



"A star danced
and under that
was I born."
William Shakespeare

Poems for Study

The Dream Keeper
Langston Hughes

Bring me all of your dreams,
You dreamers,
Bring me all of your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.

**7th Grade
ELA
Miss Winkelsas**



"Look for the poetry that grows under your feet."—Rainer Maria Rilke

Sympathy

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

I KNOW what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals —
I know what the caged bird feels!
I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting —
I know why he beats his wing!
I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings —
I know why the caged bird sings!

The above poem was published in *Lyrics of the Hearthside* by Dodd, Mead and Company in 1899. It was this poem that inspired the title to Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*.

Mother to Son

Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
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 —
Bare.
But all the time
I've 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've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Dreams

Langston Hughes

**Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.**

**Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.**

Haiku

Sonia Sanchez

**i have looked into
my father's eyes and seen an
african sunset**

Women

by Alice Walker

They wre women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice-Stout of
Step
With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
Starched white
Shirts
How they led
Armies
Headragged Generals
Across mined
Fields
Boody-trapped
Ditches
To discover books
Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we
Must Know
Without knowing a page
Of it
Themselves.

Base Stealer

Robert Francis

Poised between going on and back, pulled
Both ways taut like a tightrope-walker,
Fingertips pointing the opposites,
Now bouncing tiptoe like a dropped ball
Or a kid skipping rope, come on, come on,
Running a scattering of steps sidewise,
How he teeters, skitters, tingles, teases,
Taunts them, hovers like an ecstatic bird,
He's only flirting, crowd him, crowd him,
Delicate, delicate, delicate, delicate-now!

The Drum

by Nikki Giovanni

Daddy says the world is
a drum tight and hard
and I told him
i'm gonna beat
out my own rhythm.

When the Roses Revolted

Anonymous

The roses were fed up.
They were sick sick sick
of being symbols for love.

One night they revolted,
crept out of flower shops,
jumped out of windows
and touched the dirt!

They spent that night
drinking real night air,
carousing with clover
boogying with bluebells,
dancing with dandelions,
and in this way they
rediscovered their
roots.

Knoxville Tennessee

I always like summer
Best
you can eat fresh corn
From daddy's garden
And okra
And greens
And cabbage
And lots of
Barbeque
And buttermilk
And homemade ice-cream
At the church picnic
And listen to
Gospel music
Outside
At the church
Homecoming
And go to the mountains with
Your grandmother
And go barefooted
And be warm
All the time
Not only when you go to bed
And sleep

Nikki Giovanni

Who Am I?
Felice Holman

The trees ask me,
And the sky,
And the sea asks me
Who am I?

The grass asks me,
And the sand,
And the rocks ask me
Who I am.

The wind tells me
At nightfall,
And the rain tells me
Someone small.

*Someone small
Someone small
But a piece
of
it
all.*

Juke Box Love Song Langston Hughes

I could take the Harlem night
and wrap around you,
Take the neon lights and make a crown,
Take the Lenox Avenue busses,
Taxis, subways,
And for your love song tone their rumble down.
Take Harlem's heartbeat,
Make a drumbeat,
Put it on a record, let it whirl,
And while we listen to it play,
Dance with you till day--
Dance with you, my sweet brown Harlem girl.

Running Away Karla Kuskin

Running away
From the rest of today
Running away
From you
Running away
From "Don't do that"
From all of the things
I must constantly do.
I feel too tall
I feel too old
For a hundred helpings of being told.
Packing my head
Taking my feet
Galloping down the familiar street.
My head is a bird.
My heart is free again.
I might come back
When I feel like me again.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud
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.**

#8

from Dark Testament

by Pauli Murray

Hope is a crushed stalk
Between clenched fingers.
Hope is a bird's wing
Broken by a stone.
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty—
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,
A name and place for one's children
And children's children at last...
Hope is a song in a weary throat.

Harriet Tubman
Eloise Greenfield

**Harriet Tubman didn't take no stuff
Wasn't scared of nothing neither
Didn't come in this world to be no slave
And wasn't going to stay one either**

**"Farewell!" she sang to her friends one
night
She was mighty sad to leave them
But she ran away that dark, hot night
Ran looking for her freedom**

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 many so warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Theme for English B
By Langston Hughes

The instructor said,

*Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you--
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:
hear you, hear me--we two--you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York, too.) Me--who?
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records--Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me *not* like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white--
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me--
although you're older--and white--
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Winter Forest

The snow falls,
gently, quietly down
to blanket the trees
as nature puts them to bed.

Long, gleaming crystal icicles
hang from my window
like fangs dripping clear blood,
one falls to the ground
and shatters like a glass cup
dropped by the busy housewife.

All is quiet outside
except for the snow falling
gently, quietly down
to blanket the trees.
Nature puts them to bed.

— Lisa

Snowflake

I once found a snowflake in a field
an utterly exquisite crystal from god
and yet I found it odd
that it was unlike all
in this field
it was without flaw
with lines made out of lace
and nothing out of place
unique by itself
even though very small
about the size of a minute elf
I shall take it to school with me
and it shall be
the nicest flake they ever beheld
it shall be with me not on a shelf
I shall be the one who holds
the precious flake of glass
but alas
when I got to school the flake was no longer
there
it was just water like any other melted
snowflake

— Brendan Dickinson, #11

Oda a la noche

Noche,
viniste sola en el aire
como guitarra volante.
Llena de brisas
Que me acariciaban en la noche.
Tus grandes ojos
Me miraban desde la ventana.
Llegaste con pequeñas lágrimas
Que refrescaron la natureleza.
Noche,
Llegaste oscura y desolada
Como la capa del día.
Siempre alumbrada
Por pequeñas estrellas brillantes.
Las flores bailaban
Con tu pequeña brisa.
Y tu hermosa luna brillante
Me acompañaba en mis sueños.

— Karla Figueróa

Ode to the Night

Night,
You came alone in the air
Like a flying guitar
Full of breezes
That caressed me in the night.
The great eyes
watched me from the window.
You came with small tears
That refreshed nature.
Night,
You came dark and desolate
Like the cape of the day.
Always illuminated by small bright stars.
The flowers danced with your small breeze.
And your beautiful, bright moon came
with me in my dream.

— Karla Figueróa
translated by Josefina Bosch

IN THE DEPTHS OF SOLITUDE

Dedicated 2 me

I exist in the depths of solitude

pondering my true goal

Trying 2 find peace of mind

and still preserve my soul

CONSTANTLY yearning 2 be accepted

and from all receive respect

Never compromising but sometimes risky

and that is my only regret

A young ~~man~~ with an old soul

How can there be

How can ~~be~~ be in the depths of solitude

when there R 2 inside of me

This Duo within me causes

the perfect opportunity

2 learn and live ~~twice~~ as fast

~~as~~ those who accept simplicity

In the Depths of Solitude

Dedicated 2 Me

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Trying 2 find peace of mind

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CONSTANTLY yearning 2 be accepted

and from all receive respect

Never compromising but sometimes risky

and that is my only regret

A young heart with an old soul

How can there be peace

How can I be in the depths of solitude

when there R 2 inside of me

This Duo within me causes

the perfect opportunity

2 learn and live twice as fast

as those who accept simplicity

Martin Luther King Jr.

Gwendolyn Brooks



Martin Luther King, Jr., a great civil rights leader, led a march on Washington, D.C., in August 1963. There he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands of Americans, black and white, who gathered to show support for equal rights. Gwendolyn Brooks's poem is a tribute to this man and to his ideals.

A man went forth with gifts.

He was a prose poem.

He was a tragic grace.

He was a warm music.

