out with a will to roam.*)

"O daughter, thine eyes be better than mine,"

(*The waves ascend high as yonder dome*)

"North or south is there never a sign?"

(*And a ship is long due home.*)

They watched there all the long night through—

(*The wind's out with a will to roam*)

Wind and rain and sorrow for two—

(*And heaven on the long reach home.*)

**W8. Waving Goodbye By** [**Gerald Stern**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerald-stern)

I wanted to know what it was like before we

had voices and before we had bare fingers and before we

had minds to move us through our actions

and tears to help us over our feelings,

so I drove my daughter through the snow to meet her friend

and filled her car with suitcases and hugged her

as an animal would, pressing my forehead against her,

walking in circles, moaning, touching her cheek,

and turned my head after them as an animal would,

watching helplessly as they drove over the ruts,

her smiling face and her small hand just visible

over the giant pillows and coat hangers

as they made their turn into the empty highway.

Gerald Stern, “Waving Goodbye” from *This Time: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1979 by Gerald Stern. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. This selection may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (July 1979).

**W9. The Way It Sometimes Is By** [**Henry Taylor**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/henry-taylor)

At times it is like watching a face you have just met,

trying to decide who it reminds you of—

no one, surely, whom you ever hated or loved,

but yes, somebody, somebody. You watch the face

as it turns and nods, showing you, at certain angles,

a curve of the lips or a lift of the eyebrow

that is exactly right, and still the lost face

eludes you. Now this face is talking, and you hear

a sound in the voice, the accent on certain words—

yes! a phrase . . . you barely recall sitting outside,

by a pool or a campfire, remarking

a peculiar, recurring expression. Two syllables,

wasn’t it? Doorknob? Bathroom? Shawcross? What the hell

kind of word is shawcross? A name; not the right one.

A couple of syllables that could possibly be

a little like something you may once have heard.

So the talk drifts, and you drift, sneaking glances,

pounding your brain. Days later a face occurs to you,

and yes, there is a resemblance. That odd word, though,

or phrase, is gone. It must have been somebody else.

Yes, it’s like that, at times; something is, maybe;

and there are days when you can almost say what it is.

Henry Taylor, “The Way It Sometimes Is” from *The Made Thing: An Anthology of Contemporary Southern Poetry*. Copyright © 2000 by Henry Taylor. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press. Source: *The Made Thing: An Anthology of Contemporary Southern Poetry* (Louisiana State University Press, 2000)

**W10. Ways of Talking By** [**Ha Jin**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ha-jin)

We used to like talking about grief

Our journals and letters were packed

with losses, complaints, and sorrows.

Even if there was no grief

we wouldn’t stop lamenting

as though longing for the charm

of a distressed face.

Then we couldn’t help expressing grief

So many things descended without warning:

labor wasted, loves lost, houses gone,

marriages broken, friends estranged,

ambitions worn away by immediate needs.

Words lined up in our throats

for a good whining.

Grief seemed like an endless river—

the only immortal flow of life.

After losing a land and then giving up a tongue,

we stopped talking of grief

Smiles began to brighten our faces.

We laugh a lot, at our own mess.

Things become beautiful,

even hailstones in the strawberry fields.

Ha Jin, “Ways of Talking” from *Facing Shadows.* Copyright © 1996 by Ha Jin. Reprinted with the permission of Hanging Loose Press. Source: *Poetry* (July 1994).

**W11. Weighing In By** [**Rhina P. Espaillat**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rhina-p-espaillat)

What the scale tells you is how much the earth

has missed you, body, how it wants you back

again after you leave it to go forth

into the light. Do you remember how

earth hardly noticed you then? Others would rock

you in their arms, warm in the flow

that fed you, coaxed you upright. Then earth began

to claim you with spots and fevers, began to lick

at you with a bruised knee, a bloody shin,

and finally to stoke you, body, drumming

intimate coded messages through music

you danced to unawares, there in your dreaming

and your poems and your obedient blood.

Body, how useful you became, how lucky,

heavy with news and breakage, rich, and sad,

sometimes, imagining that greedy zero

you must have been, that promising empty sack

of possibilities, never-to-come tomorrow.

But look at you now, body, soft old shoe

that love wears when it’s stirring, look down, look

how earth wants what you weigh, needs what you know.

Rhina Espailat, “Weighing In” from *Where Horizons Go* (Normal: Truman University Press, 1998).

Source: *Where Horizons Go* (Truman State University Press, 1998)

**W12. The Well Rising By** [**William E. Stafford**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-e-stafford)

The well rising without sound,

the spring on a hillside,

the plowshare brimming through deep ground

everywhere in the field—

The sharp swallows in their swerve

flaring and hesitating

hunting for the final curve

coming closer and closer—

The swallow heart from wingbeat to wingbeat

counseling decision, decision:

thunderous examples. I place my feet

with care in such a world.

“The Well Rising” copyright 1960, 1998 the Estate of William Stafford. Reprinted from *The Way It Is* with the permission of Graywolf Press. www.graywolfpress.org  
Source: *The Darkness Round Us Is Deep* (HarperPerennial, 1993)

**W13. Wet Casements By** [**John Ashbery**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-ashbery)

*When Eduard Raban, coming along the passage, walked into the*  
*open doorway, he saw that it was raining. It was not raining much.*  
*KAFKA, Wedding Preparations in the Country*

The concept is interesting: to see, as though reflected

In streaming windowpanes, the look of others through

Their own eyes. A digest of their correct impressions of

Their self-analytical attitudes overlaid by your

Ghostly transparent face. You in falbalas

Of some distant but not too distant era, the cosmetics,

The shoes perfectly pointed, drifting (how long you

Have been drifting; how long I have too for that matter)

Like a bottle-imp toward a surface which can never be

approached,

Never pierced through into the timeless energy of a present

Which would have its own opinions on these matters,

Are an epistemological snapshot of the processes

That first mentioned your name at some crowded cocktail

Party long ago, and someone (not the person addressed)

Overheard it and carried that name around in his wallet

For years as the wallet crumbled and bills slid in

And out of it. I want that information very much today,

Can't have it, and this makes me angry.

