



Associated Manitoba Arts Festivals

SPEECH ARTS MANUAL

PART 1: SOLO SPOKEN POETRY
2023 edition



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SAFE?

I look to the left,
I look to the right,
Before I ever
Move my feet.
No cars to the left,
No cars to the right,
I guess it's safe
To cross the street....

Shel Silverstein (Falling Up, HarperCollins)

THE HAIRY DOG

My dog's so furry I've not seen
His face for years and years:
His eyes are buried out of sight,
I only guess his ears.

When people ask me for his breed,
I do not know or care:
He has the beauty of them all
Hidden beneath his hair.

Herbert Asquith (Time for Poetry, W.J. Gage & Company)

THE WISH

Each birthday wish
I've ever made
Really does come true.
Each year I wish
I'll grow some more
And every year
I
DO!

Ann Friday (Read Aloud Rhymes, Random House)

AIM HIGH TO THE SKY

Aim high to the sky,
In all that you do.
Because you just never know,
What it takes to be you.

Be strong and be brave,
But at the same time be kind.
And always be sure,
That you're using your mind.

James McDonald (Rainy Day Poems, House of Lore)

I'M GLAD THE SKY IS PAINTED BLUE

I'm glad the sky is painted blue,
And the earth is painted green,
With such a lot of nice fresh air
All sandwiched in between.

Unknown author (Poems for the Very Young, Jonathan Cape Ltd.)

FIRST SNOW

Snow makes whiteness where it falls.
The bushes look like popcorn-balls.
And places where I always play,
Look like somewhere else today.

Marie Louise Allen (A Pocketful of Poems, HarperCollins)

MY HAT!

Here's my hat.
It holds my head,
the thoughts I've had
and the things I've read.

It keeps out the wind.
It keeps off the rain.
It hugs my hair
and warms my brain.

There's me below it,
the sky above it.
It's my lid.
And I love it.

Tony Mitton (Plum, Barn Owl Books)

NO PENCIL

No pencil.
No marker.
No paint brush.
No pen.
No nothing
to draw with
or paint with
again.

No blue paint.
No green paint.
No pink paint.
No red.
Mom takes them
away when
I color
my head.

Kenn Nesbitt (The Biggest Burp Ever, Purple Room Publishing)

FISHING WITH MY GRANDPA

My Grandpa and I do a lot of things together,
But fishing with my Grandpa is the best ever.
I love going to the lake when the sky is all blue.
I love riding in my Grandpa's boat, too.
The next trip to the lake I don't want to miss.
Just being with my Grandpa is better than catching fish.

Dawneisha Washington (familyfriendpoems.com)

BUBBLES

Red bubble
yellow bubble
orange bubble blue

Pink bubble
purple bubble
rainbow bubble too

This bubble
big bubble
shiny and round

Float bubble
fly bubble
rise from the ground

Up bubble
up bubble
up so high

Go bubble
go bubble
gone –
bye bye!

James Carter (Hey, Little Bug! Poems for Little Creatures, Frances Lincoln)

MARCH

“Brrr!” said the robin,
“I thought it was spring!
It’s March, this I know,
And I’m ready to sing.
But my beak’s nearly frozen,
My feet hardly move;
If this month is spring
Then I do not approve!”

Fran Newman ([Sunflakes & Snowshine](#), North Winds Press)

SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE

Something big has been here,
what it was, I do not know,
for I did not see it coming,
and I did not see it go,
but I hope I never meet it,
if I do, I’m in a fix,
for it left behind its footprints,
they are size nine-fifty-six.

Jack Prelutsky ([Something Big Has Been Here](#), Greenwillow Books)

NEW PET

We've something new at our house now
A something soft and small
But though it cries and wiggles so,
It's not a pig at all!

It drinks just milk and gulps it down
Till it looks very fat.
It can't chase mice; do you know why?
It isn't any cat!

It cries at night; I guess that's 'cause
It's lonely for its mother.
No, it's not a puppy dog.
It's a baby brother!

Lois F. Pasley (Poetry Place Anthology, Scholastic)

SPRING RAIN

The storm came up so very quick
It couldn't have been quicker.
I should have brought my hat along,
I should have brought my slicker.

My hair is wet, my feet are wet,
I couldn't be much wetter.
I fell into a river once
But this is even better.

Marchette Chute (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

SUN AND MOON

The moon shines clear as silver,
The sun shines bright like gold,
And both are very lovely,
And very, very old.

God hung them up as lanterns,
For all beneath the sky;
And nobody can blow them out,
For they are up too high.

Charlotte DrUITt Cole ([New Oxford Modern English Book 1](#), Oxford University Press)

I TOOK MY DOGGY FOR A WALK

I took my doggy for a walk.
I thought it would be fun.
The moment that we got outside
he took off at a run.

I gripped the handle of his leash.
It instantly pulled tight.
My dog was strong. He ran so fast
I practically took flight.

He pulled me through the neighborhood.
(My doggy likes to roam.)
I bumped and bounced and banged around
until he ran back home.

So now I'm bruised and battered
like a ratty, tattered rag.
I took my doggy for a walk.
He took me for a drag.

Kenn Nesbitt ([My Cat Knows Karate](#), ReadHowYouWant.com)

JACK WAS NIMBLE

Jack was nimble.
Jack was quick.
Jack jumped over
the candlestick.

Jack kept jumping,
much too close.
Now his pants
smell like burnt toast.

Bruce Lansky (The New Adventures of Mother Goose, Running Press)

I'M GLAD I'M ME

No one looks
The way I do.
I have noticed
That it's true.
No one walks the way I walk.
No one talks the way I talk.
No one plays the way I play.
No one says the things I say.
I am special.
I am me.
There's no one else
I'd rather be!

Jack Prelutsky (I'm Glad I'm Me: Poems About You, Scholastic)

SICK DAYS

On days when I am sick in bed
My mother is so nice;
She brings me bowls of chicken soup
And ginger ale with ice.

She cuts the crusts off buttered toast
And serves it on a tray
And sits down while I eat it
And doesn't go away.

She reads my favorite books to me;
She lets me take my pick;
And everything is perfect—
Except that I am sick!

Mary Ann Hoberman (Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers, Scholastic)

MICE

I think mice
Are rather nice.

Their tails are long,
Their faces small,
They haven't any
Chins at all.
Their ears are pink,
Their teeth are white,
They run about
The house at night
They nibble things
They shouldn't touch
And no one seems
To like them much.

But I think mice
Are nice.

Rose Fyleman (Fifty-One New Nursery Rhymes, Doubleday)

JONATHAN'S FARM

I'd like a little farm
with a house that's painted blue,
with a lively little terrier
and a pussy cat or two.

I'd build a little barn
to keep my gentle cows,
outside I'd build a pig-pen
for piglets and for sows;

I'd plant a little orchard
with apple and with plum
and all the birds would praise
their green kingdom.

Miriam Waddington (Til All the Stars Have Fallen, Kids Can Press)

THE LITTLE TURTLE

There was a little turtle.
He lived in a box.
He swam in a puddle.
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito.
He snapped at a flea.
He snapped at a minnow.
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito.
He caught the flea.
He caught the minnow.
But he didn't catch me.

Vachel Lindsay (The Little Turtle, Scholastic)

IMAGINATION COLLABORATION

Welcome to our play,
We hope you have a blast
As we use our imagination
To go back into the past,
Or travel to a star
Or swim with fish at sea,
For no matter where you are
Your imagination can set you free.

Rebecca and James McDonald ([At the End of the Rainbow](#), House of Lore)

CAT KISSES

Sandpaper kisses
on a cheek or chin --
that is the way
for a day to begin!

Sandpaper kisses --
a cuddle, a purr.
I have an alarm clock
that's covered with fur.

Bobbi Katz ([Here's A Little Poem: A Very First Book of Poetry](#), Candlewick)

MY KITTEN IS A NINJA

My kitten is a ninja.
He wears a black disguise.
He sneaks up on me stealthily
and takes me by surprise.

I never hear him coming.
He doesn't make a peep.
He hides, then glides in silently
and makes a flying leap.

I don't know why he does it.
The reason isn't clear.
He simply likes to tackle me
then swiftly disappear.

I wish that he was normal
and didn't act like that.
My life would be so different if
I had an average cat.

I'd play with him, and pet him,
and treat him gingerly.
Instead, whenever he's around
I get a ninjury.

Kenn Nesbitt (Poetry4Kids.com)

MY DOG DOES MY HOMEWORK

My dog does my homework
at home every night.
He answers each question
and gets them all right.

There's only one problem
with homework by Rover.
I can't turn in work
that's been slobbered all over.

Kenn Nesbitt (When the Teacher Isn't Looking, Running Press)

DIRTY SOCKS

My socks were very dirty,
so I washed them in the lake.
It wasn't long before I knew
I'd made a big mistake.

The water changed from clear to mud.
Then fumes began to rise.
And soon a cloud of air pollution
covered up the skies.

When bullfrogs starting croaking
and ducks began to quack,
some campers started chanting,
"We want our clean lake back."

I've got a pile of dirty socks.
I'm in an awful bind.
I guess I'll have to bury them.
I hope the worms don't mind.

Bruce Lansky (If Pigs Could Fly...And Other Deep Thoughts, Running Press Adult)

THE BALL GAME IS OVER

The ball game is over,
And here is the score --
They got ninety-seven,
We got ninety-four.

Baseball is fun,
But it gives me the blues
To score ninety-four
And still manage to lose.

Jack Prelutsky (Be Glad Your Nose Is On Your Face, Greenwillow Books)

POLAR BEAR

The Polar Bear never makes his bed;
He sleeps on a cake of ice instead.
He has no blanket, no quilt, no sheet
Except the rain and snow and sleet.
He drifts about on a white ice floe
While cold winds howl and blizzards blow
And the temperature drops to forty below.
The Polar Bear never makes his bed;
The blanket he pulls up over his head
Is lined with soft and feathery snow.
If ever he rose and turned on the light,
He would find a world of bathtub white,
And icebergs floating through the night.

William Jay Smith ([Around My Room](#), Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

OUR MOLE

Where does he go, our mole?
The one who lies under the lawn.
Where does he go in winter?
The one who steals up at dawn
And steals my mother's flowers
To decorate his room,
Or toss a little salad
To nibble in the gloom.

Where does he go, our mole,
When everything's icy and cold?
Does he warm himself all winter
With a little lump of coal?
Does he sleep in a sleeping bag
Of softest dandelion fluff?

Mole, if you're still down there,
Somewhere...
I do hope you're warm enough.

Lois Simmie ([Auntie's Knitting a Baby](#), Prairie Books)

FREDDIE

I don't like doing homework,
I know that it will bore me.
But now I am much happier
'Cause Freddie does it for me!

He greets me at the door each day
When I come home from school.
He just can't wait to read my books --
I think that's pretty cool!

I give him all my homework,
Like history and math.
And when he's done I give him
A nice warm bubble bath!

My grades are so much better now,
Which makes my parents glad.
Freddie is the smartest dog
That I have ever had!

Phil Bolsta (Kids Pick the Funniest Poems, Meadowbrook Press)

FEBRUARY TWILIGHT

I stood beside a hill
Smooth with new-laid snow,
A single star looked out
From the cold evening glow.

There was no other creature
that saw what I could see --
I stood and watched the evening star
As long as it watched me.

Sara Teasdale (Dark of the Moon, Macmillan Company)

I TAUGHT MY CAT TO CLEAN MY ROOM

I taught my cat to clean my room,
to use a bucket, brush and broom,
to dust my clock and picture frames,
and pick up all my toys and games.

He puts my pants and shirts away,
and makes my bed, and I would say
it seems to me it's only fair
he puts away my underwear.

In fact, I think he's got it made.
I'm not as happy with our trade.
He may pick up my shoes and socks,
but I clean out his litter box.

Kenn Nesbitt ([My Hippo Has the Hiccups](#), Sourcebooks Jabberwocky)

MY PARENTS SENT ME TO THE STORE

My parents sent me to the store
to buy a loaf of bread.
I came home with a puppy
and a parakeet instead.

I came home with a guinea pig,
a hamster and a cat,
a turtle and a lizard
and a friendly little rat.

I also had a monkey
and a mongoose and a mouse.
Those animals went crazy
when I brought them in the house.

They barked and yelped and hissed
and chased my family out the door.
My parents never let me
do the shopping anymore.

Kenn Nesbitt ([The Armpit of Doom](#), Purple Room Publishing)

ONE DAY I'LL BE

Today at school my teacher said,
I wonder what you'll be?
When time has passed and you've grown up,
And the world is yours to see.

Right then and there I stood straight up,
And looked her in the face,
And said with pride and confidence,
I plan to live in space.

Like pirates of so long ago,
My ship will take me far,
Around the moon and back again,
And to a distant star.

So when you talk about the world,
And say it's yours to see,
I believe I'll have the greatest view,
Upon the cosmic sea.

James McDonald ([Rainy Day Poems](#), House of Lore)

A MILLION CANDLES

A million candles fill the night,
they glisten in the dark,
and though by day they hide their glow,
now each displays its spark.

Amidst them all, there is one light
that has a special shine,
and that's the one whose name I know...
I think that it knows mine.

Jack Prelutsky ([Be Glad Your Nose Is on Your Face](#), Greenwillow Books)

UNDER THE GROUND

What is under the grass,
Way down in the ground,
Where everything is cool and wet
With darkness all around?

Little pink worms live there;
Ants and brown bugs creep
Softly round the stones and rocks
Where roots are pushing deep.

Do they hear us walking
On the grass above their heads;
Hear us running over
While they snuggle in their beds?

Rhoda W. Bacmeister ([Voices on the Wind](#), Kids Can Press)

SOMEONE SWIPED THE COOKIES

Someone swiped the cookies
that were really meant for me.
I'm sure I know who did it,
she'll regret her little spree.
She snuck into the pantry
where she found the cookie jar,
she thinks she's really clever,
but she won't get very far.

I'm tracking down the culprit,
she should not be hard to find.
She left a very messy trail
of cookie crumbs behind.
There she is! I've got her!
She has crumbs around her lips!
Oh no! She finished every one...
my luscious chocolate chips.

Jack Prelutsky ([A Pizza the Size of the Sun](#), Greenwillow Books)

CATS

Cats sleep
Anywhere,
Any table,
Any chair,
Top of piano,
Window-ledge,
In the middle,
On the edge,
Open drawer,
Empty shoe,
Anybody's
Lap will do,
Fitted in a
Cardboard box,
In the cupboard
With your frocks—
Anywhere!
They don't care!
Cats sleep
Anywhere.

Eleanor Farjeon (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

THE CROCODILE

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin!
How neatly spread his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws!

Lewis Carroll (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the leaves bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

Christina Rossetti (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

THE SWING

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown—
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

Robert Louis Stevenson (A Child's Garden of Verses, Gollancz)

THE MARCH WIND

I come to work as well as play;
I'll tell you what I do;
I whistle all the live-long day,
"Woo-oo-oo-oo! Woo-oo!"

I toss the branches up and down
And shake them to and fro,
I whirl the leaves in flocks of brown,
And send them high and low.

I strew the twigs upon the ground,
The frozen earth I sweep;
I blow the children round and round
And wake the flowers from sleep.

Anonymous (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

THE LAND OF NOD

From breakfast on all through the day
At home among my friends I stay;
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do –
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

Robert Louis Stevenson (A Child's Garden of Verses, Gollancz)

POLITENESS

If people ask me,
I always tell them:
“Quite well, thank you, I’m very glad to say.”
If people ask me,
I always answer,
“Quite well, thank you, how are you today?”
I always answer,
I always tell them,
If they ask me
Politely....

BUT SOMETIMES

I wish
That they wouldn’t.

A.A. Milne (The World of Christopher Robin, McClelland & Stewart)

A KITTEN

He’s nothing much but fur
And two round eyes of blue,
He has a giant purr
And a midget mew.

He darts and pats the air,
He starts and cocks his ear,
When there is nothing there
For him to see and hear.

He runs around in rings,
But why we cannot tell;
With sideways leaps he springs
At things invisible—

Then halfway through a leap
His startled eyeballs close,
And he drops off to sleep
With one paw on his nose.

Eleanor Farjeon (Childcraft Vol. 1, World Book – Childcraft Int.)

FIREFLY

A little light is going by,
Is going up to see the sky,
A little light with wings.

I never could have thought of it,
To have a little bug all lit
And made to go on wings.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts (Poems and Prayers for the Very Young, Random House)

THE LITTLE PLANT

In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant
Lay fast asleep!

“Wake!” said the sunshine,
“And creep to the light.”
“Wake!” said the voice
Of the raindrop bright.

The little plant heard,
And it rose to see
What the wonderful
Outside world might be.

Kate L. Brown (The Plant Baby and its Friends, Silver, Burdett and Company)

ALLIGATORS ARE UNFRIENDLY

Alligators are unfriendly,
they are easily upset,
I suspect that I would never
care to have one for a pet.
Oh, I know they do not bellow,
and I think they do not shed,
but I'd probably be nervous
if I had one in my bed.

Alligators are not clever,
they are something of a bore,
they can't heel or catch a Frisbee,
they don't greet you at the door,
for their courtesy is lacking,
and their tempers are not sweet,
they won't even fetch your slippers
...though they just might eat your feet.

Jack Prelutsky (New Kid on the Block, Greenwillow Books)

UNSCRATCHABLE ITCH

There is a spot that you can't scratch
Right between your shoulder blades,
Like an egg that just won't hatch
Here you set and there it stays.
Turn and squirm and try to reach it,
Twist your neck and bend your back,
Hear your elbows creak and crack,
Stretch your fingers, now you bet it's
Going to reach—no that won't get it—
Hold your breath and stretch and pray,
Only just an inch away,
Worse than a sunbeam you can't catch
Is that one spot that
You can't scratch.

Shel Silverstein (A Light in the Attic, HarperCollins)

BRONTOSAURUS

The giant brontosaurus
Was a prehistoric chap
With four fat feet to stand on
And a very skimpy lap.
The scientists assure us
Of a most amazing thing—
A brontosaurus blossomed
When he had a chance to sing!

(The bigger brontosauruses,
Who liked to sing in choruses,
Would close their eyes
and harmonize
And sing most anything.)