He tried to heal the vivid volcanoes.

His ashes are
reading the world.

His Dream still wishes to anoint¹
the barricades² of faith and of control.

His word still burns the center of the sun,
above the thousands and the
hundred thousands.

The word was Justice. It was spoken.

So it shall be spoken.

So it shall be done.

¹ to put or rub oil on

² barriers; obstructions

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JULIE O'CALLAGHAN

1954—

Taking my Pen for a Walk

Tonight I took the leash off my pen.
At first it was frightened,
looked up at me with confused eyes, tongue panting.
Then I said, 'Go on, run away,'
and pushed its head.
Still it wasn't sure what I wanted;
it whimpered with its tail between its legs.
So I yelled, 'You're free, why don't you run—
you stupid pen, you should be glad,
now get out of my sight.'
It took a few steps.
I stamped my foot and threw a stone.
Suddenly, it realised what I was saying
and began to run furiously away from me.

SANDRA CISNEROS

1954—

Good Hot Dogs

FOR KIKI

Fifty cents apiece
To eat our lunch
We'd run
Straight from school
Instead of home
Two blocks
Then the store
That smelled like steam
You ordered
Because you had the money
Two hot dogs and two pops for here

Bill Neidjie

Everything on the hot dogs
Except pickle lily
Dash those hot dogs
Into buns and splash on
All that good stuff
Yellow mustard and onions
And french fries piled on top all
Rolled up in a piece of wax
Paper for us to hold hot
In our hands
Quarters on the counter
Sit down
Good hot dogs
We'd eat
Fast till there was nothing left
But salt and poppy seeds even
The little burnt tips
Of french fries
We'd eat
You humming
And me swinging my legs

BILL NEIDJIE

fl. 1987

'This earth'

This earth . . .
I never damage,
I look after.
Fire is nothing,
just clean up.
When you burn,
new grass coming up.
That mean good animal soon . . .
might be goose, long-neck turtle, goanna, f
Burn him off . . .
new grass coming up,
new life all over.

Oxford
children's
press

Earth

What is it that's cover'd so richly with green, A
And gives to the forest its birth? *Q*
A thousand plants bloom on its bosom serene *A*
Whose bosom?—the bosom of earth. *Q*

Hidden deep in its bowels the emerald shines, *Q*
The ruby, and amethyst blue: *A*
And silver and gold glitter bright in the mines *Q*
Of Mexico rich, and Peru. *A*

Large quarries of granite and marble are spread
In its wonderful bosom, like bones;
Chalk, gravel, and coals; salt, sulphur, and lead;
And thousands of beautiful stones.

Beasts, savage and tame, of all colours and forms,
Either stalk in its deserts or creep;
White bears sit and growl to the northerly storms,
And shaggy goats bound from the steep.

The oak and the snowdrop, the cedar and rose,
Alike on its surface are seen:
The tall fir of Norway, surrounded with snows,
And the mountain ash scarlet and green.

Fine grass and rich mosses creep over its hills,
Flow'rs breathe their perfumes to the gale;
Tall water-weeds dip in its murmuring rills,
And harvests wave bright in the vale.

And when this poor body is cold and decay'd,
And this warm throbbing heart is at rest;
My head upon thee, mother Earth, shall be laid,
To find a long home in thy breast.

Water

What is it that glitters so clear and serene,
Or dances in billows so white?
Ships skimming along on its surface are seen—
'Tis water that glitters so bright.

Sea-weeds wind about in its cavities wet,
The pearl oyster quietly sleeps;
A thousand fair shells, yellow, amber, and jet;
And coral glows red in its deeps.

Whales lash the white foam in their frolicsome wrath,
While hoarsely the winter wind roars;
And shoals of green mackerel stretch from the north,
And wander along by our shores.

When tempests sweep over its bosom serene,
Like mountains its billows arise;
The ships now appear to be buried between,
And now carried up to the skies.

It gushes out clear from the sides of the hill,
And sparkles bright down from the steep;
Then waters the valley, and roars thro' the mill,
And wanders in many a sweep.

The traveller that crosses the desert so wide,
Hot, weary, and stifled with dust,
Longs often to stoop at some rivulet's side,
To quench in its waters his thirst.

The stately white swan glides along on its breast,
Nor ruffles its surface serene;
And the duckling unfledged waddles out of its nest,
To dabble in ditch water green.

child
David

blame,
ie same.
You have lost both your rats and your sons here today!
So, goodbye, Mr Mayor. I must be on my way.
All these souls! Many thanks!
I must bid you farewell . . .

And so saying, the Devil
went
back
down
to
Hell.

PAUL FLEISCHMAN

1952—

Fireflies

[FOR TWO VOICES]

Light	Light
Night	is the ink we use
is our parchment	Night
fireflies	We're
flitting	fireflies
fireflies	flickering
glimmering	flashing
glowing	fireflies
Insect calligraphers	gleaming
practicing penmanship	Insect calligraphers
Six-legged scribblers	copying sentences
of vanishing messages,	Six-legged scribblers

Gary Soto

327

Fine artists in flight	fleeting graffiti
adding dabs of light	Fine artists in flight
Signing the June nights	bright brush strokes
as if they were paintings	Signing the June nights
flickering	as if they were paintings
fireflies	We're
fireflies.	fireflies
	flickering
	fireflies.

GARY SOTO

1952—

Teaching Numbers

The moon is one,
The early stars a few more . . .
The sycamore is lean
With sparrows, four perhaps,
Three hunched like hoods
And one by itself,
Wiping a beak
In the rag of its shoulder.

From where we sit
We could count to a thousand
By pointing at oranges
On trees, bright lanterns
Against the dusk, globes
Of water that won't come down.

Follow me with this, then:
A stray on two legs
At a trash can, one kite in a tree,
And a couple with four hands,
Three in pockets and one scratching
An ear busy with sound:
Door, cat, scrambling leaf.

Handwritten: 25/5/52

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms,
I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread
Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart
From the raging moon I write
On these spindrift pages
Nor for the towering dead
With their nightingales and psalms
But for the lovers, their arms
Round the griefs of the ages,
Who pay no praise or wages
Nor heed my craft or art.

[1946]

Robert Graves

...the war
...out and he died,
...blew them wide,
...burst pavement stone
...hattered floor.
...d a sun
...ringshoots and fire
...cks, and rang.
...grey-haired heart.
...a wound
...ng on the cage.
...common cart,
...of his age
...sun's right hand.

[1946]

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

[1952]

In summer stream in gentle rain.

When sunbeams so bright on the falling drops shine,
The rainbow enlivens the show'r,
And glows in the heavens, a beautiful sign
That water shall drown us no more.

JANE TAYLOR

1783-1824

The Star

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 traveller 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 through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveller in the dark—
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

William How

WILLIAM HOW

1792-1879

The Wind in a

The wind one morning sprung
Saying, 'Now for a frolic! now
Now for a mad-cap, galloping
I'll make a commotion in ever
So it swept with a bustle right
Creaking the signs, and scatter
Shutters; and whisking, with m
Old women's bonnets and gin
There never was heard a much
As the apples and oranges tru
And the urchins, that stand w
For ever on watch, ran off eac

Then away to the field it went
And the cattle all wondered w
It plucked by their tails the gra
And tossed the colts' manes al
Till, offended at such a familia
They all turned their backs, an
So on it went, capering and pl
Whistling with reeds on the b
Puffing the birds as they sat on
Or the traveller grave on the k
It was not too nice to hustle th
Of the beggar, and flutter his
'Twas so bold, that it feared ne
With the doctor's wig, or the p
Through the forest it roared, a
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make
And it made them bow without
Or it cracked their great branc

Oxford
Children's

them;
one:

ad;

The Sloth

In moving-slow he has no Peer.
You ask him something in his Ear,
He thinks about it for a Year;

And, then, before he says a Word
There, upside down (unlike a Bird),
He will assume that you have Heard—

A most Ex-as-per-at-ing Lug.
But should you call his manner Smug,
He'll sigh and give his Branch a Hug;

Then off again to Sleep he goes,
Still swaying gently by his Toes,
And you just *know* he knows he knows.