I shall use my anger to build a bridge like that

Of Avignon, on which people may dance for the feeling

Of dancing on a bridge. I shall at last see my complete face

Reflected not in the water but in the worn stone floor of my bridge.

I shall keep to myself.

I shall not repeat others' comments about me.

John Ashbery, "Wet Casements" from *Houseboat Days*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Copyright © 1987 by John Ashbery. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc.. Source: *Houseboat Days* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987)

**W14. [What horror to awake at night] By** [**Lorine Niedecker**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lorine-niedecker)

What horror to awake at night

and in the dimness see the light.

Time is white

mosquitoes bite

I’ve spent my life on nothing.

The thought that stings. How are you, Nothing,

sitting around with Something’s wife.

Buzz and burn

is all I learn

I’ve spent my life on nothing.

I’m pillowed and padded, pale and puffing

lifting household stuffing—

carpets, dishes

benches, fishes

I’ve spent my life in nothing.

Lorine Niedecker, “[What horror to awake at night]” from *Collected Works*, edited by Jenny Penberthy, Copyright © 2002 Regents of the University of California. Published by University of California Press. Source: *Collected Works* (University of California Press, 2004)

**W15. What It Does By** [**David Ferry**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/david-ferry)

The sea bit,

As they said it would,

And the hill slid,

As they said it would,

And the poor dead

Nodded agog

The poor head.

O topmost lofty

Tower of Troy,

The poem apparently

Speaks with joy

Of terrible things.

Where is the pleasure

The poetry brings?

Tell if you can,

What does it make?

A city of man

That will not shake,

Or if it shake,

Shake with the splendor

Of the poem’s pleasure.

**W16. What It Looks Like To Us and the Words We Use By** [**Ada Limón**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/ada-limon)

All these great barns out here in the outskirts,

black creosote boards knee-deep in the bluegrass.

They look so beautifully abandoned, even in use.

You say they look like arks after the sea’s

dried up, I say they look like pirate ships,

and I think of that walk in the valley where

J said, You don’t believe in God? And I said,

No. I believe in this connection we all have

to nature, to each other, to the universe.

And she said, Yeah, God. And how we stood there,

low beasts among the white oaks, Spanish moss,

and spider webs, obsidian shards stuck in our pockets,

woodpecker flurry, and I refused to call it so.

So instead, we looked up at the unruly sky,

its clouds in simple animal shapes we could name

though we knew they were really just clouds—

disorderly, and marvelous, and ours.

Poem copyright ©2012 by Ada Limón, whose most recent book of poems is *Sharks in the Rivers,* Milkweed Editions, 2010. Poem reprinted from *Poecology,* Issue 1, 2011, by permission of Ada Limón and the publisher.

**W17. What Kind of Times Are These By** [**Adrienne Rich**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/adrienne-rich)

There's a place between two stands of trees where the grass grows uphill

and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows

near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted

who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, but don't be fooled

this isn't a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,

our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,

its own ways of making people disappear.

I won't tell you where the place is, the dark mesh of the woods

meeting the unmarked strip of light—

ghost-ridden crossroads, leafmold paradise:

I know already who wants to buy it, sell it, make it disappear.

And I won't tell you where it is, so why do I tell you

anything? Because you still listen, because in times like these

to have you listen at all, it's necessary

to talk about trees.

“What Kind of Times Are These”. © 2002, 1995 by Adrienne Rich, from *The Fact of a Doorframe: Selected Poems 1950-2001* by Adrienne Rich. Used by permission of the author and W.W. Norton, Inc.

Source: *Dark Fields of the Republic: Poems 1991-1995* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1995)

**W18. “What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why” By** [**Edna St. Vincent Millay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/edna-st-vincent-millay)

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,

I have forgotten, and what arms have lain

Under my head till morning; but the rain

Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh

Upon the glass and listen for reply,

And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain

For unremembered lads that not again

Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,

Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,

Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:

I cannot say what loves have come and gone,

I only know that summer sang in me

A little while, that in me sings no more.

"What my lips have kissed, and where, and why..." by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Source: *Collected Poems* (Harper & Row, 1956)

**W19. What to Say Upon Being Asked to Be Friends By** [**Julian Talamantez Brolaski**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/julian-brolaski)

Why speak of hate, when I do bleed for love?

Not hate, my love, but Love doth bite my tongue

Till I taste stuff that makes my rhyming rough

So flatter I my fever for the one

For whom I inly mourn, though seem to shun.

A rose is arrows is eros, so what

If I confuse the shade that I’ve become

With winedark substance in a lover’s cup?

But stop my tonguely wound, I’ve bled enough.

If I be fair, or false, or freaked with fear

If I my tongue in lockèd box immure

Blame not me, for I am sick with love.

Yet would I be your friend most willingly

Since friendship would infect me killingly.

Julian T. Brolaski, "What to Say Upon Being Asked to Be Friends" from *Advice for Lovers*, City Lights Spotlight No. 7. Copyright © 2012 by Julian T. Brolaski. Reprinted by permission of City Lights Books.

