**When I Consider How My light is Spent**

**John Milton**

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in thi 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.”

**Allen Ginsberg**

**My Sad Self**

Sometimes when my eyes are red

I go up on top of the RCA Building

and gaze at my world, Manhattan—

my buildings, streets I’ve done feats in,

lofts, beds, coldwater flats

—on Fifth Ave below which I also bear in mind,

its ant cars, little yellow taxis, men

walking the size of specks of wool—

Panorama of the bridges, sunrise over Brooklyn machine,

sun go down over New Jersey where I was born

& Paterson where I played with ants—

my later loves on 15th Street,

my greater loves of Lower East Side,

my once fabulous amours in the Bronx

faraway—

paths crossing in these hidden streets,

my history summed up, my absences

and ecstasies in Harlem—

—sun shining down on all I own

in one eyeblink to the horizon

in my last eternity—

matter is water.

Sad,

I take the elevator and go

down, pondering,

and walk on the pavements staring into all man’s

plateglass, faces,

questioning after who loves,

and stop, bemused

in front of an automobile shop window

standing lost in calm thought,

traffic moving up & down 5th Avenue blocks behind me

waiting for a moment when ...

Time to go home & cook supper & listen to

the romantic war news on the radio

... all movement stops

& I walk in the timeless sadness of existence,

tenderness flowing thru the buildings,

my fingertips touching reality’s face,

my own face streaked with tears in the mirror

of some window—at dusk—

where I have no desire—

for bonbons—or to own the dresses or Japanese

lampshades of intellection—

Confused by the spectacle around me,

Man struggling up the street

with packages, newspapers,

ties, beautiful suits

toward his desire

Man, woman, streaming over the pavements

red lights clocking hurried watches &

movements at the curb—

And all these streets leading

so crosswise, honking, lengthily,

by avenues

stalked by high buildings or crusted into slums

thru such halting traffic

screaming cars and engines

so painfully to this

countryside, this graveyard

this stillness

on deathbed or mountain

once seen

**The Waste Land - BY**[**T. S. ELIOT**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/t-s-eliot)

*FOR EZRA POUND*                                IL MIGLIOR FABBRO

***I. The Burial of the Dead***

  April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain.

Winter kept us warm, covering

Earth in forgetful snow, feeding

A little life with dried tubers.

Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee

With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,

And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,

And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.

Bin gar keine Russin, stamm’ aus Litauen, echt deutsch.

And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke’s,

My cousin’s, he took me out on a sled,

And I was frightened. He said, Marie,

Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.

In the mountains, there you feel free.

I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

  What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only

There is shadow under this red rock,

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),

And I will show you something different from either

Your shadow at morning striding behind you

Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;

I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

*Frisch weht der Wind*

*Der Heimat zu*

*Mein Irisch Kind,*

*Wo weilest du?*

“You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;

“They called me the hyacinth girl.”

—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

*Oed’ und leer das Meer*.

  Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,

Had a bad cold, nevertheless

Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,

With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,

Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,

(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)

Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,

The lady of situations.

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,

Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,

Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find

The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.

I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,

Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:

One must be so careful these days.

  Unreal City,

Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,

I had not thought death had undone so many.

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,

To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours

With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: “Stetson!

“You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!

“That corpse you planted last year in your garden,

“Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

“Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

“Oh keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men,

“Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!

“You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!”

***II. A Game of Chess***

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,

Glowed on the marble, where the glass

Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines

From which a golden Cupidon peeped out

(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)

Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra

Reflecting light upon the table as

The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,

From satin cases poured in rich profusion;

In vials of ivory and coloured glass

Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,

Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused

And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air

That freshened from the window, these ascended

In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,

Flung their smoke into the laquearia,

Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.

Huge sea-wood fed with copper

Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,

In which sad light a carvéd dolphin swam.

Above the antique mantel was displayed

As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene

The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king

So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale

Filled all the desert with inviolable voice

And still she cried, and still the world pursues,

“Jug Jug” to dirty ears.

And other withered stumps of time

Were told upon the walls; staring forms

Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.

Footsteps shuffled on the stair.

Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair

Spread out in fiery points

Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

  “My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

“Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

  “What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

“I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

  I think we are in rats’ alley

Where the dead men lost their bones.

  “What is that noise?”

                          The wind under the door.

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”

                           Nothing again nothing.

                                                        “Do

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

“Nothing?”

       I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

“Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”

                                                                           But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It’s so elegant

So intelligent

“What shall I do now? What shall I do?”

“I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

“With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?