[1958]

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The Red Wheelbarrow **William Carlos Williams**

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

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Brooklyn College Academy
Sarah Babbitt, Instructor

Juliana Rogers, Principal
English 8

POEM TO BE READ AT 3AM

Excepting the diner
On the outskirts.
The town of Ladora
At 3 a.m.
Was dark but
For my headlights
And up in
One second-story room
A single light
Where someone
Was sick or
Perhaps reading
As I drove past
At seventy
Not thinking.
This poem
Is for whoever
Had the light on
--Donald Justice

class

Compare & contrast
Ladora → New York.

HW: Who is the person
who lives upstairs with the
light on.

I Hear America Singing

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.

VALERIE BLOOM

1956—

Sun-a-shine, Rain-a-fall

Sun a-shine an' rain a-fall,
 The Devil an' him wife cyan 'gree at all,
 The two o' them want one fish-head,
 The Devil call him wife bonthead,
 She hiss her teeth, call him cock-eye,
 Greedy, worthless an' workshy,
 While them busy callin' name,
 The puss walk in, sey is a shame
 To see a nice fish go to was'e,
 Lef with a big grin pon him face.

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

1958—

ACCORDING TO MY MOOD

I have *poetic* licence, i WriTe the way i want.
 i *drop* my **full stops** where i like...
MY CAPITAL LettErS go where i like,
 i order from **MY PeN**, i verse **the way** i like
 (i do my spelling write)

According to My *MO*od.

i **HAVE** Poetic licence,
 i put my **commers** where i like,,((O)).
 (((my brackets *are* write)))
 I REPEAT **WHEN** i like.

i can't **go RONG**.

i *look* and i.c.

It's **rite**.

i REPEAT **WHEN** i like. i have

poetic licence!

don't question me???

JACKIE KAY

1961—

English Cousin Comes to Scotland

See when my English cousin comes,
 it's so embarrassing so it is, so it is.
 I have to explain everything
 I mean Every Thing, so I do, so I do.
 I told her, 'know what happened to me?
 I got skelped, because I screamed when a skelf
 went into my pinky finger: OUCH, loud.
 And ma ma dropped her best bit of china.
 It wis sore, so it wis, so it wis.
 I was scunnert being skelped
 when I wis already sore.
 So I ran and ran, holding
 my pinky, through the park,
 over the burn, up the hill.
 I was knackered and I fell
 into the mud and went home
 mocket and got skelped again.
 So I locked myself in the cludgie
 and cried, so I did, so I did,
 pulling the long roll of paper
 onto the floor. Like that dug Andrew.'
 Whilst I'm saying this, my English cousin
 has her mouth open. Glaitit.
 Stupit. So she is, so she is.
 I says, 'I'm going to have to learn you
 what's what.' And at that the wee git
 cheers up; the wee toffee nose says,
 'not learn you, teach you,' like she's scored.

skelped spanked
 mocket filthy
 skelf splinter
 cludgie toilet
 scunnert fed up
 dug dog
 pinky finger
 glaitit silly

song? If
Ourselves

The Voice

There is a voice inside of you
That whispers all day long,
"I feel that this is right for me,
I know that *this* is wrong."
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
Or wise man can decide
What's right for you — just listen to
The voice that speaks inside.

Shel Silverstein

Great Pitches

J. Patrick Lewis

The fastball

that you hope to poke
is smoke

The curveball

that you thought was there
is air

The knuckler

wobbling up to you
can dipsy-do

The screwball

an ironic twist
hits your fist

The sinker

comes as some surprise:
it dies

The let-up pitch

you can't resist?
You missed

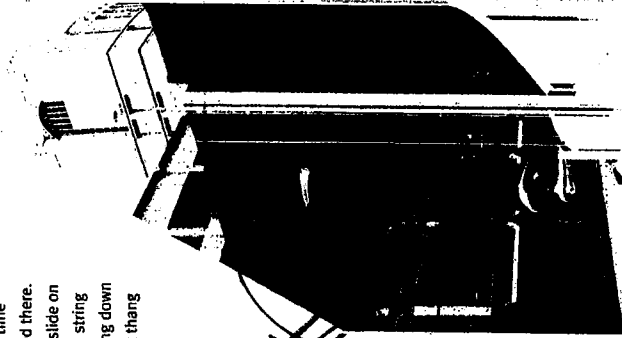
The spitball

that by law's forbidden
(is hidden)

Low Down in the Get Me High Lounge

Rusting slop bucket
Of fluid jazz.
Sweaty enclosure
A be-bop rag.
Enclave in
Blue-collar 'hood.
Merged through
Her twisted
Flugelhorn tube:
Lagos to Jamestown
Via human trade
Riffs torn
From arms
In holy raids.
B-flat scraping
Eroded stage
Peeling words
Off the poet's wall.
Plastered strata of
Talmudic scrawl.
Graffiti —
Bare and unrevealing
Sleeping from the

Jazz-soaked ceiling.
Resistance to the
Tar-filled air
Blue-note time
Suspended there.
Bassman slide on
Yo' dirty G string
Meandering down
Make that thang
Sang.



The Ice Worm

You can take away that net.
I'm not much of a performer,
one of those that struts and shines,
delivering my personal angst
in easy technicolor rhymes.
I'm from the old school
where poets named things, told the truth —
the hard truths nobody wanted to hear.
When they created beauty,
by God, people were stunned.
When they failed,
they took the fall.

Truth, beauty, the arcane lore,
what are they against *People* magazine,
USA Today, CNN, and a lying president?
Mass production, the glory and the curse of the
20th century,
replays words, pictures, politics, and bad art
until it all seeps in like an Eskimo winter,
and sometimes the only way to clear the
synapses
is a vigorous cranial wallbanger — or a good
poem.
So let me tell you something I remember.
Maybe you've seen it, too.

At four or five years old,
when I was starting to lose my imagination,
had stopped coloring dogs' tongues orange and
cats' feet purple,
I must have been home from school sick
and bored with staying inside the lines,
when I saw something where nothing should
have been.

Atop a bare sycamore branch
where the sun should have melted it away,
a piece of ice moved.
It humped itself up like an inchworm
and moved along,
humped and moved,
humped and moved.
When it got to the end of the branch,
its head searched and couldn't find anywhere to
go,
so it humped off the end of the branch and fell
with a couple of tumbling flashes into a
snowbank below.

Michael Brown

SONNET XVIII

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.

Read at the White House, April 30, 1963

THE RED WHEELBARROW

William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

My son Jack chose this poem.



1-3

Best Loved Poem
of
T.K. O'neal
Jr.

MM COPY

The Affair

Alan Riddell

i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u i i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u u u i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u u u u u i i i i i i i i
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i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i

Activities

1. When you have thought about the poem for a while, write a brief report of your reading. Note what you think the poem is about, and how you arrived at this reading.
2. Share your report with others in your group or class, and discuss the following points. What meanings have members of your group made from this text? What parts of the text did each person focus on? Was it the title? the shape and pattern of the text? the meanings of the letters? What information from "outside" the text helped you make sense of the poem?