They growled and they yowled,
They deedled and they dummed;
They warbled and they whistled,
They howled and they hummed.
They didn't eat, they didn't sleep;
They sang and sang all day.
Now all you'll find are footprints
Where they tapped the time away!

Gail Kredenser ([Random House Book of Poetry for Children](#), Random House)

HOMework

What is it about homework
That makes me want to write
My Great Aunt Myrt to thank her for
The sweater that's too tight?

What is it about homework
That makes me pick up socks
That stink from days and days of wear,
Then clean the litter box?

What is it about homework
That makes me volunteer
To take the garbage out before
The bugs and flies appear?

What is it about homework
That makes me wash my hair
And take an hour combing out
The snags and tangles there?

What is it about homework?
You know, I wish I knew,
'Cause nights when I've got homework
I've got much too much to do!

Jane Yolen (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

BILLY BATTER

*Billy Batter,
What's the matter?
How come you're so sad?
I lost my cat
In the laundromat,
And a dragon ran off with my dad,
My dad—
A dragon ran off with my dad!*

*Billy Batter,
What's the matter?
How come you're so glum?
I ripped my jeans
On the Coke machine,
And a monster ran off with my mum,
My mum—
A monster ran off with my mum!*

*Billy Batter,
Now you're better—
Happy as a tack!
The dragon's gone
To Saskatchewan;
The monster fell
In a wishing-well;
The cat showed up
With a new-born pup;
I fixed the rips
With potato chips,
And my dad and my mum came back,
Came back—
My dad and my mum came back!*

Dennis Lee ([Talking Like the Rain: A First Book of Poems](#), Little Brown)

NEW JACKET

I've got a new jacket.

I don't even care.

What good is a jacket

You can't even wear?

A not-everyday jacket

That's-not-for-play jacket

Do-as-I-say jacket

Just isn't fair.

It's yellow and red

With a zigzag design

They bought it for me

And they said it was mine.

A must-keep-it-neat jacket

Not-for-the-street jacket

Don't-you-look-sweet jacket

Isn't that fine?

I think that they bought it

Just so they could say

Go take off that jacket,

Don't wear it today.

A don't-get-it-messed jacket

Please-keep-it-pressed jacket

That-is-your-best jacket

Put it away.

Mary Ann Hoberman (Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers, Little, Brown & Co.)

FALLING ASLEEP IN CLASS

I fell asleep in class today,
as I was awfully bored.
I laid my head upon my desk
and closed my eyes and snored.

I woke to find a piece of paper
sticking to my face.
I'd slobbered on my textbooks,
and my hair was a disgrace.

My clothes were badly rumped,
and my eyes were glazed and red.
My binder left a three-ring
indentation in my head.

I slept through class, and probably
I would have slept some more,
except my students woke me
as they headed out the door.

Kenn Nesbitt (When the Teacher Isn't Looking, Running Press)

PET SHOPPING

While shopping at the pet store
I got my fondest wish.
I bought myself a fish bowl
and then a pair of fish.

And since I was already
out shopping at the store
I thought I ought to purchase
another smidgen more.

And so I got a rabbit,
a hamster and a frog,
a gerbil and a turtle,
a parrot and a dog.

I purchased an iguana,
a tortoise and a rat,
an eight-foot anaconda,
a monkey and a cat.

A guinea pig, a gecko,
a ferret and a mouse,
and had them all delivered,
directly to my house.

My sister went berzerko!
She's now installing locks,
because I said her bedroom
would be their litter box!

Kenn Nesbitt ([My Hippo Has the Hiccups](#), Sourcebooks Jabberwocky)

GROWING

Today
you may be small.
But one day
you'll be tall,
like me,
maybe taller.
You won't
fit into your bed.
Your hat
won't fit on your head.
Your feet will fill up the floor.
You'll have to bend down
to come through the door.
You'll be able to reach
on the highest shelf,
(and I can't do that now,
myself).
Out in the country
the tallest trees
will scratch your ankles
and tickle your knees.
Up in the clouds,
yes, way up there,
the eagles will nest
in your craggy hair.
But they'd better soon find
a safer place
because soon your head
will be up in space.

So I hope you won't be too proud
to bend down
and say hello
to your old home-town.
And I hope it won't drive you
utterly mad
to visit your tiny
Mum and Dad.

Tony Mitton ([Plum](#), Barn Owl Books)

LITTLE BOY BLUE

Little Boy Blue,
please cover your nose.
You sneezed on Miss Muffet
and ruined her clothes.
You sprayed Mother Hubbard,
and now she is sick.
You put out the fire
on Jack's candlestick.
Your sneeze is the reason
why Humpty fell down.
You drenched Yankee Doodle
when he came to town.
The blind mice are angry!
The sheep are upset!
From now on, use tissues
so no one gets wet!

Darren Sardelli (Peter, Peter, Pizza Eater, Meadowbrook Press)

I AM FLYING!

I am flying! I am flying!
I am riding on the breeze,
I am soaring over meadows,
I am sailing over seas,
I ascend above the cities
where the people, small as ants,
cannot sense the keen precision
of my aerobatic dance.

I am flying! I am flying!
I am climbing unconfined,
I am swifter than the falcon,
and I leave the wind behind,
I am swooping, I am swirling
in a jubilant display,
I am brilliant as a comet
blazing through the Milky Way.

I am flying! I am flying!
I am higher than the moon,
still, I think I'd best be landing,
and it cannot be too soon,
for some nasty information
has lit up my little brain—
I am flying! I am flying!
but I fly without a plane.

Jack Prelutsky ([The New Kid on the Block](#), Greenwillow Books)

PACHYCEPHALOSAURUS (*pak-i-sef-a-lo-saw-rus*)

Among the later dinosaurs
Though not the largest, strongest,
PACHYCEPHALOSAURUS had
The name that was the longest.

Yet he had more than syllables,
As you may well suppose.
He had great knobs upon his cheeks
And spikes upon his nose.

Ten inches thick, atop his head,
A bump of bone projected.
By this his brain, though hardly worth
Protecting, was protected.

No claw or tooth, no tree that fell
Upon his head kerwhacky,
Could crack or crease or jar or scar
That stony part of Paky.

And so he nibbled plants in peace
And lived untroubled days.
Sometimes, in fact, as Paky proved,
To be a bonehead pays.

Richard Armour (Sing a Song of Popcorn, Scholastic)

SMART

My dad gave me one dollar bill
'Cause I'm his smartest son,
And I swapped it for two shiny quarters
'Cause two is more than one!

And then I took the quarters
And traded them to Lou
For three dimes—I guess he don't know
That three is more than two!

Just then, along came old blind Bates
And just 'cause he can't see
He gave me four nickels for my three dimes,
And four is more than three!

And I took the nickels to Hiram Coombs
Down at the seed-feed store,
And the fool gave me five pennies for them,
And five is more than four!

And then I went and showed my dad,
And he got red in the cheeks
And closed his eyes and shook his head—
Too proud of me to speak!

Shel Silverstein ([Random House Book of Poetry for Children](#), Random House)

AN ELEPHANT IS AN ODD AFFAIR

An elephant is an odd affair
With lots of skin and not much hair.
So very much skin that he always looks old
As it wrinkles down in fold after fold.
His ears are squarish and his feet are round.
His head's a long, long way from the ground.
His trunk is big but his tail is not.
Each eye is almost as small as a dot.
His four big legs are straight as high trees,
Except where they bend at his wrinkled knees.
An elephant's so large that I can't understand
Why he likes the small peanut I hold in my hand.

Zhenya Gay (The Reading of Poetry, Allyn and Bacon)

THERE ARE BIG WAVES

There are big waves and little waves,
Green waves and blue,
Waves you can jump over,
Waves you dive thro'.
Waves that rise up
Like a great water wall,
Waves that swell softly
And don't break at all,
Waves that can whisper,
Waves that can roar,
And tiny waves that run at you
Running on the shore.

Eleanor Farjeon (History for Infants, Folens Publishers)

AN ALLEY CAT WITH ONE LIFE LEFT

I'm an alley cat with one life left,
I started out with nine,
but lost the first in a knockdown fight
with a cat named Frankenstein,
my second went soon after that
to something that I ate,
my third went under a garbage truck—
I noticed it too late.

While strolling through the zoo one day,
I heard an awful roar,
I'd strayed into a lion's cage—
so much for number four,
I lost my fifth one morning
to a ton of falling bricks,
then tumbled from a window ledge,
and gave up number six.

My seventh went to a Saint Bernard—
I was no match for him,
my eighth was squandered in the lake—
it seems I couldn't swim,
so now I'd better watch my step,
I'm down to number nine,
I'm an alley cat with one life left,
and glad that life is mine.

Jack Prelutsky ([The New Kid on the Block](#), Greenwillow Books)

SNOWMAN

'Twas the first day of the springtime,
And the snowman stood alone
As the winter snows were melting,
And the pine trees seemed to groan,
“Ah, you poor sad smiling snowman,
You’ll be melting by and by.”
Said the snowman, “What a pity,
For I’d like to see July.
Yes, I’d like to see July, and please don’t ask me why.
But I’d like to, yes I’d like to, oh I’d like to see July.”

Chirped a robin, just arriving,
“Seasons come and seasons go,
And the greatest ice must crumble
When it’s flowers’ time to grow.
And as one thing is beginning
So another thing must die,
And there’s never been a snowman
Who has ever seen July.
No, they never see July, no matter how they try.
No, they never ever, never ever, never see July.”

But the snowman sniffed his carrot nose
And said, “At least I’ll try,”
And he bravely smiled his frosty smile
And blinked his coal-black eye.
And there he stood and faced the sun
A blazin’ from the sky—
And I really cannot tell you
If he ever saw July.
Did he ever see July? You can guess as well as I
If he ever, if he never, if he ever saw July.

Shel Silverstein ([Where the Sidewalk Ends](#), Harper and Row)

THE LEAVES HAD A WONDERFUL FROLIC

The leaves had a wonderful frolic.
They danced to the wind's loud song.
They whirled, and they floated, and scampered.
They circled and flew along.

The moon saw the little leaves dancing,
Each looked like a small brown bird.
The man in the moon smiled and listened,
And this is the song he heard.

The North Wind is calling and calling,
And we must whirl round and round,
And then when our dancing is ended,
We'll make a warm quilt for the ground.

Unknown Author ([Autumn Songbook](#), Sophia Books)

ITCHES

I'm covered in calamine lotion
from forehead on down to my feeters
to stop me from scratching the itches
of hundreds of bites from mosqueeters.

My arms and my legs are so itchy,
they feel like they're starting to smoke.
I guess that I got that from playing
in patches of red poison oak.

As if it could not be more painful,
my stomach is rashy and hivy,
my back and my sides are all blotchy,
from wandering through poison ivy.

Despite that I'm itching like crazy,
I hardly can wait until when,
my itches and rashes are better
so I can go camping again!

Kenn Nesbitt ([The Aliens Have Landed at Our School!](#), Running Press)

RECESS! OH, RECESS!

Recess! Oh, Recess!
We love you! You rule!
You keep us away
from the teachers in school.
Your swings are refreshing.
Your slides are the best.
You give us a break
from a really hard test.

Recess! Oh, Recess!
We want you to know,
you're sweeter than syrup,
you're special like snow.
You don't assign homework.
You make the day fun.
You let us play kickball
and run in the sun.

Recess! Oh, Recess!
You're first on our list.
We'd be in despair
if you didn't exist.
We're happy we have you.
You're awesome and cool.
Recess! Oh, Recess!
We love you! You rule!

Darren Sardelli ([Galaxy Pizza and Meteor Pie](#), Laugh-A-Lot Books)

EGGS!

Eggs!
You're excellent, exquisite,
I exalt you, hot or cold,
I salute you in a salad,
I commend you in a mold,
you are scrumptious lightly scrambled,
fully fascinating fried,
incandescent over easy,
dazzling on your sunny side.

Eggs!
You're dainty when you're coddled,
when you're stuffed, I long to bite,
you're angelic when you're deviled,
when you're shirred, you're sheer delight,
you are magic on a muffin,
gold ambrosia on a bun,
you are princely, poached precisely,
when your yellow starts to run.

Eggs!
You're nectar in an omelette,
in soufflés, a savory dream,
baked or boiled you are bewitching,
in a quiche, you reign supreme,
yes, I love you to distraction,
but alas, you have a flaw,
for you're thoroughly revolting
when you're swallowed whole and raw.

Jack Prelutsky ([The New Kid on the Block](#), Greenwillow Books)

THE PUZZLE

Annie and Ernie
 McGilligan Spock
Pedalled their tricycles
 Round the block.

They pedalled and pedalled
 And pedalled in pairs,
Till they came to a house
 That was just like theirs.

In the same front yard
 Stood the same small tree;
On the same brown table
 The same pot of tea;

And the very same smells!
 And the very same noise!
And the very same beds
 With the very same toys!

They stood and they stared
 And they stared and they stood;
The thing was too weird
 To be understood:

How was it possible?
 Think of the shock
Of Annie and Ernie
 McGilligan Spock!

Dennis Lee ([Jelly Belly](#), Macmillan Canada)

POLAR BEAR SNOW

At Churchill, Manitoba,
Right next to Hudson Bay,
I spied a monstrous snowball
One snowy winter day.

Snow, snow, polar bear snow!

I'd never seen a snowball
So gigantic and so round,
So huge it towered over me
Upon the frozen ground.

Snow, snow, polar bear snow!

I pushed that monster snowball,
I punched it, kicked it too,
When all at once that snowball moved—
It stretched and then it grew.

Snow, snow, polar bear snow!

It had a mouth, four giant paws,
A hundred teeth, a thousand claws,
A million strands of snow-white hair.
It growled just like a...POLAR BEAR!

Snow, snow, polar bear snow!

"A POLAR BEAR! HELP! HELP!" I cried.
One snap!
 One gulp!
 I was inside!

Snow, snow, polar bear snow!

It's dark and damp inside this bear,
I've been stuck at least a year—
So hurry up to Churchill now
And GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Robert Heidbreder ([Don't Eat Spiders](#), Oxford Press)

THE RUNAWAY

Once, when the snow of the year was beginning
to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say,
“Whose colt?”
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his
head
And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled
And we saw him or thought we saw him dim
and gray,

Like a shadow against the curtain of falling
flakes.
“I think the little fellow’s afraid of the snow.
He isn’t winter-broken. It isn’t play
With the little fellow at all. He’s running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, ‘Sakes,
It’s only weather.’ He’d think she didn’t know!
Where is his mother? He can’t be out alone.”
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone,
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn’t hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
“Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in.”

Robert Frost (Time for Poetry, Scott Foresman & Co.)

SEAL

See how he dives
From the rocks with a zoom!
See how he darts
Through his watery room
Past crabs and eels
And green seaweed,
Past fluffs of sandy
Minnow feed!
See how he swims
With a swerve and a twist,
A flip of the flipper,
A flick of the wrist!
Quicksilver-quick,
Softer than spray,
down he plunges
And sweeps away;
Before you can think,
Before you can utter
Words like "Dill Pickle"
Or "Apple Butter,"
Back up he swims
Past Sting Ray and Shark,
Out with a zoom,
A Whoop, a bark;
Before you can say
Whatever you wish,
He plops at your side
With a mouthful of fish!

William Jay Smith ([Around My Room](#), Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

THE BIRDS' BATH

In our garden we have made
Such a pretty little pool,
Lined with pebbles neatly laid,
Filled with water clean and cool.

When the sun shines warm and high
Robins cluster round its brink,
Never one comes flying by
But will flutter down to drink.

Then they splash and splash and splash,
Spattering little showers bright
All around, till off they flash
Singing sweetly their delight.

Evaleen Stein (Child Songs of Cheer, Good Press)

MY DOG IS TOO FRIENDLY

My dog is very friendly,
but he sometimes gets excited --
especially when we've been apart
and then are reunited.

He puts his paws up on my waist,
then barks and gives a push.
I tumble over backwards
and I land right on my tush.

My dog feels very sorry,
and he licks me without fail.
He licks my ears and cheeks and nose,
then wags his little tail.

I hate it when he licks me,
but I do not have much hope.
His breath smells like a garbage dump.
He should be using Scope.

Bruce Lansky (My Dog Ate My Homework, Running Press)

THE WORLD'S FASTEST BICYCLE

My bicycle's the fastest
that the world has ever seen;
it has supersonic engines
and a flame-retardant sheen.

My bicycle will travel
a gazillion miles an hour —
it has rockets on the handlebars
for supplemental power.

The pedals both are jet-propelled
to help you pedal faster,
and the shifter is equipped
with an electric turbo-blaster.

The fender has a parachute
in case you need to brake.
Yes, my bike is undeniably
the fastest one they make.

My bicycle's incredible!
I love the way it feels,
and I'll like it even more
when Dad removes the training wheels.

Kenn Nesbitt ([The Aliens Have Landed at Our School!](#), Running Press)

SWEET DREAMS

It's always been a wish of mine
(Or should I say a dream)
To scare my sister half to death
And hear her piercing scream.

That's why I squished four bugs until
They all were very dead,
Then took them to my sister's room
And put them in her bed.

After we had said goodnight,
My heart began to pound.
I waited and I waited, but
She never made a sound.

And then I got so doggone tired
I couldn't stay awake.
I climbed into my own warm bed
And shrieked – there was a snake!

It wiggled, and I leaped and fell
And bruised my bottom half;
Then I heard an awful sound --
It was my sister's laugh.

Joyce Armor ([Kids Pick the Funniest Poems](#), Running Press)

I WISH MY FATHER WOULDN'T TRY TO FIX THINGS ANYMORE

My father's listed everything
he's planning to repair,
I hope he won't attempt it,
for the talent isn't there,
he tinkered with the toaster
when the toaster wouldn't pop,
now we keep it disconnected,
but we cannot make it stop.

He fiddled with the blender,
and he took a clock apart,
the clock is running backward,
and the blender will not start.
Every windowpane he's puttied
now admits the slightest breeze,
and he's half destroyed the furnace,
if we're lucky, we won't freeze.

The TV set was working,
yet he thought he'd poke around,
now the picture's out of focus,
and there isn't any sound,
there's a faucet in the basement
that had dripped one drop all year,
since he fixed it, we can't find it
without wearing scuba gear.

I wish my father wouldn't try
to fix things anymore,
for everything he's mended
is more broken than before,
if my father finally fixes
every item on his list,
we'll be living in the garden,
for our house will not exist.