“What shall we ever do?”

                                               The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

  When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said—

I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself,

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.

And no more can’t I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o’ that, I said.

Then I’ll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

If you don’t like it you can get on with it, I said.

Others can pick and choose if you can’t.

But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling.

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can’t help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It’s them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

(She’s had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

The chemist said it would be all right, but I’ve never been the same.

You *are* a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won’t leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don’t want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

***III. The Fire Sermon***

  The river’s tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf

Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind

Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.

Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,

Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends

Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.

And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;

Departed, have left no addresses.

By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .

Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,

Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.

But at my back in a cold blast I hear

The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation

Dragging its slimy belly on the bank

While I was fishing in the dull canal

On a winter evening round behind the gashouse

Musing upon the king my brother’s wreck

And on the king my father’s death before him.

White bodies naked on the low damp ground

And bones cast in a little low dry garret,

Rattled by the rat’s foot only, year to year.

But at my back from time to time I hear

The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring

Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter

And on her daughter

They wash their feet in soda water

*Et O ces voix d’enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

Twit twit twit

Jug jug jug jug jug jug

So rudely forc’d.

Tereu

Unreal City

Under the brown fog of a winter noon

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant

Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants

C.i.f. London: documents at sight,

Asked me in demotic French

To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel

Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back

Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits

Like a taxi throbbing waiting,

I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,

Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see

At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives

Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,

The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights

Her stove, and lays out food in tins.

Out of the window perilously spread

Her drying combinations touched by the sun’s last rays,

On the divan are piled (at night her bed)

Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.

I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs

Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—

I too awaited the expected guest.

He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,

A small house agent’s clerk, with one bold stare,

One of the low on whom assurance sits

As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.

The time is now propitious, as he guesses,

The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,

Endeavours to engage her in caresses

Which still are unreproved, if undesired.

Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;

Exploring hands encounter no defence;

His vanity requires no response,

And makes a welcome of indifference.

(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all

Enacted on this same divan or bed;

I who have sat by Thebes below the wall

And walked among the lowest of the dead.)

Bestows one final patronising kiss,

And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,

Hardly aware of her departed lover;

Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:

“Well now that’s done: and I’m glad it’s over.”

When lovely woman stoops to folly and

Paces about her room again, alone,

She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,

And puts a record on the gramophone.

“This music crept by me upon the waters”

And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.

O City city, I can sometimes hear

Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,

The pleasant whining of a mandoline

And a clatter and a chatter from within

Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls

Of Magnus Martyr hold

Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

               The river sweats

               Oil and tar

               The barges drift

               With the turning tide

               Red sails

               Wide

               To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.

               The barges wash

               Drifting logs

               Down Greenwich reach

               Past the Isle of Dogs.

                                 Weialala leia

                                 Wallala leialala

               Elizabeth and Leicester

               Beating oars

               The stern was formed

               A gilded shell

               Red and gold

               The brisk swell

               Rippled both shores

               Southwest wind

               Carried down stream

               The peal of bells

               White towers

                                Weialala leia

                                Wallala leialala

“Trams and dusty trees.

Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew

Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees

Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.”

“My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart

Under my feet. After the event

He wept. He promised a ‘new start.’

I made no comment. What should I resent?”

“On Margate Sands.

I can connect

Nothing with nothing.

The broken fingernails of dirty hands.

My people humble people who expect

Nothing.”

                       la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord Thou pluckest me out

O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

***IV. Death by Water***

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,

Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell

And the profit and loss.

                                   A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell

He passed the stages of his age and youth

Entering the whirlpool.

                                   Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,

Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

***V. What the Thunder Said***

  After the torchlight red on sweaty faces

After the frosty silence in the gardens

After the agony in stony places

The shouting and the crying

Prison and palace and reverberation

Of thunder of spring over distant mountains

He who was living is now dead

We who were living are now dying

With a little patience

Here is no water but only rock

Rock and no water and the sandy road

The road winding above among the mountains

Which are mountains of rock without water

If there were water we should stop and drink

Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think

Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand

If there were only water amongst the rock

Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit

Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit

There is not even silence in the mountains

But dry sterile thunder without rain

There is not even solitude in the mountains

But red sullen faces sneer and snarl

From doors of mudcracked houses

                                      If there were water

   And no rock

   If there were rock

   And also water

   And water

   A spring

   A pool among the rock

   If there were the sound of water only

   Not the cicada

   And dry grass singing

   But sound of water over a rock

   Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees

   Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop

   But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?