Source: *Advice for Lovers* (City Lights Books, 2012)

**W20. What You Have to Get Over By** [**Dick Allen**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/dick-allen)

Stumps. Railroad tracks. Early sicknesses,

the blue one, especially.

Your first love rounding a corner,

that snowy minefield.

Whether you step lightly or heavily,

you have to get over to that tree line a hundred yards in the distance

before evening falls,

letting no one see you wend your way,

that wonderful, old-fashioned word, *wend*,

meaning “to proceed, to journey,

to travel from one place to another,”

as from bed to breakfast, breakfast to imbecile work.

You have to get over your resentments,

the sun in the morning and the moon at night,

all those shadows of yourself you left behind

on odd little tables.

*Tote that barge! Lift that bale!* You have to

cross that river, jump that hedge, surmount that slogan,

crawl over this ego or that eros,

then hoist yourself up onto that yonder mountain.

Another old-fashioned word, *yonder*, meaning

“that indicated place, somewhere generally seen

or just beyond sight.” If you would recover,

you have to get over the shattered autos in the backwoods lot

to that bridge in the darkness

where the sentinels stand

guarding the border with their half-slung rifles,

warned of the likes of you.

Dick Allen, "What You Have to Get Over" from *Best American Poetry 2010*. Copyright © 2010 by Dick Allen. Reprinted by permission of Dick Allen. Source: *Best American Poetry 2010* (Scribner, 2010)

**W21. The Wheel Revolves By** [**Kenneth Rexroth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/kenneth-rexroth)

You were a girl of satin and gauze

Now you are my mountain and waterfall companion.

Long ago I read those lines of Po Chu I

Written in his middle age.

Young as I was they touched me.

I never thought in my own middle age

I would have a beautiful young dancer

To wander with me by falling crystal waters,

Among mountains of snow and granite,

Least of all that unlike Po’s girl

She would be my very daughter.

The earth turns towards the sun.

Summer comes to the mountains.

Blue grouse drum in the red fir woods

All the bright long days.

You put blue jay and flicker feathers

In your hair.

Two and two violet green swallows

Play over the lake.

The blue birds have come back

To nest on the little island.

The swallows sip water on the wing

And play at love and dodge and swoop

Just like the swallows that swirl

Under and over the Ponte Vecchio.

Light rain crosses the lake

Hissing faintly. After the rain

There are giant puffballs with tortoise shell backs

At the edge of the meadow.

Snows of a thousand winters

Melt in the sun of one summer.

Wild cyclamen bloom by the stream.

Trout veer in the transparent current.

In the evening marmots bark in the rocks.

The Scorpion curls over the glimmering ice field.

A white crowned night sparrow sings as the moon sets.

Thunder growls far off.

Our campfire is a single light

Amongst a hundred peaks and waterfalls.

The manifold voices of falling water

Talk all night.

Wrapped in your down bag

Starlight on your cheeks and eyelids

Your breath comes and goes

In a tiny cloud in the frosty night.

Ten thousand birds sing in the sunrise.

Ten thousand years revolve without change.

All this will never be again.

Kenneth Rexroth, “The Wheel Revolves” from *The Collected Shorter Poems*. Copyright © 1966 by Kenneth Rexroth. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, [www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/nd/welcome.htm).   
Source: *The Collected Shorter Poems* (1966)

**W22. When I Am Asked By** [**Lisel Mueller**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/lisel-mueller)

When I am asked

how I began writing poems,

I talk about the indifference of nature.

It was soon after my mother died,

a brilliant June day,

everything blooming.

I sat on a gray stone bench

in a lovingly planted garden,

but the day lilies were as deaf

as the ears of drunken sleepers

and the roses curved inward.

Nothing was black or broken

and not a leaf fell

and the sun blared endless commercials

for summer holidays.

I sat on a gray stone bench

ringed with the ingenue faces

of pink and white impatiens

and placed my grief

in the mouth of language,

the only thing that would grieve with me.

Lisel Mueller, "When I am Asked" from *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1996 by Lisel Mueller. Reprinted by permission of Louisiana State University Press.  
  
Source: *Poetry* (October/November 1987).

**W23. Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent By** [**John Milton**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-milton)

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one Talent which is death to hide

Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide;

“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”

I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need

Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:

They also serve who only stand and wait.”

**W24. When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be By** [**John Keats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-keats)

When I have fears that I may cease to be

Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,

Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,

Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;

When I behold, upon the night’s starred face,

Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,

And think that I may never live to trace

Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,

That I shall never look upon thee more,

Never have relish in the faery power

Of unreflecting love—then on the shore

Of the wide world I stand alone, and think

Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

**W25. When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer By** [**Walt Whitman**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/walt-whitman)

When I heard the learn’d astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander’d off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.

**W26. When You Are Old By** [**William Butler Yeats**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-butler-yeats)

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,

And nodding by the fire, take down this book,

And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,

And loved your beauty with love false or true,

But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,

And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,

Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled

And paced upon the mountains overhead

And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

Source: *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989)

**W27. The White City By** [**Claude McKay**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/claude-mckay)

I will not toy with it nor bend an inch.

Deep in the secret chambers of my heart

I muse my life-long hate, and without flinch

I bear it nobly as I live my part.

My being would be a skeleton, a shell,

If this dark Passion that fills my every mood,

And makes my heaven in the white world’s hell,

Did not forever feed me vital blood.

I see the mighty city through a mist—

The strident trains that speed the goaded mass,

The poles and spires and towers vapor-kissed,

The fortressed port through which the great ships pass,

The tides, the wharves, the dens I contemplate,

Are sweet like wanton loves because I hate.