Jack Prelutsky ([Something Big Has Been Here](#), Greenwillow Books)

MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an errant sleepyhead,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Robert Louis Stevenson (Time for Poetry, W.J. Gage & Company)

THE LAMPLIGHTER

My tea is nearly ready
and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window
to see Leerie going by;
For every night at tea-time
and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder
he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver
and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker
and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger
and can choose what I'm to do,
O Leerie, I'll go round at night
and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky,
with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it
as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry by
with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child
and nod to him to-night!

Robert Louis Stevenson ([A Child's Garden of Verses](#), Gollancz)

THE RIVER

Why hurry, little river,
Why hurry to the sea?
There is nothing there to do
But to sink into the blue
And all forgotten be.
There is nothing on that shore
But the tides for evermore,
And the faint and far-off line
Where the winds across the brine
For ever, ever roam
And never find a home.

Why hurry, little river,
From the mountains and the mead,
Where the graceful elms are sleeping
And the quiet cattle feed?
The loving shadows cool
The deep and restful pool;
And every tribute stream
Brings its own sweet woodland dream
Of the mighty woods that sleep
Where the sighs of earth are deep,
And the silent skies look down
On the savage mountain's frown.

Oh linger, little river,
Your banks are all so fair,
Each morning is a hymn of praise,
Each evening is a prayer.
All day the sunbeams glitter
On your shallows and your bars,
And at night the dear God stills you
With the music of the stars.

Frederick George Scott (All Sails Set, Copp Clark Publishing)

WILD HORSES

We saw them drink from a quiet stream,
 As clear as their own dark eyes;
Their necks were arched in the sunlight's gleam
And they were beautiful as a dream
When they drank at dawn from a quiet stream,
 As clear as their own dark eyes.

We saw them run on the open plains,
 Untouched by the whip and spur;
The wind was soft in their tossing manes,
The love of freedom in their veins,
As they ran for joy on the open plains,
 Untouched by the whip and spur.

We saw them stand on a hilltop high
 With nostrils wide to the breeze.
Their forms were graceful against the sky,
And wild and beautiful was their cry
As they stood at eve on a hilltop high
 With nostrils wide to the breeze.

Myra A.I. Smith (All Sails Set, Copp Clark Publishing)

THE MINUET

Grandma told me all about it,
Told me so I couldn't doubt it,
How she danced, my grandma danced; long ago—
How she held her pretty head,
How her dainty skirt she spread,
How she slowly leaned and rose—long ago.

Grandma's hair was bright and sunny,
Dimpled cheeks, too, oh, how funny!
Really quite a pretty girl—long ago.
Bless her! why, she wears a cap,
Grandma does, and takes a nap
Every single day: and yet
Grandma danced the minuet—long ago.

"Modern ways are quite alarming,"
Grandma says, "but boys were charming"
(Girls and boys she means, of course) "long ago."
Brave but modest, grandly shy;
She would like to have us try
Just to feel like those who met
In the graceful minuet—long ago.

Mary Mapes Dodge (101 Famous Poems, Contemporary Books)

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I thought;
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, splashless, as they swim.

Emily Dickinson (*A Child's Anthology of Poetry*, Scholastic)

BOOKS

What worlds of wonder are our books!
As one opens them and looks,
New ideas and people rise
In our fancies and our eyes.

The room we sit in melts away,
And we find ourselves at play
With someone who, before the end,
May become our chosen friend.

Or we sail along the page
To some other land or age.
Here's our body in the chair,
But our mind is over there.

Each book is a magic box
Which with a touch a child unlocks.
In between their outside covers
Books hold all things for their lovers.

Eleanor Farjeon (Blackbird Has Spoken, Macmillan Children's)

COLOR

What is pink? a rose is pink
By a fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? Why, an orange,
Just an orange!

Christina Rossetti (The Big Golden Book of Poetry, Golden Press)

THE HENS

The night was coming very fast;
It reached the gate as I ran past.

The pigeons had gone to the tower of the church
And all the hens were on their perch,

Up in the barn, and I thought I heard
A piece of a little purring word.

I stopped inside, waiting and staying,
To try to hear what the hens were saying.

They were asking something, that was plain,
Asking it over and over again.

One of them moved and turned around,
Her feathers made a ruffled sound,

A ruffled sound, like a bushful of birds,
And she said her little asking words.

She pushed her head close into her wing,
But nothing answered anything.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts ([Under the Tree](#), Barnes and Noble)

JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll ([The Random House Book of Poetry for Children](#), Random House)

A PATH TO THE MOON

From my front door there's a path to the moon
that nobody seems to see
tho it's marked with stones & grass & trees
there's nobody sees it but me.

You walk straight ahead for ten trees or so
turn left at the robin's song
follow the sound of the west wind down
past where the deer drink from the pond.

You take a right turn as the river bends
then where the clouds touch the earth
close your left eye & count up to ten
while twirling for all that you're worth.

And if you keep walking right straight ahead
clambering over the clouds
saying your mother's & father's names
over & over out loud

you'll come to the place where moonlight's born
the place where the moonbeams hide
and visit all of the crater sites
on the dark moon's secret side.

From my front door there's a path to the moon
that nobody seems to see
tho it's marked with stones & grass & trees
no one sees it but you & me.

B.P. Nichol ([Til All the Stars Have Fallen](#), Kids Can Press)

AND MY HEART SOARS

The beauty of the trees,
the softness of the air,
the fragrance of the grass,
speaks to me.

The summit of the mountain,
the thunder of the sky,
the rhythm of the sea,
speaks to me.

The faintness of the stars,
the freshness of the morning,
the dew drop on the flower,
speaks to me.

The strength of fire,
the taste of salmon,
the trail of the sun,
And the life that never goes away,
They speak to me.

And my heart soars.

Chief Dan George (Til All the Stars Have Fallen, Kids Can Press)

THE CAMPER

Night 'neath the northern skies, lone, black, and
grim:
Naught but the starlight lies 'twixt heaven, and him.

Of man no need has he, of God, no prayer;
He and his Deity are brothers there.

Above his bivouac the firs fling down
Through branches gaunt and black, their needles
brown.

Afar some mountain streams, rockbound and fleet,
Sing themselves through his dreams in cadence sweet,

The pine trees whispering, the heron's cry,
The plover's wing, his lullaby.

And blinking overhead the white stars keep
Watch o'er his hemlock bed—his sinless sleep.

E. Pauline Johnson (Flint & Feather, Hodder & Stoughton)

LION

The lion, ruler over all the beasts,
Triumphant moves upon the grassy plain
With sun like gold upon his tawny brow
And dew like silver on his shaggy mane.

Into himself he draws the rolling thunder,
Beneath his flinty paw great boulders quake;
He will dispatch the mouse to burrow under,
The little deer to shiver in the brake.

He sets the fierce whip of each serpent lashing,
The tall giraffe brings humbly to his knees,
Awakes the sloth, and sends the wild boar crashing,
Wide-eyed monkeys chittering, through the trees.

He gazes down into the quiet river,
Parting the green bulrushes to behold
A sunflower-crown of amethyst and silver,
A royal coat of brushed and beaten gold.

William Jay Smith (Random House Book of Poetry for Children, Random House)

PAUL BUNYAN

He came,
 striding
 over the mountain,
 the moon slung on his back,
 like a pack,
 a great pine
 stuck on his shoulder
 swayed as he
 talked
 to his blue ox
 Babe;
 a huge, looming shadow
 of a man,
 clad
 in a mackinaw coat,
 his logger's shirt
 open at the throat
 and the great mane of hair
 matching, meeting
 the locks of night,
 the smoke from his cauldron pipe,
 a cloud on the moon
 and his laugh
 rolled through the mountains
 like thunder
 on a summer night
 while the lightning of his smile
 split the heavens
 asunder.
 His blue ox, Babe,
 pawed the ground
 till the earth
 trembled
 and shook
 and a high cliff

toppled and fell;
 and Babe's bellow
 was fellow
 to the echo
 of Bunyan's laughter;
 and then
 with one step
 he was in the next valley
 dragging the moon after,
 the stars
 tangled,
 spangled
 in the branches of the great pine.
 And as he left,
 he whistled in the dark
 like a far off train
 blowing for a crossing
 and plainly heard
 were the plodding grunts
 of Babe, the blue ox,
 trying
 to keep pace
 from hill to hill,
 and then, the sounds,
 fading,
 dying,
 were lost
 in the churn of night,—
 and all was still.

Arthur S. Bourinot (['Til All the Stars Have Fallen](#), Kids Can Press)

THE DIVER

I would like to dive
Down
Into this still pool
Where the rocks at the bottom are safely deep,

Into the green
Of the water seen from within,
A strange light
Streaming past my eyes—

Things hostile;
You cannot stay here, they seem to say;
The rocks, slime-covered, the undulating
Fronds of weeds—

And drift slowly
Among the cooler zones;
Then, upward turning,
Break from the green glimmer

Into the light,
White and ordinary of the day,
And the mild air,
With the breeze and the comfortable shore.

W.W.E. Ross (The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, Oxford University Press)

FLIGHT OF THE ROLLER-COASTER

Once more around should do it, the man confided...

And sure enough, when the roller-coaster reached the peak
Of the giant curve above me—screech of its wheels
Almost drowned by the shriller cries of the riders—

Instead of the dip and plunge with its landslide of screams
It rose in the air like a movieland magic carpet, some
wonderful bird,

And without fuss or fanfare swooped slowly across the
amusement park,
Over Spook's Castle, ice-cream booths, shooting-gallery;
and losing no height

Made the last yards above the beach, where the cucumber-cool
Brakeman in the last seat saluted
A lady about to change from her bathing-suit.

Then, as many witnesses duly reported, headed leisurely
over the water,
Disappearing mysteriously all too soon behind a low-lying
flight of clouds.

Raymond Souster (The Wind Has Wings, Oxford University Press)

SEA CLIFF

Wave on wave
and green on rock
and white between
the splash and black
the crash and hiss
of the feathery fall,
the snap and shock
of the water wall
and the wall of rock:
after --
after the ebb-flow,
wet rock,
high --
high over the slapping green,
water sliding away
and the rock abiding,
new rock riding
out of the spray.

A. J. M. Smith (['Til All the Stars Have Fallen](#), Kids Can Press)

MORNING

Day came in
on an old brown bus
with two friends.
She crept down
an empty street
bending over
to sweep the thin dawn away.
With her broom,
she drew red streaks
in the corners
of the dusty sky
and finding a rooster still asleep,
prodded him into song.
A fisherman,
not far from the shore,
lifted his eyes, saw her coming,
and yawned.
The bus rolled by,
and the two friends caught
a glimpse of blue
as day swung around a corner
to where the sea met a road.
The sky blinked,
woke up,
and might have changed its mind,
but day had come.

Dionne Brand (Earth Magic, Kids Can Press)

THE SECRET PLACE

There's a place I go, inside myself,
Where nobody else can be,
And none of my friends can tell it's there—
Nobody knows but me.

It's hard to explain the way it feels,
Or even where I go.
It isn't a place in time or space,
But once I'm there, I *know*.

It's tiny, it's shiny, it can't be seen,
But it's big as the sky at night . . .
I try to explain and it hurts my brain,
But once I'm there, it's *right*.

There's a place I know inside myself,
And it's neither big nor small,
And whenever I go, it feels as though
I never left at all.

Dennis Lee (The Ice Cream Store, Scholastic)

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE

It's cold.
Winter is dying.
But it is not yet dead.
In its final days,
It makes one last effort
To conquer life.

A breeze starts up from the northwest.
It grows stronger, and soon becomes
A wild, wicked wind, whipping the white snow
Into a fanatical, freezing fury.
The once large and gentle snowflakes
Have become small and sinister and icy;
Driven by the angry air,
They show mercy to no man,
Penetrating the flesh
Like minute hypodermic needles,
Injecting the deadly cold
Into the heart,
Into the very soul
Of all who dare defy the winter wind.

But March has come,
And though it has come like a raging lion,
It may yet leave like a meek little lamb;
For Winter is dying,
And in spite of its last mad, malicious moments,
Its death is inevitable.
Soon Spring will come,
And with it,
Warmth, life, and joy.

Cornelius V. Giesbrecht ([Poetry of Manitoba](#), Province of Manitoba)

MA-HE-CAN (WOLF)

Silent as day falling into night
he glides across fresh fallen snow
barely leaving a trail in the land
like a shadow in the night
he blends in the dark landscape

a movement on the ground catches his attention
he stops, body quivering with excitement
a rabbit frozen with fear suddenly bolts
ma-he-can jumps to the chase

zig-zagging across the frozen ground
the two hurtle through the silent woods
ma-he-can never misses the rabbit's turns
he could lunge and snap the rabbit's neck
but he waits

rabbit stumbles burying his face in the snow
quivering eyes full of fear he awaits his death
ma-he-can's eyes yellow expressionless stops
he howls at the moon, a mournful cry
his cry is answered in the wind

he trots away, glancing back only once
he is not hungry tonight
the run was only for the joy of life

Duncan Mercredi (*Spirit of the Wolf: Raise Your Voice*, Pemmican Publications)

MANITOBA

In winter the snow falls
Covering the bare trees,
With white, fluffy night gowns.
The fenceposts are covered
With marshmallow hats.
At night the full moon shines
Bright and clear.
The snow glitters in the moonlight
Like silvery diamonds.
All the land sleeps
Under a blanket of snow.

Soon it is spring.
The brooks and rivers are running.
The migration of ducks and geese
Has begun.
They are flying northward
To raise their young.
In the mountains,
The animals are coming out of
hibernation.
The air is filled
With a sweet, fresh scent
Of new growth.

It is summer now.
The trees are all covered
With broad green leaves.
The young animals
Are learning to hunt
And fend for themselves.
It rains almost every week.
The grass is growing bigger and greener.
Grazing cattle
Feed contentedly
On the broad expanse of prairie land.

Soon it is fall.
The trees are ablaze
With brilliant colours,
Of yellow, red and orange.
The golden fields of grain
Are being harvested.
Squirrels and chipmunks gather nuts
For the long winter months.
Animals return to hibernation.
Snow falls, and all is quiet.
This is Manitoba.

Randy Burak ([Poetry of Manitoba](#), Province of Manitoba)

OLD HOUSE

Poor old house, with blinds all tattered and torn;
The bricks rose-faded in the sunset of its life.
 The side porch sags in weariness,
 Held up by a scarlet vine
That spills triangular leaves from a rusty eaves trough.

 Silence mocks the empty rooms:
His hollow laughter echoes through the halls,
Disturbing ghosts of memory that long have lain
In dust shrouds of oblivion.

 A spider weaves a silken web,
 A gossamer bridge
Tethering the brass bed to the window sill.

A cool breeze stirs an oak branch that rasps on broken shingles...
 And the storm begins.

The rain slides coolly down the grimy pane
 Like tears of weakness
 Down the face of an old, old man.

Anita Kenny (Poetry of Manitoba, Province of Manitoba)

SPIRIT SANDS

What is this land of the shifting sands?
Is it the remnants of an ancient sea?
Where flowers grow and we feel the wind blow
On its ever changing scenery.

Lit by the moon, the rippling dunes
Surrounded by masts of trees
Cast their spell on creatures that dwell
Amid those silicon seas.

In this place is found many a trace
Of things that came before
Bleached out bones and polished stones
Reveal to mortals those days of yore.

The wildlife here from lizards to deer
Live life in relative peace
And seem to abound on this shifting ground
From perils have found release.

Let us preserve and try to conserve
These wonders we don't understand
Treat with love this gift from above
The magic of the Spirit Sands

Robert C. Atkin ([The Manitoba 125th Anniversary](#), Compascor Manitoba)

THE MAGIC PAINTERS

One night I saw a leprechaun standing
When the winds were bridled and still.
He was painting the trees in the forest
Balanced there on my white window sill.

His right hand was holding a paint brush
And his left hand was waving at me.
He smiled as he hid a wee red squirrel
In the limbs of a white tamarack tree.

I saw his shy smile in the moonlight
And he had lots of fun there I know.
As he stood right outside of my window
On the ledge in the fresh fallen snow.

His toque dangled over one shoulder
And his blue eyes were sparkling bright.
As he painted the trees and the grasses
On my pane in the silver moonlight.

He grinned as he worked on the picture
When the night air was quiet and still,
And he winked as he blew a kiss at me
From the ledge of my white window sill.

I watched his friends race up the sidewalk
In the moon's guiding ribbon of light.
And I saw them glance up at my window
As the stars twinkled there in the night.

When the frost creaks the house in the winter
And it's colder than a polar bear's nose;
You'll see them out there in the moonlight
Dressed up in their warm woollen clothes.

When the wind goes to sleep in the hollow
And they're called by old Patrick the Saint,
Hide yourself in the curtain's dark cover
And you'll see the wee leprechauns paint.

Frank Connolly (Manitoba Myriad, Dennis County Writers' Group)

SWINGING LESSON

Push forward
from your core
right down
to your belly
hang on
to these chains
don't let go
even if your hands get sweaty
stretch your legs
out in front of you
as you go forward
bend them down
as you swing back
keep going

keep your legs moving
like you're running
like you're trying
to catapult yourself
into the sky
until you can only feel
wind all around you
until you look up
and all you see is
thin summer clouds
strong bright sun
and all the tree tops
dancing

Katherena Vermette ([North End Love Songs](#), Muses' Company)

BIG FISH, LITTLE FISH

Little fish swimming in the water,
Hanging out alone
Down near the bottom.
He left his school and might be a goner
If the big fish hadn't come along,
If the big fish hadn't come along.

Fisherman came upon a worm one day,
He said "Hey I've got a job for you!
How'd you like to hang on my hook all day,
Down in the deep, deep blue,
Down in the deep, deep blue?"

Fisherman said with a wink and a smile,
"On a shiny new hook you're going down in style.
Take a good book 'cause it may take a while
Till the big fish comes along,
Till the big fish comes along."

Worm in the water, worm with a book,
Little fish came a-swimming just to have a good look.
Saw the worm in the book,
And he might have bit the hook,
If the big fish hadn't come along,
If the big fish hadn't come along.

Along came the big fish down near the bottom,
Saw the worm looking good to his brother.
Worm called up, "Hey I think I got him!"
But the big fish came along,
But the big fish came along.