Constructing a Reading

Below are the readings two students produced in response to this poem. They have explained what they thought the poem was saying and how they produced this reading. Compare these responses with how you read the poem.

Reading 1

I think the poem is about how relationships come and go, and how people can become obsessed by another person. At the beginning, in the first line, the person is totally wrapped up in herself, and the poem shows it by repeating "i, i, i . . ." It is as if the poem is recording her thoughts or outlook on the world. In the second line it shows that she has met someone special and started to include him in her life and thoughts a

**For the Love of the Game
Michael Jordan and Me**

by Eloise Greenfield

When he was just a little boy
when he was just a kid
Michael saw a basketball
and this is what he did ...

FROM NORTH CAROLINA,
AT GUARD, SIX-SIX,
MI - CHAEL JORDAN!

For the love of the game
he rises from the chair
he steps to the court
he greets his team
he takes his stance
he makes his move

he slaps the ball
from clutching hands
snaps it to a friend
helps his team to win
he forget to obey
the law of gravity
jumps not up and down

but up and up
an up, then stops

stands right there
on a little piece of air
will he shoot for the left
or shoot from the right?
which hand will he use tonight?
he sails higher, holds the ball
above the bucket, and *slam!*

before he lands, smooth
as a gliding plane, then
turns and smiles
at the memory of flying.

For the love of the game
of life
I rise from my bed
and greet the world
I am here!

The sun has risen
but barely
in the pale light
I see a world of many paths
partly hidden by trees
and shadows of trees

it is a puzzle
of power and beauty
and I must see more
someday I will choose a path
and go

But I hear the voices
naysayers
You can't, too hard,
You can't

I hear the voice
Of doomsayers
Danger! All is danger!
and I am afraid

under what tree lie the roots
that will trip me?
In which shadow hide the holes
that will swallow me?

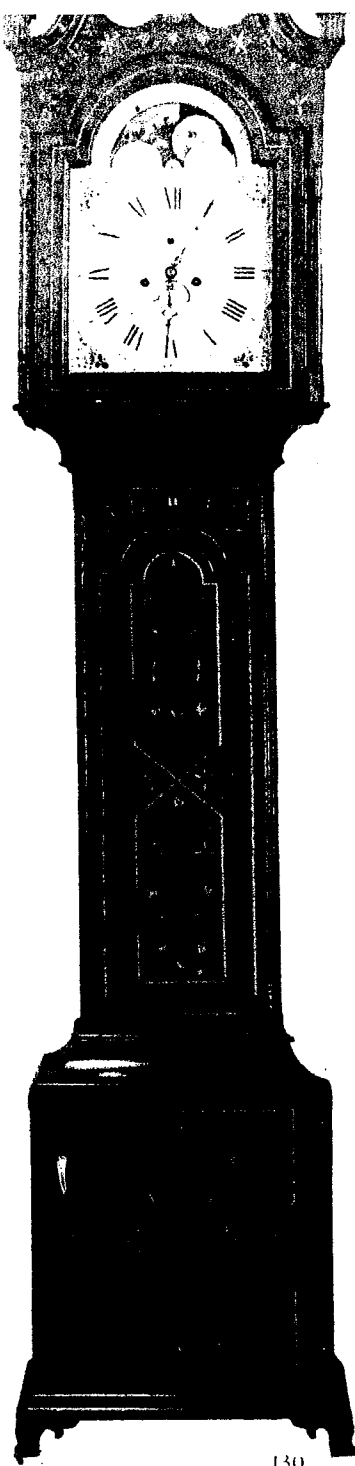
Then through the din of voices
I hear the chanting of people
who love me
*If you fall you will
rise again*

I breathe their words
I feel the strength
Of my spirit
If I fall I will rise again
The sun is at midmorning
The time to prepare
is now.

In the game of life
I choose to choose
the path that I will take
I listen to my heart
beating *my* rhythm

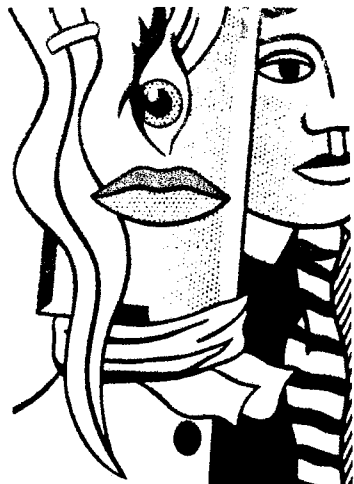
I take my stance
I make my move.

For the love of the game
of my life
I live.



Or purple with green rings.
Or green with yellow rings.
Or yellow with blue rings.
None of them are strange.
With socks of lace
And beaded ceintures.
People are not going
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.
Only, here and there, an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather.

Wallace Stevens, 1879-1955



132

131

THE GREAT FIGURE

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

William Carlos Williams
1883-1963



130 Ta
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Take a look

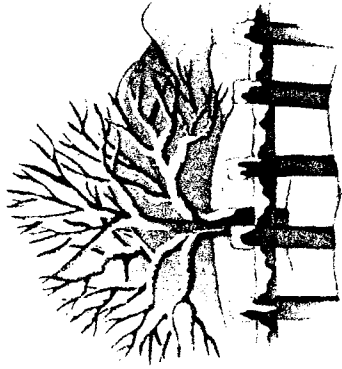


A fuzzy fellow without feet
Yet doth exceeding run!
Of velvet is his countenance
And his complexion dun.

Sometimes he dwelleth in the grass,
Sometimes upon a bough
From which he doth descend in plush
Upon the passer by.

dun... a dull grayish brown

typoanq f souuo oq w agjda qv v



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 flings a crystal veil

On stump and stack and stem,
The summer's empty room,
Acres of seams where harvests were,
Recordless, but for them.

It ruffles wrists of posts,
And ankles of a queen,
Then stills its artisans like ghosts,
Denying they have been.

WINTER

sieves... strainers or sifters
artisans... skilled workers or craftspeople who make things that show imagination and feeling

Wally Dehlon

Wally Dehlon

MY PAPA'S WALTZ

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

THE EMPTY WOMAN

The empty woman took toys!
In her sisters' homès
Were little girls and boys.

The empty woman had hats
To show. With feathers. Wore combs
In polished waves. Wooded cats

And pigeons. Shopped.
Shopped hard for nephew-toys,
Niece-toys. Made taffy. Popped

Popcorn and hated her sisters,
Featherless and waveless but able to
Mend measles, nag noses, blast blisters

And all day waste wordful girls
And war-boys, and all day
Say "Oh God!"—and tire among curls

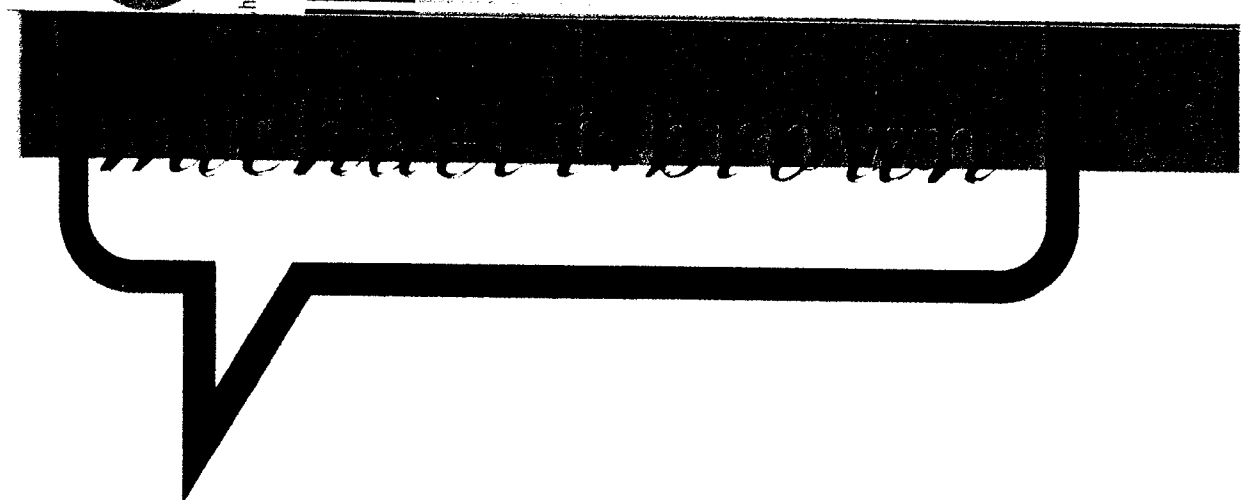
And plump legs and proud muscle
And blackened school-bags, babushkas, torn socks,
And bouffants that bustle, and rustle.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

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401 WEST 164th ST
NEW YORK N.Y.