Claude McKay, "The White City" from *Liberator* (October 1921). Courtesy of the Literary Representative for the Works of Claude McKay, Schombourg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tildeen Foundations.  
  
Source: *Liberator* (The Library of America, 2004)

**W28. The Widow’s Lament in Springtime By** [**William Carlos Williams**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-carlos-williams)

Sorrow is my own yard

where the new grass

flames as it has flamed

often before, but not

with the cold fire

that closes round me this year.

Thirty-five years

I lived with my husband.

The plum tree is white today

with masses of flowers.

Masses of flowers

load the cherry branches

and color some bushes

yellow and some red,

but the grief in my heart

is stronger than they,

for though they were my joy

formerly, today I notice them

and turn away forgetting.

Today my son told me

that in the meadows,

at the edge of the heavy woods

in the distance, he saw

trees of white flowers.

I feel that I would like

to go there

and fall into those flowers

and sink into the marsh near them.

William Carlos Williams, “The Widow’s Lament in Springtime” from *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume I, 1909-1939,* edited by Christopher MacGowan. Copyright 1938, 1944, 1945 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Source: *Poetry* (January 1922).

**W29. Wife’s Disaster Manual By** [**Deborah Paredez**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/deborah-paredez)

When the forsaken city starts to burn,

after the men and children have fled,

stand still, silent as prey, and slowly turn

back. Behold the curse. Stay and mourn

the collapsing doorways, the unbroken bread

in the forsaken city starting to burn.

Don’t flinch. Don’t join in.

Resist the righteous scurry and instead

stand still, silent as prey. Slowly turn

your thoughts away from escape: the iron

gates unlatched, the responsibilities shed.

When the forsaken city starts to burn,

surrender to your calling, show concern

for those who remain. Come to a dead

standstill. Silent as prey, slowly turn

into something essential. Learn

the names of the fallen. Refuse to run ahead

when the forsaken city starts to burn.

Stand still and silent. Pray. Return.

**W30. The Windhover By** [**Gerard Manley Hopkins**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gerard-manley-hopkins)

To Christ our Lord**To Christ our Lord** This epigraph dedicated the poem to Jesus while echoing the Latin phrase, Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam, the Jesuit motto meaning “To the Greater Glory of God.”

I caught this morning morning's minion**minion** favorite, darling; also, an underling or servant, king-

dom of daylight's dauphin**dauphin** prince; a French historical term, along with “chevalier”, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding

High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling**wimpling** rippling wing

In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here

Buckle!**Buckle!** to bend, attach; prepare for flight or battle. The verb could be descriptive of the bird’s action, or it could be the speaker’s imperative. AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!**chevalier** French word for “knight” or “champion”; pronounced Chev-ah-leer, to rhyme with “here” and “dear”

No wonder of it: shéer plód**shéer plód** slowly, laboriously, and without break; these accent marks, inserted by Hopkins, tell the reader to place more accent or emphasis on those syllables when reading aloud makes plough down sillion**sillion** Fresh soil upturned by a plow (“plough”)

Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear**ah my dear** Compare with the same phrase in the poem [“Love (III)”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=173632) by George Herbert, a poet Hopkins admired.,

Fall, gall**gall** to become sore, crack, or chafe themselves, and gash gold-vermilion**vermilion** a vibrant scarlet color.

Source: *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985)

**W31. Windows By** [**Linda Bierds**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/linda-bierds)

When the cow died by the green sapling,

her limp udder splayed on the grass

like something from the sea, we offered

our words in their low calibrations—

which was our fashion—then severed

her horns with a pug-toothed blade

and pounded them out to an amber

transparency, two sheets that became,

in their moth-wing haze, our parlor windows.

They softened our guests with the gauze-light

of the Scriptures, and rendered to us,

on our merriest days, the sensation

of gazing through the feet of a gander.

In time we moved up to the status

of glass—one pane, then two—each

cupping in proof of its purity

a dimple of fault, a form of distortion

enhancing our image. We took the panes

with us from cottage to cottage,

moth-horn and glass, and wedged up

the misfitted gaps with a poultice

of gunny and wax. When woodsmoke

darkened our bricks, we gave

to the windowsills a lacquer

of color—clear blue with a lattice

of yellow: a primary entrance and exit

for light. And often, walking home

from the river and small cheese shop,

we would squint their colors to a sapling

green, and remember the hull

of that early body, the slap of fear

we suffered there, then the little wash

of recovery that is our fashion—how

we stroked to her bones a cadenced droning,

and took back from her absence, our

amber, half-literal method of sight.

Linda Bierds, “Windows” from *The Ghost Trio* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994).   
Copyright © 1994 by Linda Bierds. Reprinted with the permission of the   
author.

Source: *The Ghost Trio: Poems* (Henry Holt & Co., 1994)

**W32. Windy City By** [**Stuart Dybek**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/stuart-dybek)

The garments worn in flying dreams

were fashioned there—

overcoats that swooped like kites,

scarves streaming like vapor trails,

gowns ballooning into spinnakers.

In a city like that one might sail

through life led by a runaway hat.

The young scattered in whatever directions

their wild hair pointed, and gusting

into one another, fell in love.

At night, wind rippled saxophones

that hung like windchimes in pawnshop

windows, hooting through each horn

so that the streets seemed haunted

not by nighthawks, but by doves.

Pinwheels whirled from steeples

in place of crosses. At the pinnacles

of public buildings, snagged underclothes—

the only flag—flapped majestically.