Big fish said, "It doesn't look right.
You're going to get hooked if you take a big bite."
Little fish might have got caught that night,
If the big fish hadn't come along,
If the big fish hadn't come along.

So the little fish went back to school,
Didn't want to be a fisherman's fool,
Might have missed out on the golden rule,
If the big fish hadn't come along,
If the big fish hadn't come along.

Jake Chenier (Walking in the Sun, CD Baby)

COUNTING FEATHERS

I think I'll fetch my feather collection
 For an annual inspection.
 Line them up and organize,
 Sort them out - by shape and size.
 I'm building up an inventory,
 Every feather tells a story.

I'm counting feathers one by one,
 Counting feathers - I've begun
 To pile them up in stacks of ten,
 This one, a goose, that one, a hen.

Here's the first feather I found
 Just lying there upon the ground.
 It's grey and brown and short and narrow;
 I think that it came from a sparrow.
 A jay dropped this one from a tree
 As if it were a gift for me.

I'm counting feathers two by two.
 I've got so many more to do,
 I bet you I could fill a truck!
 Hey, look at this one – thank you, Duck!

I found this on my window sill,
 I think it's from a whip-poor-will.
 This one's from a grouse in flight,
 That one's from a pillow fight!

I overheard a seagull screech
 And found this lying on the beach.
 The black one blew off a crow in a storm,
 I hope it can manage to keep itself warm.
 The white one's from the caboose of a goose,
 It was scratching itself – that's how it came
 loose.

I'm counting feathers three by three:
 Owl, eagle, and chickadee;
 Swallow, grosbeak, raven, wren,
 Bluebird, blackbird, ptarmigan.

While I was reading the newspaper page,
 I found this one inside the parakeet cage.

I'm counting feathers four by four,
 I never plucked one, that's for sure.
 They fell when the birds were moulting.
 Or chased by cats, how revolting!

Quick, close the door! A sudden breeze
 Will blow them – Oooooohhhhhhhhhh . . .
 Here comes a SNEEZE . . .
 Ah, ah, ah, ah-CHOO!!

I guess I'll count them once again,
 Pile them up in stacks of ten.
 The ostrich plume and a blue peacock's –

Hey, I should be collecting rocks!

Al Simmons (Counting Feathers, Longstreet Press)

FIREFLY

Walking through the forest
I came upon a sight,
There in the darkness
I thought I saw a light.
Quietly it moved,
A gentle flash of green.
It was light made by nature on a flying machine.

Firefly lighting up the night,
Firefly
Fly fly fly.

It flew across the sky and landed at my side.
It sat upon a bush,
And then it seemed to hide.
I looked to find a switch,
To turn on the light.
Then I saw it fly away,
Clean out of sight.

Firefly lighting up the night,
Firefly
Fly fly fly.

I caught a firefly and put it in a jar.
I showed it to my friends,
I showed it to the stars.
I saw it was unhappy and it didn't feel right,
So I opened up the jar and gave it to the night.

Firefly lighting up the night,
Firefly
fly fly fly.

Jake Chenier ([Walking in the Sun](#), CD Baby)

CLEAN GENE

Clean Gene is *really* clean—
He is a bath fanatic.
He has six washstands in his room
And twelve tubs in his attic.
He'll wash before he goes to school,
He'll rinse when he gets there.
At recess you can find him
Rubbin' shampoo in his hair.
He buys each new deodorant
To keep him smelling sweet,
He hires a manicurist
For each toenail on his feet.
He only will play baseball
With a Q-tip in each hand,
In case his ears get gritty
From the winds and blowin' sand.
He wears a plastic bubble
So no germs can touch his shirt.
He will not eat potatoes
'Cause potatoes grow in dirt.

He carries toothpaste, and he'll brush
And floss with zest and zeal
Before—and after—and (I'm sorry)
During every meal.
He has a shower above his bed
To spray a soapy stream
(Just in case he ever should
Get dirty in his dreams).
He's hired a man named Henry Grunge,
And when he goes to play,
Grunge runs beside him with a sponge
To wipe his sweat away.
He's built a special music tub
That he can sit right in
'Longside his music teacher
While he plays the violin.
So when you go to visit Gene
Just make sure your jeans are clean,
Just make sure your nails are scrubbed,
Make sure you bring along your tub,
And leave your shoes out in the hall—
If you visit Gene at all.

Shel Silverstein (Falling Up, HarperCollins)

THE TRAIN DOGS

Out of the night and the north;
Savage of breed and of bone,
Shaggy and swift comes the yelping band,
Freighters of fur from the voiceless land
That sleeps in the Arctic zone.

Laden with skins from the north,
Beaver and bear and raccoon,
Marten and mink from the polar belts,
Otter and ermine and sable pelts –
The spoils of the hunter's moon.

Out of the night and the north,
Sinewy, fearless and fleet,
Urging the pack through the pathless snow,
The Indian driver, calling low,
Follows with moccasined feet.

Ships of the night and the north,
Freighters on prairies and plains,
Carrying cargoes from field and flood
They scent the trail through their wild red
blood,
The wolfish blood in their veins.

E. Pauline Johnson (Through the Open Window, Oxford)

MANITOBA FARMERS

Three trucks
 three colours
ton-and-a-half
tarpaulined
 like cows heavy in calf
 filing from the field
 snorting under the strain
three trucks
roar from the bin
round the curve
and slowly halt
 halfway down
 the gently sloping lane.

The drivers alight
 a team
checking for trouble signs.
Frosted shouts echo:
 “How’s that tire?”
 “This tarp’s all right.”

Men and motors
breathe steam.

Mounted again
the men
manoeuvre the sharp turn
space themselves on the open

road
 snow-packed

increasing speed:
 giant bumble bees
 in droning flight.

Each
piloting this precious load
 of mustard seed
to the far-off cleaning mill
feels a faint flutter
 in his weathered breast:
the old excitement his forefathers
 felt
piloting prairie schooners
 laden with their all
across this vast expanse
 of untamed west.

The challenge
 of those wooden wheels
is rumbling still
in stout hearts
 light with neighbourly
 goodwill.

Winifred Hulbert (Of The Jigsaw, Peguis Publishers)

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 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.

Robert Frost (Sound and Sense, Academic Press)

IN BETWEEN

As I gaze into the mirror
I find myself looking
staring,
wondering,
Why this is happening
To me
I'm not the little girl
Who once played dolls,
Or pretended I was a teacher
Of a grade one class.
I'm not the little girl who
Couldn't sleep on Christmas Eve,
Who played house with my dog,
Or who made sandcastles
On the beach.
Still...
I'm not familiar with
These feelings of
Growing,
Hoping
For some change,
I'm a young woman,
I can feel it,
Yet...
I'm still the grade one child
Still waiting for Christmas
And still making sandcastles
on the beach.

Lisa Banks (Cycles 2, Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.)

UNFOLDING BUD

One is amazed
By a water-lily bud
Unfolding
With each passing day,
Taking on a richer color
And new dimensions.

One is not amazed,
At first glance,
By a poem,
Which is tight-closed
As a tiny bud.

Yet one is surprised
To see the poem
Gradually unfolding,
Revealing its rich inner self
As one reads it
Again
And over again.

Naoshi Koriyama ([Bite In 2](#), Nelson Thornes)

TOUCHING THE SKY

Come for me, sweet tomorrow.
Help me touch the sky.
Like a well-learned bird opens its wings,
I, too, want to fly high.

Don't let the darkness of yesterday
Blind my vision to evolve.
Coming out of the bitterness of the past,
Help me let my flaws absolve.

Make me like a rainbow,
The colours mingled together,
But all of them in show.
Help me discover my hidden talents
And pull myself together with efforts gallant.

Let me be a beacon of goodness
For the people I meet.
Help me hear the music of life
And follow every beat.

Come for me, sweet tomorrow.
Help me touch the sky;
Like a well-learned bird opens its wings,
I, too, want to fly high.

Shreya D. Chattree (poemsforkids.org)

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Billy Collins ([The Apple that Astonished Paris](#), University of Arkansas Press)

BARTER

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

Sara Teasdale (Sound and Sense, Harcourt & Brace)

HOW TO FALL ASLEEP

Hey, Ted, in just a little bit,
we'll need to go to sleep.
So let me show you how.
It's far more fun than counting sheep.

Lie down in bed and close your eyes.
Now take a breath and sigh,
and picture you're an airplane and you're
flying through the sky.

Now fly a little lower through
the clouds and in the breeze,
until you see the water of
the slowly rolling seas.

Then settle on the water where
you've now become a boat,
and feel the ocean rock you
gently, gently as you float.

Now turn into a submarine
and sink beneath the waves,
to watch the fish swim in and out
of underwater caves.

You follow them inside,
exploring tunnels as you go.
It's quiet here, and everything
is beautiful and slow.

So you become the water now,
and you become the caves,
and you become the ocean and
the gently rocking waves.

It's peaceful on the ocean bed,
so silent, warm, and deep,
so spread yourself across the world
and drift away to sleep.

Kenn Nesbitt (One Minute till Bedtime, Little, Brown and Company)

RAIN

It was raining, raining, raining hard.
It was falling on my head.
 It was falling on the stars.
It was falling on the sun.
 It was falling on my shoes.
I got soaking wet.
 I got soaking wet.
But I stayed outside.
 I stayed outside.
The rain was sweet.
 The rain was warm.
The rain was soft.
It reminded me of home.

It was raining, raining, raining hard.
 It was falling, falling, falling on the stars.
It was raining, raining, raining hard.
 It was falling, falling, falling on the stars.

Soft rain
 Raining, raining
Sweet rain
 Raining, raining
Warm rain
 Raining, raining

Sweet soft Raining, raining
Warm rain Raining, raining
Sweet soft Raining, raining
Warm rain Raining, raining

Carolyn Graham ([Jazz Chants](#), Oxford University Press)

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO

I'll tell you, shall I, something I remember?
Something that still means a great deal to me.
It was long ago.

A dusty road in summer I remember.
A mountain, and an old house, and a tree
That stood, you know,

Behind the house. An old woman I remember
In a red shawl with a grey cat on her knee
Humming under a tree.

She seemed the oldest thing I can remember,
But then perhaps I was not more than three.
It was a long time ago.

I dragged on the dusty road, and I remember
How the old woman looked over the fence at me
And seemed to know

How it felt to be three, and called out, I remember
'Do you like bilberries and cream for tea?'
I went under the tree

And while she hummed, and the cat purred, I remember
How she filled a saucer with berries and cream for me
So long ago,

Such berries and such cream as I remember
I never had seen before and never see
Today, you know.

And that is almost all I can remember,
The house, the mountain, the grey cat on her knee,
Her red shawl, and the tree,

And the taste of the berries, the feel of the sun I remember,
And the smell of everything that used to be
So long ago,

Till the heat on the road outside again I remember,
And how the long dusty road seemed to have for me
No end, you know.

That is the farthest thing I can remember.
It won't mean much to you. It does to me.
Then I grew up, you see.

Eleanor Farjeon (Silver, Sand and Snow, Michael Joseph)

THE FOG

I saw the fog grow thick,
 Which soon made blind my ken;
It made tall men of boys,
 And giants of tall men.

It clutched my throat, I coughed;
 Nothing was in my head
Except two heavy eyes
 Like balls of burning lead.

And when it grew so black
 That I could know no place,
I lost all judgment then,
 Of distance and of space.

The street lamps, and the lights
 Upon the halted cars,
Could either be on earth
 Or be the heavenly stars.

A man passed by me close,
 I asked my way, he said,
“Come, follow me, my friend”—
I followed where he led.

He rapped the stones in front,
 “Trust me,” he said, “and come”;
I followed like a child—
 A blind man led me home.

W.H. Davies (The Complete Poems of W.H. Davies, Random House U.K.)

EASTERN SHORE

He stands and walks as if his knees were tensed
To a pitching dory. When he looks far off
You think of trawl-kegs rolling in the trough
Of swaying waves. He wears a cap against
The sun on water, but his face is brown
As an old mainsail, from the eyebrows down.

He has grown old as something used and known
Grows old with custom; each small fading scar
Engrained by use and wear in plank and spar,
In weathered wood and iron, and flesh and bone.
But youth lurks in the squinting eyes, and in
The laughter wrinkles in the tanbark skin.

You know his story when you see him climb
The lookout hill. You know that age can be
A hill for looking; and the swaying sea
A lifetime marching with the waves of time.
Listen—the ceaseless cadence, deep and slow.
Tomorrow. Now. And years and years ago.

Charles Bruce (Contexts Anthology 3, Nelson Canada)

THE BEACHES OF MEXICO

Have you ever seen the beaches of Mexico?
Have you ever walked the streets of San Juan?
Have you ever been to Haiti?
Have you ever been to Spain?
Have you ever walked barefoot
in a heavy rain?

Have you ever been in trouble?
Have you ever been in pain?
Have you ever been in love?
Would you do it all again?

Well, I've never seen the beaches of Mexico.
I've never walked the streets of San Juan.
I've never been to Haiti.
I've never been to Spain.
I've never walked barefoot
in a heavy rain.
But I've sure been in trouble,
I've sure been in pain,
I've sure been in love,
I'd do it all again.

Carolyn Graham (Jazz Chants, Oxford University Press)

THE CAGE

They are not thick, those bars—

Yet there you lie
With small grave eye
Brooding glassily,
While your heavy paws
Uncurl their claws
Lazily,
And your tail half twitches, then
Falls again.

Across those bars the people stream
In black confusion, till they seem
Like tangled thoughts that blur in dream.
You heed them not—you watch the dream.

Then spread
Immeasurable spaces,
Vast trees, garmented
With moonlight, places
Of creeping shadows, scents of blood
By dark water, where the flood
Glitters with monstrous stars, and you

Are crouching, quivering, bounding through
The illimitable spaces—
You with eyes

Like yellow daggers, you with claws
Like curled scythes, you with paws
Like pounding hammers, slantwise
Striking to kill. You
Free, intent,
Unaccountable, magnificent,
Bounding through
The illimitable spaces!

Black and white the people stream
Across the slim, stiff bars, and seem
Distinct as thoughts that wake from dream.

And you
Uncurl your claws lazily
And blink your grave eyes sleepily
And yawn as there were nought to do.

And yet they are not thick, those bars—

Ruth Manning-Sanders (Words on Wings I, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

THE LITTLE GREEN ORCHARD

Some one is always sitting there,
In the little green orchard;
Even when the sun is high,
In noon's unclouded sky,
And faintly droning goes
The bee from rose to rose,
Some one in shadow is sitting there,
In the little green orchard.

Yes, and when twilight's falling softly
On the little green orchard;
When the grey dew distills
And every flower-cup fills;
When the last blackbird says,
"What—what!" and goes her way—ssh!
I have heard voices calling softly
In the little green orchard.

Not that I am afraid of being there,
In the little green orchard;
Why, when the moon's been bright,
Shedding her lonesome light,
And moths like ghosties come,
And the horned snail leaves home:
I've sat there, whispering and listening there,
In the little green orchard;

Only it's strange to be feeling there,
In the little green orchard;
Whether you paint or draw,
Dig, hammer, chop, or saw;
When you are most alone.
All but the silence gone...
Some one is waiting and watching there,
In the little green orchard.

Walter de la Mare (Time for Poetry, Gage Publishing)

WHY WE NEED POETRY

I don't know if it's because
Poetry is the language of rebels, artists and mavericks, confounding
Expectations, breaking rules and saying this, this is how things might be
Or maybe that
At times of the deepest emotion, we turn as if by instinct, back to poetry
Of course perhaps
It's the invitation to play, to dance, to make words sing
Or simply that
We need to express a deeper truth
Perhaps it's because we understand that
Poems are born from the words of the heart
Or maybe as one who's found this, that
Once you get started you can make your own rules
And yet I know it's not form, it's that
Some things are too beautiful, or too terrible, not to be spoken in verse
Which means I believe to my core that
However much some poems baffle us, others can reach us at the most
Human, most universal level
And that
We are human, and long to say: this, this is how it was for me... and we
Will keep exploring and experimenting with ways to say it, share it, make
You feel it too
Or maybe its simply that
Poetry has a pulse
And sometimes we need reminders of how it feels to be alive.

Joanna Paterson (pitlochryps.co.za)

THE SEA

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And "Bones, bones, bones, bones!"
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and howls long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

James Reeves (English for the more able, Folens)

THE SHARK

He seemed to know the harbour,
So leisurely he swam;
His fin,
Like a piece of sheet-iron,
Three-cornered,
And with knife-edge,
Stirred not a bubble
As it moved
With its base-line on the water.

His body was tubular
And tapered
And smoke-blue,
And as he passed the wharf
He turned,
And snapped at a flat-fish
That was dead and floating.
And I saw the flash of a white throat,
And a double row of white teeth,
And eyes of metallic grey,
Hard and narrow and slit.

Then out of the harbour,
With that three-cornered fin
Shearing without a bubble the water
Lithely,
Leisurely,
He swam—
That strange fish,
Tubular, tapered, smoke-blue,
Part vulture, part wolf,
Part neither—for his blood was cold.

E. J. Pratt (Canadian Poetry 1920 – 1960, McClelland & Stewart)

THE NEED OF BEING VERSED IN COUNTRY THINGS

The house had gone to bring again
To the midnight sky a sunset glow.
Now the chimney was all of the house that stood
Like a pistil after the petals go.

The barn opposed across the way,
That would have joined the house in flame
Had it been the will of the wind, was left
To bear forsaken the place's name.

No more it opened with all one end
For teams that came by the stony road
To drum on the floor with scurrying hoofs
And brush the mow with the summer load.

The birds that came to it through the air
At broken windows flew out and in,
Their murmur more like the sigh we sigh
From too much dwelling on what has been.

Yet for them the lilac renewed its leaf,
And the aged elm, though touched with fire;
And the dry pump flung up an awkward arm;
And the fence post carried a strand of wire.

For them there was really nothing sad.
But though they rejoiced in the nest they kept,
One had to be versed in country things
Not to believe the phoebes wept.

Robert Frost (Complete Poems of Robert Frost, Holt, Rinehart & Winston)

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.

Dylan Thomas (Sound and Sense, Harcourt & Brace)

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

King Francis was a hearty king, and loved a royal sport,
And one day, as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles fill'd the benches, and the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom he
sigh'd;
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show—
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid, laughing jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their
paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled one on another,
Till all the pit, with sand and mane, was in a thunderous smother;
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
Said Francis, then, 'Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there!"