Sound as silences
factory for now

W. A. B.



The Ice Worm

You can take away that net.
 I'm not much of a performer,
 one of those that struts and shines,
 delivering my personal angst
 in easy technicolor rhymes.
 I'm from the old school
 where poets named things, told the truth —
 the hard truths nobody wanted to hear.
 When they created beauty,
 by God, people were stunned.
 When they failed,
 they took the fall.

Truth, beauty, the arcane lore,
 what are they against *People* magazine,
USA Today, CNN, and a lying president?
 Mass production, the glory and the curse of the
 20th century,
 replays words, pictures, politics, and bad art
 until it all seeps in like an Eskimo winter,
 and sometimes the only way to clear the
 synapses
 is a vigorous cranial wallbanger — or a good
 poem.

So let me tell you something I remember.
 Maybe you've seen it, too.

At four or five years old,
 when I was starting to lose my imagination,
 had stopped coloring dogs' tongues orange and
 cats' feet purple,
 I must have been home from school sick
 and bored with staying inside the lines,
 when I saw something where nothing should
 have been.

Atop a bare sycamore branch
 where the sun should have melted it away,
 a piece of ice moved.
 It humped itself up like an inchworm
 and moved along,
 humped and moved,
 humped and moved.
 When it got to the end of the branch,
 its head searched and couldn't find anywhere to
 go,
 so it humped off the end of the branch and fell
 with a couple of tumbling flashes into a
 snowbank below.

Sample Poems

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

Had I the heavens'
embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden
and silver light,
The blue and the dim
and the dark cloths
Of night and light and
the half-light,
I would spread the
cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have
only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams
under your feet;
Tread softly because
you tread on my dreams.

-William
Butler Yeats

Red Light

The only thing we know is the thing
We turn out to be, I don't care what
You think, it's true, now you think
Your way out of this.

- LeRoi Jones

This Is Just To Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which

you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
They were delicious
So sweet
And so cold

- William Carlos
Williams

632

The Brain - is wider than the Sky -
For - put them side by side -
The one the other will contain
With ease - and You -beside

The Brain is deeper than the sea -
For -- hold them - Blue to Blue -
The one the other will absorb -
As Sponges - Buckets - do -

The Brain is just the weight of God -
For -Heft them - Pound for Pound -
And they will differ - if they do -
As Syllable from Sound -

-Emily Dickinson

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

- William Carlos
Williams

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

Behold the hippopotamus!
We laugh at how he looks to us,
And yet in moments dank and grim,
I wonder how we look to him.
Peace, peace, thou hippopotamus!
We really look all right to us,
As you no doubt delight the eye
Of other hippopotami.

-Ogden Nash

Incident (For Eric Walrond)

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

- Countee Cullen

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down 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.

- Robert Frost

'And the days are not full enough'

And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass.

-Ezra Pound

The Octopus

Tell me, O Octopus, I begs,
Is those things arms, or is they legs?
I marvel at thee, Octopus;
If I were thou, I'd call me Us.

=-jNcdo

- Ogden Nash

Be! I'm Expecting You

Be! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due—

The Frogs got Home last week -
Are settled, and at work -
Birds, mostly back -
The Clover warm and thick -

You'll get my Letter by
The seventeenth; Reply
Or better, be with me -
Yours, Fly.

- Emily Dickinson
Son when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Sea- Weed

Sea-weed sways and sways and
swirls

- Langston Hughes

as if swaying were its form
of stillness;

While watching a pigeon fly by,
I got something white in my eye.

and it flushes against fierce
rock

Now I didn't moan,

But said with a groan,

it slips over it as shadows
do, without hurting itself.

"I'm just glad that milk cows can't fly!"

-Anonymous

-D.H. Lawrence

First autumn morning:
The mirror I stare into
Shows my father's face.

-Basho

First Visit to the Ocean

She's lost
inside her laugh
before the rising tide
that reaches out to tickle her
bare toes.

- Jeanne Kessler

American History

Those four black girls blown up
in that Alabama church
remind me of five hundred
middle passage blacks,
in a net, under water
in Charleston Harbor
so redcoats wouldn't find them.
Can't find what you can't see
Can you?

- Michael Harper

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

ice cream
i scream
ice cream

bright
chosen
lucent
sharp

uneven
curving
but willed
jagged

silent
magical, one
moment only

melting

the shape itself
the texture
a test
an admission

the recognition
deceiving the mind
the lettering on the rim
arguing sugar crystals,
blatant, gummy, broken

the patchwork grill
intensifying
curving

outline
curling its
fingers
around,
and down

possessing

to draw, to take
in the hand,
to crunch
its one
point

the image
the transformation

eating it

blurred
rounded off
made indefinite
Copper...
The side
nubbled
syrup-slow
the taste
glyceride
the memory
smirched
shimmering
insatiable

accumulating,
dribbling, about
the cone to drop
cardboard
the surface
sticky as plastic

immediate and
unknown
trivial
enormous

licked
moist
still
firm

yet
dis-
appear-
ing

"I'll take your watches.
Oh, that's a nice wedding ring."

"I'm in no hurry ma'am,
shoot, I want any gold coins
silver, every last nickel and

Copper? Oh no,
not a Copper!

- Brian Ellis

JONATHAN PRICE

"All right! Nobody act like a hero
and we all walk out of here
alive!"

"I'll take your ones, your fives,
tens, twenties, and fifties,
one hundreds and of course
any thousand dollar
bills."

"Empty the registers, the cash drawers,
and vaults."

[Untitled]

(For Margaret Danner)

one ounce of truth benefits
like ripples on a pond
one ounce of truth benefits like a ripple
on a pond
one ounce of truth
benefits like ripples on
a pond
as things change remember my smile

the old man said my time is getting near
the old man said my time
is getting near
he looked at his dusty cracked boots to say
sister my time is getting near
and when i'm gone remember i smiled
when i'm gone remember
i smiled
i'm glad my time is getting there

the baby cried wanting some milk
the baby cried needing some milk
the baby he cried for wanting
his mother kissed him gently

when i came they sang a song
when i was born they sang a song
when i was saved they sang a song
remember i smiled when i'm gone
remember i smiled when i'm gone
sing a good song when i'm gone
we ain't got long to stay

[28 feb 72]

*My house
Nikki
G 10/10/10*

IN JUST-SPRING

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

AN UPWARD LOOK

James Merrill
1995

O heart green acre sown with salt
by the departing occupier

lay down your gallant spears of wheat
Salt of the earth each stellar pinch

flung in blind defiance backwards
now takes its toll Up from his quieted

quarry the lover colder and wiser
hauling himself finds the world turning

toys triumphs toxins into
this vast facility the living come
dearest to die in How did it happen

In bright alternation minutely mirrored
within the thinking of each and every

mortal creature halves of a clue
approach the earthlights Morning star

evening star salt of the sky
First the grave dissolving into dawn

then the crucial recrystallizing
from inmost depths of clear dark blue

Abraham Lincoln
Keats

MOTHER TO SON

Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
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—
Bare.
But all the time
I've 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've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Best Loved Poem
of J. Ona
Superior

100

100

100

100

HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

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.