And when it came time to disappear

one simply chose a thoroughfare

devoid of memories, raised a collar,

and turned his back on the wind.

I closed my eyes and stepped

into a swirl of scuttling leaves.

“Windy City” from *Streets in Their Own Ink* by Stuart Dybek. Copyright 2004 by Stuart Dybek. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC. www.fsgbooks.com

Source: *Streets in Their Own Ink* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2006)

**W33. Winter By** [**Marie Ponsot**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/marie-ponsot)

I don’t know what to say to you, neighbor,

as you shovel snow from your part of our street

neat in your Greek black. I’ve waited for

chance to find words; now, by chance, we meet.

We took our boys to the same kindergarten,

thirteen years ago when our husbands went.

Both boys hated school, dropped out feral, dropped in

to separate troubles. You shift snow fast, back bent,

but your boy killed himself, six days dead.

My boy washed your wall when the police were done.

He says, “We weren’t friends?” and shakes his head,

“I told him it was great he had that gun,”

and shakes. I shake, close to you, close to you.

You have a path to clear, and so you do.

Marie Ponsot, “Winter” from *The Bird Catcher.* Copyright © 1998 by Marie Ponsot. Reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.  
  
Source: *The Bird Catcher* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1998)

**W34. Winter Remembered By** [**John Crowe Ransom**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-crowe-ransom)

Two evils, monstrous either one apart,

Possessed me, and were long and loath at going:

A cry of Absence, Absence, in the heart,

And in the wood the furious winter blowing.

Think not, when fire was bright upon my bricks,

And past the tight boards hardly a wind could enter,

I glowed like them, the simple burning sticks,

Far from my cause, my proper heat and center.

Better to walk forth in the frozen air

And wash my wound in the snows; that would be healing;

Because my heart would throb less painful there,

Being caked with cold, and past the smart of feeling.

And where I walked, the murderous winter blast

Would have this body bowed, these eyeballs streaming,

And though I think this heart’s blood froze not fast

It ran too small to spare one drop for dreaming.

Dear love, these fingers that had known your touch,

And tied our separate forces first together,

Were ten poor idiot fingers not worth much,

Ten frozen parsnips hanging in the weather.

John Crowe Ransom, “Winter Remembered” from *Selected Poems, Revised and Enlarged Edition.* Copyright 1924, 1927, 1934, 1939, 1945, © 1962, 1963 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

Source: *Selected Poems* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1969)

**W35. Without Regret By** [**Eleanor Wilner**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/eleanor-wilner)

Nights, by the light of whatever would burn:

tallow, tinder and the silken rope

of wick that burns slow, slow

we wove the baskets from the long gold strands

of wheat that were another silk: worm soul

spun the one, yellow seed in the dark soil, the other.

The fields lay fallow, swollen with frost,

expectant winter. Mud clung to the edges

of our gowns; we had hung back like shadows

on the walls of trees and watched. In the little circles

that our tapers threw, murdered men rose red

in their clanging armor, muttered

words that bled through the bars

of iron masks: *the lord*

*who sold us to the glory fields, lied.*

Trumpets without tongues, we wove lilies

into the baskets. When they asked us

what we meant by these, we’d say “mary, mary”

and be still. We lined the baskets on the sill

in the barn, where it is always dusk

and the cows smell sweet. Now the snow

sifts through the trees, dismembered

lace, the white dust of angels, angels.

And the ringing of keys that hang

in bunches at our waists, and the sound of silk

whispering, whispering.

There is nothing in the high windows

but swirling snow,

the glittering milk of winter.

The halls grow chill. The candles flicker.

Let them wait who will and think what they want.

The lord has gone with the hunt, and the snow,

the snow grows thicker. Well he will keep

till spring thaw comes. Head, hand, and heart—

baskets of wicker, baskets of straw.

Eleanor Wilner, “Without Regret” from *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 1997 by Eleanor Wilner. Reprinted with the permission of Copper Canyon Press, P. O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368-0271, [www.coppercanyonpress.org](http://www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Source: *Reversing the Spell: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press, 1998)

**W36. The Woman at the Washington Zoo By** [**Randall Jarrell**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/randall-jarrell)

The saris go by me from the embassies.

Cloth from the moon. Cloth from another planet.

They look back at the leopard like the leopard.

And I....

this print of mine, that has kept its color

Alive through so many cleanings; this dull null

Navy I wear to work, and wear from work, and so

To my bed, so to my grave, with no

Complaints, no comment: neither from my chief,

The Deputy Chief Assistant, nor his chief—

Only I complain.... this serviceable

Body that no sunlight dyes, no hand suffuses

But, dome-shadowed, withering among columns,

Wavy beneath fountains—small, far-off, shining

In the eyes of animals, these beings trapped

As I am trapped but not, themselves, the trap,

Aging, but without knowledge of their age,

Kept safe here, knowing not of death, for death—

Oh, bars of my own body, open, open!

The world goes by my cage and never sees me.

And there come not to me, as come to these,

The wild beasts, sparrows pecking the llamas’ grain,

Pigeons settling on the bears’ bread, buzzards

Tearing the meat the flies have clouded....

Vulture,

When you come for the white rat that the foxes left,

Take off the red helmet of your head, the black

Wings that have shadowed me, and step to me as man:

The wild brother at whose feet the white wolves fawn,

To whose hand of power the great lioness

Stalks, purring....

You know what I was,

You see what I am: change me, change me!