When I count, there are only you and I together

But when I look ahead up the white road

There is always another one walking beside you

Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded

I do not know whether a man or a woman

—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air

Murmur of maternal lamentation

Who are those hooded hordes swarming

Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth

Ringed by the flat horizon only

What is the city over the mountains

Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air

Falling towers

Jerusalem Athens Alexandria

Vienna London

Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight

And fiddled whisper music on those strings

And bats with baby faces in the violet light

Whistled, and beat their wings

And crawled head downward down a blackened wall

And upside down in air were towers

Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours

And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains

In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing

Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel

There is the empty chapel, only the wind’s home.

It has no windows, and the door swings,

Dry bones can harm no one.

Only a cock stood on the rooftree

Co co rico co co rico

In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust

Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves

Waited for rain, while the black clouds

Gathered far distant, over Himavant.

The jungle crouched, humped in silence.

Then spoke the thunder

DA

*Datta:* what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart

The awful daring of a moment’s surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract

By this, and this only, we have existed

Which is not to be found in our obituaries

Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider

Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor

In our empty rooms

DA

*Dayadhvam:* I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only

We think of the key, each in his prison

Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison

Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours

Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

*Damyata:* The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar

The sea was calm, your heart would have responded

Gaily, when invited, beating obedient

To controlling hands

                                    I sat upon the shore

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

*Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina*

*Quando fiam uti chelidon*—O swallow swallow

*Le Prince d’Aquitaine à la tour abolie*

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo’s mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

                  Shantih     shantih     shantih

**You Say You Love- John Keats**

**I**

You say you love ; but with a voice

Chaster than a nun's, who singeth

The soft Vespers to herself

While the chime-bell ringeth-

O love me truly!

**II**

You say you love; but with a smile

Cold as sunrise in September,

As you were Saint Cupid 's nun,

And kept his weeks of Ember.

O love me truly!

**III**

You say you love but then your lips

Coral tinted teach no blisses,

More than coral in the sea

They never pout for kisses

O love me truly!

**IV**

You say you love ; but then your hand

No soft squeeze for squeeze returneth,

It is like a statue's dead

While mine to passion burneth

O love me truly!

**V**

O breathe a word or two of fire!

Smile, as if those words should bum me,

Squeeze as lovers should O kiss

And in thy heart inurn me!

O love me truly!

**The Almanac of Time - Dylon Thomas**

The almanac of time, hangs in the brain;  
The seasons numbered, by the inward sun,  
The winter years, move in the pit of man;  
His graph is measured as the page of pain  
Shifts to the redwombed pen.  
  
The calendar of age hangs in the heart,  
A lover’s thought tears down the dated sheet,  
The inch of time’s protracted to a foot  
By youth and age, the mortal state and thought  
Ageing both day and night.  
  
The word of time lies on the chaptered bone,  
The seed of time is sheltered in the loin:  
The grains of life must seethe beneath the sun,  
The syllables be said and said again:  
Time shall belong to man.

**Life Cycles- Nikki Giovanni**

she realized

she wasn't one

of life's winners

when she wasn't sure

life to her was some dark

dirty secret that

like some unwanted child

too late for an abortion

was to be borne

alone

she had so many private habits

she would masturbate sometimes

she always picked her nose when upset

she liked to sit with silence

in the dark

sadness is not an unusual state

for the black woman

or writers

she took to sneaking drinks

a habit which displeased her

both for its effects

and taste

yet eventually sleep

would wrestle her in triumph

onto the bed

never regained or desired

in the mind to come

where all Manhattan that I’ve seen must disappear.

**Ave Maria- Frank O´Hara**

Mothers of America  
                               let your kids go to the movies!  
get them out of the house so they won’t know what you’re up to  
it’s true that fresh air is good for the body  
                                                              but what about the soul  
that grows in darkness, embossed by silvery images   
and when you grow old as grow old you must  
                                                                  they won’t hate you  
they won’t criticize you they won’t know  
                                                           they’ll be in some glamorous country  
they first saw on a Saturday afternoon or playing hookey  
  
they may even be grateful to you  
                                                  for their first sexual experience  
which only cost you a quarter  
                                            and didn’t upset the peaceful home  
they will know where candy bars come from  
                                                               and gratuitous bags of popcorn  
as gratuitous as leaving the movie before it’s over  
with a pleasant stranger whose apartment is in the Heaven on Earth Bldg  
near the Williamsburg Bridge  
                                                oh mothers you will have made the little tykes  
so happy because if nobody does pick them up in the movies  
they won’t know the difference  
                                             and if somebody does it’ll be sheer gravy  
and they’ll have been truly entertained either way  
instead of hanging around the yard  
                                                     or up in their room  
                                                                                   hating you  
prematurely since you won’t have done anything horribly mean yet  
except keeping them from the darker joys  
                                                               it’s unforgivable the latter  
so don’t blame me if you won’t take this advice  
                                                                      and the family breaks up  
and your children grow old and blind in front of a TV set  
                                                                                  seeing  
movies you wouldn’t let them see when they were young

**She Walks in Beauty - BY LORD BYRON (GEORGE GORDON)**

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!