Best loved Poems
of J. Amass's
Hyperion

Maya Angelou
+
Jean-Michel
Basquiat
(art.)

go boo

Make them shoo

make fun

way they run

I won't cry

So they fly

I just smile

They go wild

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Picture Book
by Maya Angelou
illustrated by Jean-Michel Basquiat

44-38861-1000

44-38861-1000

Sample Poems

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

Had I the heavens'
embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden
and silver light,
The blue and the dim
and the dark cloths
Of night and light and
the half-light,
I would spread the
cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have
only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams
under your feet;
Tread softly because
you tread on my dreams.

-William
Butler Yeats

Red Light

The only thing we know is the thing
We turn out to be, I don't care what
You think, it's true, now you think
Your way out of this.

- LeRoi Jones

This Is Just To Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which

you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
They were delicious
So sweet
And so cold

- William Carlos
Williams

632

The Brain - is wider than the Sky -
For - put them side by side -
The one the other will contain
With ease - and You -beside

The Brain is deeper than the sea -
For -- hold them - Blue to Blue -
The one the other will absorb -
As Sponges - Buckets - do -

The Brain is just the weight of God -
For -Heft them - Pound for Pound -
And they will differ - if they do -
As Syllable from Sound -

-Emily Dickinson

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

- William Carlos
Williams

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

Behold the hippopotamus!
We laugh at how he looks to us,
And yet in moments dank and grim,
I wonder how we look to him.
Peace, peace, thou hippopotamus!
We really look all right to us,
As you no doubt delight the eye
Of other hippopotami.

-Ogden Nash

Incident (For Eric Walrond)

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

- Countee Cullen

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not ravel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down 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.

- Robert Frost

'And the days are not full enough'

And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass.

-Ezra Pound

The Octopus

Tell me, O Octopus, I begs,
Is those things arms, or is they legs?
I marvel at thee, Octopus;
If I were thou, I'd call me Us.

=-jNcdo

- Ogden Nash

Be! I'm Expecting You

Be! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due—

The Frogs got Home last week -
Are settled, and at work -
Birds, mostly back -
The Clover warm and thick -

You'll get my Letter by
The seventeenth; Reply
Or better, be with me -
Yours, Fly.

- Emily Dickinson
Son when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Sea- Weed

Sea-weed sways and sways and
swirls

- Langston Hughes

as if swaying were its form
of stillness;

While watching a pigeon fly by,
I got something white in my eye.

and it flushes against fiercer
rock

Now I didn't moan,

But said with a groan,

it slips over it as shadows
do, without hurting itself.

"I'm just glad that milk cows can't fly!"

-Anonymous

-D.H. Lawrence

First autumn morning:
The mirror I stare into
Shows my father's face.

-Basho

First Visit to the Ocean

She's lost
inside her laugh
before the rising tide
that reaches out to tickle her
bare toes.

- Jeanne Kessler

American History

Those four black girls blown up
in that Alabama church
remind me of five hundred
middle passage blacks,
in a net, under water
in Charleston Harbor
so redcoats wouldn't find them.
Can't find what you can't see
Can you?

- Michael Harper

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

ice cream
i scream
ice cream

bright
chosen
lucent
sharp

uneven
curving
but willed
jagged

silent
magical, one
moment only

melting

the shape itself
the texture
a test
an admission

the recognition
deceiving the mind
the lettering on the rim
arguing sugar crystals,
blatant, gummy, broken

the patchwork grill
intensifying
curving

outline
curling its
fingers
around,
and down

possessing

to draw, to take
in the hand,
to crunch
its one
point

the image
the transformation

eating it

blurred
rounded off
made indefinite
Copper...
The side
nubbled
syrup-slow
the taste
glyceride
the memory
smirched
shimmering
insatiable

accumulating,
dribbling, about
the cone to drop
cardboard
the surface
sticky as plastic

immediate and
unknown
trivial
enormous

licked
moist
still
firm

yet
dis-
appear-
ing

"I'll take your watches.
Oh, that's a nice wedding ring."

"I'm in no hurry ma'am,
shoot, I want any gold coins
silver, every last nickel and
copper..."

Copper? Oh no,
not a Copper!

- Brian Ellis

JONATHAN PRICE

"All right! Nobody act like a hero
and we all walk out of here
alive!"

"I'll take your ones, your fives,
tens, twenties, and fifties,
one hundreds and of course
any thousand dollar
bills."

"Empty the registers, the cash drawers,
and vaults."

The Voice

There is a voice inside of you
That whispers all day long,
“I feel that this is right for me,
I know that *this* is wrong.”
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend
Or wise man can decide
What’s right for you — just listen to
The voice that speaks inside.

Shel Silverstein

Song
myself

Great Pitches

J. Patrick Lewis

The fastball

that you hope to poke
is smoke

The curveball

that you thought was there
is air

The knuckler

wobbling up to you
can dipsy-do

The screwball

an ironic twist
hits your fist

The sinker

comes as some surprise:
it dies

The let-up pitch

you can't resist?
You missed

The spitball

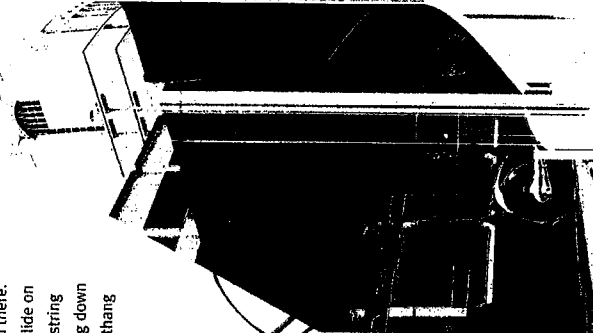
that by law's forbidden
(is hidden)

Low Down in the Get Me High Lounge

Rustling slop bucket
Of fluid jazz.
Sweaty enclosure
A be-bop rag.
Enclave in
Blue-collar 'hood.
Merged through
Her twisted
Flugelhorn tube:
Lagos to Jamestown
Via human trade
Riffs torn
From arms
In holy raids.
B-flat scraping
Eroded stage
Peeling words
Off the poet's wall.
Plastered strata of
Talmudic scrawl.
Graffiti—
Bare and unrevealing
Seeping from the

Jazz-soaked ceiling.
Resistance to the
Tar-filled air
Blue-note time
Suspended there.
Bassman slide on
Yo' dirty G string
Meandering down
Make that thang
Sang.

*



Michael Brown

The Ice Worm

You can take away that net.
I'm not much of a performer,
one of those that struts and shines,
delivering my personal angst
in easy technicolor rhymes.
I'm from the old school
where poets named things, told the truth—
the hard truths nobody wanted to hear.
When they created beauty,
by God, people were stunned.
When they failed,
they took the fall.

Truth, beauty, the arcane lore,
what are they against *People* magazine,
USA Today, CNN, and a lying president?
Mass production, the glory and the curse of the
20th century.

replays words, pictures, politics, and bad art
until it all seeps in like an Eskimo winter,
and sometimes the only way to clear the
synapses
is a vigorous cranial wallbanger—or a good
poem.