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous, lively dame,
With smiling lips, and sharp, bright eyes, which always seemed the
same:
She thought, "the Count my lover, is as brave as brave can be,
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love for me!
King, ladies, lovers, all look on, the occasion is divine;
I'll drop my glove to prove his love, great glory will be mine!"

She dropped her glove to prove his love, then looked at him and
smiled;
He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions wild;
The leap was quick; return was quick; he has regained his place,
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face!
"In truth!" cried Francis, "rightly done!" and he rose from where he
sat;
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."

Leigh Hunt (Favourite Poems Old and New, Doubleday & Company)

FORTUNE.....

Fortune
 has its cookies to give out
 which is a good thing
 since it's been a long time since
 that summer in Brooklyn
 when they closed off the street
 one hot day
 and the
 FIREMEN
 turned on their
 hoses
 and all the kids ran out in it
 in the middle of the street
 and there were
 maybe a couple dozen of us
 out there
 with the water squirting up
 to the
 sky
 and all over
 us
 there was maybe only six of us
 kids altogether
 running around in our
 barefeet and birthday
 suits
 and I remember Molly but then
 the firemen stopped squirting their hoses
 all of a sudden and went
 back in
 their firehouse
 and
 started playing pinochle again
 just as if nothing
 had ever
 happened
 while I remember Molly
 looked at me and
 ran in
 because I guess really we were the only ones there

Lawrence Ferlinghetti (A Coney Island of the Mind, New Directions Publishing Corporation)

THE LONG VOYAGE

Not that the pines were darker there,
nor mid-May dogwood brighter there,
nor swifts more swift in summer air;
 it was my own country,

having its thunderclap of spring,
its long midsummer ripening,
its corn hoar-still at harvesting,
 almost like any country,

yet being mine; its face, its speech,
its hills bent low within my reach,
its river birch and upland beech
 were mine, of my own country.

Now the dark waters at the bow
fold back, like earth against the plow;
foam brightens like the dogwood now
 at home, in my own country.

Malcolm Cowley (20th Century Poetry & Poetics, Oxford University Press)

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
 In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
 At a tranquil pace,
 Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk
 And you in wool,
White as white cow's milk,
 More beautiful
 Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
 In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
 Upon silver fleece,
 Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes;
 Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
 On white silence below.
 We shall walk in the snow.

Elinor Wylie (Sound and Sense, Harcourt & Brace)

NO DOCTORS TODAY, THANK YOU

They tell me that euphoria is the feeling of feeling
wonderful; well, today I feel euphorian,
Today I have the agility of a Greek god and the appetite of
a Victorian.
Yes, today I may even go forth without my galoshes;
Today I am a swashbuckler, would anybody like me to
buckle any swashes?
This is my euphorian day,
I will ring welkins and before anybody answers I will run away.
I will tame me a caribou
And bedeck it with marabou.
I will pen me my memoirs.
Ah youth, youth! What Euphorian days them was!
I wasn't much of a hand for the boudoirs,
I was generally to be found where the food was.
Does anybody want any flotsam?
I've gotsam.
Does anybody want any jetsam?
I can getsam.
I can play 'Chopsticks' on the Wurlitzer,
I can speak Portuguese like a Berlitzer.
I can don or doff my shoes without tying or untying the
laces because I am wearing moccasins,
And I practically know the difference between serums and
antitoccasins.
Kind people, don't think me purse-proud, don't set me
down as vainglorious,
I'm just a little euphorious.

Ogden Nash (Verses from 1929 On, Little Brown and Company)

THIS WAS MY BROTHER

This was my brother
At Dieppe,
Quietly a hero
Who gave his life
Like a gift,
Withholding nothing.

His youth...his love...
His enjoyment of being alive...
His future, like a book
With half the pages still uncut –

This was my brother
At Dieppe. . .
The one who built me a doll house
When I was seven,
Complete to the last small picture frame,
Nothing forgotten.

He was awfully good at fixing things,
At stepping into the breach when he was needed.

That's what he did at Dieppe;
He was needed.
And even Death must have been a little shamed
At his eagerness.

Mona Gould (Words on Wings Book 1, Thomas Nelson)

SEA-GULLS

For one carved instant as they flew,
The language had no simile—
Silver, crystal, ivory
Were tarnished. Etched upon the horizon blue,
The frieze must go unchallenged, for the lift
And carriage of the wings would stain the drift
Of stars against a tropic indigo
Or dull the parable of snow.

Now settling one by one
Within green hollows or where curled
Crests caught the spectrum from the sun,
A thousand wings are furled.
No clay-born lilies of the world
Could blow as free
As those wild orchids of the sea.

A. J. Pratt (Selected Poems, University of Toronto Press)

GENIUS

was what they called you in high school
if you tripped on a shoelace in the hall
and all your books went flying.

Or if you walked into an open locker door,
you would be known as Einstein,
who imagined riding a streetcar into infinity.

Later, genius became someone
who could take a sliver of chalk and square pi
a hundred places out beyond the decimal point,

or a man painting on his back on a scaffold,
or drawing a waterwheel in a margin,
or spinning out a little night music.

But earlier this week on a wooded path,
I thought the swans afloat on the reservoir
were the true geniuses,
the ones who had figured out how to fly,
how to be both beautiful and brutal,
and how to mate for life.

Twenty-four geniuses in all,
for I numbered them as Yeats had done,
deployed upon the calm, crystalline surface—

forty-eight if we count their white reflections,
or an even fifty if you want to throw in me
and the dog running up ahead,

who were at least smart enough to be out
that morning—she sniffing the ground,
me with my head up in the bright morning air.

Billy Collins ([Aimless Love](#), Random House)

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
 Knocking on the moonlit door;
 And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
 Of the forest's ferny floor:
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,
 Above the Traveler's head:
 And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 "Is anybody there?" he said.
 But no one descended to the Traveler;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
 Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
 But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
 That goes down to the empty hall,
 Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
 By the lonely Traveler's call.
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head:—
 "Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word," he said.
 Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake:
 Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
 And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare ([Classic Poems to Read Aloud](#), Kingfisher)

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Moharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney!'
And dance like a wave of the sea.

William Butler Yeats ([Time for Poetry](#), W.J. Gage and Company)

THERE CAME A WIND LIKE A BUGLE

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.

On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

Emily Dickinson ([The Art of Poetry](#), McClelland and Stewart)

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

Because I could not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —
The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
And Immortality.

We slowly drove — He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility —
We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess—in the Ring —
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —
We passed the Setting Sun —

Or rather — He passed Us —
The Dews drew quivering and chill —
For only Gossamer, my Gown —
My Tippet —only Tulle —

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground —
The Roof was scarcely visible —
The Cornice — in the Ground —

Since then — 'tis Centuries — and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity —

Emily Dickinson (Poems, Houghton Mifflin)

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrampled sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee ([The Golden Caravan](#), Ryerson Press)

WANDER-THIRST

Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the
 sea,
And East and West the wander-thirst that will
 not let me be;
It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say
 good-bye;
For the seas call and the stars call, and oh! the
 call of the sky!

I know not where the white road runs, nor what
 the blue hills are,
But a man can have the sun for a friend, and for
 his guide a star;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the
 voice is heard,
For the rivers call and the roads call, and oh! the
 call of a bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night
 and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young
 ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must, and if men ask
 you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun
 and the white road and the sky.

Gerald Gould (The Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature, Scott, Foresman)

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea
 That a maiden there lived, whom you may
 know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;

And this maiden she lived with no other
 thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.
I was a child and *she* was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea

But we loved with a love that was more than
 love –
 I and my Annabel Lee –
 With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;

So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me –
 Yes! – that was the reason (as all men know
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we –
 Of many far wiser than we –
 And neither the angels in heaven above,
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing
 me dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright
 eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling – my darling – my life and my
 bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea –
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

E.A. Poe (Annabel Lee, Tundra Books)

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive (stamped on these lifeless things),
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Shelley (Sound and Sense, Academic Press)

THE TYGER

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake ([Themes on the Journey](#), Nelson Canada)

BLOW, BUGLE, BLOW

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson ([The Charge of the Light Brigade and other Poems](#), Dover Publications, Inc.)

THE BLUE HERON

In a green place lanced through
With amber and gold and blue;
A place of water and weeds
And roses pinker than dawn,
And ranks of lush young reeds,
And grasses straightly withdrawn
From graven ripples of sands,
The still blue heron stands.

Smoke-blue he is, and grey
As embers of yesterday.
Still he is, as death;
Like stone, or shadow of stone,
Without a pulse or breath,
Motionless and alone
There in the lily stems:
But his eyes are alive like gems.

Still as a shadow; still
Grey feather and yellow bill:
Still as an image made
Of mist and smoke half hid
By windless sunshine and shade,
Save when a yellow lid
Slides and is gone like a breath:
Death-still—and sudden as death!

Theodore Goodridge Roberts (Poetry in Focus, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press)

WORKWORN

Across the street, an humble woman lives;
 To her 'tis little fortune ever gives;
 Denied the wines of life, it puzzles me
 To know how she can laugh so cheerily.
 This morn I listened to her softly sing,
 And, marvelling what this effect could bring
 I looked: 'twas but the presence of a child
 Who passed her gate, and looking in, had smiled.
 But self-encrusted, I had failed to see
 The child had also looked and laughed to me.
 My lowly neighbour thought the smile God-sent,
 And singing, through the toilsome hours she went
 O! weary singer, I have learned the wrong
 Of taking gifts, and giving naught of song;
 I thought my blessings scant, my mercies few,
 Till I contrasted them with yours, and you;
 To-day I counted much, yet wished it more—
 While but a child's bright smile was all your store,

If I had thought of all the stormy days,
 That fill some lives that tread less favoured ways,
 How little sunshine through their shadows gleamed,
 My own dull life had much the brighter seemed;
 If I had thought of all the eyes that sweep
 Through desolation, and still smiling keep
 That see so little pleasure, so much woe,
 My own had laughed more often long ago;
 If I had thought how leaden was the weight
 Adversity lays at my kinsman's gate,
 Of that great cross my next door neighbour bears,
 My thanks had been more frequent in my prayers;
 If I had watched the woman o'er the way,
 Workworn and old, who labours day by day,
 Who has no rest, no joy to call her own,
 My tasks, my heart, had much the lighter grown.

E. Pauline Johnson (Flint & Feather, The Complete Poems of E. Pauline Johnson, Hodder & Stoughton)

THE COLT

Through the gate
 The boy leads him,
 Turns him, expectant,
 Around;
 Slips off the halter:
 He whirls, is gone, -
 Boy brandishing
 The halter at his going,
 Clapping his hands-
 Unnecessary-
 In long lopes he speeds,
 Rising and dipping,
 Down the rolling lane.
 Such beauty, see,
 Such grace,
 Moving (diversely!)
 Never was.
 Nor such gait-perfection
 And exactness
 Is in any man.
 His mane and his tail
 Lie back on the breeze,
 And the breeze at his every lope
 Surges past
 His laid-back ears.

See the long swift
 Flash and swing,
 Low,
 Of his limbs...
 Gone now,
 But back streaks his whinny
 Wild, enimaging himself;
 He will round the gate corner
 At the end of the long pasture
 With entrancing ease
 And speed,
 Re-accelerate,
 Bound onward to his comrades,
 And stop.
 Or else, breaking
 Into a great high free stride,
 Trot up to, around them,
 Tail up, nose inheld;
 Greet his kinsfolk.
 The farmer looks over his fence
 To see him pass;
 And his world,
 And its days, make him say:
 "Idle colts!
 Somehow nohow of any use!"

Raymond Knister (Through the Open Window, Oxford University Press)

HOW ONE WINTER CAME IN THE LAKE REGION

For weeks and weeks the autumn world stood still,
 Clothed in the shadow of a smoky haze;
The fields were dead, the wind had lost its will,
And all the lands were hushed by wood and hill,
 In those grey, withered days.

Behind a mist the bleary sun rose and set,
 At night the moon would nestle in a cloud;
The fisherman, a ghost, did cast his net;
The lake its shores forgot to chafe and fret,
 And hushed its caverns loud.

Far in the smoky woods the birds were mute,
 Save that from blackened tree a jay would scream,
Or far in swamps the lizard's lonesome lute
Would pipe in thirst, or by some gnarled root
 The tree-toad trilled his dream.
From day to day still hushed the season's mood,
The streams stayed in their runnels shrunk and dry;
Suns rose aghast by wave and shore and wood,
And all the world, with ominous silence, stood
 In weird expectancy.

When one strange night the sun like blood went down,
 Flooding the heavens in a ruddy hue;
Red grew the lake, the sere fields parched and brown,
Red grew the marshes where the creeks stole down,
 But never a wind-breath blew.

That night I felt the winter in my veins,
 A joyous tremor of the icy glow;
And woke to hear the North's wild vibrant strains,
While far and wide, by withered woods and plains,
 Fast fell the driving snow.

Wilfred Campbell ([Oxford Book of Canadian Verse](#), Oxford)

THE DESERTED PASTURE

I love the stony pasture
That no one else will have,
The old grey rocks so friendly seem,
So durable and brave.
In tranquil contemplation
It watches through the year,
Seeing the frosty stars arise,
The slender moons appear.

Its music is the rain-wind,
Its choristers the birds,
And there are secrets in its heart
Too wonderful for words.

It keeps the bright-eyed creatures
That play about its walls,
Though long ago its milking herds
Were banished from their stalls.

Only the children come there,
For buttercups in May,
Or nuts in autumn, where it lies
Dreaming the hours away.

Long since its strength was given
To making good increase,
And now its soul is turned again
To beauty and to peace.

There in the early springtime
The violets are blue,
And adder-tongues in coats of gold
Are garmented anew.

There bayberry and aster
Are crowded on its floors,
When marching summer halts to praise
The Lord of Out-of-doors.

And there October passes
In gorgeous livery—
In purple ash, and crimson oak,
And golden tulip tree.

And when the winds of winter
Their bugle blasts begin,
I watch the white battalions come
To pitch their tents therein.

Bliss Carman ([The Golden Caravan](#), Ryerson Macmillan)

TO HILTON

Standing in your main street
Where your last remaining houses
(Four in number) and Ab Little's General Store
Still stand, I closed my eyes
And saw you as you were, so long ago
The year the railway came:
All bustling with activity and speed
Wagons of wheat lined up waiting
To unload into the three tall new elevators,
Stores, Post Office, livery, lumber yard,
Buggies parked as owners dined in state
In the elegant Hilton Hotel.
Children dawdling 'till the school bell rings
Two churches waiting, watchful for the Sabbath crowd.

All in the span of a lifetime it is done:
Rail line abandoned. Elevator, station gone.
A village that sprang to life full grown
And blossomed for a few short years
To fall into senility and pass away
Till only the name, the memory, remain.

Vasnata Panchami (Poetry of Manitoba, Province of Manitoba)

A JANUARY MORNING

The glittering roofs are still with frost; each worn
Black chimney builds into the quiet sky
Its curling pile to crumble silently.
Far out to westward on the edge of morn,
The slender misty city towers up-borne
Glimmer faint rose against the pallid blue;
And yonder on those northern hills, the hue
Of amethyst, hang fleeces dull as horn.

And here behind me come the woodmen's sleighs
With shouts and clamorous squeakings; might and main
Up the steep slope the horses stamp and strain,
Urged on by hoarse-tongued drivers – cheeks ablaze,
Iced beards and frozen eyelids – team by team,
With frost-fringed flanks, and nostrils jetting steam.

Archibald Lampman ([The Art of Poetry](#), McClelland & Stewart)

FARM HOUSE RULES

An arborite table in the middle of the room,
yellow vinyl chairs found their place.
The centerpiece was cheery, wild flowers from the prairies,
in a mason jar on a tablecloth of lace.

The floors were old linoleum,
they were kept so sparkling clean.
Seven hundred square of living space
we lived within our means.

Cousins came to visit, seasons came to pass,
neighbors always came to lend a hand.
The years saw many changes, kids grew up and left,
but they still come back to the farmhouse when they can.

All that traffic through the front door
which always stayed unlocked.
Everybody had their stories,
if those walls could only talk.

That old farmhouse heard some laughter,
that old farmhouse saw some tears.
The blessings and the good times,
that lingered through the years.

Take your shoes off at the door,
bow your head before you eat,
rules that were good to live by,
and they meant the world to me.

That farmhouse saw some living,
that farmhouse raised some dreams.
Memories sewn together
With love bursting at the seams.

With a list of rules I won't forget,
they never will grow old.
They helped make who I am today,
and shaped my heart and soul.

Eli Barsi ([Poems and Paintings from a Prairie Girl](#), Copperstar Publishing)

WILDFLOWERS

it's the wildflowers
she feels sorry for
they've got to
watch their backs
nobody wants
them around
people spread poison
to kill them off
call them weeds

she thinks
it's a shame 'cause
if you let them
just grow
they're really quite
beautiful
flowering pink
butter yellow
can fill a dark space with
splendid green
if you let them

but if they flower
they'll seed
if you let them
they'll take over
choke out all those
poppies and marigolds
roses and daffodils
no planted flower
stands a chance
against a pack of weeds

Katherena Vermette ([North End Love Songs](#), The Muses' Company)

MARSHLANDS

A thin wet sky, that yellows at the rim,
And meets with sun-lost lip the marsh's brim.

The pools low lying, dank with moss and mould,
Glint through their mildews like large cups of gold.

Among the wild rice in the still lagoon,
In monotone the lizard shrills his tune.

The wild goose, homing, seeks a sheltering,
Where rushes grow, and oozing lichens cling.

Late cranes with heavy wing, and lazy flight,
Sail up the silence with the nearing night.

And like a spirit, swathed in some soft veil,
Steals twilight and its shadows o'er the swale.

Hushed lie the sedges, and the vapours creep,
Thick, grey and humid, while the marshes sleep.

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)
(Flint and Feather: The Complete Poems of E. Pauline Johnson, The Musson Book Company Ltd.)

PRAIRIE CROCUS

The crocuses are more than just a sign
Of spring. Bursting the earth with sudden force,
Like mushrooms in the snow-flecked fields, they show
A vein of colour mushrooms lack. Of course
They are less edible; but you don't dine

On beauty from a plate. That's how you know
The crocus isn't just a sign of spring;
For spring here isn't beauty: spring is work;
Spring is the prospect of a crop in fall,
A dream of dollars, a pragmatic quirk
That sees in May only the flying wing
Of August's gain.