**Anyone lived in a pretty how town - E.E Cummings**

anyone lived in a pretty how town  
(with up so floating many bells down)  
spring summer autumn winter  
he sang his didn’t he danced his did.  
  
Women and men(both little and small)  
cared for anyone not at all  
they sowed their isn’t they reaped their same  
sun moon stars rain  
  
children guessed(but only a few  
and down they forgot as up they grew  
autumn winter spring summer)  
that noone loved him more by more  
  
when by now and tree by leaf  
she laughed his joy she cried his grief  
bird by snow and stir by still  
anyone’s any was all to her  
  
someones married their everyones  
laughed their cryings and did their dance  
(sleep wake hope and then)they  
said their nevers they slept their dream  
  
stars rain sun moon  
(and only the snow can begin to explain  
how children are apt to forget to remember  
with up so floating many bells down)  
  
one day anyone died i guess  
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)  
busy folk buried them side by side  
little by little and was by was  
  
all by all and deep by deep  
and more by more they dream their sleep  
noone and anyone earth by april  
wish by spirit and if by yes.  
  
Women and men(both dong and ding)  
summer autumn winter spring  
reaped their sowing and went their came  
sun moon stars rain

**One Art: BY** [**ELIZABETH BISHOP**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/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.

**She Dwelt Among The Untrodden Ways by William Wordsworth**

She dwelt among the untrodden ways

Beside the springs of Dove,

A Maid whom there were none to praise

And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye!

—Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be;

But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me!

**O Captain! My Captain! BY** [**WALT WHITMAN**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/walt-whitman)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

                     But O heart! heart! heart!

                        O the bleeding drops of red,

                           Where on the deck my Captain lies,

                              Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

                     Here Captain! dear father!

                        This arm beneath your head!

                           It is some dream that on the deck,

                                You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

                     Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

                        But I with mournful tread,

                           Walk the deck my Captain lies,

                   Fallen cold and dead.

**Leda and the Swan**

***by 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?

**There's a certain Slant of light**

**Emily Dickonson**

There's a certain Slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –   
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of Cathedral Tunes –   
  
Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –   
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference,  
Where the Meanings, are –   
  
None may teach it – Any –   
'Tis the Seal Despair –   
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the Air –   
  
When it comes, the Landscape listens –   
Shadows – hold their breath –   
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death-

# *Wanting to Die-* By Anne Sexton

Since you ask, most days I cannot remember.

I walk in my clothing, unmarked by that voyage.

Then the almost unnameable lust returns.

Even then I have nothing against life.

I know well the grass blades you mention,

the furniture you have placed under the sun.

But suicides have a special language.

Like carpenters they want to know which tools.

They never ask why build.

Twice I have so simply declared myself,

have possessed the enemy, eaten the enemy,

have taken on his craft, his magic.

In this way, heavy and thoughtful,

warmer than oil or water,

I have rested, drooling at the mouth-hole.

I did not think of my body at needle point.

Even the cornea and the leftover urine were gone.

Suicides have already betrayed the body.

Still-born, they don't always die,

but dazzled, they can't forget a drug so sweet

that even children would look on and smile.

To thrust all that life under your tongue!-

that, all by itself, becomes a passion.

Death's a sad Bone; bruised, you'd say,

and yet she waits for me, year after year,

to so delicately undo an old wound,

to empty my breath from its bad prison.

Balanced there, suicides sometimes meet,

raging at the fruit, a pumped-up moon,

leaving the bread they mistook for a kiss,

leaving the page of the book carelessly open,

something unsaid, the phone off the hook

and the love, whatever it was, an infection.

**Ode to the West Wind - BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY**

**I**   
O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,   
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead   
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,   
  
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,   
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,   
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed   
  
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,   
Each like a corpse within its grave, until   
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow   
  
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill   
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)   
With living hues and odours plain and hill:   
  
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;   
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!   
  