Randall Jarrell, “The Woman at the Washington Zoo” from *The Complete Poems.* Copyright © 1969, renewed 1997 by Mary von S. Jarrell. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC, [www.fsgbooks.com](http://www.fsgbooks.com). All rights reserved. Caution: Users are warned that this work is protected under copyright laws and downloading is strictly prohibited. The right to reproduce or transfer the work via any medium must be secured with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

Source: *The Complete Poems* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2001)

**W37. Women By** [**Louise Bogan**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/louise-bogan)

Women have no wilderness in them,

They are provident instead,

Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts

To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,

They do not hear

Snow water going down under culverts

Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,

They stiffen, when they should bend.

They use against themselves that benevolence

To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field

Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.

Their love is an eager meaninglessness

Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them

A shout and a cry.

As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills

They should let it go by.

Source: *Body of this Death: Poems* (1923)

**W38. The Wooden Toy By** [**Charles Simic**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/charles-simic)

**1**

The brightly-painted horse

Had a boy’s face,

And four small wheels

Under his feet,

Plus a long string

To pull him by this way and that

Across the floor,

Should you care to.

A string in-waiting

That slipped away

In many wiles

From each and every try.

**2**

Knock and they’ll answer,

Mother told me.

So I climbed four flights of stairs

And went in unannounced.

And found a small wooden toy

For the taking

In the ensuing emptiness

And the fading daylight

That still gives me a shudder

As if I held the key to mysteries in my hand.

**3**

Where’s the Lost and Found Department,

And the quiet entry,

The undeveloped film

Of the few clear moments

Of our blurred lives?

Where’s the drop of blood

And the teeny nail

That pricked my finger

As I bent down to touch the toy

And caught its eye?

**4**

Evening light,

Make me a Sunday

Go-to meeting shadow

For my toy.

My dearest memories are

Steep stair-wells

In dusty buildings

On dead-end streets,

Where I talk to the walls

And closed doors

As if they understood me.

**5**

The wooden toy sitting pretty.

No, quieter than that.

Like the sound of eyebrows

Raised by a villain

In a silent movie.

*Psst*, someone said behind my back.

Charles Simic, “The Wooden Toy” from *Poetry* (October 1997). Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Poetry* (October 1997).

**W39. Words By** [**Barbara Guest**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/barbara-guest)

The simple contact with a wooden spoon and the word

recovered itself, began to spread as grass, forced

as it lay sprawling to consider the monument where

patience looked at grief, where warfare ceased

eyes curled outside themes to search the paper

now gleaming and potent, wise and resilient, word

entered its continent eager to find another as

capable as a thorn. The nearest possession would

house them both, they being then two might glide

into this house and presently create a rather larger

mansion filled with spoons and condiments, gracious

as a newly laid table where related objects might gather

to enjoy the interplay of gravity upon facetious hints,

the chocolate dish presuming an endowment, the ladle

of galactic rhythm primed as a relish dish, curved

knives, finger bowls, morsel carriages words might

choose and savor before swallowing so much was the

sumptuousness and substance of a rented house where words

placed dressing gowns as rosemary entered their scent

percipient as elder branches in the night where words

gathered, warped, then straightened, marking new wands.

Barbara Guest, “Words” from *Selected Poems* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1995). Reprinted with the permission of the author. Source: *Selected Poems* (1995)

**W40. Work without Hope By** [**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/samuel-taylor-coleridge)

Lines Composed 21st February 1825

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—

The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—

And Winter slumbering in the open air,

Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!

And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,

Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,

Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.

Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,

For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!

With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:

And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?

Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,

And Hope without an object cannot live.

**W41. The World By** [**Robert Creeley**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/robert-creeley)

I wanted so ably

to reassure you, I wanted

the man you took to be me,

to comfort you, and got

up, and went to the window,

pushed back, as you asked me to,

the curtain, to see

the outline of the trees

in the night outside.

The light, love,

the light we felt then,

greyly, was it, that

came in, on us, not

merely my hands or yours,

or a wetness so comfortable,

but in the dark then

as you slept, the grey

figure came so close

and leaned over,

between us, as you

slept, restless, and

my own face had to

see it, and be seen by it,

the man it was, your

grey lost tired bewildered

brother, unused, untaken—

hated by love, and dead,

but not dead, for an

instant, saw me, myself

the intruder, as he was not.

I tried to say, it is

all right, she is

happy, you are no longer

needed. I said,

he is dead, and he

went as you shifted

and woke, at first afraid,

then knew by my own knowing

what had happened—

and the light then

of the sun coming

for another morning

in the world.

Robert Creeley, “The World” from *Collected Poems of Robert Creeley 1945-1975.* Copyright © 1962 by Robert Creeley. Reprinted with the permission of the author and University of California Press, [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu). Source: *Poetry* (April/May 1965).

**W42. The World Is Too Much With Us By** [**William Wordsworth**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/william-wordsworth)

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I’d rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

**W43. Writing By** [**Howard Nemerov**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/howard-nemerov)

The cursive crawl, the squared-off characters

these by themselves delight, even without

a meaning, in a foreign language, in

Chinese, for instance, or when skaters curve

all day across the lake, scoring their white

records in ice. Being intelligible,

these winding ways with their audacities

and delicate hesitations, they become

miraculous, so intimately, out there

at the pen’s point or brush’s tip, do world

and spirit wed. The small bones of the wrist

balance against great skeletons of stars

exactly; the blind bat surveys his way

by echo alone. Still, the point of style

is character. The universe induces

a different tremor in every hand, from the

check-forger’s to that of the Emperor

Hui Tsung, who called his own calligraphy

the ‘Slender Gold.’ A nervous man

writes nervously of a nervous world, and so on.