But life and death are all
The crocus has to give: a moment's smile
Of beauty, with her fragile blue encased
In tender down against quick-chilling winds
And frost: a fleeting life, swift-blown, that's chased
By swifter death.

No autumn will beguile
Her measured days, and swift decay rescinds
All hope of gain. Only with beauty's eyes
She smiles, without utility, and dies.

Thomas Saunders (Beyond the Lakes - Selected Poems, Peguis Publishers)

SEPTEMBER HEAT

The young girl
ravishes
her bike
with the tools
her
mother
gave her,
a present,
perhaps a
future
builder,
mechanic.

She works
diligently
talking
about
taking off
the tire,
the door
to our
house
She will change
it all,
fix
everything.

The leaves fall
still
some
glitter
in the hot sun,
the warm wind
embraces
her
her
moving hands
Hands full
of
hammers, nails,
heat.

She learns some
things she
has no
control over
leaves in color
geese soaring
over her
flowers freezing.

It is other
things
she can
change,
alter.

POWER (to do).

Wendy Cory (Rural Writings May 1983 #3, Rural Writings)

TRANSFORMATIONS

The blood of my ancestors
has died in me
I have forsaken the steppes
of Russia for the prairies
of Winnipeg, I have turned
my back on Minneapolis
and the Detroit lakes
I love only St. Boniface
its grey wooden churches
I want to spend my life
in Gimli listening to the
roar of emptiness in the
wild snow, scanning the lake
for the music of rainbow-
skinned fishes, I will compose
my songs to gold-eye tunes
send them across the land
in smoke-spaces, ice-signals
and concentrate all winter
on Henry Hudson adrift
in a boat, when he comes home
I will come home too and
the blood of my ancestors
will flower on Mennonite bushes

Miriam Waddington (Collected Poems, Oxford University Press)

GREY TO GREEN

The Pembina Valley
In the flood height of spring
Rocks with the burgeoning
Of life and green
Groans with buds bursting
In a slow hiss
From dull grey stems

Water trickles from slate cracks
And grey cliff faces shimmer
Jet black diamonds
Tumbling in the stretching sun

Runoff roars round slow corners
Overleaps willowed banks
And drags deadfall in a
Gale of flotsam
To reach where the river is going

Cold sunshine calms the senses
And on walks in muddied tracks
Filled with lethargy
Spring relief
Fills every breath
Of pungent oak and chokecherry resin

Slipping into sight
Green after green hue
Rioting against winter beige and grey
And rising to a crescendo
Of triumph

Every green from blue to gold.

Al Thorleifson (www.cici.mb.ca/athorleif, Permission of author)

THE PRAIRIE CHILD

When I was a child,
The prairie to me – was a beautiful shining pea green sea.
And I lay on a log
In the shade of a tree,
And I dreamed of the far off places to see.
My log was a raft
and I sailed away,
Over that shimmering shining sea.
India, Africa and Pakistan,
The tropic isles,
The Isle of Man.
I travelled to Britain and Paris, too,
Then across the Pacific so brightly blue.
I travelled afar,
I travelled wide,
No longer a lonely prairie child.
But a girl of the World
On a pea green sea,
Seeing the World
With a heart full of glee.
I'm older now,
Wiser too,
But there's just one thing
I would like to do.
Go back to that glistening, glittering sea,
And go sailing away,
With that young girl me.
With stars in her eyes,
From the dreams she had dreamed
And the world was all that it really seemed.
But that was yesterday,
To-day is now.
And you can't go back – not ever somehow.
So I'll cherish that girl
and her pea green sea,
To remind me of days
When life was free.

Marta Freeman (Permission of author)

FRIEND OR FOE

The night is upon us
It strikes with a vengeance
Surrounding all within its grasp
Is it friend or is it foe?

The darkness brings fear to some
Shelter to others
It lives deep within the soul of us
The essence of evil protrudes from it
Coming closer to all who believe

The streets come alive
The other side becomes real
We try in vain
To take back what is our own

There is comfort in the dark
No one sees us cringe or cry
Wanting help but knowing not where to turn

We try to sleep but cannot
The shadows dance on the wall
They are what we make them.

The morning comes slowly
Creeping, bringing with it the sun
Another day – but is it friend or foe
We all must decide – alone within.

Lillian Antoniw ([Rapid City Anthology](#), Compascor)

POPULAR GEOGRAPHY

Miami is one big yellow
pantsuit where the ocean
is louder than the sighs
of old age; Chicago is
a huge hot gun sending
smoke into the sky for
1000 miles to Winnipeg;
New York is a bright sharp
hypodermic needle and the
Metropolitan Opera singing
Wagner on winter afternoons,
and my own Toronto is an
Eaton's charge account adding
to the music in a Henry Moore
skating rink; Montreal was
once an Iroquois city huddled
around a mountain under a cross
and now is the autoroute to
an Olympic dream; everything
has changed, all the cities
are different, but Manitoba
oh Manitoba, you are still
a beautiful green grain
elevator storing the sunlight
and growing out of the black
summer earth.

Miriam Waddington ([Section Lines: A Manitoba Anthology](#), Turnstone Press)

OKANAGAN

The clear skies of the Okanagan, lakes, a
sparkling diamond blue.
Mountains rise in stately splendour,
creating a panoramic view.
Sagebrush growing on the craggy slopes
and on the rolling valley floor,
Pine and evergreen surround us, this is
Mother Nature's store.
Feathery crystals falling from the sky,
leave a blanket of pure white snow,
Rain's come down to touch the earth
urging fruit trees and flower to grow.

Apple blossoms, peach and plum are
bursting into bloom,
Cherry, apricot and grape, fill the valley
with sweet perfume.
Sandy beaches, trails and parks,
viewpoints along the way
Come and visit for a while, we know
you will want to stay.
Gracious people you will always find
make you feel welcome here,
Friendly smiles, affectionate hello's and a
heart full of good Cheer.

Norma G. Christie (Rapid City Anthology, Compascor)

THE PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY

The people in the valley live
in the thundering shadow of the railroad.
They have rutted back lanes and small
cramped houses and muddy back yards
huddled like a toy town under the concrete arches
of bridges spanning the tracks.
They have small shapely churches
and haphazard sidewalks and venturesome streets.
They hear meadowlarks and other birds
and have gardens and ramshackle rabbit hutches
in their backyards.
They have unkempt empty lots for playgrounds
and open field at easy distance.
The people in the valley build their houses
on little hills, and in some yards
you go down and in some you go up
by three small steps and some have terraces.
There are small sheds built
of weathered wood and rusty metal sheets.
There are clotheslines heavy
with coloured shirts and children's clothes.
The people in the valley live
in the shadow of the railroad.
In between the strident whistles
and the dull thunder of metal,
they hear the meadowlarks.

Anne Le Dressay (Poetry of Manitoba, Province of Manitoba)

FORSAKEN DREAMS

The vacant, silent farmyards
that dot our prairie land,
speak to me of hardship
and the power of nature's hand.

The fading paint and crumbling walls,
doors blown by wind ajar,
the shattered trees, the sagging roofs,
can all be seen afar.

These sites were home to farm folk
whose lives linked with the soil.
What circumstances forced them
to cease their daily toil?

What dreams did they relinquish?
What hopes were laid to rest
before they uttered bitter words –
“It's yours. I've done my best.”

The yards they left are monuments
that slowly will decay.
But, in the meantime, loud they speak
of a doleful farming day.

Ida E. Sanderson (Windrifts and Firesides, Country Quills)

DISEMBARKING AT QUEBEC

Is it my clothes, my way of walking,
the things I carry in my hand
-a book, a bag with knitting-
the incongruous pink of my shawl

this space cannot hear

or is it my own lack
of conviction which makes
these vistas of desolation,
long hills, the swamps, the barren sand, the glare
of sun on the bone-white
driftlogs, omens of winter,
the moon alien in day-
time a thin refusal

The others leap, shout

Freedom!

The moving water will not show me
my reflection.

The rocks ignore.

I am a word
in a foreign language.

Margaret Atwood (Journals of Susannah Moodie, Oxford University Press)

JAZZ CONCERT

The guitarist's mouth,
half open as he plays—
jazz, a downpour of sound and rhythm

On the shoulder of the man
with the silver trumpet,
black shadow of the mike

The drum beats on, never knowing
of the staves pounding rhythmically
into my flesh

Concert over,
houselights smile faintly
in the pause before the everyday world
returns

Standing on the amplifier
where horizontal and
vertical sound waves converge—
a can of beer

On the stage, tangled cords lie sprawled
like bars of melted music
fallen off the page

By the end of the musicians'
second number
I am drenched in notes

Walking after jazz
through an underground arcade—
hawkers' cries like the rumbling of the sea

Photographer
snapping away at the stage—
he, too, master of his instrument

Morning—
my inner ear tingles
with the banked fires of last night's jazz

Like a hit man
he peers into his camera
wrapped in layers of blue smoky air

Machi Tawara (Salad Anniversary, Kodansha International)

WARTY BLIGGENS THE TOAD

i met a toad
the other day by the name
of warty bliggens
he was sitting under
a toadstool
feeling contented
he explained that when the cosmos
was created

that toadstool was especially
planned for his personal
shelter from sun and rain
thought out and prepared
for him

do not tell me
said warty bliggens
that there is not a purpose
in the universe
the thought is blasphemy

a little more
conversation revealed
that warty bliggens
considers himself to be
the center of the said
universe
the earth exists
to grow toadstools for him
to sit under
the sun to give him light
by day and the moon
and wheeling constellations
to make beautiful

the night for the sake of
warty bliggens

to what act of yours
do you impute
this interest on the part
of the creator
of the universe
i asked him
why is it that you
are so greatly favored

ask rather
said warty bliggens
what the universe

has done to deserve me
if i were a
human being i would
not laugh
too complacently
at poor warty bliggens
for similar
absurdities
have only too often
lodged in the crinkles
of the human cerebrum
archy

Don Marquis (Archy and Mehitabel, Doubleday)

I, ICARUS

There was a time when I could fly. I swear it.
Perhaps, if I think for a moment, I can even tell you the year.
My room was on the ground floor at the rear of the house.
My bed faced a window.
Night after night I lay on my bed and willed myself to fly.
It was hard work, I can tell you.
Sometimes I lay perfectly still for an hour before I felt my body
 rising from the bed.
I rose slowly, slowly until I floated three or four feet above the
 floor.
Then, with a kind of swimming motion, I propelled myself
 toward the window.

Outside, I rose higher and higher, above the pasture fence, above
 the clothesline, above the dark, haunted trees beyond the
 pasture.
And, all the time, I heard the music of flutes.
It seemed the wind made this music.
And sometimes there were voices singing.

Alden Nowlan (Bread Wine and Salt, Stoddard Publishing)

DEPARTURE

leaving home
I stand with my dead
grandmother's suitcases in hand
coat slung carelessly over my shoulder
the car loaded down with
all my possessions
packed in boxes tied doubly
with string
(like a refugee from some
old movie)

my father coughs
shakes my hand
and offers me a last-minute
yellow screwdriver with
interchangeable heads

my mother kisses me
and says
as long as I have a sense of
humor
I will
survive

in the doorway now
I smile awkwardly and mutter
goodbye
my mother asks
again
have you
got
everything

yes
I say
I've got it
all
and
frightened suddenly
I want to paint my name
in huge red letters
on the ceilings and walls
of every room
carve my initials in
the coffee table
and leave a life-sized reproduction of myself
asleep upstairs

Glen Kirkland (Connections 2 - Relating, Gage Publishing)

ANTLERS AGAINST THE SKY

On a high ridge where the wind blows keen,
And tall firs finger at the blue,
The buck has paused to watch again
The red miracle of dawn break through.

His haunch is round with fat, for life –
The good life of the mountain tops –
Has groomed and grown and ripened him.
Waiting, my gun clicks as he stops.

Softly! For he has not heard
This faint prelude to death, nor knows
That I am near. Softly....Now
Against the sky his proud head shows!

Spear-clustered antlers, sharp as fear –
The old buck wears them with pride
That recks not now of hunt or hunter.
Red gleam the dawn rays on his hide.

He stamps a sharp, black hoof. Well down
In a cove, a fawn bleats for its mother.
But high ridge winds salute the king!
King of ridges, he, no other!

Steadily now! Aim well the rifle!
And quickly, too, for now he swings
Those lordly antlers high for flight!
(God pity all wild frightened things!)

Gently I ease the rifle down.
His gallant leap salutes the sky.
The good life of the hills be his!
We are of the ridge tops – he and I!

S. Omar Barker ([Words on Wings Book 1](#), Thomas Nelson & Sons)

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown--

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind--

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea--

A poem should not mean
But be.

Archibald MacLeish (Collected Poems 1917-1982, Houghton Mifflin)

CAGED BIRD

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou ([The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou](#), Random House)

I AM OFFERING THIS POEM

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
when winter comes to cover you,
or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
to warm your belly in winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would
if you were lost, needing direction,
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or hogan
in dense trees, come knocking,
and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe,

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
and all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

I love you.

Jimmy Santiago Baca ([Immigrants in Our Own Land and Selected Early Poems](#), New Directions Publishing Corporation)

AFTERNOON WITH IRISH COWS

There were a few dozen who occupied the field
across the road from where we lived,
stepping all day from tuft to tuft,
their big heads down in the soft grass,
though I would sometimes pass a window
and look out to see the field suddenly empty
as if they had taken wing, flown off to another country.

Then later, I would open the blue front door,
and again the field would be full of their munching
or they would be lying down
on the black-and-white maps of their sides,
facing in all directions, waiting for rain.
How mysterious, how patient and dumbfounded
they appear in the long quiet of the afternoons.

But every once in a while, one of them
would let out a sound so phenomenal
that I would put down the paper
or the knife I was cutting an apple with
and walk across the road to the stone wall
to see which one of them was being torched
or pierced through the side with a long spear.

Yes, it sounded like pain until I could see
the noisy one, anchored there on all fours,
her neck outstretched, her bellowing head
laboring upward as she gave voice
to the rising, full-bodied cry
that began in the darkness of her belly
and echoed up through her bowed ribs into her gaping mouth.

Then I knew that she was only announcing
the large, unadulterated cowness of herself,
pouring out the ancient apologia of her kind
to all the green fields and the gray clouds,
to the limestone hills and the inlet of the blue bay,
while she regarded my head and shoulders
above the wall with one wild, shocking eye.

Billy Collins ([Sailing Alone Around the Room](#), Random House)

AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS ROOM IN A SLUM

Far far from gusty waves, these children's faces.
Like rootless weeds the torn hair round their paleness.
The tall girl with her weighted-down head. The paper-seeming boy with
 rat's eyes. The stunted unlucky heir
Of twisted bones, reciting a father's gnarled disease,
His lesson from his desk. At back of the dim class,
One unnoted, sweet and young: his eyes live in a dream
Of squirrels' game, in tree room, other than this.

On sour cream walls, donations. Shakespeare's head
Cloudless at dawn, civilized dome riding all cities.
Belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley. Open-handed map
Awarding the world its world. And yet, for these
Children, these windows, not this world, are world,
Where all their future's painted with a fog,
A narrow street sealed in with a lead sky,
Far far from rivers, capes, and stars of words.

Surely Shakespeare is wicked, the map a bad example
With ships and sun and love tempting them to steal—
For lives that slyly turn in their cramped holes
From fog to endless night? On their slag heap, these children
Wear skins peeped through by bones and spectacles of steel
With mended glass, like bottle bits on stones.
All of their time and space are foggy slum
So blot their maps with slums as big as doom.

Unless, governor, teacher, inspector, visitor,
This map becomes their window and these windows
That open on their lives like crouching tombs
Break, O break open, till they break the town
And show the children to the fields and all their world
Azure on their sands, to let their tongues
Run naked into books, the white and green leaves open
The history theirs whose language is the sun.

Stephen Spender (*Twentieth Century Poetry: American and British*, McGraw Hill)

MY POSITION, MY VIEW

I can understand your
stuffed-shirt status
it has painted flowers on your eyes
you think they are in

my hair

I can respect your position
you're sure you're giving me the best
but it's shaded history, I'm just an element
in your power

I can only take so much

I am your future – rearrange it if you will
you're painting flowers in my brain
you think they are keeping
me innocent

I can understand your
disinterest in change

Someone painted flowers in your brain
this is what you're
putting to me

Please let me be me

loose and free
you might be surprised at how much
good I can be

I can accept you
can you not attempt to accept me?

Julie Hobson (*It's Not Always a Game*, All About Us Books)

THE SHELL

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well.
And straightway, like a bell,
Came low and clear
The slow, sad murmur of far distant seas
Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Wind-swept and desolate.
It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight
Since time began
Of any human quality or stir,
Save what the dreary winds and waves incur.

And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles, rolling round;
For ever rolling, with a hollow sound:
And bubbling sea-weeds, as the waters go,
Swish to and fro
Their long cold tentacles of slimy grey:
There was no day;
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight
To wonder at the moon:
'Twas twilight only, and the frightened croon,
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind
And waves that journeyed blind....
And then I loosed my ear—Oh, it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

James Stephens ([Theme & Image: An Anthology of Poetry](#), Copp Clark)

THE BURNING OF THE LEAVES

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves.
They go to the fire; the nostril pricks with smoke
Wandering slowly into the weeping mist.
Brittle and blotched, ragged and rotten sheaves!
A flame seizes the smouldering ruin, and bites
On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock's fallen tower is dust:
All the spices of June are a bitter reek,
All the extravagant riches spent and mean.
All burns! the reddest rose is a ghost.
Sparks whirl up, to expire in the mist: the wild
Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,
Time for the burning of days ended and done,
Idle solace of things that have gone before,
Rootless hope and fruitless desire are there:
Let them go to the fire with never a look behind.
That world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.

