

Phenomenal Woman

By: Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.

I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.

I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.

I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,

The grace of my style.
I'm a woman

Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Much Madness is Divinest Sense

By: Emily Dickinson

Much Madness is divinest Sense
To a discerning Eye
Much Sense--the starkest Madness
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail
Assent and you are sane
Demure--you're straightway dangerous--
And handled with a Chain--

A Work of Artifice:

By: Marge Piercy

The bonsai tree
in the attractive pot
could have grown eight feet tall
on the side of a mountain
till split by lightning.
But a gardener
carefully pruned it.
It is nine inches high
Every day as he
whittles back the branches
the gardener croons,
It is your nature
to be small and cozy,
domestic and weak:
how lucky, little tree,
to have a pot to grow in.
With living creatures
one must begin very early
to dwarf their growth:
the bound feet,
the crippled brain,
the hair in curlers,
the hands you
love to touch.

Ethics

By: Linda Pastan

In ethics class so many years ago
our teacher asked this question every fall:
if there were a fire in a museum
which would you save, a Rembrandt painting
or an old woman who hadn't many
years left anyhow? Restless on hard chairs
caring little for pictures or old age
we'd opt one year for life, the next for art
and always half-heartedly. Sometimes
the woman borrowed my grandmother's face
leaving her usual kitchen to wander
some drafty, half-imagined museum.
One year, feeling clever, I replied
why not let the woman decide herself?
Linda, the teacher would report, eschews
the burdens of responsibility.
This fall in a real museum I stand
before a real Rembrandt, old woman,
or nearly so, myself. The colors
within this frame are darker than autumn,
darker even than winter--the browns of earth,
though earth's most radiant elements burn
through the canvas. I know now that woman
and painting and season are almost one
and all beyond saving by children.

Mirror

By: Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful--
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

By: Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage 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.

Alone by Edgar Allan Poe

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—

Fire and Ice by Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

When You are Old

by W. B. Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

This Is Just To Say

by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Poetry Set 3: Due on MONDAY, NOV 25

Introduction to Poetry

BY [BILLY COLLINS](#)

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.

OH, OH by: William Hathaway

My girl and I amble a country lane,
moo cows chomping daisies, our own
sweet saliva green with grass stems.
"Look, look," she says at the crossing,
"the choo-choo's light is on." And sure
enough, right smack dab in the middle
of maple dappled summer sunlight
is the lit headlight – so funny.

An arm waves to us from the black window.
We wave gaily to the arm. "When I hear
trains at night I dream of being president,"
I say dreamily. "And me first lady," she
says loyally. So when the last boxcars,
named after wonderful, faraway places,
and the cabooses chuckle by we look
eagerly to the road ahead. And there,
poised and growling, are fifty Hell's Angels.

The Waking Theodore Roethke

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.

kidnap poem

by Nikki Giovanni

ever been kidnapped
by a poet
if i were a poet
i'd kidnap you
put you in my phrases and meter
you to jones beach
or maybe coney island
or maybe just to my house
lyric you in lilacs
dash you in the rain
blend into the beach
to complement my see
play the lyre for you
ode you with my love song
anything to win you
wrap you in the red Black green
show you off to mama
yeah if i were a poet i'd kid
nap you

Catch

by Robert Francis

Two boys uncoached are tossing a poem together,
Overhand, underhand, backhand, sleight of hand, everyhand,
Teasing with attitudes, latitudes, interludes, altitudes,
High, make him fly off the ground for it, low, make him stoop,
Make him scoop it up, make him as-almost-as possible miss it,
Fast, let him sting from it, now, now fool him slowly,
Anything, everything tricky, risky, nonchalant,
Anything under the sun to outwit the prosy,
Over the tree and the long sweet cadence down,
Over his head, make him scramble to pick up the meaning,
And now, like a posy, a pretty one plump in his hands.

Eating Poetry

BY [MARK STRAND](#)

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

Poetry Set 4

A Dream Deferred

By: Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Still I Rise

by [Maya Angelou](#)

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Little Black Boy

By: William Blake (1789)

MY mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O, my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.
My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the East, began to say:
'Look at the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,
And flowers and trees and beasts and men
receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.
'And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.
'For when our souls have learn'd the heat to
bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear His
voice,
Saying, "Come out from the grove, my love and
care,
And round my golden tent like lambs
rejoice."
Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,
I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers--Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—

I've heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.