So let me tell you something I remember.
Maybe you've seen it, too.

At four or five years old,
when I was starting to lose my imagination,
had stopped coloring dogs' tongues orange and
cats' feet purple,
I must have been home from school sick
and bored with staying inside the lines,
when I saw something where nothing should
have been.

Atop a bare sycamore branch
where the sun should have melted it away,
a piece of ice moved.
It humped itself up like an inchworm
and moved along.
humped and moved,
humped and moved.
When it got to the end of the branch,
its head searched and couldn't find anywhere to
go.

so it humped off the end of the branch and fell
with a couple of tumbling flashes into a
snowbank below.

SONNET XVIII

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.

Read at the White House, April 30, 1963

THE RED WHEELBARROW

William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

My son Jack chose this poem.



1-3

Best Loved Poem
of
J.K. O'neal
in 1910

MM COPY

The Affair

Alan Riddell

i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u i i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u i i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u u u i i i i i i i i i i
i i i i i i i i i i u u u u u u u u i i i i i i i
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i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i

Activities

1. When you have thought about the poem for a while, write a brief report of your reading. Note what you think the poem is about, and how you arrived at this reading.
2. Share your report with others in your group or class, and discuss the following points. What meanings have members of your group made from this text? What parts of the text did each person focus on? Was it the title? the shape and pattern of the text? the meanings of the letters? What information from "outside" the text helped you make sense of the poem?

Constructing a Reading

Below are the readings two students produced in response to this poem. They have explained what they thought the poem was saying and how they produced this reading. Compare these responses with how you read the poem.

Reading 1

I think the poem is about how relationships come and go, and how people can become obsessed by another person. At the beginning, in the first line, the person is totally wrapped up in herself, and the poem shows it by repeating "i, i, i. . ." It is as if the poem is recording her thoughts or outlook on the world. In the second line it shows that she has met someone special and started to include him in her life and thoughts a

**For the Love of the Game
Michael Jordan and Me**

by Eloise Greenfield

When he was just a little boy
when he was just a kid
Michael saw a basketball
and this is what he did ...

FROM NORTH CAROLINA,
AT GUARD, SIX-SIX,
MI - CHAEL JORDAN!

For the love of the game
he rises from the chair
he steps to the court
he greets his team
he takes his stance
he makes his move

he slaps the ball
from clutching hands
snaps it to a friend
helps his team to win
he forget to obey
the law of gravity
jumps not up and down

but up and up
an up, then stops

stands right there
on a little piece of air
will he shoot for the left
or shoot from the right?
which hand will he use tonight?
he sails higher, holds the ball
above the bucket, and *slam!*

before he lands, smooth
as a gliding plane, then
turns and smiles
at the memory of flying.

For the love of the game
of life
I rise from my bed
and greet the world
I am here!

The sun has risen
but barely
in the pale light
I see a world of many paths
partly hidden by trees
and shadows of trees

it is a puzzle
of power and beauty
and I must see more
someday I will choose a path
and go

But I hear the voices
naysayers
You can't, too hard,
You can't

I hear the voice
Of doomsayers
Danger! All is danger!
and I am afraid

under what tree lie the roots
that will trip me?
In which shadow hide the holes
that will swallow me?

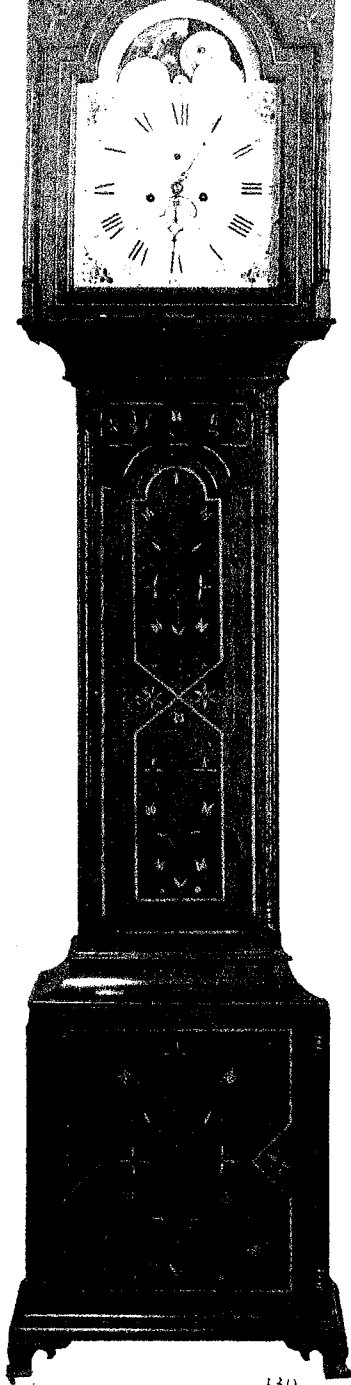
Then through the din of voices
I hear the chanting of people
who love me
*If you fall you will
rise again*

I breathe their words
I feel the strength
Of my spirit
If I fall I will rise again
The sun is at midmorning
The time to prepare
is now.

In the game of life
I choose to choose
the path that I will take
I listen to my heart
beating *my* rhythm

I take my stance
I make my move.

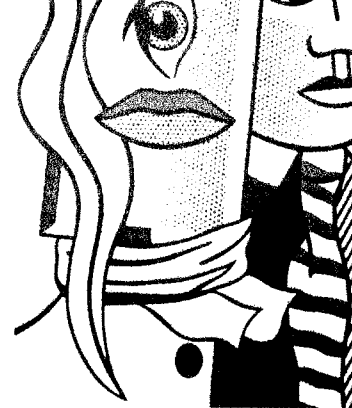
For the love of the game
of my life
I live.



130

Or yellow with blue rings.
None of them are strange.
With socks of lace
And beaded ceintures.
People are not going
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.
Only, here and there, an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather.

Wallace Stevens, 1879–1955



132

THE GREAT FIGURE

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

William Carlos Williams
1883–1963

131



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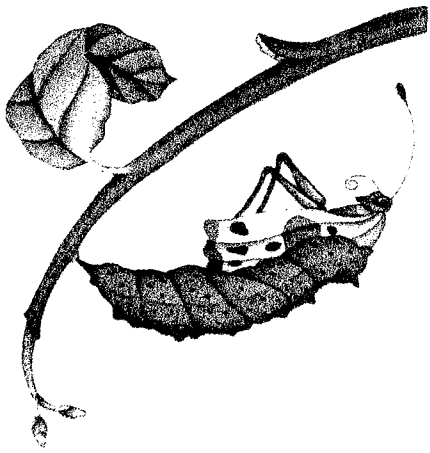
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Talking to the

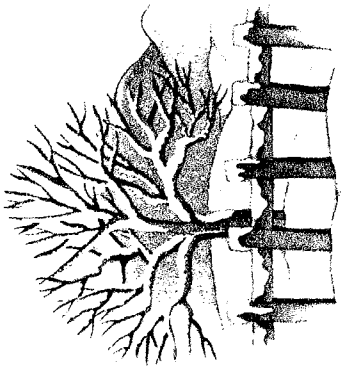


A fuzzy fellow without feet
 Yet doth exceeding run!
 Of velvet is his countenance
 And his complexion dun.

Sometimes he dwelleth in the grass,
 Sometimes upon a bough
 From which he doth descend in plush
 Upon the passer-by.

dun - a dull grayish brown

(speaking of some of our English poets)



It sits 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 flings a crystal veil

(wood)

On stump and stack and stem,
 The summer's empty room,
 Acres of scams where harvests were,
 Recordless, but for them.