**II**   
Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,   
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,   
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,   
  
Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread   
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,   
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head   
  
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge   
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,   
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge   
  
Of the dying year, to which this closing night   
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,   
Vaulted with all thy congregated might   
  
Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere   
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!   
  
**III**   
Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams   
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,   
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,   
  
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,   
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers   
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,   
  
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers   
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou   
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers   
  
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below   
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear   
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know   
  
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,   
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!   
  
**IV**   
If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;   
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;   
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share   
  
The impulse of thy strength, only less free   
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even   
I were as in my boyhood, and could be   
  
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,   
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed   
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven   
  
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.   
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!   
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!   
  
A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd   
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.   
  
**V**   
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:   
What if my leaves are falling like its own!   
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies   
  
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,   
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,   
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!   
  
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe   
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!   
And, by the incantation of this verse,   
  
Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth   
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!   
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth   
  
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,   
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behin

# If We Must Die- [Claude McKay](https://www.poets.org/node/44680)

If we must die—let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursed lot.  
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  
Oh, Kinsmen!  We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we’ll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

**Music by Wilfred Owen**

I have been urged by earnest violins

And drunk their mellow sorrows to the slake

Of all my sorrows and my thirsting sins.

My heart has beaten for a brave drum's sake.

Huge chords have wrought me mighty: I have hurled

Thuds of gods' thunder. And with old winds pondered

Over the curse of this chaotic world,-

With low lost winds that maundered as they wandered.

I have been gay with trivial fifes that laugh;

And songs more sweet than possible things are sweet;

And gongs, and oboes. Yet I guessed not half

Life's symphony till I had made hearts beat,

And touched Love's body into trembling cries,

And blown my love's lips into laughs and sighs.

### The Art of Drowning

***By: Billy Collins***

I wonder how it all got started, this business

about seeing your life flash before your eyes

while you drown, as if panic, or the act of submergence,

could startle time into such compression, crushing

decades in the vice of your desperate, final seconds.

After falling off a steamship or being swept away

in a rush of floodwaters, wouldn't you hope

for a more leisurely review, an invisible hand

turning the pages of an album of photographs-

you up on a pony or blowing out candles in a conic hat.

How about a short animated film, a slide presentation?

Your life expressed in an essay, or in one model photograph?

Wouldn't any form be better than this sudden flash?

Your whole existence going off in your face

in an eyebrow-singeing explosion of biography-

nothing like the three large volumes you envisioned.

Survivors would have us believe in a brilliance

here, some bolt of truth forking across the water,

an ultimate Light before all the lights go out,

dawning on you with all its megalithic tonnage.

But if something does flash before your eyes

as you go under, it will probably be a fish,

a quick blur of curved silver darting away,

having nothing to do with your life or your death.

The tide will take you, or the lake will accept it all

as you sink toward the weedy disarray of the bottom,

leaving behind what you have already forgotten,

the surface, now overrun with the high travel of clouds.

# Maximus, to himself - BY [CHARLES OLSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/charles-olson)

I have had to learn the simplest things

last. Which made for difficulties.

Even at sea I was slow, to get the hand out, or to cross

a wet deck.

               The sea was not, finally, my trade.

But even my trade, at it, I stood estranged

from that which was most familiar. Was delayed,

and not content with the man’s argument

that such postponement

is now the nature of

obedience,

               that we are all late

               in a slow time,

               that we grow up many

               And the single

               is not easily

               known

It could be, though the sharpness (the achiote)

I note in others,

makes more sense

than my own distances. The agilities

               they show daily

               who do the world’s

               businesses

               And who do nature’s

               as I have no sense

               I have done either

I have made dialogues,

have discussed ancient texts,

have thrown what light I could, offered

what pleasures

doceat allows

               But the known?

This, I have had to be given,

a life, love, and from one man

the world.

               Tokens.

               But sitting here

               I look out as a wind

               and water man, testing

               And missing

               some proof

I know the quarters

of the weather, where it comes from,

where it goes. But the stem of me,

this I took from their welcome,

or their rejection, of me

               And my arrogance

               was neither diminished

               nor increased,

               by the communication

2

It is undone business

I speak of, this morning,

with the sea

stretching out

from my feet

# Dream Song 29- [John Berryman](https://www.poets.org/node/44354),

There sat down, once, a thing on Henry’s heart  
só heavy, if he had a hundred years  
& more, & weeping, sleepless, in all them time  
Henry could not make good.  
Starts again always in Henry’s ears  
the little cough somewhere, an odour, a chime.  
  