Miraculous. It is as though the world

were a great writing. Having said so much,

let us allow there is more to the world

than writing: continental faults are not

bare convoluted fissures in the brain.

Not only must the skaters soon go home;

also the hard inscription of their skates

is scored across the open water, which long

remembers nothing, neither wind nor wake.

Howard Nemerov, “Writing” from *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov.* Copyright © 1977 by Howard Nemerov. Reprinted with the permission of Margaret Nemerov.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Howard Nemerov* (The University of Chicago Press, 1977)

**W44. Written by Himself By** [**Gregory Pardlo**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/gregory-pardlo)

I was born in minutes in a roadside kitchen a skillet

whispering my name. I was born to rainwater and lye;

I was born across the river where I

was borrowed with clothespins, a harrow tooth,

broadsides sewn in my shoes. I returned, though

it please you, through no fault of my own,

pockets filled with coffee grounds and eggshells.

I was born still and superstitious; I bore an unexpected burden.

I gave birth, I gave blessing, I gave rise to suspicion.

I was born abandoned outdoors in the heat-shaped air,

air drifting like spirits and old windows.

I was born a fraction and a cipher and a ledger entry;

I was an index of first lines when I was born.

I was born waist-deep stubborn in the water crying

ain’t I a woman and a brother I was born

to this hall of mirrors, this horror movie I was

born with a prologue of references, pursued

by mosquitoes and thieves, I was born passing

off the problem of the twentieth century: I was born.

I read minds before I could read fishes and loaves;

I walked a piece of the way alone before I was born.

Gregory Pardlo, "Written By Himself" from *The Best American Poetry 2010*. Copyright © 2010 by Gregory Pardlo. Reprinted by permission of Gregory Pardlo.  
  
Source: *The Best American Poetry 2010* (2010)

**POL X-LIST**

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**X1**](#X1) **X2 X3 X4 X5 X6 X7 X8 X9 X10 X11 X12 X13**

**X14 X15 X16 X17 X18 X19 X20 X21 X22 X23 X24 X25 X26**

**X27 X28 X29 X30 X31 X32 X33 X34 X35 X36 X37 X38 X39**

**X40 X41 X42 X43 X44 X45 X46 X47 X48 X49 X50 X51 X52**

**X53 X54 X55 X56 X57 X58 X59 X60 X61 X62 X63 X64 X65**

**X66 X67 X68 X69 X70 X71 X72 X73 X74 X75 X76 X77 X78**

**X79 X80 X81 X82 X83 X84 X85 X86 X87 X88 X89 X90 X91**

**X92 X93 X94 X95 X96 X97 X98 X99 X100 X101 X102 X103 X104**

**Task(s)**

Special Instructions

1. **Identify Imagery**
2. **Identify Rhyme Scheme**
3. **Identify Meter**
4. **Identify Motif**
5. **Identify Personification**
6. **Identify Irony**
7. **Identify Metaphor**
8. **Identify Ambiguity**
9. **Identify Alliteration**
10. **Identify Assonance**
11. **Identify Onomatopoeia**
12. **Identify Characterization**
13. **Identify Persona**
14. **Identify Contrast**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**X1. Xenophobia By** [**Rae Armantrout**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/rae-armantrout)

***1***

“must represent the governess

for, of course, the creature itself

could not inspire such terror.”

staring at me fixedly, no

trace of recognition.

“when the window opened of its own accord.

In the big walnut tree

were six or seven wolves ...

strained attention. They were white.”

(The fear of cloudy skies.)

like strangers! After five years

Misgiving. Misdoubt.

***2***

(The fear that one is dreaming.)

The moon was shining, suddenly

everything around me appeared

(The fear of)

unfamiliar.

Wild vista

inside or near the home.

(Dread of bearing a monster.)

If I failed to overlook the torn cushions,

three teapots side by side,

strewn towels, socks, papers—

both foreign and stale.

***3***

when I saw the frame was rotten,

crumbling away from the glass,

in spots, in other places still attached

with huge globs of putty.

The doctor forced me to repeat the word.

Chimera. Cold feet.

scared and unreal looking at buildings.

The thin Victorians with scaly paint,

their flimsy backporches linked

by skeletal stairways.

***4***

After five years

(The fear that you are not at home.)

I was sitting in the alcove where I never sit

when I noticed a single eye,

crudely drawn in pencil,

in a corner near the floor.

The paint was blistering—

beneath it I saw white.

***5***

Sparrows settle on the sagging wires.

(Fear of sights not turned to words.)

Horrific. Grisly.

“Rumplestiltskin!”

Not *my* expression.

Not my net of veins

beneath thin skin.

(A morbid dread of throbbing.)

Of its own accord

Rae Armantrout, “Xenophobia” from *Veil: New and Selected Poems.* Copyright © 2001 by Rae Armantrout. Reprinted with the permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Source: *Veil: New and Selected Poems* (Wesleyan University Press, 2001)

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**Sample Lesson**

**Teacher:**

1. **Circle a Poem #**
2. **Circle a Task**
3. **Provide additional instructions**

**Student:**

**Follow the instructions outlined by the teacher.**

**Poem #**

[**Y1**](#Y1)[**Y2**](#Y2)[**Y3**](#Y3) **Y4 Y5 Y6 Y7 Y8 Y9 Y10 Y11 Y12 Y13**

**Y14 Y15 Y16 Y17 Y18 Y19 Y20 Y21 Y22 Y23 Y24 Y25 Y26**

**Y27 Y28 Y29 Y30 Y31 Y32 Y33 Y34 Y35 Y36 Y37 Y38 Y39**

**Y40 Y41 Y42 Y43 Y44 Y45 Y46 Y47 Y48 Y49 Y50 Y51 Y52**

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **alliteration** | **assonance** | **imagery** | **P**  **E**  **R**  **S**  **O**  **N**  **A** |
| **Metaphor** | **CoNtRaSt** | **Rhyme**  **Scheme** | **characterization** |
| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**Y1. You, Andrew Marvell By** [**Archibald MacLeish**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/archibald-macleish)