They will come again, the leaf and the flower, to arise
From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,
And magical scents to a wondering memory bring;
The same glory, to shine upon different eyes.
Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.
Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

Lawrence Binyon ([Theme & Image: An Anthology of Poetry](#), Copp Clark)

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
 Toward heaven still,
 And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
 Beside it, and there may be two or three
 Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
 But I am done with apple-picking now.
 Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
 The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
 I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
 I got from looking through a pane of glass
 I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
 And held against the world of hoary grass.
 It melted, and I let it fall and break.
 But I was well
 Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
 And I could tell
 What form my dreaming was about to take.
 Magnified apples appear and disappear,
 Stem end and blossom end,
 And every fleck of russet showing clear.
 My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
 It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
 I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
 And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
 The rumbling sound
 Of load on load of apples coming in.
 For I have had too much
 Of apple-picking: I am overtired
 Of the great harvest I myself desired.
 There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,

 Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
 For all
 That struck the earth,
 No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
 Went surely to the cider-apple heap
 As of no worth.
 One can see what will trouble
 This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
 Were he not gone,
 The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
 Long sleep as I describe its coming on,
 Or just some human sleep.

Robert Frost (*Theme & Image: An Anthology of Poetry*, Copp Clark)

FROM THE SHORE

A lone gray bird,
Dim-dipping, far-flying,
Alone in the shadows and grandeurs and tumults
Of night and the sea
And the stars and storms.

Out over the darkness it wavers and hovers,
Out into the gloom it swings and batters,
Out into the wind and the rain and the vast,
Out into the pit of a great black world,
Where fogs are at battle, sky-driven, sea-blown,
Love of mist and rapture of flight,
Glories of chance and hazards of death
On its eager and palpitant wings.

Out into the deep of the great dark world,
Beyond the long borders where foam and drift
Of the sundering waves are lost and gone
On the tides that plunge and rear and crumble.

Carl Sandburg (Poetry for Young People, Scholastic)

THE DELIGHT SONG OF TSOAI-TALEE

I am a feather on the bright sky
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water
I am the shadow that follows a child
I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows
I am an eagle playing with the wind
I am a cluster of bright beads
I am the farthest star
I am the cold of the dawn
I am the roaring of the rain
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow
I am the long track of the moon in a lake
I am a flame of four colors
I am a deer standing away in the dusk
I am a field of sumac and the pomme blanche
I am an angle of geese in the winter sky
I am the hunger of a young wolf
I am the whole dream of these things

You see, I am alive, I am alive
I stand in good relation to the earth
I stand in good relation to the gods
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful
I stand in good relation to the daughter of Tsen-tainte
You see, I am alive, I am alive

N. Scott Momaday ([In the Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems, 1961 - 1991](#), St. Martin's Press LLC)

THE PARADOX

When I am inside writing,
all I can think about is how I should be outside living.

When I am outside living,
all I can do is notice all there is to write about.

When I read about love, I think I should be out loving.
When I love, I think I need to read more.

I am stumbling in pursuit of grace,
I hunt patience with a vengeance.

On the mornings when my brother's tired muscles
held to the pillow, my father used to tell him,

*For every moment you aren't playing basketball,
someone else is on the court practicing*

I spend most of my time wondering
if I should be somewhere else.

So I have learned to shape the words *thank you*
with my first breath each morning, my last breath every night.

When the last breath comes, at least I will know I was thankful
for all the places I was so sure I was not supposed to be.

All those places I made it to,
all the loves I held, all the words I wrote.

And even if it is just for one moment,
I will be exactly where I am supposed to be.

Sarah Kay ([No Matter the Wreckage](#), Write Bloody Publishing)

MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:

They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

W. H. Auden (Twentieth Century Poetry and Poetics, Oxford University Press)

ALL ABOARD

a distant whistle blows
through the long tunnel
of memory

feel the shuttle-sway
steel wheels on steel tracks
clickety clack
throbs a pulse
that matches
my own

conductor arranges seats
for a 3AM village stop
never a porter to answer
a silent bell
for a middle-of-the-night
assist

landscape moves by windows
a real – too – real film
running sideways
eye-balled from padded seats
that face
where we've been

observation car sees
grey-green foothills grey-purple
mountains
approach at clickety clack speed

burrowing tunnels spill
new life – new scenes
trestles cross
vicious torrents
300 feet below - stop
the heart in the throat

the ocean larger
much larger than Lake Winnipeg
not nearly
as calm

Vancouver
next stop
end of the line

mountains to the east
ocean to the west
and I claustrophobic
breathe in the coast
long
for the prairie flat-lands
soon too soon
the last spike
is driven in the heart
of Via

Lenore Wright (Permission of author)

PERCEPTION

(Dedicated to the memory of Richard A. Robertson)

The world was good to him until
It took his sight away
With anger he began to write
With bitter words he played

I put myself in his place
A writer too, I am
On darkened beach late one night
Closed my eyes upon the sand

I listened with intensity
To waves breaking on the shore
To trees that whispered secrets
I had never heard before

I reached to touch the cool, moist sand
Felt the breeze upon my face
Wrote a word upon the beach
Felt the surf erase its trace

I tasted rain upon my tongue
A nectar I'd never known
In the space of one short hour
Within me I had grown

I smelled the freshness of the rain
The greenness of the trees
The scent of decomposing earth
The lake's wash-up debris

I then perceived within my mind
The anger that he felt
To lose a sense we think as prime
My heart began to melt

Unknowingly he taught me
To see without my eyes
Perceive the world through senses
From them to literalize

With a smile upon his face
And a pen held in his hand
With words so graphic and concise
Through years his works will stand

I try to learn from all I meet
This man has taught me more
With words and senses, together
We have worlds to explore.

Lenore Wright (Permission of author)

THE ICE-CART

Perched on my city office-stool
 I watched with envy, while a cool
 And lucky carter handled ice.....
 And I was wandering in a trice,
 Far from the grey and grimy heat
 Of that intolerable street,
 O'er sapphire berg and emerald floe,
 Beneath the still, cold ruby glow
 Of everlasting Polar night,
 Bewildered by the queer half-light,
 Until I stumbled, unawares,
 Upon a creek where big white bears
 Plunged headlong down with flourished heels,
 And floundered after shining seals
 Through shivering seas of blinding blue.
 And as I watched them, ere I knew,
 I'd stripped, and I was swimming, too,
 Among the seal-pack, young and hale,
 And thrusting on with threshing tail,
 With twist and twirl and sudden leap
 Through cracking ice and salty deep—
 Diving and doubling with my kind,
 Until, at last, we left behind
 Those big white, blundering bulks of death,
 And lay, at length, with panting breath
 Upon a far untravelled floe,
 Beneath a gentle drift of snow—
 Snow drifting gently, fine and white,
 Out of the endless Polar night,
 Falling and falling evermore
 Upon that far untravelled shore,
 Till I was buried fathoms deep
 Beneath that cold, white drifting sleep—
 Sleep drifting deep,
 Deep drifting sleep.....

The carter cracked a sudden whip:
 I clutched my stool with startled grip,
 Awakening to the grimy heat
 Of that intolerable street.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (Poetic Experience, McClelland and Stewart)

NIGHT BOAT

Throb, throb, throb...the tall ship,
The white ship never launched upon the ocean
Moves beneath us with a steady motion,
A never-ending give-and-take-and give,
Gentle, rhythmic and contemplative.
The cup is not jarred against the lip,
The foot is not shaken on the floor—
The ship times the heartbeat

and no more.

Softly across a sea as dark as jet
And smooth as glass it goes with no wind sighing,
The glimmer of its wake behind it lying
Like a white peacock's train upon the night;
Its corridors are dim with veiled light—
And everywhere in arch and alcove set,
Sprawled at large or huddled in a heap
Men groan in heavy and hypnotic sleep.

There is a harbour for the ship; and they
Its breathing cargo shall awake tomorrow
Each to his separate world of hope and sorrow;
Only tonight, dazed with the watch I keep,
I look on them and think—"The night for sleep:
What if there never dawn another day,
And the ship slide forever by no shore,
And these its living-dead arise no more?"

Audrey Alexandra Brown (Golden Carvan, Ryerson Macmillan)

OCTOBER PAINT

Flame blue wisps in the west,
Wrap yourselves in these leaves
And speak to winter about us.
Tell winter the whole story.

Red leaves up the oaken slabs,
You came little and green spats
Four months ago; your climbers
Put scroll after scroll around
The oaken slabs. "Red, come red,"
Some one with an October paint
Pot said. And here you are,
Fifty red arrowheads of leaf paint
Or fifty mystic fox footprints
Or fifty pointed thumbprints.
Hold on, the winds are to come
Blowing, blowing, the gray slabs
Will lose you, the winds will
Flick you away in a whiff
One by one, two by two... Yet
I have heard a rumor whispered;
Tattlers tell it to each other
Like a secret everybody knows...
Next year you will come again.
Up the oaken slabs you will put
Your pointed fox footprints
Green in the early summer
And you will be red arrowheads
In the falltime... Tattlers
Slip this into each other's ears
Like a secret everybody knows.
...If I see some one with an
October paint pot I shall be
Full of respect and say,
"I saw your thumbprints everywhere,
How do you do it?"

Carl Sandburg (Poetry for Young People, Scholastic)

TOO HOT TO SLEEP

He was sleeping when bear
came down from the mountain
by the water trap
after cleaning the screen
of branches and gravel

He fell asleep, a hot june morning
above Wapta Lake, the Kicking Horse Pass
When Muskwa came down without a sound
and snuffed at his jeans

Who's this asleep on my mountain?

It's my friend Birnie asleep I said
(in my head)
I didn't hear you coming bear
I was dozing, I looked up
and there you were

You never know said Bear
just where the wind will lead me
when I'll be around
or what beat I'm hunting on

and sniffed at Birnie's collar
at his ear, which he licked tentatively
causing Birnie to moan softly

Nothing doing here he said, nothing doing

"We were just going bear," I said quietly
edging backwards

Don't move too quickly will you, said Bear
when you move, or better still
don't move at all

Are you here often, are you coming again?
he asked, flipping over a stone
licking delicately the underside
"No," I said. good he said, that's good.

I just came down from the pass
the wind blowing up my nose
to see who was sleeping on my mountain
he said, and sniffed at Birnie's armpit
Whoosh whoosh he snorted

and tuned away, clattered down the creek
popping his teeth, his hackles up
Went out of sight
around the shoulder of Mount Hector

as Birnie woke rubbing his eyes
"Too hot to sleep he said." Yeah.

Sid Marty (Signatures: Poems of Canada Two, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

CANADIAN RAILROAD TRILOGY

There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run,
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun,
Long before the white man and long before the wheel
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real.

But time has no beginnings and history has no bounds,
As to this verdant country they came from all around,
They sailed upon her waterways and they walked the forests tall,
Built the mines, the mills and the factories for the good of us all.

And when the young man's fancy was turnin' in the spring,
The railroad men grew restless for to hear the hammers ring,
Their minds were overflowin' with the visions of their day
And many a fortune won and lost and many a debt to pay.

For they looked in the future and what did they see,
They saw an iron road runnin' from the sea to the sea,
Bringin' the goods to a young, growin' land
All up from the seaports and into their hands.
"Look away!", said they, "across this mighty land,
From the eastern shore to the western strand!"

"Bring in the workers and bring up the rails,
We gotta lay down the tracks and tear up the trails,
Open her heart, let the life blood flow,
Gotta get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow
Get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow."

"Behind the blue Rockies the sun is declinin',
The stars they come stealin' at the close of the day,
Across the wide prairie our loved ones lie sleeping
Beyond the dark ocean in a place far away."

"We are the navies who work upon the railway,
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun.
Livin' on stew and drinkin' bad whiskey,
Bendin' our backs 'til the long days are done."

"We are the navies who work upon the railway,
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun,
Layin' down track and buildin' the bridges,
Bendin' our backs 'til the long days are done."

continued on next page...

“So over the mountains and over the plains,
Into the muskeg and into the rain.
Up the Saint Lawrence all the way to Gaspé,
Swingin’ our hammers and drawin’ our pay,
Layin’ ‘em in and tyin’ ‘em down,
Away to the bunkhouse and into the town,
A dollar a day and a place for my head
A drink to the living, a toast to the dead!”

“Oh, the song of the future has been sung,
All the battles have been won,
On the mountain tops we stand,
All the world at our command.
We have opened up the soil
With our teardrops—
And our toil.”

For there was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not
run,
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun,
Long before the white man and long before the wheel,
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real.
And many are the dead men,
Too silent
To be real.

Gordon Lightfoot (Sunburst, Thomas Nelson & Sons)

EX-BASKETBALL PLAYER

Pearl Avenue runs past the high-school lot,
Bends with the trolley tracks, and stops, cut off
Before it has a chance to go two blocks,
At Colonel McComsky Plaza. Berth's Garage
Is on the corner facing west, and there,
Most days, you'll find Flick Webb, who helps Berth out.

Flick stands tall among the idiot pumps –
Five on a side, the old bubble-head style,
Their rubber elbows hanging loose and low.
One's nostrils are two S's, and his eyes
An E and O. And one is squat, without
A head at all – more of a football type.

Once Flick played for the high-school team, the Wizards.
He was good: in fact, the best. In '46
He bucketed three hundred ninety points,
A county record still. The ball loved Flick.
I saw him rack up thirty-eight or forty
In one home game. His hands were like wild birds.

He never learned a trade, he just sells gas,
Checks oil, and changes flats. Once in a while,
As a gag, he dribbles an inner tube,
But most of us remember anyway.
His hands are fine and nervous on the lug wrench.
It makes no difference to the lug wrench, though.

Off work, he hangs around Mae's Luncheonette.
Grease-grey and kind of coiled, he plays pinball,
Sips lemon cokes, and smokes those thin cigars;
Flick seldom speaks to Mae, just sits and nods
Beyond her face towards bright applauding tiers
Of Necco Wafers, Nibs, and Juju Beads.

John Updike (Through the Open Window, Oxford University Press)

MOSQUITOS

When my father wanted to point out galaxies
or Andromeda or the Seven Sisters, I'd complain
of the huzz of mosquitoes, or of the yawning
moon-quiet in that slow, summer air. All I wanted

was to go inside into our cooled house and watch TV
or paint my nails. What does a fifteen year-old girl
know of patience? What does a girl know of the steady turn
of whole moon valleys cresting into focus?

Standing there in our driveway with him,
I smacked my legs, my arms, and my face
while I waited for him to find whatever pinhole
of light he wanted me to see. At night, when I washed

my face, I'd find bursts of blood and dried bodies
slapped into my skin. Complaints at breakfast about
how I'd never do it again, how I have more homework
now, Dad. How I can't go to school with bites all over

my face anymore, Dad. Now -- I hardly
ever say no. He has plans to go star-gazing
with his grandson and for once, I don't protest.
He has plans. I know one day he won't ask me,

won't be there to show me the rings of Saturn
glow gold through the eyepiece. He won't be there
to show me how the moons of Jupiter jump
if you catch them on a clear night. I know

one day I will look up into the night sky
searching, searching—I know mosquitoes
will have their way with me --
and my father won't hear me complain.

Aimee Nezhukumatathil ([Lucky Fish: Poems](#), Tupelo Press)

AFTER THE WINTER

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves
And against the morning's white
The shivering birds beneath the eaves
Have sheltered for the night,
We'll turn our faces southward, love,
Toward the summer isle
Where bamboos spire the shafted grove
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill
Where towers the cotton tree,
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,
And works the droning bee.
And we will build a cottage there
Beside an open glade,
With black-ribbed bluebells blowing near,
And ferns that never fade.

Claude McKay ([Claude McKay: Complete Poems](#), University of Illinois Press)

A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

As virtuous men pass mildly away
 And whisper to their souls to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 'The breath goes now,' and some say, 'No:'

So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
 'Twere profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th'earth brings harms and fears;
 Men reckon what it did, and meant.
 But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love –
 Whose soul is sense – cannot admit
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined
 That ourselves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Care less eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls, therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
 Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th'other do.

And though it in the center sit,
 Yet, when the other far doth roam,
 It leans and harkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
 Like th'other foot, obliquely run;
 Thy firmness makes my circle just,
 And makes me end where I begun.

John Donne (Sound and Sense 2nd Edition, Harcourt, Brace & World)

VESTIGIA

I took a day to search for God,
And found Him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw His footprint in the sod.

Then suddenly, all unaware,
Far off in the deep shadows, where
A solitary hermit thrush
Sang through the holy twilight hush—
I heard His voice upon the air.

And even as I marvelled how
God gives us Heaven here and now,
In a stir of wind that hardly shook
The poplar trees beside the brook—
His hand was light upon my brow.

At last with evening as I turned
Homeward, and thought what I had learned
And all that there was still to probe—
I caught the glory of His robe
Where the last fires of sunset burned.

Back to the world with quickening start
I looked and longed for any part
In making saving Beauty be...
And from that kindling ecstasy
I knew God dwelt within my heart.

Bliss Carman (Canadian Poetry in English, Ryerson Press)

A DESCRIPTION OF LOVE

Now what is love? I pray thee, tell.
It is that fountain and that well,
Where pleasure and repentance dwell.
It is perhaps that sauncing bell,
That tolls all in to heaven or hell:
And this is love, as I hear tell.

Yet what is love? I pray thee say.
It is a work on holy-day;
It is December matched with May;
When lusty bloods, in fresh array,
Hear ten months after of the play:
And this is love, as I hear say.

Yet what is love? I pray thee sayn.
It is a sunshine mixed with rain;
It is a tooth-ache, or like pain;
It is a game where none doth gain;
The lass saith no, and would full fain:
And this is love, as I hear sayn.

Yet what is love? I pray thee say.
It is a yea, it is a nay,
A pretty kind of sporting fray;
It is a thing will soon away;
Then take the vantage while you may:
And this is love, as I hear say.

Yet what is love? I pray thee show.
A thing that creeps, it cannot go;
A prize that passeth to and fro;
A thing for one, a thing for mo;
And he that proves must find it so:
And this is love, sweet friend, I trow.

Sir Walter Raleigh (Oxford Book of 16th Century Verse, Oxford University Press)

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns!" he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismayed?
 Not tho' the soldiers knew
 Some one had blundered:
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell,
 Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabers bare,
 Flashed as they turned in air,
 Sab'ring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wondered:
 Plunged in the battery smoke,
 Right through the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reeled from the sabre-stroke
 Shattered and sundered.
 Then they rode back, but not-
 Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered;
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
 Oh, the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.
 Honor the charge they made!
 Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble Six Hundred!