And there is another thing he has in mind  
like a grave Sienese face a thousand years  
would fail to blur the still profiled reproach of.  Ghastly,  
with open eyes, he attends, blind.  
All the bells say: too late.  This is not for tears;  
thinking.  
  
But never did Henry, as he thought he did,  
end anyone and hacks her body up  
and hide the pieces, where they may be found.  
He knows: he went over everyone, & nobody’s missing.  
Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.  
Nobody is ever missing.

**Lonesome Place - Poem by Langston Hughes**

Autoplay next video

I got to leave this town.

It’s a lonesome place.

Got to leave this town cause

It’s a lonesome place.

A po’, po’ boy can’t

Find a friendly face.

Goin’ down to de river

Flowin’ deep an’ slow.

Goin’ down to de river

Deep an’ slow-

Cause there ain’t no worries

Where de waters go.

I’m weary, weary,

Weary, as I can be.

Weary, weary,

Weary as can be.

This life’s so weary,

‘S’ bout to overcome me.

# Weeds - [Edna St. Vincent Millay](https://www.poets.org/node/45670)

White with daisies and red with sorrel

  And empty, empty under the sky!—

Life is a quest and love a quarrel—

  Here is a place for me to lie.

Daisies spring from damnèd seeds,

  And this red fire that here I see

Is a worthless crop of crimson weeds,

  Cursed by farmers thriftily.

But here, unhated for an hour,

  The sorrel runs in ragged flame,

The daisy stands, a bastard flower,

  Like flowers that bear an honest name.

And here a while, where no wind brings

  The baying of a pack athirst,

May sleep the sleep of blessèd things,

  The blood too bright, the brow accurst.

**Sometime during eternity**- **By: Lawrence Ferlinghetti**

Sometime during eternity

                                                   some guys show up

and one of them

                  who shows up real late

                                                   is a kind of carpenter

     from some square-type place

                                          like Galilee

      and he starts wailing

                                         and claiming he is hip

           to who made heaven

                                      and earth

                                                     and that the cat

               who really laid it on us

                                             is his Dad

    And moreover

         he adds

                     It’s all writ down

                                          on some scroll-type parchments

      which some henchmen

                 leave lying around the Dead Sea somewheres

            a long time ago

                                      and which you won’t even find

        for a coupla thousand years or so

                                             or at least for

     nineteen hundred and fortyseven

                                                     of them

                        to be exact

                                            and even then

        nobody really believes them

                                                  or me

                                                           for that matter

      You’re hot

                     they tell him

      And they cool him

      They stretch him on the Tree to cool

                     And everybody after that

                                                              is always making models

                                         of this Tree

                                                      with Him hung up

      and always crooning His name

                                 and calling Him to come down

                                and sit in

                                             on their combo

                          as if he is *the* king cat

                                                           who’s got to blow

                  or they can’t quite make it

                  Only he don’t come down

                                                        from His Tree

      Him just hang there

                                      on His Tree

      looking real Petered out

                                         and real cool

                                                         and also

               according to a roundup

                                                of late world news

         from the usual unreliable sources

                                                              real dead

**The Road Not Taken- 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

# Daddy- BY [SYLVIA PLATH](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sylvia-plath)

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

In which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.

You died before I had time——

Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,

Ghastly statue with one gray toe

Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic

Where it pours bean green over blue

In the waters off beautiful Nauset.

I used to pray to recover you.

Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

But the name of the town is common.

My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.

So I never could tell where you

Put your foot, your root,

I never could talk to you.

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

Are not very pure or true.

With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck

And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack

I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been scared of *you,*

With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.

And your neat mustache

And your Aryan eye, bright blue.

Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You——

Not God but a swastika

So black no sky could squeak through.

Every woman adores a Fascist,

The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

In the picture I have of you,

A cleft in your chin instead of your foot

But no less a devil for that, no not

Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.

I was ten when they buried you.

At twenty I tried to die

And get back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,

And they stuck me together with glue.

And then I knew what to do.

I made a model of you,

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.

And I said I do, I do.

So daddy, I’m finally through.

The black telephone’s off at the root,

The voices just can’t worm through.

If I’ve killed one man, I’ve killed two——

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now.

There’s a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you.

They are dancing and stamping on you.

They always *knew* it was you.

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.

# To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time - [Robert Herrick](https://www.poets.org/node/45735)

Gather ye rosebuds 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.