It ruffles wrists of poets,
 And ankles of a queen,
 Then stills its artisans like ghosts,
 Denying they have been.

sieves - strainers or sifters
 artisans - skilled workers or craftspeople who make things that show imagination and feeling

Windy
 Dehison

Dehison

MY PAPA'S WALTZ

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

[12]

THE EMPTY WOMAN

The empty woman took toys!
In her sisters' homès
Were little girls and boys.

The empty woman had hats
To show. With feathers. Wore combs
In polished waves. Wooded cats

And pigeons. Shopped.
Shopped hard for nephew-toys,
Niece-toys. Made taffy. Popped

Popcorn and hated her sisters,
Featherless and waveless but able to
Mend measles, nag noses, blast blisters

And all day waste wordful girls
And war-boys, and all day
Say "Oh God!"—and tire among curls

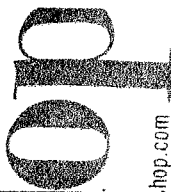
And plump legs and proud muscle
And blackened school-bags, babushkas, torn socks,
And bouffants that bustle, and rustle.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

LIBRARY, JR. H.S. 104
401 WEST 164th ST
NEW YORK, N.Y.

[13]

Sound by silences
empty



W/ Hood

michael r. brown

The Ice Worm

You can take away that net.
I'm not much of a performer,
one of those that struts and shines,
delivering my personal angst
in easy technicolor rhymes.
I'm from the old school
where poets named things, told the truth—
the hard truths nobody wanted to hear.
When they created beauty,
by God, people were stunned.
When they failed,
they took the fall.

Truth, beauty, the arcane lore,
what are they against *People* magazine,
USA Today, CNN, and a lying president?
Mass production, the glory and the curse of the
20th century,
replays words, pictures, politics, and bad art
until it all seeps in like an Eskimo winter,
and sometimes the only way to clear the
synapses
is a vigorous cranial wallbanger—or a good
poem.
So let me tell you something I remember.
Maybe you've seen it, too.

At four or five years old,
when I was starting to lose my imagination,
had stopped coloring dogs' tongues orange and
cats' feet purple,
I must have been home from school sick
and bored with staying inside the lines,
when I saw something where nothing should
have been.

Atop a bare sycamore branch
where the sun should have melted it away,
a piece of ice moved.
It humped itself up like an inchworm
and moved along,
humped and moved,
humped and moved.
When it got to the end of the branch,
its head searched and couldn't find anywhere to
go,
so it humped off the end of the branch and fell
with a couple of tumbling flashes into a
snowbank below.

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL



Once I saw one, I saw more.

They were on trees, the snow and the sidewalks.

As my chest and throat and head
were about to burst with excitement,
my mother came up behind me.

She saw what I saw,
and light flashed in her warm brown eyes
the way it had off the ice worm.

She opened the window and slid her finger
under one on the window sill.

I watched it inch along.

Before it got to the end,

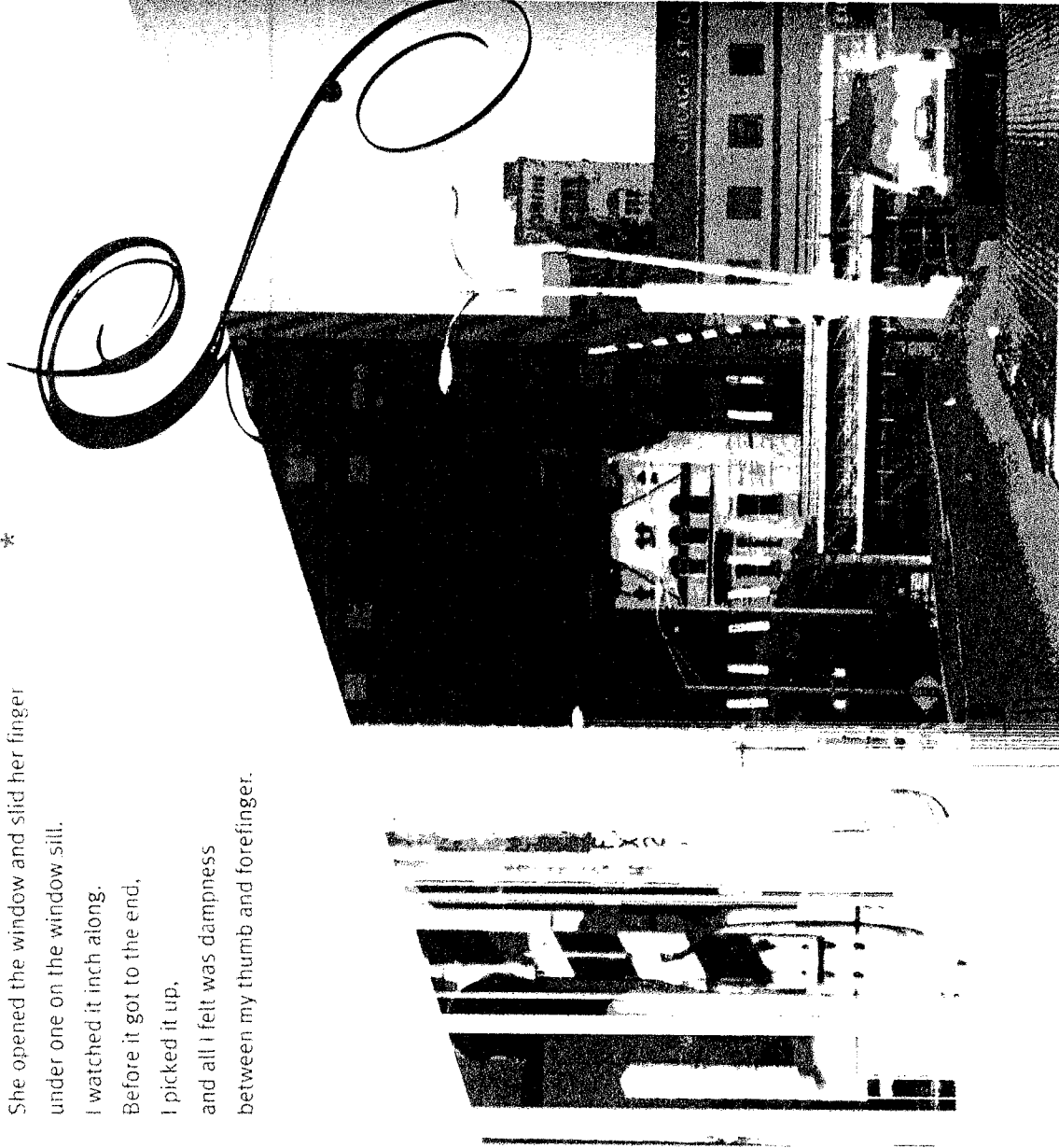
I picked it up,

and all I felt was dampness
between my thumb and forefinger.

I haven't seen an ice worm in years.

I'm not sure what that means, except for this —
there ought to be things that we can't see easily,
that TV networks, magazines, companies,
and the goddamned politicians can't use,
small, beautiful things that disappear
as soon as we get our hands on them.

★



Old Walt

Old Walt Whitman
Went finding and seeking,
Finding less than sought
Seeking more than found,
Every detail minding
Of the seeking or the finding.

Pleased equally
In seeking as in finding,
Each detail minding,
Old Walt went seeking
And finding.

Kid in the Park

Lonely little question mark
on a bench in the park:

See the people passing by?
See the airplanes in the sky?
See the birds
flying home
before
dark?

Home's just around
the corner
there—
*but not really
anywhere.*

*Selected poems
of Langston Hughes*