And here face down beneath the sun

And here upon earth’s noonward height

To feel the always coming on

The always rising of the night:

To feel creep up the curving east

The earthy chill of dusk and slow

Upon those under lands the vast

And ever climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees

Take leaf by leaf the evening strange

The flooding dark about their knees

The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate

Dark empty and the withered grass

And through the twilight now the late

Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge

Across the silent river gone

And through Arabia the edge

Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra’s street

The wheel rut in the ruined stone

And Lebanon fade out and Crete

High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air

Still flashing with the landward gulls

And loom and slowly disappear

The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore

Of Africa the gilded sand

And evening vanish and no more

The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea:

And here face downward in the sun

To feel how swift how secretly

The shadow of the night comes on ...

Archibald MacLeish, “You, Andrew Marvell” from *Collected Poems 1917-1982.* Copyright © 1985 by The Estate of Archibald MacLeish. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Source: *Collected Poems 1917-1952* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1952)

**Y2. Song: “You charm'd me not with that fair face” By** [**John Dryden**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/john-dryden)

from *An Evening's Love*

You charm'd me not with that fair face

Though it was all divine:

To be another's is the grace,

That makes me wish you mine.

The Gods and Fortune take their part

Who like young monarchs fight;

And boldly dare invade that heart

Which is another's right.

First mad with hope we undertake

To pull up every bar;

But once possess'd, we faintly make

A dull defensive war.

Now every friend is turn'd a foe

In hope to get our store:

And passion makes us cowards grow,

Which made us brave before.

**Y3. Youth By** [**James Wright**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/james-wright)

Strange bird,

His song remains secret.

He worked too hard to read books.

He never heard how Sherwood Anderson

Got out of it, and fled to Chicago, furious to free himself

From his hatred of factories.

My father toiled fifty years

At Hazel-Atlas Glass,

Caught among girders that smash the kneecaps

Of dumb honyaks.

Did he shudder with hatred in the cold shadow of grease?

Maybe. But my brother and I do know

He came home as quiet as the evening.

He will be getting dark, soon,

And loom through new snow.

I know his ghost will drift home

To the Ohio River, and sit down, alone,

Whittling a root.

He will say nothing.

The waters flow past, older, younger

Than he is, or I am.

James Wright, “Youth” from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose.* Copyright © 1990 by James Wright. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.  
  
Source: *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose* (1990)

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[**Z1**](#Z1)[**Z2**](#Z2) **Z3 Z4 Z5 Z6 Z7 Z8 Z9 Z10 Z11 Z12 Z13**

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| **Onomatopoeia** | **P**  **O**  **E**  **M** | **I**  **R**  **O**  **N**  **Y** | **personification** |
| **M**  **O**  **T**  **I**  **F** | **ambiguity** | **S**  **C**  **A**  **V**  **E**  **N**  **G**  **E**  **R** | **METER** |

**Z1. Zacuanpapalotls ﻿ By** [**Brenda Cárdenas**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/brenda-cardenas)

(in memory of José Antonio Burciaga, 1947-1996)  *We are chameleons. We become chameleon.*  *—José Antonio Burciaga* ﻿

We are space between—

the black-orange blur

of a million Monarchs

on their two-generation migration

south to fir-crowned Michoacán

where tree trunks will sprout feathers,

a forest of paper-thin wings.

Our Mexica cocooned

in the membranes de la Madre Tierra

say we are reborn zacuanpapalotls,

mariposas negras y anaranjadas

in whose sweep the dead whisper.

We are between—

the flicker of a chameleon’s tail

that turns his desert-blue backbone

to jade or pink sand,

the snake-skinned fraternal twins

of solstice and equinox.

The ashen dawn, silvering dusk,

la oración as it leaves the lips,

the tug from sleep,

the glide into dreams

that husk out mestizo memory.

We are—

one life passing through the prism

of all others, gathering color and song,

cempazuchil and drum

to leave a rhythm scattered on the wind,

dust tinting the tips of fingers

as we slip into our new light.

Brenda Cardenas, “Zacuanpapalotls” from *Boomerang*. Copyright © 2009 by Brenda Cardenas. Reprinted by permission of Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe .﻿

Source: *Boomerang﻿* (Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 2009)

**Z2. Zoom! By** [**Simon Armitage**](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poet/simon-armitage)

It begins as a house, an end terrace

in this case

but it will not stop there. Soon it is

an avenue

which cambers arrogantly past the Mechanics' Institute,

turns left

at the main road without even looking

and quickly it is

a town with all four major clearing banks,

a daily paper

and a football team pushing for promotion.

On it goes, oblivious of the Planning Acts,

the green belts,

and before we know it it is out of our hands:

city, nation,

hemisphere, universe, hammering out in all directions

until suddenly,

mercifully, it is drawn aside through the eye

of a black hole

and bulleted into a neighbouring galaxy, emerging

smaller and smoother

than a billiard ball but weighing more than Saturn.

People stop me in the street, badger me

in the check-out queue

and ask "What is this, this that is so small

and so very smooth

but whose mass is greater than the ringed planet?"

It's just words

I assure them. But they will not have it.

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