Alfred Lord Tennyson (Norton Anthology of English Literature, W.W. Norton & Co.)

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

I

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England – now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops – at the bent spray's edge –
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
- Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Robert Browning (Penguin Book of Victorian Verse, Penguin)

FROM "THE LADY OF SHALOTT"

PART I

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And through the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below.
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Through the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle embowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd
 By slow horses; and unhail'd
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 And abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
 And sometimes through the mirror blue
 The knights come riding two and two:
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,
 For often through the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot:
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed;—
 "I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley (A Book Of Verses, David Nutt)

SONNET 18: SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY?

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.

William Shakespeare (The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Collins)

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
 Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime. . .
 Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen (Sound & Sense, 2nd Edition, Harcourt Brace)

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

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.

William Wordsworth (The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Norton & Company)

FROM "THE WIND OUR ENEMY"

Wind
flattening its gaunt furious self against
the naked siding, knifing in the wounds
of time, pausing to tear aside the last
old scab of paint.

Wind
surging down the cocoa-coloured seams
of summer-fallow, darting in about
white hoofs and brown, snatching the sweaty cap
shielding red eyes.

Wind
filling the dry mouth with bitter dust
whipping the shoulders worry-bowed too soon,
soiling the water pail, and in grim prophecy
greying the hair.

.....
Wind
in a lonely laughterless shrill game
with broken wash-boiler, bucket without
a handle, Russian thistle, throwing up
sections of soil.

God, will it never rain again? What about
those clouds out west? No, that's just dust, as thick
and stifling now as winter underwear.
No rain, no crop, no feed, no faith, only
wind.

Anne Marriott (Through the Open Window, Oxford University Press)

DAZZLE

Light looks from a dazzled leaf,
Stares like a small sun,
Glitters, and in the breeze
Leaps to another leaf.

Light speaks and the morning answers,
The surest answer from the tree,
Up, up, up, up and all open,
But the flight and the song breaking free
Of the branch answer, answer also,
And the brightest answer is the eye—

Light blazes from the car windshield,
Prints tendrils on the shimmering wall,
Twinkles in the flower cup...
Up, up, up, up
Answer the vine and the grassblade,
The squirrel and the ball out of sight,
Answer all the shapes broken up
Into shimmer and shadow. Light

Comes to the eye from the answer,
Not direct from the fiery core—
From the kindled pebble under the sprinkler
To the glittering eye
That answers with so much seen
And the blinded 'Why?'

Light plays with the chorus of the living
While the dead hurry down
Earthward to lift to the dazzle
Any answering form.

Dorothy Roberts (*The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse*, Oxford University Press)

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I AM NOT SAYING

In body – just inches apart
But in our minds, who knows?
Are we united? Are your thoughts my thoughts?
Do you feel what I feel?
Constantly I wonder.
Please hear what I am not saying.

How do I tell you?
With an earnest look, with pleading eyes
I pour my heart out to you.
My eyes reflect the innermost feelings of my heart
Can you not see through them?
Please hear what I am not saying.

How can one go on not knowing?
Not being able to feel for someone.
That need must be fulfilled.
Is there a gleam of hope behind that wry smile?
Or must one search elsewhere, settle for less?
Oh, please hear what I am not saying.

I begin to feel the dreaded fear of defeat
Am I rejected, not wanted, or just not recognized?
Am I defeated before I have risen up?
Where do I begin?
Oh, please hear what I am not saying.

Teardrops from heaven fall softly against the window
My world is lonely, desolate and dark
I feel abandoned, I'm lost and alone
A feeling of emptiness creeps over me.
- Tell me, where do I stand?
- Please hear what I am not saying.

Brenda Stewart ([It's Not Always a Game](#), All About Us Books)

A KITE IS A VICTIM

A kite is a victim you are sure of.
You love it because it pulls
gentle enough to call you master,
strong enough to call you fool;
because it lives
like a desperate trained falcon
in the high sweet air,
and you can always haul it down
to tame it in your drawer.

A kite is a fish you have already caught
in a pool where no fish come,
so you play him carefully and long,
and hope he won't give up,
or the wind die down.

A kite is the last poem you've written;
so you give it to the wind,
but you don't let it go
until someone finds you
something else to do.

A kite is a contract of glory
that must be made with the sun,
so you make friends with the field
the river and the wind,
then you pray the whole cold night before
under the traveling cordless moon,
to make you worthy and lyric and pure.

Leonard Cohen ([Tribal Drums](#), McGraw-Hill)

JULY

Blue sky that holds off at a distance,
you can follow the pine trunks all the way up with your eye
to the high branches stilled in sunlight
where birds come and go
from here to the next county.
You can sit forever in an evening
spitting melon seeds,
twisting around the tongue
the few fibres that held
a whole mouthful of sweet water.
It is possible to swallow this
and all of childhood in one gulp,
along with all the wrongs that have not yet happened,
blessing them in advance.
Bright melon sliced open on the table
with all of summer leaking out of it.
Still the children call to one another in the streets
not wanting to come in, but on a night like this
if they stayed out they would learn how to float
like the moon through the pine branches.
On the table the half-eaten melon
is a cave of red meat and black stars,

pale rinds float in the grass,
and the big neighbourhood dog comes to stand
like a hand stuffed into too small a glove.

Roo Borson (20th Century Poetry and Poetics, 4th Ed., Oxford University Press)

THE SHROUDING

Sun through the winter's dust
Gleams meagrely
In mockery of birds who through the afternoon
Murmur their short, inconsequent sharp notes
And think to welcome spring.

For still snow clings
Along the northern fences
Greyish and all unkempt:
Still the elms stand lone
Seeming to harbour winter in their boughs,
Unready still to yield to loosening sap,
Unready for the battle with the sun.

Must we awake from this long quietness of sleep,
Must we arise and find
Beauty in wakening?

Let me lie safe on lonely northern ground
Safe in the snow;
Wrap me in silence, let me not ever know
When the sun burns, nor whither flies the crow.

Dorothy Livesay (Collected Poems: The Two Seasons, McGraw-Hill Ryerson)

WOMAN BY THE SHORE

There is a woman
I know, at Pimisi Bay
who says she's getting old
whose brave words
make me cry
when I thought I was through
with crying:
"I have reached
the all but obscene
age of 90...said in the sense,
that to reach for the exaggerated,
is to challenge the rational."

Little wonder that there are
tears on my face;
Louise speaks with clarion voice
and utter sensibility
for all of us.

I see her now
on a bench beside the bay
bird calls drawing her
out of herself,
words streaming through
her serene mind
a desire to write
making her blue eyes shine.

Listen to the loon
dear lady, let the voice of
the white-throat
send you my love.

Robert W. Nero ([Woman by the Shore and Other Poems](#), Imprimerie Gagné Ltée)

CIVILIZATION LIVES IN THE THROAT

like a bird cross-stitching a backyard with sound.
The throat is the hollow stem of a wineglass,
the root of the question mark that rises out of the heart
into the head. The throat connects heartbeat and word;
can you tell by its rhythm which speech drinks its truths
and which does not thirst. The lark ascends in your communications
or it does not. A child sits on a bank, piping a river
through a wooden flute. Listening at a window
a woman hums sun's delight across water
as she sketches architectural plans for a new city hall.
People flow through these glass doors, reflections approach
like ideas surfacing, words seeking air. The inner
leaps toward the outer like the pulse in the throat
shared by everyone you pass on a downtown street.
The street itself is a throat, each of us carried in its pulse –
city landscaped by voice. Civilization lives in the cry
that lifts like early morning light up skyscraper windows
above the slumped panhandler, his cap a silent mouth.
Well-wishers drop coins and hurry their own surrender away.
What is language if we do not speak what stammers the tongue?
Not knowing is the beginning of everything.
The same notes play us all, then we arrange into different chords;
one shared note can listen you into a strange city
where people you've never met smile like songs you want to learn
and we're all busking our heart beats for a dime.
There perched on a street corner bench, a lark embroiders
Our sidewalk anthem. It ascends.

Beth Goobie ([Best Canadian Poetry 2021](#), Biblioasis)

LATE AUGUST

This is the plum season, the nights
blue and distended, the moon
hazed, this is the season of peaches

with their lush lobed bulbs
that glow in the dusk, apples
that drop and rot
sweetly, their brown skins veined as glands

No more the shrill voices
that cried *Need Need*
from the cold pond, bladed
and urgent as new grass

Now it is the crickets
that say *Ripe Ripe*
slurred in the darkness, while the plums

dripping on the lawn outside
our window, burst
with a sound like thick syrup
muffled and slow

The air is still
warm, flesh moves over
flesh, there is no

hurry

Margaret Atwood (Margaret Atwood Selected Poems 1966-1984, Oxford University Press)

BOTH SIDES NOW

Rows and flows of angel hair
And ice cream castles in the air
And feather canyons everywhere
I've looked at clouds that way

But now they only block the sun
They rain and they snow on everyone
So many things I would have done
But clouds got in my way

I've looked at clouds from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow
It's cloud illusions I recall
I really don't know clouds at all

Moons and Junes and Ferris wheels
The dizzy dancing way that you feel
As every fairy tale comes real
I've looked at love that way

But now it's just another show
And you leave 'em laughing when you go
And if you care, don't let them know
Don't give yourself away

I've looked at love from both sides now
From give and take and still somehow
It's love's illusions that I recall
I really don't know love
Really don't know love at all

Tears and fears and feeling proud
To say "I love you" right out loud
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds
I've looked at life that way

Oh but now old friends they're acting strange
And they shake their heads and they tell me that
I've changed
Well something's lost but something's gained
In living every day

I've looked at life from both sides now
From win and lose and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all
I really don't know life
I really don't know life at all

Joni Mitchell (Both Sides Now, Gandalf Press)

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF TAPE

The real poems are being written in outports
on backwoods farms
in passageways where pantries still exist
or where geraniums
nail light to the window
while out of the window boy in the flying field
is pulled to heaven on the keel of a kite.

Stories breed in the north:
men with snow in their mouths
trample and shake at the bit
kneading the woman down under blankets of snow
icing her breath, her eyes.

The living speech is shouted out
by men and women leaving railway lines
to trundle home, pack-sacked
just company for deer or bear—

Hallooed
across the counter, in a corner store
it booms upon the river's shore:
on midnight roads where hikers flag you down
speech echoes from the canyon's wall
resonant
indubitable.

Dorothy Livesay (*The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse*, Oxford University Press)

LYNX IN WINNIPEG

His stiff fur
Bristles. He looks neither to left
Nor right. His feet
Scuff dust dropped from chimneys.
Over the years, his forests have grown houses.
Unable to tell what
Is his, he has come to reclaim it,
To see if boards will remember how to sprout branches.
In an hour his daily dream of rabbits
Will be lost in the white snarl of dogs
As he crouches in a tree without leaves.
A bullet will open his chest,
Releasing ten thousand memories of frogs
On the soft edges of streams, snow turning purple
With night, warm blood after a long hunt.
All this will be lost.
At the last, he will draw back, his yellow coat
As hard as quills, his mouth
Defiant, his claws rending the air.
His body will back itself into the distance
As though he would climb for heaven or a new world
Of tree tops and blue sky. His death will not come
Easily. Out of his place, he will drive
Others out of their lives until
A young man with a wife and two children
To whom he is kind, will ease himself
From his car, raise his heavy rifle,
Nestle wood to cheek.
Hedges are forests grown impotent.

W.D. Valgardson ([In the Gutting Shed](#), Turnstone Press)

SILENT SEASONS

When dandelions warm a
 sun-starved heart
And harsh caw-caws are
 music to the soul
My farmer, restless as any
 haltered foal,
Waits, all set for spring
 seeding to start.
When a cricket's cheerful
 cree-cree is part
Of the day's song; roadside
 asters extol
Autumn's charm; and barley
 on every knoll
Is white – harvest fever
 strikes like a dart.
Twice each year I watch my
 anxious man
Withdraw, monkwise, to the
 sancta of his fields
To commune long hours
 with his soul in
 grinding dust
Or itching chaff. Time has
 taught me to plan
For silent seasons: engrossed
 in weather and yields,
Dog-tired, he rations words –
 speaks if he must.

Winifred Hulbert (Moth and Candle, Compascor)

GREEN RAIN

I remember long veils of green rain
Feathered like the shawl of my grandmother—
Green from the half-green of the spring trees
Waving in the valley.

I remember the road
Like the one which leads to my grandmother's house,
A warm house, with green carpets,
Geraniums, a trilling canary
And shining horse-hair chairs;
And the silence, full of the rain's falling
Was like my grandmother's parlour
Alive with herself and her voice, rising and falling—
Rain and wind intermingled.

I remember on that day
I was thinking only of my love
And of my love's house.
But now I remember the day
As I remember my grandmother.
I remember the rain as the feathery fringe of her shawl.

Dorothy Livesay (Collected Poems: The Two Seasons, McGraw-Hill Ryerson)

WOODED PATHS

I enter the dark green, cool shade of the woods. A little way off to the side a sparkling stream tinkles and cascades over the pebbles on its sandy bed. Lush green moss grows abundantly at the edge.

The coolness envelops me as I stroll down the path. Sunlight filters through the dense leaves to reach the ground and halo the flowers.

The fragrant smell of spring and flowers is in the air blending with the smell of pine needles. I stoop to kneel on the emerald green grass. There I pick an azure blue-bell and inhale its tender perfume of dew, spring and its own sweet scent.

The birch trees look like young girls talking with young men. Their buds are like tight curls in their hair and their waving branches are their gesticulating arms.

I pick lilies and lilacs and inhale their virginal fragrance. I bind up the flowers and their scent with my hair ribbon.

There on the wooded paths all cares of the world are lost in the delicate perfume of flowers, the potpourri of spring and the calm, cool air of the woods. Reluctantly I re-enter the real world from my haven.

Christianne Rioux (Rapid City Anthology, Compascor Manitoba)

LONELY HOME

The cobblestone path wanders aimlessly backward
Finally reaching a little house in the glen
A white picket fence encompasses the yard
The surroundings over-grown by flowers and vines.

The happiness once within emanates through the windows
Shining upon the over-grown yard
A home filled once with laughter and love
Now gone forever.

Silently a shadow appears at the side of the house
Only seen by a special few
Those who are able to see
Willing to believe
In the past, present and future.

As swiftly as it appeared the shadow leaves
Stopping only a few moments to remember
Was it all real or just a dream
The love will always be there
The laughter and tears again will flow.

The house stands empty only awhile
People now see the beauty within
There will be life in the home again
The family has returned
They did not forget.

Lillian Antoniw ([Rapid City Anthology](#), Compascor)

REPRIEVE

How can I work today?
All summer long
Our lawns lay panting
in Manitoba's heat:
Winds forgot their
cooling, sighing song
And aided the sun in
scorching helpless
wheat

Like dusty soldiers
dropping on rations,
flowers
Lit my eye – such
dogged effort to bloom
Mortals daily searched
for signs of showers
And oldsters relived the
Dirty Thirties'
doom.
Now mercy whispers at
dawn, disarming fear;
Hope, waking, climbs
like Jack on his fabled
bean;
O heavenly music
tinkling in my ear
Sweet elfin sound of
grass turning green.

Why should I work?
Like the barrel under
the eave
Spill over, my heart,
and dance through this
reprieve.

Winifred N. Hulbert (Moth and Candle, Compascor)

THIS CITY

This city
Sings a quiet song
Meeting at the junction of two rivers
Background song of drum and dance
Echoes of laughter and tears
Buried beneath the concrete
Sacred mounds long leveled
Meaning nothing
Needing space to build
Lay tracks
Displayed in glass cases
This city
Dirty sidewalks cover blood and death
A spirit left to lie alone
No name, no reason
Just a body, buried in back pages
A shrug, move on
I have lived here longer than where I was born
I walk along its concrete trails
Paths have led me through back alley dreams
Still my visions take me back
That place where the river blessed me
I could dive down deep within that clear cold water
Stretch my arms out to touch bottom
But I never could and over time
That clear cold water became cloudy
No longer clear
No longer life giving
No longer blessed
Now I haunt the urban landscape
Searching for another song
One I heard as a child
Has faded by city sounds and sirens in the night
Reaching the place where the city ends
All I see is an unending horizon
I always turn back
Face east, west, south but never north
I have left that place
I have placed my tobacco on these sidewalks
To claim this city as my home

Duncan Mercredi ([mahikan ka onot: The Poetry of Duncan Mercredi](#), Wilfrid Laurier University Press)

WINNIPEG POEM (“AT THE CRUX OF TWO RIVERS”)

At the crux of two rivers that hold
more than they wash away
an imperfect city stands, restless
in the heat of its own light

aglow in grin, gleaming from one
bundled-up neighbour to another
waving a glove-clad good morning

aglow in bright eyes
as learners file into classrooms
to take in new wisdom
and churn out tomorrow.

aglow from the sun,
glinting on the Golden Boy,
glancing down at a city
that spends each day learning
& loving,
& overcoming,
& looking fearlessly into its own flaws
& renaming them lessons
in forgiveness
in growth
in relentless hope.

The tale of two rivers
of one city
whose story is still being written
crafted by unsure hands,
building, breaking
bread, holding on
to each other, taking up
pencil & paintbrush & laser pointer,
coming together, determined
to tell our own tale, to say something
beautiful about ourselves
and to make it true.

Chimwemwe Undi (chimwemweundi.com/relentlesshope)

GREEN DISEASE

she watches the city
cut down trees
bright orange
X
a kill mark
spray painted
across the bark

they come in
an over sized white truck
stretch out a long metal arm
with a large bucket
at the end
a man gets in
rises up off the street
like an elevator
or hot air balloon

with a loud buzzing saw
he starts at the top
cuts the leafy branches
sways gently
back and forth
as if carving a sculpture
or trimming hair

branches fall
lightly to the earth
where other men
absentmindedly
gather them
into a pile

she watches
until the tree looks nothing
like itself
it is naked
bald
amputated

the bucket lowers slightly
the trunk stabbed
the man cuts a short
thick piece
until it loosens
and falls heavy

cut after cut
until the tree is barely
taller than the grass
and pieces sit around
the stump
like stones

when the men leave
she studies
the pieces of the tree
tries to count
the yellow rings that were once
inside

but each blond circle blurs
into the next

Katherena Vermette ([North End Love Songs](#), The Muses' Company)