Read This Poem from the Bottom Up Ruth Porritt

This simple cathedral of praise.
How you made, from the bottom up,
Is for you to remember
Of Andromeda. What remains

Until you meet the ancient light
With your sight you can keep ascending
Its final transformation into space.
And uphold

The horizon's urge to sculpt the sky
Puts into relief
Your family's mountain land
Upon the rising air. In the distance

A windward falcon is open high and steady
Far above the tallest tree
Just beyond your height.
You see a young pine lifting its green spire

By raising your eyes
Out onto the roof deck.
You pass through sliding glass doors
And up to where the stairway ends.

To the top of the penultimate stanza
Past the second story,

But now you're going the other way,
Line by line, to the bottom of the page.

A force that usually pulls you down,
Of moving against the gravity of habit,
While trying not to notice the effort
And feel what it's like to climb stairs.

Titanic by David Slavitt

Who does not love the Titanic?
If they sold passage tomorrow for that same crossing,
who would not buy?

To go down...We all go down, mostly
alone. But with crowds of people, friends, servants,
well fed, with music, with lights!Ah!

And the world, shocked, mourns, as it ought to do
and almost never does. There will be the books and movies
to remind our grandchildren who we were
and how we died, and give them a good cry.

Not so bad, after all. The cold
water is anesthetic and very quick.
The cries on all sides must be a comfort.

We all go: only a few, first class.

Childhood is the Kingdom Where Nobody Dies

by [Edna St. Vincent Millay](#)

Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a
certain age
The child is grown, and puts away childish things.
Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.

Nobody that matters, that is. Distant relatives of course
Die, whom one never has seen or has seen for an hour,
And they gave one candy in a pink-and-green striped
bag, or a jack-knife,
And went away, and cannot really be said to have lived
at all.

And cats die. They lie on the floor and lash their tails,
And their reticent fur is suddenly all in motion
With fleas that one never knew were there,
Polished and brown, knowing all there is to know,
Trekking off into the living world.
You fetch a shoe-box, but it's much too small, because
she won't curl up now:
So you find a bigger box, and bury her in the yard, and
weep.
But you do not wake up a month from then, two months
A year from then, two years, in the middle of the night
And weep, with your knuckles in your mouth, and say Oh,
God! Oh, God!
Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies that
matters,
—mothers and fathers don't die.

And if you have said, "For heaven's sake, must you
always be kissing a person?"
Or, "I do wish to gracious you'd stop tapping on the
window with your thimble!"
Tomorrow, or even the day after tomorrow if you're busy
having fun,
Is plenty of time to say, "I'm sorry, mother."

To be grown up is to sit at the table with people who have
died,
who neither listen nor speak;
Who do not drink their tea, though they always said
Tea was such a comfort.

Run down into the cellar and bring up the last jar of
raspberries;
they are not tempted.
Flatter them, ask them what was it they said exactly
That time, to the bishop, or to the overseer, or to Mrs.
Mason;
They are not taken in.
Shout at them, get red in the face, rise,

Drag them up out of their chairs by their stiff shoulders
and shake
them and yell at them;
They are not startled, they are not even embarrassed;
they slide
back into their chairs.

Your tea is cold now.
You drink it standing up,
And leave the house.

By [CARL SANDBURG](#) 1878–1967 Carl Sandburg

PILE the bodies high at Austerlitz and
Waterloo,
Shovel them under and let me work--
am the grass; I cover all.
And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the
conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?
I am the grass.
Let me work.

Dulce et Decorum Est

by [Wilfred Owen](#)

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 tired, outstripped Five-Nines that
dropped 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.

'pity this busy monster, manunkind'

pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness
--- electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountainrange; lenses extend
unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish
returns on its unself.

A world of made
is not a world of born --- pity poor flesh

and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this
fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

a hopeless case if --- listen: there's a hell
of a good universe next door; let's go

E. E. Cummings

Snowbanks North of the House

Those great sweeps of snow that stop
suddenly six
feet from the house ...
Thoughts that go so far.
The boy gets out of high school and reads no
more
books;
the son stops calling home.
The mother puts down her rolling pin and
makes no
more bread.
And the wife looks at her husband one night
a
party, and loves him no more.
The energy leaves the wine, and the minister
falls
leaving the church.
It will not come closer
the one inside moves back, and the hands
touch
nothing, and are safe.
The father grieves for his son, and will not
leave the
room where the coffin stands.
He turns away from his wife, and she sleeps
alone.
And the sea lifts and falls all night, the moon
goes on
through the unattached heavens alone.
The toe of the shoe pivots
in the dust ...
And the man in the black coat turns, and goes
back
down the hill.

No one knows why he came, or why he turned
away,
and did not climb the hill.
Bly, Robert. 1981.